

# Performance Task 2: Individual Research-Based Essay and Presentation

Content Area: **Generic Content Area**  
Course(s):  
Time Period: **1 marking period**  
Length: **8 weeks**  
Status: **Published**

## Unit Overview

---

This unit follows the College Board guidelines for Performance Task 2: Individual Research-Based Essay and Presentation on the AP Capstone: Seminar exam. In January, the College Board releases cross-curricular stimulus material (texts) representing a range of perspectives focused on a single theme. Students read and analyze these stimulus materials to identify thematic connections among them and possible areas for inquiry. Their inquiry must be based on the thematic connection between at least two of the stimulus materials. Students then compose a research question of their own; conduct research; analyze, evaluate, and select evidence to develop an argument; and present and defend their conclusions. The final paper must integrate at least one of the provided stimulus materials as part of the response.

The following domains are represented in the stimulus materials: Natural Sciences, Technology, Mathematics, Environment; Social Sciences, Politics, Economics, Psychology; Arts (Visual Arts, Music, Dance, Theater); Culture, Languages, Linguistics; History; Literature, Philosophy, Critical Theory/Criticism. College Board notes that the following is also represented in the texts: Multimedia text (e.g., photographs, artwork, video, music); and Qualitative data.

The products in this unit are part of the students AP Capstone: Seminar exam score as follows:

- Individual Written Argument (IWA) (2000 words): 24.5% of total exam score (College Board scored)
- Individual Multimedia Presentation (IMP) (6-8 minutes): 7% of total exam score (Teacher scored; score submitted to College Board)
- Oral Defense (OD) (two questions from teacher): 3.5% of total exam score (Teacher scored; score submitted to College Board)

Because the products of this unit are the students' exams, the instructor cannot give direct feedback to any of the students work individual. Feedback can be given via as-needed lessons to the whole class. The stimulus materials, however, should be taught in-depth as they come out from the College Board.

## Transfer

---

Students will be able to independently use their learning to...

-What kinds of long term, independent accomplishments are desired?

- Students will be able to independently create and refine questions worthy of inquiry based on their own interests, the preponderance of evidence, and the perspectives of others.
- Students will be able to know where and how to find information on any line of inquiry.

- Students will be able to evaluate sources for relevance and credibility and will be able to weigh them accordingly in their reporting.
- Students will be able to independently research a topic from a variety of perspectives or lenses.
- Students will be able to synthesize sources from a variety of perspectives/lenses to confidently give an overview of what is known on a topic.
- Students will be able to write an argument with a solution based on wide-ranging research.
- Students will be able to select, compress, summarize, and synthesize information from their IWA to create a multimedia presentation.
- Students will be able to deliver, individually, an argument and a solution about a well-researched topic using multiple forms of media.
- Students will be able to respond to live, improvised questions in their oral defense with poise.

---

For more information, read the following article by Grant Wiggins.

[http://www.authenticeducation.org/ae\\_bigideas/article.lasso?artid=60](http://www.authenticeducation.org/ae_bigideas/article.lasso?artid=60)

## Meaning

---

### Understandings

---

Students will understand that...

-What specifically do you want students to understand?

-What inferences should they make/grasp/realize?

- Students will understand that research questions should be formed based on personal interest and evidence from reliable/credible sources.
- Students will understand the appropriate scope that a research has will allow for extended, complex exploration and argument.
- Students will understand that, in order to gain the most accurate understanding on a topic, it is important to consider the research question from a variety of perspectives or lenses: Cultural and Social; Environmental; Scientific; Economic; Political and Historical; and Artistic and Philosophical.
- Students will understand that, in order to arrive at the most informed and considered solution to a problem presented within a topic, it is important to consider the research question from a variety of perspectives or lenses.
- Students will understand that, given the specific topic under study, certain lenses/perspectives are more valid to consider than others.
- Students will understand that everyone and every organization has biases and that those biases must be taken into account

when building one's understanding of and integrating into one's discussion/argument any source.

- Students will understand the importance of giving credit to the researchers, writers, and speakers whom they are citing in their research.
- Students will understand how to accurately deliver and synthesize the variety of voices and perspectives in their research.
- Students will understand an audience's concerns and questions about a given topic or piece of research should be considered when building a presentation on a topic.
- Students will understand how to build a presentation in which all presentors play equal and important roles.
- Students will be able to prepare themselves in their understanding of the topic to respond naturally and confidently to audience questions.
- Students will understand the "solution" to a problem or argument does not necessarily mean the problem goes away, but that, in argument, a solution might also mean bringing attention to some issue that is not getting the attention it deserves.

## **Essential Questions**

---

Students will keep considering...

-What thought provoking questions will foster inquiry, meaning making and transfer?

