

Master's Academy High School Summer Assignment for Senior Thesis Class  
Ms. Jessica Samons



**Incoming 12th Graders:**

**You will be completing your senior thesis research and word study over the summer. Your topic must be selected and approved by Ms. Samons *before the end of your junior year*. Once approved, you will be researching your topic and completing your word study over the summer.**

**What will be due in the fall? Due Friday, August 16, 2024**

1. Index cards with your listed sources - (a minimum of 8 sources)
2. Thorough and complete NOTES attached to each note card from the source.
3. A variety of sources – references, books, media, online sources.
4. A list of at least 10 – 15 words for your word study.
5. A Thesis Statement (tentative)
6. Possible candidates for your ADVISOR.
7. A copy of the MLA Reference Handbook 9<sup>th</sup> Edition.

**It is also highly encouraged to read a fiction book for pleasure as well. Prolific readers make good writers.**

**Recommended Reading:**

*\*Conquering the College Admissions Essay in 10 Steps* by Alan Gelb

*\*Not required – just a suggestion for independent reading for seniors considering college.*

**\*\* A highly recommended non-fiction book to read to help you be successful in school: 7 *Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen R. Covey – this would not be one of the selected books, but something extra to read over the summer.**

**Junior (Incoming Seniors) – Senior Thesis Summer Project (Required)  
Senior Thesis Topic (to Ms. Samons) for Approval Due by April 30, 2024**



Dear Incoming Seniors:

Congratulations and welcome to your senior year of high school! You have worked hard to reach this point in your academic career. To help you prepare for your senior thesis class next year, you will begin your research and word study over the summer. Your mandatory summer project is to begin prepping for your senior thesis paper.

Your first task is to decide on a topic that is:

1. First, take time to PRAY on this topic. See where the Lord is leading you on this assignment.
2. **Your topic must be - Controversial in nature.**
3. **Your topic - Can be biblically defended.**
4. **Your topic has a broad impact on society, not just the church.**
5. **Present in writing to Ms. Samons by April 30, 2024.**

✚ **It MUST meet all THREE criteria to be approved. If it is not approved, you must go back and revise or find a new topic and present it to Ms. Samons by May 3, 2024.**

✚ Once you have your APPROVED topic, you will begin your preliminary research so it can be narrowed down and from there you can write a “working” thesis statement.

✚ Research must be more than just “online”. Details below will provide you with what kind of sources and how many credible sources you must complete and include in your paper. Over the summer, you are encouraged to visit libraries, such as the library at Warner University (for Christian Scholarly sources) and/or other collegiate libraries, and the Indian River County library system to conduct your research. Remember as you research, take detailed and clear notes, recording the source information, which you must have in your paper (in-text and works cited sources).

✚ Also, over the summer, start thinking and recruiting your advisor, who will be your mentor and guide throughout the process. The advisor must be a Master’s Academy staff member (they cannot be a family member). You will be meeting your advisor each week during the process from beginning to end. They will also serve on your panel for the presentation portion of the senior thesis process.

## CRITERIA AND EXPECTATIONS FOR YOUR SENIOR THESIS PAPER

### I. Assignment Prompt:

**Choose a topic** that is culturally relevant/controversial and that can be defended from a biblical perspective. Extensively research this topic using scholarly and reputable sources and sound exegesis to determine the biblical standpoint on the issues at hand demonstrating competence in the 4 R's of scholarship--Research, Reason, Relate, and Record. Prepare a written thesis explaining this research with the intent to present and defend this information to a panel of professionals and community members.

**Total Length: 20-25 pages of content, 1 title page, 1 abstract page, and 1-4 pages of references (works cited pages). 15-20 pages for the main body of your paper. If your paper is short, you will lose significant points.**

**\*It is expected that you will use MLA to write your paper. Therefore, it is highly recommended you purchase the MLA Reference Book – 9<sup>th</sup> Edition.**

**Sources: 8-16 sources containing the following variety of media:**

- Print Books (fiction & nonfiction)
- Bible (Use one translation – preferably ESV)
- Professional journal articles
- *Webster's 1828 Dictionary*
- Historical documents
- News items from reputable news outlets
- *Reputable*
- and *scholarly* online sources (i.e. Bible Hub is a great resource for Christian commentary)

**Include the following in your work:**

(Things to look for in your research)

- a. Definitions of words/terms
- b. Biblical origin and/or precedent of the subject or issue
- c. Further history of the subject
- d. Work from the ideal to the digression, from the counterfeit to the true
- e. Trace the digression while identifying underlying faults, root causes.

f. Presentation and reference to opposing views.

***g. Your proposed solution should include a plan of restoration, working from the root to the fruit, from the cause to the effect, from the individual sphere to the community, and from internal to external.***

## **WRITING YOUR THESIS STATEMENT – YOUR ENTIRE PAPER HANGS ON A STRONG THESIS STATEMENT.**

**The thesis is a statement (usually a single sentence) that expresses the central idea or main argument of the essay and reflects the writer's purpose for writing it.**

- It typically appears at the end of the introduction as the last sentence (though it may appear elsewhere).
- The thesis may be implied or explicitly stated, but it should always be evident to the reader.
- The thesis may differ in form depending on the type of writing (argumentative, persuasive, informative, narrative, etc.).
- The thesis should be restated in a new and interesting way in the conclusion. Explicit vs. Implied
- An explicit thesis directly states the writer's main idea/position and provides a clear direction for the essay.

