

## English 11 ISP Overview

**Definition:** This Independent Research Project (ISP) consists of a number of cross-curricular composition steps designed to instruct the English 11 student in how to research a topic, to explain that research in a written narrative, to document sources for the research and to apply the research and analysis to the world at large.

**Philosophy:** This project is designed to challenge the student to apply previously gained knowledge and skills. Those who successfully complete the ISP are well prepared for the rigors of English 12 and higher education.

**Objectives:** During the ISP process, the student will learn:

1. significant information about something in which he or she is interested
2. varied research skills
3. how to synthesize research information
4. analytic writing skills
5. research paper format
6. time management
7. to enhance speaking skills

**Content and Material:** The student will conduct research by utilizing a variety of reliable sources. Students will compile [source](#) and [note cards](#) to record and organize data from the sources. The student will then synthesize the data to create a logical, orderly, and significant expository paper. Individual teachers have the prerogative to guide students away from questionable sources.

**Time Frame:** The ISP will span much of the spring semester (usually eight to ten weeks).

**Grade Value:** The ISP will not make or break a student's grade, but will comprise 25-35% of it. Individual steps will account for the majority of the points earned, with the final paper counting less than half of the grade.

**Suggested Personal Philosophy:** Students who are successful with this project find a topic in which they are greatly interested and approach the ISP with a positive attitude. Do not be absent from important classroom instruction and do not procrastinate!

**Common Core State Standards:**

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.7: 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.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.8: Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

## Independent Study Project: Career Research

To the student: Below is an overview of the possible structure of your final paper and the elements of research that may be included. Not all careers will reflect ALL of the bulleted inclusions, however all careers will include some from each subthesis. The student must incorporate as many supports as appropriate to the career, with a minimum of three from each subthesis.

Thesis: \_\_\_\_\_ is a viable career (specific, precise, focused).

Introduction: Overview of the profession

- history/background of the profession
- job description
- job market / position availability / employment opportunities
- possible drawbacks / pitfalls

Subthesis #1: Requirements and considerations prior to employment

- prerequisites (age, social skills?)
- education / physical / language requirements
- technological requirements and/or skills
- manual skills and/or requirements
- application and interview process
- apprenticeship and/or internship possibilities

Subthesis #2: The job description, duties, responsibilities

- duties and/or responsibilities
- appearance and dress requirements
- work location and/or environment
- work schedule hours/days
- description of hierarchy
- advancement and/or promotion opportunities
- job security
- ethical considerations

Subthesis #3: Rewards, incentives, benefits

- salary/wages
- salary options (commissions, stock options, profit sharing, etc.)
- travel requirements (if any)
- benefits (life/health insurance)
- vacation/leave options
- retirement
- union involvement
- fringe benefits

Conclusion: Further insight

- future of the profession
- personal (intangible rewards)
- contributions to community/environment/mankind

All Projects will also include somewhere in the paper:

- hard statistics
- case studies
- interview(s)
- real-life situations
- anecdotes
- direct quotes from professionals
- visual addenda (charts, graphs, photos, drawings, etc.)

## ISP Final Topic & Hypothesis

Respond to the following (typed) on a separate sheet:

1. State your final ISP topic.
2. State your ISP hypothesis.
3. Tell how your hypothesis is truly arguable. What might an opposing argument be?
4. How do you plan to ensure your project is innovative (not just a rehash of some hackneyed subject)?
5. Do you know for certain that your topic is researchable? Tell specifically where and how you plan to gather information.
6. Is your topic indeed personally significant? What motivated you to pursue this particular area of research?

Students will not be allowed to research:

- A career of a parent or sibling.
- A career that has yet to be established or identified (speculative).
- A career that is morally or socially offensive (i.e. exotic dancer, ticket scalper, etc.).

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Dear parent/guardian:

Your English 11 student is beginning a major research project. Please take a few minutes to review the overall process with him/her, including topic choice (above), deadline sheet (in student's possession), and "Plagiarism and Intellectual Honesty" handout (attached). Please sign where appropriate. Also, please, if possible, take an active interest in your student's research project, thereby minimizing any surprises later on. As stated in its title, this is an independent project. While we will have instruction time in class, the majority of this project will be done during the student's personal time and not in class. Please help your student stay on top of this project as well as all other class assignments not related to the ISP.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

I have reviewed the project handouts with my son/daughter, approve of the topic choice, and understand his/her obligations.

