

2026 AP Research Summer Assignment

(Due First Week of School)

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Objectives:

- A *clear, researchable topic idea* (or a few narrowed options)
- A basic understanding of what it would take to research it (methods, challenges, resources)
- A sense of how your topic fits into a broader conversation

Part 1: Topic Proposal & Exploration (2–3 pages total)

Write a short document that includes the following:

1. Topic Interest Statement

- What topic are you interested in researching and *why*?
- What personal, academic, or social connection do you have to it?

2. Initial Inquiry Questions

- What do you hope to find out?
- Pose 2–3 possible research questions (these can evolve).

3. Background Exploration

- Find and summarize **2 credible sources** that give you some foundational knowledge about your topic.
- For each, briefly answer:
 - What is this source about?
 - How does it help you understand your topic?
 - What questions does it raise?

4. Research Feasibility Reflection

- What kinds of sources, experts, or data might be available to you?
- What *method* might you use? (e.g., interview, survey, experiment, content analysis, case study)
- What challenges do you anticipate?

Part 2: Primary Source Engagement (Optional but Strongly Encouraged)

Try to **interview or email someone** knowledgeable about your topic. This could be a professional, teacher, artist, family member—anyone with experience related to your idea.

Write 1 paragraph reflecting on:

- What you asked
- What you learned
- How it influenced your thinking

Part 3: Annotated Bibliography Entry (1 source)

Pick **one scholarly or in-depth source** (journal article, book chapter, report) and write a full annotated bibliography entry:

- Citation (in APA or MLA format)
- 150-word annotation explaining:
 - What the source argues or presents
 - How it might support your research
 - Any limitations or biases

Submission Format

Submit a Google Doc with your name and “AP Research Summer Assignment” in the title. Be prepared to present your topic briefly to the class in the first week.

Advice from Previous AP Researchers

Real insights from students who just completed the course

Start with a Strong, Realistic Topic

“Over the summer, start thinking about what you want to write about. You’re an 18-year-old, not a professional researcher with unlimited access—*don’t aim for something unrealistic*. Be open-minded about how to approach your idea, and think early about how this can count for your senior project too.”

“Choose something that genuinely interests you—something that makes you curious or frustrated. You *don’t need a groundbreaking idea*, just one you can go deep on. Remember: *depth over scale*.”

“The hardest part is solidifying a topic. People who waited too long either rushed or had to completely change. *Have something in mind before class starts*—it doesn’t have to be perfect, but it should be focused.”

Mindsets That Help You Succeed

“I waited for the ‘right moment’ to feel inspired to work... and fell behind. *Discipline is more important than inspiration*. Just do the work.”

“You’ll have to be your own biggest supporter. Sometimes I kept going just to prove I could. *You have to create your own motivation in this course*.”

“Don’t put too much pressure on yourself. You’ll grow through the tough moments. *Trust that everything will be okay—and enjoy the ride*.”

Stay Organized from Day One

“Keep track of your sources *immediately*. I lost material because I didn’t save links or cite properly. Use tools like Google starring system or a citation manager.”

“Set a schedule early and work consistently. Break things into chunks. *This course rewards steady effort more than last-minute work.*”

“Make one document for everything—don’t juggle five tabs. Having all your work in one place makes writing and revising much easier.”

Pitfalls to Avoid

“Don’t treat class like a study hall. Use the time well and you’ll barely have homework. *And if you don’t like your topic, change it early.* Waiting just makes everything harder.”

“Don’t procrastinate, don’t avoid feedback, and don’t ignore your presentation. *Start prepping early—it’s 25% of the grade.*”

“Check school dates early. Your due date might fall on the same day as a senior trip or event. *And know your sources well,* especially before the final presentation.”

“Be kind to yourself. *Growth happens through trial, error, and revision.* You can do this!”