

# 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Research



Mrs. Colson, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade English

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### GOALS OF RESEARCH

1. To foster intellectual curiosity
2. To develop researchable questions
3. To become a discerning reader of information
4. To determine the validity and relevancy of sources
5. To credit sources accurately

In 8<sup>th</sup> grade, we will conduct THEMATIC RESEARCH - that is research that is based on an overarching theme. Your goal is to create a 2 - 3 "magazine-type- page" academic essay that presents information and illustrations (pictures, charts, graphs, etc.) that supports your group's theme by exploring a specific topic within the theme.

# NARROWING YOUR TOPIC: FORMULATING RESEARCH QUESTIONS

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**General topic**

---

**Who?**

---

**What?**

---

**When?**

---

**Where?**

---

**What two are combined:** \_\_\_\_\_

---

**What two are combined:** \_\_\_\_\_

---

**What two are combined:** \_\_\_\_\_

Major Research Statement:

Key phrase

Key Phrase

Key phrase

Research questions

1.

2.

3.

Research questions

1.

2.

3.

Research questions

1.

2.

3.

Thesis Statement

## WRITING A THESIS STATEMENT

A thesis statement is **ONE** sentence in the opening statement of an academic essay which states the main idea of the research. The basic formula for a thesis statement is:

\_\_\_\_\_ + \_\_\_\_\_ = Thesis

So, in general, the thesis of an academic essay is the main topic of the essay paired with the writer's position on that topic.

### What makes a thesis statement important?

- a. A thesis statement helps you:
  1. start drafting
  2. stay focused
  3. narrow your subject
  4. have a point of reference to guide your paper
- b. A thesis statement serves three purposes:
  1. gives a preview to the audience of what the project will discuss
  2. presents the categories that will be used to organize the project
  3. introduces the order in which the categories will be presented

### What is a GOOD thesis statement:

1. A good thesis statement is short and simple: it should be no longer than one sentence, regardless of essay length.

**Good thesis:** *Success is a result of doing the right things consistently.*

**Bad thesis:** *In a world full of success gurus and books about success, it becomes ever so more important to delineate the one trait that ultimately determines success: doing the right things consistently.*
2. A good thesis statement is limited to one main idea.

**Good thesis:** *The key to successful dieting is focusing on a specific goal.*

**Bad thesis:** *The key to successful dieting is focusing on a specific goal, which is also the key to successfully running a business and coaching a football team.*
3. A good thesis statement is a declarative sentence with no qualifiers (*in my opinion, I think, might, maybe, perhaps, etc.*):

**Good thesis:** *Lebron James' ability to score, pass, and rebound make him the league's most valuable player.*

**Bad thesis:** *Lebron James' ability to score, pass, and rebound just might make him the league's most valuable player.*

## THESIS STATEMENT WORKSHEET

*This worksheet is an exercise to help you **IDENTIFY, CREATE, and CORRECT** thesis statements so that you can use them effectively in your own academic essay.*

### Identification

*Take a look at the passages below. In each paragraph, highlight the sentence you believe to be the thesis.*

1. There is new cause for concern for parents who think they are feeding their young children safe and healthy foods. A new lawsuit claims the Environmental Protection Agency is allowing unacceptably high levels of pesticides in some foods favored by children. Massachusetts joins Connecticut, New Jersey and New York in alleging everything from grapes to oranges to potatoes contains pesticide residues that are excessive for children. The EPA is being accused of not setting child safe pesticide limits as required by the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996. "These safety standards exist. They've existed since 1996. They need to be enforced. We do need to have these levels set and ideally they'll be set at 10 times the safety standards so that they will protect kids," said Massachusetts Assistant Attorney General Alice Moore.
2. While California has been the state most prone to serious earthquakes in recent years, there are many other fault zones in other areas of the United States. For example, geologists and seismologists have predicted a 97 percent chance of a major earthquake in the New Madrid seismic zone of the central United States (including Arkansas, Missouri, Tennessee, and Kentucky) between now and the year 2035. While earthquakes with the power of the one that hit the greater Los Angeles area in January 1994 are fairly rare, less severe earthquakes can interrupt your normal living patterns and cause substantial injury.

