

SENIOR PAPER GUIDELINES 2009

The Senior Paper, a graduation requirement at Brookline High School, is the culminating experience of four years of English. Seniors draw upon what they have learned in the study of literature and ideas, and apply their reading and writing skills to complete a major paper (8-12 pages). Ideally, this experience should be both rigorous and meaningful. Students have the opportunity to choose their own books and pursue an area of their own interest.

In preparing the Senior Paper, students will be expected to read works of fiction and/or nonfiction on their own: novels, short stories, plays, poems, essays, memoirs, and biographies. The reading relates to some aspect of the student's senior English course. The paper engages students in critical thinking, and may require research beyond literary works. Students must formulate independent thought about what they have read.

The exact form of the Senior Paper varies according to senior course and teacher; however, all senior teachers will evaluate the paper according to a common Senior Paper writing rubric. Teachers devote sufficient instructional time to the process, which they break down into manageable steps. When a student falls significantly behind in the process, the teacher will inform the parent/guardian. **Students and parents/guardians should be aware of the following deadlines :**

- **By Monday, April 13th, senior teachers will submit to Deans the names of students who have not made sufficient progress on their papers to ensure timely completion.**
- **The completed Senior Paper is due on or before Friday, May 1st.**

Since the Senior Paper constitutes a major piece of work, it counts as a substantial portion of the fourth quarter grade. Students who fail to complete a satisfactory Senior Paper will not receive their diplomas at graduation. If they wish to receive a diploma, these students will remain in school until they complete the Senior Paper requirement.

An unpleasant but necessary note on the subject of plagiarism: Anyone who copies or uses the words, ideas, or opinions of someone else without giving proper credit to that person is guilty of plagiarism. This applies to materials taken from the Internet and used without citation. **A paper that is plagiarized, in whole or in part, earns a zero, and will prevent a student from receiving a Brookline High diploma.**

The Senior Paper should represent a student's best work in English; thus, whether or not a graduate goes on to college, the Senior Paper serves as a fitting conclusion to a Brookline High School education.