Signed (parent/guardian) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Possible Thesis Statement:

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Independent Study Project Deadlines  
English 11

Deadline	Assignment	Point Value
February 23th	Three possible topics Include supporting preliminary research and annotated descriptive paragraph.	20
March 1st	Final topic choice and hypothesis (arguable, concise, innovative, researchable, personally significant). Include brief, typewritten synopsis describing your compliance with the above criteria. Must be signed off by parent/guardian.	15
March 7th	Four of the seven (minimum) required 3x5 <a href="#">source cards</a> . Print neatly as described by classroom instruction and examples.	10
March 14th	Preliminary Outline Use only complete sentences and follow format as described by classroom instruction.	25
March 22nd	<a href="#">Note Cards</a> Print neatly on 4x6 cards. Follow in-class instruction and examples. Use five colored or tabbed dividers to separate sub-theses. Include source cards.	30
April 5-7	Oral Reports	20
April 6th	Thesis and Final Outline Expand preliminary outline with research content.	30
April 19th	Preliminary Draft Two copies required. Include parenthetical documentation and works cited. CLASSROOM ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY for full credit.	30
April 29th	Final Draft Include speech rubric, final outline, edited preliminary draft, preliminary outline, note cards, and source cards. The final must be submitted to Turnitin.com to receive full credit.	200
	Total Possible	380

A deadline is just that. Late work will be downgraded one full letter grade per calendar day. In case of illness, assignments may be sent in with a classmate or placed in the teacher's mailbox prior to the start of the period. With the exception of source and note cards, all assignments will be nearly typed. Each step must be completed to minimum standards before the following step will be accepted. The above dates, assignment content, and point values are subject to minor changes.

ISP Grade Sheet - Final Draft

	10	INTRODUCTION: Purpose, direction clear. History, background, and/or overview of topic. Well-worded, creative ICD. Thesis underlined.
	40	SUBTHESIS ONE: Sufficient development; Combination of writer's words and appropriate, specific, well-cited research. Interesting, relevant, and convincing. Facts/figures explain. No generalization or unsupported personal opinions. all contents reflects main thesis.
	40	SUBTHESIS TWO: Sufficient development; Combination of writer's words and appropriate, specific, well-cited research. Interesting, relevant, and convincing. Facts/figures explain. No generalization or unsupported personal opinions. all contents reflects main thesis.
	40	SUBTHESIS THREE: Sufficient development; Combination of writer's words and appropriate, specific, well-cited research. Interesting, relevant, and convincing. Facts/figures explain. No generalization or unsupported personal opinions. all contents reflects main thesis.
	10	CONCLUSION: Concise, creative. Further insight offers solution(s),or resolves unanswered questions.Effectively responds to, "So what?" Reflects a valuable lesson in research.
	10	STYLE: Well chosen, creative vocabulary. Variety of concise, well-structured sentences. Mature transitions. Good grammar (agreement, usage, tense, paragraphing).
	15	SOURCE DOCUMENTATION: Minimum seven sources, four different types. Correct bibliographic and citation format.
	15	CROSSCHECK: Final paper reflects content of outline, source cards, and note cards.
	10	MECHANICS: Spelling, punctuation, nearness, proofreading.
	10	OVERALL FORMAT: Title page, paper quality, typing, margins, spacing, order of inclusions/addenda, general adherence to AHS <i>Stylebook</i> and classroom instruction.
	200	TOTAL  Final Comments:

## PRELIMINARY OUTLINE

Even though the I.S.P.'s preliminary outline goes one step further than the statement of organization for an essay, it is very important to remember that it does essentially the same thing (it sets up the arguable points which, if true, help prove each of the mini-essay's thesis which in turn are arguable and help to prove, if true, the research projects hypothesis).

In order to set up an effective outline for your research project, you should, therefore, think in two separate steps: First, what arguable points will help prove your I.S.P.'s hypothesis (these will become the thesis for your mini-essays, and will be written out as Roman numerals of your outline); second, what arguable points will help prove the thesis statements for each of these mini-essays (these will become the topic sentences for each mini-essay and will be written out as the capital letters of your outline.)