### Create

*Add your opinion to the following topics to create your own thesis statements.*

3. Topic: Pesticides used for controlling pests which can damage crops.

Thesis: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Topic: Air pollution caused by fossil fuel emissions.

Thesis: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Topic: Rainforest depletion caused by logging.

Thesis: \_\_\_\_\_

### Correct

*Take a look at the following thesis statements and re-write them correctly on the lines below.*

*Remember that a complete thesis statement must have the topic and also state the author's position on that topic.*

6. Air pollution is caused in part by fossil fuel emissions, which are given off by gasoline burning vehicles.

This thesis is incorrect because: \_\_\_\_\_

A correct thesis might be: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## GATHER, EVALUATE, AND DOCUMENT SOURCES

Part of the research process is to be able to gather information from a range of relevant print and electronic sources. We will use the school library information system to locate reference materials (i.e. an encyclopedia) about your subject. You may use all types of resources, however your final project **REQUIRES** that you have at least the following sources: one encyclopedia source or other reference book; two non-fiction book, magazine, newspaper article, or other type of database source; two Internet sources. While five sources are required, more sources may be used as needed.

When you find an information source you wish to use, you must create a bibliographic citation for it. Each citation should be recorded on the "BIBLIOGRAPHIC CITATION INFORMATION" sheet located at the back of this packet. Remember that bibliographic information for citations should include the author, the title, page numbers, publishers, etc. If a piece of information is not present in a source, simply leave that box blank and move on to the next box in your bibliographic citation information.

For **print sources**, you should be able to identify the following citation information:

Author's name, title of the chapter or essay being used, the title of the text, the name of the editor (this may or may not be present), the edition and/or volume of the text, the place of publication, the name of the publisher, the date of publication (copyright date), and the medium of publication would be *print*. (Databases are print sources.)

For **internet sources**, you should be able to identify the following citation information:

Author/creator's name, title of the webpage, the title of the website (which may be the same as the title of the webpage), the date of publication (or last update), the date you accessed the site (when you actually used the site), the name of the sponsoring institution or organization, the simple URL ([www.whatever.com/org/edu/gov/mil](http://www.whatever.com/org/edu/gov/mil)). If you are using an image from the site (map, graph, chart, photograph), be sure to include the title of the image (can be a brief description of the image is a specific title isn't shown). The medium of the publication would be *web*.

### Evaluating sources:

While most print sources are from reliable, credible sources, when you begin internet research it is important to check the reliability and validity of your sources. We will use the "Get R.E.A.L." check to validate your internet sources:

**Read the URL:** identify the URL extension:

gov = government

mil = military

edu = education

com = business

org = any organization

net = any organization

**Examine the content:** is the information useful and accurate? Are additional links provided? Is the site current and updated?

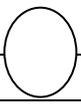
**Ask about the author or owner:** is the owner a person, company, or organization? Is the owner an authority on the subject matter of the site?

**Look at the links:** are the links to other websites credible?

## TAKING NOTES

Now is the time to gather facts, quotes, and other pieces of knowledge from the sources you have chosen and organize them into a workable format.

Just as you have been using Cornell style notes for other units, we will use Cornell style notes to record information from your sources. Below is an example of a Cornell style notes for research; use this as a model to create notes on your own sheets of notebook paper:

	Your last name, first name Date you began this sheet Source Reference information
	Main idea of this page of notes
<i>Main idea of the note taken</i>	This is where you will write paraphrased notes from the source that you are using. (pg # where you found the information)
<i>Main idea of this note</i>	Skip a line and then write another paraphrased notes from the source that is being used. (pg #)
<i>Main idea of this note</i>	Each note should be no more than 1 - 2 sentences in length and should ALWAYS be paraphrased! (and have the pg# used)
<i>Direct Quote identify that this is a quote</i>	If you write a direct quote, "You must include your own words with the quote," and place the directly quoted text in quotation marks. (don't forget page#).