**Example: The most significant problems facing Africa are poverty, political corruption, and poor healthcare.**

- An implied thesis is not directly stated, but rather suggested through the writer's ideas and supporting points. Nonetheless, it should still provide an obvious focus for the reader.

**Example: There are several serious problems facing Africa today that require attention**

## **RESEARCH BASICS – HOW TO RESEARCH FOR YOUR SENIOR THESIS PAPER**

(Source: How to Do Research in 7 Simple Steps (collegeinfo geek.com))

- 1. Find a topic (This is your approved topic)**
- 2. Refine your topic (This is your thesis statement)**
- 3. Find key sources. - RESEARCH**

✚ If you've picked a good topic, then you probably have lots of sources to work with. This is both a blessing and a curse. A variety of sources shows that there's something worth saying about your topic, and it also gives you plenty of

material to cite. Remember you need to include Christian scholarly sources as part of your research.

- ✚ But this abundance can quickly turn into a nightmare in which you spend hours reading dense, mind-numbing material without getting any closer to producing a paper.
- ✚ How do you keep this from happening? Choose **5–8 key sources** and focus on them intently. Sure, you will need more sources, since the requirement for sources should be 8 – 15 sources. But if you start out trying to read 15 sources, you're likely to get overwhelmed and frustrated.

Focusing on a few key sources is powerful because it:

- Lets you engage deeply with each source.
- Gives you a variety of perspectives.
- Points you to further resources.
- Keeps you focused.

#### 4. Read and Take Notes

Create an index card for all of your sources (see attached sample handout) and attach to your notes from this source. But what do you do with these sources, exactly? You need to **read them the right way**.

Follow these steps to effectively read academic books and articles:

##### **Skim**

Go through the article and look at the section headings. If any words or terms jump out at you, make note of them. Also, glance at the beginning sentences of each section and paragraph to get an overall idea of the author's argument.

The goal here isn't to comprehend deeply, but to prime your mind for effective reading.

##### **Question**

Write down any questions you have after skimming the article, as well as any general questions you hope the article can answer. Always keep your topic in mind.

##### **Read Actively**

Now, start reading. But don't just passively go through the information like you're scrolling through Tumblr. **Read with a pen or pencil in hand**, underlining any unfamiliar terms or interesting ideas.

Make notes in the margins about other sources or concepts that come to mind. If you're reading a library book, you can make notes on a separate piece of paper.

Use the SQ3R method. The **SQ3R** is a reading comprehension method named for its five steps: **survey, question, read, recite, and review.**

### **Rest**

Once you've finished reading, take a short break. Have a cup of tea or coffee. Go for a walk around the library. Stretch. Just get your mind away from the research for a moment without resorting to distracting, [low-density fun](#).

### **Summarize**

Now come back to the article and look at the things you underlined or noted. Gather these notes and transfer them to a program like [Evernote](#).

If you need to look up a term, do that, and then add that definition to your notes. Also, make note of any sources the author cites that look helpful.

*But what if I'm reading a book? Won't this take forever?* No, because you're not going to read the entire book.

For most research you'll do in college, reading a whole academic book is **overkill**. Just skim the table of contents and the book itself to find chapters or sections that look relevant.

Then, read each of those in the same way you would read an article. Also, be sure to glance at the book's bibliography, which is a goldmine for finding additional sources.

## **5. Create a tentative outline of your research. - Organize the ideas**

## **6. Do additional research as necessary.**

## **7. Cite your sources.**

Go ahead and create your MLA Works Cited page as you research. IF you do not use a source in your paper, you will remove it from your Works Cited page. And remember, there is ALWAYS the right way to cite a source – LOOK it UP! And there is a proper way to create a Works Cited page in MLA – again, look it up.

## **HOW TO COMPLETE YOUR WORD STUDY ASSIGNMENTS**

When you begin writing your paper, you must define words/terms related to your topic. About five-word studies have been incorporated into the timeline of the senior thesis class next year to help you better understand the language and biblical principles related to your topic.

By the middle of the first quarter, your word study will be completed, and you should have at least 25 words compiled in the final word study. As you read and research this summer, write down key words or terms that are: 1. Important to your topic; 2. Need defining to provide context; 3. Helps you understand the language and biblical principles.

You will be using the Webster's Dictionary from 1828 to complete the word study when you return in the fall. So, for now, simply keep a running list of words or terms you encounter through your research. The Key Word Study Format handout is attached

## **Word Study (ESV)**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**A Word Study is an exercise where a student studies the origin, meaning, and application of a word.**

**Word** \_\_\_\_\_

1828 Definition

Online dictionary definition

Origin or historical usage of the word

Bible usage

Personal Application

Write a sentence using the word/s showing clearly that you understand their meaning.