Now you are ready to prepare a preliminary outline for your study project.

### SAMPLE

#### Thesis

##### I. Sub-thesis statement #1

- A. Topic sentence A
- B. Topic Sentence B
- C. Topic sentence C

##### II. Sub-thesis statement #2

- A. Topic sentence A
- B. Topic sentence B
- C. Topic sentence C

##### III. Sub-thesis statement #3

- A. Topic sentence A
- B. Topic sentence B
- C. Topic sentence C
- D. Topic sentence D

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_ Per.\_\_\_\_\_

Independent Study Project  
Preliminary Outline Grading

\_\_\_\_\_ (5) THESIS: arguable, concise, innovative, researchable

\_\_\_\_\_ (5) SUBTHESIS ONE:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Clearly concisely stated  
\_\_\_\_\_ Directly supports main thesis  
\_\_\_\_\_ Valid major support  
\_\_\_\_\_ Valid major support  
\_\_\_\_\_ Valid major support

\_\_\_\_\_ (5) SUBTHESIS TWO:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Clearly concisely stated  
\_\_\_\_\_ Directly supports main thesis  
\_\_\_\_\_ Valid major support  
\_\_\_\_\_ Valid major support  
\_\_\_\_\_ Valid major support

\_\_\_\_\_ (5) SUBTHESIS THREE:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Clearly concisely  
\_\_\_\_\_ Directly supports main thesis  
\_\_\_\_\_ Valid major support  
\_\_\_\_\_ Valid major support  
\_\_\_\_\_ Valid major support

\_\_\_\_\_ (5) MECHANICS: Spelling, Punctuation

\_\_\_\_\_ (5) FORMAT: Font, spacing, typing, margins, neatness

\_\_\_\_\_ (30) TOTAL

Comments:

Independent Study Project  
Preliminary Outline

Hypothesis: Disposable diapers are a detriment to society.

I. Introduction.

II. Disposable diapers are a menace to the environment.

- A. They fill up landfills.
- B. They litter public communal areas.
- C. Their production adds to environmental pollution.

III. Health hazards exist where disposable diapers are used.

- A. Babies who are subjected to disposable diapers incur a greater incidence of diaper rash.
- B. Carelessly littered diapers become hotbeds of disease.
- C. Used diapers in household disposal situations put family members at risk of disease.

IV. Disposable diapers are not cost effective.

- A. Cloth diapers are cheaper to purchase and to use.
- B. Manufacturers do not reap much of a profit from these diapers.
- C. Disposal of the used product is too expensive.

V. Conclusion.



Name\_\_\_\_\_

## Independent Study Project Oral Report

Students may use note cards and are encouraged to employ props, but are not to read from prepared scripts. Each student must also prepare a presentation using **Powerpoint or Google Slides**. Presentations will last approximately five to seven minutes and will be graded as follows:

### Topic

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### Thesis

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(plus = well done, check = adequate, minus = insufficient)

\_\_\_\_\_(20) CONTENT

- \_\_\_ preparation
- \_\_\_ interest creating devices/methods
- \_\_\_ history/background of research subject
- \_\_\_ explanation of topic/hypothesis and how it fits ISP criteria
- \_\_\_ appropriate facts, figures, statistics, quotes, and explanation as to how they will be incorporated into final paper
- \_\_\_ concluding remarks that answer the question, "So what?"
- \_\_\_ personal reactions/thoughts
- \_\_\_ review of research sources and any problems/successes during research process.

\_\_\_\_\_(20) Multimedia

- \_\_\_
- \_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_(10) PRESENTATION

- \_\_\_ voice tone, clarity
- \_\_\_ volume, projection, inflection
- \_\_\_ posture, body language
- \_\_\_ eye contact
- \_\_\_ class feedback

\_\_\_\_\_(50) TOTAL

Comments:

## Research Paper Final Checklist

If you answer “yes” to all of the following questions, your final paper will probably be quite successful. If you answer “no” to any questions