1. Before you take notes from a source, be certain you have written that source on your bibliographic information sheet.
2. Write the name of the author or the title of the article you are using to create the notes in the upper right hand corner of your notes beneath your full name and the date.
3. Be sure to write the page number where you found each note in parentheses after the note. If the note came from a source without page numbers, then you can skip that step.
4. If you write a direct quote, you need to write *Direct quote* in the small "make notes" column of your Cornell style notes.
5. Take your notes as ONE idea or fact at a time. Don't write paragraphs of notes, rather write individual sentences.
6. Don't write on the back of the page. If you run out of space, begin a new page.
7. Also begin a new paper whenever you change sources. Do not mix your notes.

## SAMPLE Notes page

	Colson, Monica 1/8/2012 Pratt, Emiline
	The role of women on the home front
<i>Women in factories</i>	Women left their homes and took jobs in the traditionally male business world. (15)
<i>Pop culture image</i>	The image of Rosie the Riveter became popular during this era. (12)

### How to determine what is "note-worthy":

To decide what information to write down, consider the following questions:

1. What are you going to explain in your paper?
2. What information supports only ONE position or stance on this issue/topic?
3. Does the information help explain why I am presenting this project?
4. Does the information support what I said in my thesis?

### PLAGIARISM PRE-TEST

*Identify each statement as either T (true) or F (false).  
Write your response in the blank next to each statement.*

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Copying and pasting from the Internet can be done without citing the Internet page, because everything on the Internet is common knowledge and can be used without citation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. You don't have to use quotation marks when you quote an author as long as you cite the author's name at the end of the paragraph.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. When you summarize a block of text from another work, citing the source at the end of your paper is sufficient.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. If you quote your roommate in an interview, you don't have to cite or use quotation marks.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. You don't have to cite famous proverbs because they're common knowledge.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. If you borrow someone's idea and use it in a paper, you don't have to cite it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Using a few phrases from an article and mixing them with your own words is not plagiarism.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Song lyrics don't have to be cited.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The date for George Washington's birthday is common knowledge which means you don't have to cite the source in which you found it.

## PLAGIARISM - #1 Project Killer!

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as your own. Ideas and text from another source - including another student, past or present - belong to the person who authored them. When a student uses those ideas or words as if they were their own original words or ideas, the student is plagiarizing.

**PLAGIARISM IS UNACCEPTABLE** and will not be tolerated.

### Examples of Plagiarism:

1. Copying text verbatim (word for word).
  - \* You cannot just cut and paste text from an Internet source
  - \* You cannot copy words (print) from another source and call it your own
2. Paraphrasing text without referencing the original source
  - \* Even if you paraphrase something, you must still give credit to the original source
  - \* Despite the wording being different from the original, the idea is still not yours and you must give credit where credit is due
3. Copying text verbatim without including your own words with it
  - \* When you use a quote in your writing, you must include some of your own words with it
  - \* It is not good enough to simply copy something word for word, put quotation marks around it, and then reference it - THAT IS PLAGIARISM!
4. Forgetting the all important bibliography page
  - \* If your final project is referenced correctly within the text, it's been footnoted or parenthetically noted, it has your own words and your own ideas, but you don't identify the sources from which you gathered your information, YOU HAVE PLAGIARIZED!

### How to avoid plagiarism:

1. Read it and then put it away
  - \* read the text, set it aside, THEN make notes
2. Read multiple sources on the same topic, then make your notes
  - \* take notes about a topic based on information gathered from several sources
3. Reference every note
  - \* put your source information in the upper right hand corner of every page of notes
  - \* put the page number where you found the information at the end of every note
5. Believe in your writing talent
  - \* you are smart and capable of generating ideas on your own
  - \* you don't have to copy someone else's ideas because you have plenty creative ideas of your own!

## CREATING AN OUTLINE

Once you have compiled all of your information and created a thesis statement, you should begin the process of organizing your information as it will be presented in your academic essay. To accomplish this, you will create an outline. We will use the "Notetaker" tool on Read Write Think's website. ([http://interactives.mped.org/view\\_interactive.aspx?id=722&title=](http://interactives.mped.org/view_interactive.aspx?id=722&title=)).

