

Final Project – Research Essay and PowerPoint Presentation

For your final project in this course, you need to choose a topic related to Dinosaurs, research that topic, and write a 5-page research essay that is also the basis for an in-class PowerPoint presentation.

Requirements and Suggestions for a Successful Presentation

Overview Your presentation should focus on a relatively narrow topic related to dinosaurs, (for example, a recent discovery that has made the news) and explain it in a way that is both interesting and understandable to your audience. You will probably need to include some background information on your topic so that your audience can appreciate what you are talking about. For example, if you are discussing a new species of sauropod dinosaur, you might want to include a short review of what sauropod dinosaurs are. Also, you need to discuss the fossil evidence that is the basis for the information you are presenting. What have the paleontologists concluded based on the fossil(s) you are discussing and why? Ideally, you should be able to relate what you are talking about to the ideas that we have learned about and discussed in class.

Technical Each presentation should include a minimum of 10 slides and you should compose about a half page to a full page of notes for each slide within the notes section of your PowerPoint file (not visible onscreen). As addressed below, such notes will facilitate writing the accompanying research paper that is due in lab at the end of the semester. Your first slide must be a title slide with your name on it. The remaining slides should be a combination of photos and diagrams. All images should be referenced in your presentation. List the source (book or web site) in small type below the image. You may include text in your slides to outline your main talking points or to list important facts (use at least 16 pt font so your audience can read the text), but avoid placing too much text on a single slide and **DO NOT** put your notes on each slide and read from them during your presentation. **DO NOT** include slides that are all text. Proofread your slides carefully to catch spelling and grammatical errors. To deliver an effective presentation, you should prepare note cards with what you want to say outlined on the cards.

When giving your presentation, face your audience and speak loudly and clearly, making eye contact with people around the room. Use your note cards to remind yourself of what you want to say, but avoid reading from the cards. If you are using technical terms, local place names, or other unfamiliar vocabulary, find out the correct pronunciations ahead of time. It is always a good idea to practice your presentation ahead of time in front of a live audience composed of family or friends.

Written Report You must also hand in a written report, based on your PowerPoint presentation, in fulfillment of the writing requirement for distribution courses at Hofstra. You should research your topics carefully, compile facts and ideas, and derive some real information to transfer to your student colleagues. By including factual notes with your slides, as suggested above, you will easily be able to extract and edit your notes to produce a paper. A list of references, including web site references, must be included in your paper as well as in your presentation. See the following page for examples of proper reference formats.

Checklists for a Successful Presentation and Written Report

PowerPoint file delivery

1. Email file or deliver on CD or jump drive to your lab instructor **at least one day** prior to your presentation.
2. Make sure any movie files or sound files in your presentation are included in a folder with your .ppt file or they will not work.
3. DO NOT bring your presentation on your own laptop to class.

Oral Presentations Using PowerPoint

1. Presentation logically organized, accurate, and complete
2. Slides relevant and helpful in successfully teaching about your topic
3. Minimum 10 slides, including title slide
4. Slides include a combination of text, images, and diagrams – no slides with only text
5. Images referenced on the slide
6. DO NOT read from your slides
7. Speak clearly and project your voice
8. Make eye contact with your audience
9. Correct pronunciation of technical terms, place names, and unfamiliar vocabulary
10. Discussion of how conclusions of the study were derived from the fossil evidence

Written Report

1. Report should be typed, double-spaced, 12 pt. Times or similar font, 1 inch margins
2. Report must include a reference list (bibliography) including web site citations in correct format (see above).
3. Minimum 5 pages in length.
4. Text must be your own wording. Do not copy and paste from web sites or other sources! This is plagiarism! Your report may be checked for plagiarism using web-based search engines. All students are expected to follow Hofstra's policy on Academic Honesty, as outlined in *The Guide to Pride*. If you are uncertain if your work is in violation of this policy, don't hesitate to ask your professor for advice and guidance.

Citation Formats

You may use any standard citation format such as MLA or APA. Minimum citation information should include authors, date, title, source (journal, newspaper, magazine title), publisher, pages. Web pages you consult must also be cited. Examples:

Levin, Harold, 2003, *The Earth Through Time*, 7th ed., John Wiley and Sons, Inc.: 22-30.

Poniewozik, James, 2000, "The Death of the Dinosaurs." *Time*, 20 Nov. 2000: 70-71.

Nancy Crane 1997. [Online]. Available: <http://www.uvm.edu/~ncrane/estyles/apa.html> [2000, August 31]. Note that the first date is the date the article was written and the date in brackets at the end of the citation is the date you visited the site.