1. Do you have a clear, concise, arguable thesis?
2. Does all of your paper’s content deal directly with the thesis, and not wander to unrelated subject?
3. Are you taking care to prove a point (thesis), as opposed to merely writing a report?
4. Does your introduction provide sufficient background, context, and direction?
5. Does each subthesis develop your argument in an organized, detailed manner?
6. Does your paper contain sufficient valid research data (not mere theory, opinion, reflection, and a few quotes)?
7. Does your conclusion provide sufficient additional development and insight into the topic?
8. Have you made every effort to make your paper interesting, original, and insightful?
9. Is your paper composed mainly of your words, supported by well-chosen, accurate research data?
10. Have you written as concisely as possible and chosen each word carefully?
11. Does your argument flow easily toward your conclusion?
12. Have you written with a sense of audience (YOU understand what you are attempting to communicate, but does your reader?)?
13. Does your paper reflect 11-12 years of instruction in the conventions of the English language (grammar, usage, vocabulary, spelling, sentence structure, punctuation)?
14. Have you carefully consulted the online sources in order to provide accurate MLA documentation?
15. Does each parenthetical citation have a bibliography entry (and vice versa)?
16. Does your text follow your note cards and final outline (minor inconsistencies are understandable)?
17. Does your overall project reflect the objectives of the ISP/DCE: research, analysis, organization, synthesis, documentation, and formal application of writing skills?
18. Have you tried your very best during the entire research process?

### FINAL PROJECT SUBMITTAL

The final paper will be submitted at the beginning of the period on the due date. the submittal process itself will take a bit of time, as students will provide some initial crosscheck assistance.

The student will have in possession:

- Grading rubric
- Title page
- Text of paper
- Addenda, if any (charts, graphs, photos, etc.)
- Works cited page
- Final outline
- Note cards
- Source cards

ALSO, the final paper must be successfully submitted to [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) prior to the beginning of class. Papers submitted late will incur a ten percent (per calendar day) penalty. Papers will not be accepted piecemeal: all elements must be present before the teacher accepts the final paper.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Per. \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluator \_\_\_\_\_

Research Paper Preliminary Draft  
Peer Editing Checklist

N=none	P=poor	F=fair	G=good	E=excellent						
1. Format (typing, neatness, margins, page #'s)						P	F	G	E	
2. Introduction (thesis, direction, background, ICD)	N					P	F	G	E	
3. Subthesis one:										
a. Content argues thesis directly and well	N					P	F	G	E	
b. Sufficient <u>documented</u> research paper support		N				P	F	G	E	
c. Appropriate, well-included quotes		N				P	F	G	E	
d. All research data, quotes, stats. cited		N				P	F	G	E	
e. Interesting, easy to follow		N				P	F	G	E	
4. Subthesis one:										
a. Content argues thesis directly and well	N					P	F	G	E	
b. Sufficient <u>documented</u> research paper support		N				P	F	G	E	
c. Appropriate, well-included quotes		N				P	F	G	E	
d. All research data, quotes, stats. cited		N				P	F	G	E	
e. Interesting, easy to follow		N				P	F	G	E	
5. Subthesis one:										
a. Content argues thesis directly and well	N					P	F	G	E	
b. Sufficient <u>documented</u> research paper support		N				P	F	G	E	
c. Appropriate, well-included quotes		N				P	F	G	E	
d. All research data, quotes, stats. cited		N				P	F	G	E	
e. Interesting, easy to follow		N				P	F	G	E	
6. Conclusion (concise, creative, "So what?")						N	P	F	G	E
7. Writing style:										
a. Sentence structure (incl. frags/r.o.'s)							P	F	G	E
b. Vocabulary							P	F	G	E
c. Usage (agreement, pronouns, etc.)							P	F	G	E
d. Paragraphing		N				P	F	G	E	
e. Transitioning							P	F	G	E
8. Mechanics:										
a. Spelling							P	F	G	E
b. Punctuation							p	F	G	E
c. Proofreading			N				P	F	G	E
9. Source Documentation:										
a. Parenthetical documentation format correct			N				P	F	G	E
b. Each citation has bib. entry to match			N				P	F	G	E
c. Bibliography format			N				P	F	G	E
d. Total number of sources			1-2				3-4	5-6	7-8	9&
e. Different kinds of sources			1				2	3	4	5
10. Overall effectiveness of paper							P	F	G	E

Evaluator:

Comment specifically on each of the following areas:

1. Format:
2. Introduction:
3. Subthesis one:
4. Subthesis two:
5. Subthesis three:
6. Conclusion:
7. Writing style:
8. Mechanics:
9. Source documentation:
10. Write an extended overview of this paper in general:

INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECT  
Sample of Possible Topic Initial research

Select three topics that interest you and read one article about each. Begin by citing the source using the MLA documentation. Write one paragraph summarizing each article and a second paragraph in which you respond to the article in a personal way. Was the article interesting? disappointing? boring? Would you like to further research the topic? Why? Why not?