1. Begin your outline with your thesis statement as Roman numeral I. You should write out your entire thesis as a complete sentence to begin your outline.
2. To generate the body of your outline, go back to your notes and chunk your information into logical categories. You can organize them chronologically, from least important to most important, etc. Remember that your outline is an overview of your paper. So consider how you want your essay arranged, and that is how your outline should be arranged as well.
3. If you will be using a direct quote in your final academic essay, where the quote will be in the paper must be documented in your outline. You must write the quote as it will appear in your paper in your outline with parenthetical (in-text) citation. (See the example below.)
4. The body of your outline WILL NOT be written as complete sentences, but rather as the main ideas of the notes that you took.
5. The very last thing on your outline is the conclusion, which, like the introduction, should be written as a complete sentence. The conclusion of your essay will be a restatement of your thesis. No new information should be presented in your conclusion, but rather the main points of your essay should be reiterated.

I. Despite being a nun, Saint Teresa Benedicta became a martyr for her religious beliefs in the Holocaust.

II. Childhood ← *Main Heading*

- A. Birthdate
- B. Parents

III. Education

A. Studies (Saint Teresa Benedicta 18)

1. Despite the fact that she stopped believing in God at the age of 14, Edit Stein was intrigued by those who "learned to live at God's hands" (Koeppel 11).

B. Husserl and phenomenology (Saint Teresa Benedicta 42)

IV. On May 1, 1987, Pope John Paul II beatified Saint Teresa Benedicta for suffering a martyr's death for her faith.

*Thesis*

*Subheading*

*Documentation for  
a direct quote*

*Conclusion*

Your first outline will be a "working outline", which means that it may change. With your final academic essay, you will be required to turn in a "final outline"; that outline should be a true reflection of the structure and order of your final project.

## DRAFTING, EDITING, and WORKS CITED

### Drafting

- Use your working outline to draft your final project.
- Your draft should be double spaced and in 12 point font.
- Your draft should be about 3 - 5 pages in length.
- Remember that you are creating a "textbook" page that should include pictures and text. Your pictures should be word-wrapped and be captioned.

### Creating Parenthetical (In-text) Citations:

A parenthetical citation is when a writer directly puts into the text a note from where he or she got the information. Parenthetical or "in-text" citation allows your reader to know from what source each idea/fact came.

This is how a **direct** quote looks in the text of your paper:

*Proving that the web is being used for more than just entertainment, "In 2007, 37 percent of American adults sought medical information from the internet regarding a health problem they were experiencing before consulting a doctor" (Smith 38), up 10% from 2005.*

Here is an example of the same idea presented as an **indirect quote**:

*Instead of going to a doctor right away, as many would do in the past, a recent study found that more Americans are now turning to the internet for medical information (Smith 38).*

### Editing

- We will edit together in class.
- You must have at least TWO classmates edit for you. (They will sign their name on the bottom of your paper proving that they edited.)
- You should edit for grammatical and mechanical errors, as well as for errors in formatting (not double spaced, missing captions, not word-wrapped.)
- Although it is not required, it's a good idea to have an adult edit your paper as well.

### Works Cited

You must create a works cited that lists all of the sources you used to prepare for your project. To create your works cited, you will do the following:

1. Go to *KnightCite Citation Service* (<http://www.calvin.edu/library/knightcite/>)
2. Fill in the blanks using the citation information from your Bibliographic Citation Information sheet
3. Copy the citation and paste it to a blank page at the end of your essay.
4. Single space each entry, but double space between entries.
5. Alphabetize your entries.

## PUBLISHING

Your final academic essay "textbook page" MUST include:

1. A Title page, with the following information centered:
  - a. Title of the work
  - b. Name of the author
  - c. Name of the course (English 8)
  - d. Name of the instructor (Mrs. Colson)
  - e. Date of completion (or due date)
2. Final outline
  - a. Title
  - b. Parenthetical notations
  - c. Double spaced and 12 point font
  - d. Formatted correctly
3. Completed academic essay
  - a. Double spaced
  - b. At least two images with citations
  - c. At least 3 images with captions and appropriate word wrapping.
  - d. Adequate length (2 - 3 pages)
4. Works Cited Page
  - a. Correctly formatted (alphabetized, reverse indented, single spaced within and double spaced between)
  - b. 12 point font
5. Pagination in the header or the footer of each page.
  - a. Pagination should be your last name and the page number.