- How can I refine a question to yield more relevant, credible, or interesting lines of inquiry?
- How can understanding of bias help me adjust how I read others' writing/research as well as evaluate my own perspectives?
- What different perspectives or lenses can be used to gain a more nuanced understanding of a topic?
- How can different perspectives on a topic be integrated to create a more accurate view of a topic and/or create a solution to a problem?
- What type of lens/perspective is more appropriate given a particular research question or line of inquiry being taken?
- How can I adapt, using multimedia techniques, my extended text-based argument to a briefer, more understandable argument for an in-person presentation audience?
- What are the methods a person should use to communicate an idea effectively to an audience?

## **Application of Knowledge and Skill**

---

### **Students will know...**

---

Students will know...

What facts and basic concepts should students know and be able to recall?

- Lenses (Cultural and Social; Environmental; Scientific; Economic; Political and Historical; and Artistic and Philosophical)
- Perspectives
- Biases
- Argument
- Solution
- Plagiarism
- Synthesis
- Credibility
- Relevance
- Suitability

## **Students will be skilled at...**

---

Students will be skilled at...

What discrete skills and processes should students be able to use?

- Creating/refining a research question appropriate in relevance and scope.
- Evaluating sources for relevance, credibility, and biases.
- How to synthesize different types of sources (e.g., the artistic and the statistical).
- How to synthesize several voices under a single specific topic within a line of inquiry.
- Citing sources in the subject area under research (most likely APA style).
- How to avoid plagiarism.
- How to integrate one's writer's voice with the voices of sources to create a new, refined line of inquiry (synthesis).
- How to use commentary in an argument/synthesis to extend and bring together a variety of sources while keeping one's writer's voice at the forefront.
- How to speak clearly (with every connotation of 'clearly')
- How to select and use a variety of multimedia methods to present information most effectively and suitably given the type of information and the specific audience.

## **Academic Vocabulary**

---

- Lenses (Cultural and Social; Environmental; Scientific; Economic; Political and Historical; and Artistic and Philosophical)
- Perspectives
- Biases
- Argument
- Solution
- Plagiarism
- Synthesis
- Credibility
- Relevance

- Suitability

## Learning Goal 1

---

Identify and describe the claims and evidence of an argument.

### Target 1

---

Identify and explain claims and evidence within an argument.

LA.RI.9-10.2	Determine a central idea of a text and analyze how it is developed and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
LA.RI.9-10.5	Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).
LA.RI.9-10.6	Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetorical devices to advance that point of view or purpose.
LA.RI.9-10.8	Describe and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and reasoning.

### Target 2

---

Identify and describe the overarching thesis of an argument, and any indication it provides of the argument's structure.

LA.RI.9-10.2	Determine a central idea of a text and analyze how it is developed and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
LA.RI.9-10.3	Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.
LA.RI.9-10.5	Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).
LA.RI.9-10.8	Describe and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and

reasoning.

### Target 3

---

Explain ways claims are qualified through modifiers, counterarguments, and alternative perspectives.

LA.RI.9-10.1	Accurately cite strong and thorough textual evidence, (e.g., via discussion, written response, etc.) and make relevant connections, to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferentially, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
LA.RI.9-10.8	Describe and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and reasoning.

### Learning Goal 2

---

Explore complexities of one or more themes by making connections within, between, and/or among multiple cross-curricular areas and by exploring, evaluating, and synthesizing multiple perspectives and lenses (e.g., cultural and social; artistic and philosophical; political and historical; environmental; economic; scientific; futuristic; ethical) related to those themes.

### Target 1

---

Students will read widely about a topic across many disciplines to gain a fuller understanding of the topic.

LA.RI.9-10.9	Analyze and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) documents of historical and literary significance, (e.g., Washington's Farewell Address the Gettysburg Address, Roosevelt's Four Freedoms speech, King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail", Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, etc.), including how they relate in terms of themes and significant concepts.
LA.RI.9-10.10b	By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at grade level text-complexity or above.

### Target 2

---

Students will synthesize ideas from many disciplines, perspectives, and lenses.

LA.RI.9-10.7	Analyze various perspectives as presented in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.
LA.RI.9-10.9	Analyze and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) documents of historical and literary significance, (e.g., Washington's Farewell Address the Gettysburg Address, Roosevelt's Four Freedoms speech, King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail", Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, etc.), including how they relate in terms of themes and significant concepts.
LA.W.9-10.7	Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including

a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

LA.W.9-10.8

Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation (MLA or APA Style Manuals).

### Target 3

---

In keeping focused on a single topic or theme, evaluate the relative credibility and relevance to a theme of the various perspectives and lenses being explored.

LA.RI.9-10.8

Describe and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and reasoning.

LA.W.9-10.8

Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation (MLA or APA Style Manuals).

LA.W.9-10.9.B

Apply grades 9–10 Reading standards to nonfiction informational (e.g., “Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning”).

### Learning Goal 3

---

Work independently to convey their perspective and present their conclusions from their individual written argument by developing a 6-8 minute presentation, in which students should use and attribute, either orally or visually, evidence to support their claims and situate their perspective in a larger context, rather than merely summarizing their research.