The following example is purely fictional. Its purpose is merely to provide you with a model format for your initial research. Be sure to provide enough detail in the summary to prove that you have read the article. Be prepared to provide the actual article upon request. Your paper must be typed in a 12-point font and double-spaced. This assignment is worth twenty points and must be completed successfully before you move forward in the ISP process.

**Dufous, Herkimer. "The Deluge of Disposable Diapers," *Newsweek* 17 August 1995: 22-28.**

This article describes the mountains of disposable diapers that are being dumped into California landfills each year. It indicates that the numbers of these diapers are increasing dramatically from approximately 2,300 tons in 1970 to over 4,000 tons annually as of 1995. It goes on to describe the health and sanitation problems that are caused by the great volume and talks about some of the proposed solutions that California Waste Management officials are considering, such as a statewide campaign to alert the public about the problem. This campaign would urge consumers to either use the more biodegradable diaper products or to revert to the "old-fashioned" use of washable cloth diapers. It further goes on to tell how the buying public has been duped into believing that the convenience of disposable diaper use is more important than environmental considerations. The article is loaded with statistics to back up its claims, the most shocking of which states that more communicable diseases are spread by soiled disposable diapers than by sneezes in public.

I found the article quite interesting and enlightening in that i never before thought much about the problem. i considered how i spent my infant years in these diapers, as did my little brother, and i am wondering how much i personally might have contributed to the situation. The statistics, if they are accurate, are indeed alarming and enough to make anyone who reads this article at least think twice before using "Huggies" or "Luvs." Nowhere in the article did the author state absolutely that these diapers should *not* be used, but he did paint a pretty grim picture of their presence in the state's landfills. This topic has indeed sparked my interest, and i am seriously considering it as a final topic choice.

Name:  
Date:  
Period:

### ISP Initial Research Rubric

_____ (5)	Overall quality of content: Developmental, details, insight
_____ (5)	Writing style: Usage, sentence structure, vocabulary, agreement, grammar
_____ (5)	Mechanics: Punctuation, spelling, neatness, spacing, margins, proofreading
_____ (5)	MLA citations as instructed
_____ (20)	Total

Comments:

## What is a thesis?

A thesis statement declares what you believe and what you intend to prove. A good thesis statement makes the difference between a thoughtful research project and a simple retelling of facts.

A good tentative thesis will help you focus your search for information. But don't rush! You must do a lot of background reading before you know enough about a subject to identify key or essential questions. You may not know how you stand on an issue until you have examined the evidence. You will likely begin your research with a working, preliminary or tentative thesis which you will continue to refine until you are certain of where the evidence leads.

The thesis statement is typically located at the end of your opening paragraph. (The opening paragraph serves to set the context for the thesis.)

Remember, your reader will be looking for your thesis. Make it clear, strong, and easy to find.

Attributes of a good thesis:

- It should be contestable, proposing an arguable point with which people could reasonably disagree. A strong thesis is provocative; it takes a stand and justifies the discussion you will present.
- It tackles a subject that could be adequately covered in the format of the project assigned.
- It is specific and focused. a strong thesis proves a point without discussing "everything about...." instead of music, think "American jazz in the 1930s" and your argument about it.
- It clearly asserts your own conclusion based on evidence. Note: Be flexible. The evidence may lead you to a conclusion you didn't think you'd reach. It is perfectly okay to change your thesis!
- It provides the reader with a map to guide him/her through your work.
- It anticipates and refutes the counter-arguments.
- It avoids vague language (like "it seems").
- It avoids the first person. ("I believe," "In my opinion")
- It should pass the So What? or Who cares? test (Would your most honest friend ask why he should care or respond with "but everyone knows that"?). For instance, "people should avoid driving under the influence of alcohol," would be unlikely to evoke any opposition.