<p style="text-align: center;">The Case of Sacco and Vanzetti</p> <p style="text-align: center;">By Monica Colson</p> <p style="text-align: center;">English 8 Mrs. Colson January 8, 2013</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Sacco and Vanzetti</p> <p>I. While some may argue they got what they deserved, many feel that Sacco and Vanzetti were convicted for their political view, rather than any real crime they committed.</p> <p>II. Background</p> <p>III. Robbery</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">A. Arrest</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">B. Indictment</p> <p>IV. Trials</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">A. First Trial</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">1. An eyewitness claimed they had been sold "thirty golden money like Judas" (Weinberger 152).</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">B. Second Trial</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Colson 2</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Colson 8</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Works Cited</p> <p>Avrich, Paul. <i>Anarchist Voices: An Oral History of Anarchism in America</i>, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.</p> <p>Jackson, Brian. <i>The Black Flag: A Look Back at the Strange Case of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti</i>, Boston: Routledge &amp; Kegan Paul, 1981.</p> <p>Kadane, Joseph B. and David A. Schum. <i>A Probabilistic Analysis of the Sacco and Vanzetti Evidence</i>, Wiley Series in Probability &amp; Mathematical Statistics, 1996.</p>
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**BIBLIOGRAPHIC CITATION INFORMATION #1**

Author's last name:		Author's first name:	
Title of chapter, essay, article, or webpage:			
Title of book or Website:			
Name of editor (last, first) or sponsor:			Edition, Volume:
Publication date:	Date of access:	Medium (print, web):	
City of publication:	Publisher:		
Title of photo (if citing a reprinted photo, map, chart):		URL:	

**BIBLIOGRAPHIC CITATION INFORMATION #2**

Author's last name:		Author's first name:	
Title of chapter, essay, article, or webpage:			
Title of book or Website:			
Name of editor (last, first) or sponsor:			Edition, Volume:
Publication date:	Date of access:	Medium (print, web):	
City of publication:	Publisher:		
Title of photo (if citing a reprinted photo, map, chart):		URL:	

**BIBLIOGRAPHIC CITATION INFORMATION #3**

Author's last name:		Author's first name:	
Title of chapter, essay, article, or webpage:			
Title of book or Website:			
Name of editor (last, first) or sponsor:			Edition, Volume:
Publication date:	Date of access:	Medium (print, web):	
City of publication:	Publisher:		
Title of photo (if citing a reprinted photo, map, chart):		URL:	

**BIBLIOGRAPHIC CITATION INFORMATION #4**

Author's last name:		Author's first name:	
Title of chapter, essay, article, or webpage:			
Title of book or Website:			
Name of editor (last, first) or sponsor:			Edition, Volume:
Publication date:	Date of access:	Medium (print, web):	
City of publication:	Publisher:		
Title of photo (if citing a reprinted photo, map, chart):		URL:	

**BIBLIOGRAPHIC CITATION INFORMATION #5**

Author's last name:		Author's first name:	
Title of chapter, essay, article, or webpage:			
Title of book or Website:			
Name of editor (last, first) or sponsor:			Edition, Volume:
Publication date:	Date of access:	Medium (print, web):	
City of publication:	Publisher:		
Title of photo (if citing a reprinted photo, map, chart):		URL:	

**BIBLIOGRAPHIC CITATION INFORMATION #6**

Author's last name:		Author's first name:	
Title of chapter, essay, article, or webpage:			
Title of book or Website:			
Name of editor (last, first) or sponsor:			Edition, Volume:
Publication date:	Date of access:	Medium (print, web):	
City of publication:	Publisher:		
Title of photo (if citing a reprinted photo, map, chart):		URL:	

Dear Students and Parents:

All of my 8<sup>th</sup> grade English classes will be completing research projects over the spring semester. The purpose of this research is to improve students' research skills and prepare them for research assignments they will have in the upcoming years in high school. This is a very challenging unit for students. It is very important that students take this project seriously and work diligently. Most of the assignments will be completed in class, however, if a student falls behind on a deadline or misses an instructional period, students may find themselves having to catch up on their own time outside of class.