### Target 1

---

Consider the larger context of the argument made in the IWA to communicate to the audience.

LA.W.9-10.7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

LA.SL.9-10.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically. The content, organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

LA.SL.9-10.6

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English.

## Target 2

---

Consider the best multimedia techniques to communicate the information in the presentation to an audience.

LA.SL.9-10.4	Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically. The content, organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
LA.SL.9-10.5	Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.
LA.SL.9-10.6	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English.

## Target 3

---

Present the Individual Multimedia Presentation and defend the presentation orally.

LA.SL.9-10.1.D	Respond thoughtfully to various perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and justify own views. Make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.
LA.SL.9-10.3	Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any false reasoning or distorted evidence.
LA.SL.9-10.5	Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.
LA.SL.9-10.6	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English.
LA.L.9-10.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

## Learning Goal 4

---

Develop an understanding of ethical research practices and the AP Capstone Policy on Plagiarism and Falsification or Fabrication of Information.

## Target 1

---

Students will develop knowledge of and skill in using APA formatting for in-text and bibliographic citations.

LA.W.9-10.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
LA.W.9-10.5	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, trying a new approach, or consulting a style manual (such as MLA or APA Style), focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.



## Target 2

---

Students will understand how to avoid plagiarism and falsification/fabrication (as in line with basic ethical research practices and the AP Capstone Policy).

LA.W.9-10.5	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, trying a new approach, or consulting a style manual (such as MLA or APA Style), focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
LA.W.9-10.8	Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation (MLA or APA Style Manuals).

## Formative Assessment and Performance Opportunities

---

- Practice Part-A style analysis prompts (Identify thesis/main idea; explain author's line of reasoning through use of claims; evaluate effectiveness of the evidence)
- Practice Part-B style synthesis prompt (students build their own arguments using at least two of the four provided sources)
- APA quiz
- Graphic organizers for arguments and synthesis of Stimulus Materials from College Board.
- Summaries of Stimulus Materials from College Board.
- Class Discussion and Debate of Stimulus Materials
- Reflections

## Summative Assessment

---

- IWA (Individual Written Argument): Submitted to College Board by April 30
- IMP (Individual Multimedia Presentation): Score submitted to College Board by April 30
- OD (Oral Defense): Score submitted with TMP to College Board by April 30
- Part-A Analysis Prompt
- Part-B Synthesis Prompt

## Accommodations/Modifications

---

- Remote learning may require presentations to be done via Zoom.
- Project is largely student-paced, as it is part of their AP Exam. They are able to adapt what they need to do as they needed.

## Unit Resources

---

AP Seminar Exam page/requirements: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-seminar/exam>

## 21st Century Life and Careers

---

Select all applicable standards from the applicable standards

CRP.K-12.CRP2.1	Career-ready individuals readily access and use the knowledge and skills acquired through experience and education to be more productive. They make connections between abstract concepts with real-world applications, and they make correct insights about when it is appropriate to apply the use of an academic skill in a workplace situation.
CRP.K-12.CRP4.1	Career-ready individuals communicate thoughts, ideas, and action plans with clarity, whether using written, verbal, and/or visual methods. They communicate in the workplace with clarity and purpose to make maximum use of their own and others' time. They are excellent writers; they master conventions, word choice, and organization, and use effective tone and presentation skills to articulate ideas. They are skilled at interacting with others; they are active listeners and speak clearly and with purpose. Career-ready individuals think about the audience for their communication and prepare accordingly to ensure the desired outcome.
CRP.K-12.CRP5.1	Career-ready individuals understand the interrelated nature of their actions and regularly make decisions that positively impact and/or mitigate negative impact on other people, organization, and the environment. They are aware of and utilize new technologies, understandings, procedures, materials, and regulations affecting the nature of their work as it relates to the impact on the social condition, the environment and the profitability of the organization.
CRP.K-12.CRP6.1	Career-ready individuals regularly think of ideas that solve problems in new and different ways, and they contribute those ideas in a useful and productive manner to improve their organization. They can consider unconventional ideas and suggestions as solutions to issues, tasks or problems, and they discern which ideas and suggestions will add greatest value. They seek new methods, practices, and ideas from a variety of sources and seek to apply those ideas to their own workplace. They take action on their ideas and understand how to bring innovation to an organization.
CRP.K-12.CRP7.1	Career-ready individuals are discerning in accepting and using new information to make decisions, change practices or inform strategies. They use reliable research process to search for new information. They evaluate the validity of sources when considering the use and adoption of external information or practices in their workplace situation.

## Interdisciplinary Connections

---

- Dependent upon student-chosen topics; however, they generally fall into the following lenses:
- cultural and social;
- artistic and philosophical;
- political and historical;
- environmental;
- economic;
- scientific;
- futuristic;

- ethical.