Each student has been given a research packet that outlines the details and expectations of the project. Although each step will be explained in class before work is begun in that section, all students will need to carefully read through the research packet to be properly prepared. Because students may also refer to their research packets if they are working at home or in the library on their own time, it is imperative that they do not lose this packet. There is a section for the research packet in their English binder. However, should a student lose their packet, they will be able to print another copy of the multi-page document by using the link on my page within the school's website. (The QR code at the bottom of a page will directly link you to Mrs. Colson's page.)

All students will share the same theme on their project. However, how each student interprets that theme and where they choose to take their interpretation will vary. I encourage parents to talk with your student about the progress of their project, while also keeping track of their timeline. Students will have a calendar of due dates, and this calendar is also linked to my web page. Students will be informed of any changes to dates, and this information will also be updated on my calendar and web page.

I have discussed at length with students the importance of academic integrity and their research project. On the reverse side of this form is a cross-section of the Denton ISD Academic Integrity Policy. I have discussed this document and the consequences for plagiarism - the most common academic integrity issue we face with students. Students have signed that they have heard and understand the policy and its consequences. I ask that parents also sign the academic integrity policy form showing their understanding of the policy and its consequences. (Students will receive a "bonus day" for returning their signed form to me by the date marked at the top of the policy letter.)

Research, while challenging, can be one of the most rewarding academic achievements students can have. I look forward to guiding your students through the maze of academic research. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns. I will be glad to help in any way I can.

Sincerely,

Monica Colson  
Harpool Middle School English  
[mcolson@dentonisd.org](mailto:mcolson@dentonisd.org)  
(940) 369-1700, ext. 1657



*from the Denton ISD Academic Integrity Policy*

Academic integrity is an essential element to the Denton Independent School District’s philosophy and practice of promoting academic excellence... Cheating, dishonesty, and plagiarism will not be tolerated in Denton Independent School District.

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the following examples:

- Directly quoting or paraphrasing all or part of another’s written or spoken words without notes or documentation within the body of a work.
- Presenting an idea, theory, or formula originated by another person as the original work of the person submitting that work.
- Purchasing or receiving in any other form a term paper or other assignment that is the work of another person and submitting that assignment as the student’s own work.
- Repeating information, such as statistics or demographics, which is not common knowledge and which was originally compiled by another person.

**The *MLA Style Manual Guide to Scholarly Publishing* further defines plagiarism as:**

“Forms of plagiarism include the failure to give appropriate acknowledgements when repeating another’s wording or particularly apt phrase, paraphrasing another’s argument, and present another’s line of thinking. You may certainly use other person’s words and thoughts, but the borrowed material must not appear to be your creating. In your writing, then, you must document everything you borrow; not only direct quotations and paraphrases, but also information and ideas.” (*Gibaldi, Joseph. MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1998.*)

***Plagiarism.org* indicates:**

“Plagiarism is the improper use of, or failure to give credit to another person’s writing, visual or musical representation, or ideas. It can be an act as subtle as inadvertently neglecting to use quotation marks or references when using another source or as blatant as knowingly copying an entire paper, or parts of paper, and claiming it as your own.”

\*\*\*\*\*

**Consequences for plagiarism are as follows:**

1. Mandatory contact with a parent
2. Zero grade for the assignment
3. Possible 1 day in ISSC
4. Placement of documentation in *Academic Integrity Folder* within the student’s *Discipline Folder*
5. Coaches and sponsors specific to the student’s involvement will be notified

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read and understand the definitions of plagiarism and the consequences of plagiarizing a research project as outlined in the Denton ISD Academic Integrity Policy.

Student's Name - PRINTED

Student's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_