



ACA Senior Capstone Overview and Requirements

What is the purpose of the ACA Senior Capstone Project?

The ACA Senior Capstone Project is designed to provide you with opportunity to apply all that you have learned in the four years of high school to a project with will extend your learning, stretch your potential and challenge your abilities. It is also hoped that through this rigorous project you will gain the following skills that will prepare you for your postsecondary experience:

- Project Management
- Responsibility
- Critical Thinking
- Discipline
- Creativity
- Leadership

The Four Main Outcomes of the ACA Senior Capstone Project Are:

Product

- Performance/Event
- Demonstration
- Design
- Service

For Example... A possible ACA Senior Capstone Project for someone who might be interested in English Language Learners might be to investigate how people acquire a second language and produce a bilingual book for young children about a cultural event (Cinco de Mayo, Chinese New Year, etc.). This product will require you to write the story, translate the story, illustrate the story, and bind the final copy.

Paper

- Documented Paper of some kind (works cited)
- Type of paper you do will be determined by your project

For Example... If you plan to produce a bilingual book, would it be important to know how culture impacts the acquisition of a second language? You might want to write a research paper entitled “English Language Learners: The Role of Culture in the Acquisition of a Second Language.”

Presentation

All capstone presentations will be done during the final seminar round of the school year and will include a senior exit interview with a community member as well as an evaluation of your final senior portfolio

Documentation

- Evidence of your journey
- Detailed Project Logs and accurate records
- Typed notes
- Highlighted articles, etc...
- Lessons you’ve learned and personal growth

Requirements:

- Has to be at least **1 credit minimum**
 - 1 credit = 180 hours
 - Do the preliminary planning in this seminar
 - Then after this seminar is over – you will use at least one ACA hour everyday to work on
 - this (you will sign up each round for what hour on-line)
- Must be **research-based** and solve a problem: *there is a driving question/thesis*
- Designed to be completed with guidance of a **mentor** or **expert in the field** (primary resource other than your ACA teachers)
- Needs to be a “**learning stretch**” for you
 - Challenging
 - Something you’ve never investigated before
- Be **Individual**: your product/presentation may involve another ACA senior, but you must each put in 180 hours of work in order to get full credit (it is not combined).
- Be **Approved** by your Senior Seminar Teacher (before the end of Senior Honors Experience)
- Include a **Reading Portion**
 - Choose a novel or piece of literature that corresponds with same theme as your project

How will I receive approval for my ACA Senior Capstone Project?

You will complete and submit a Letter of Intent to your ACA capstone teacher for approval by the rest of the ACA staff. You will need to include: why you selected your topic, what you will research on your topic, what product or performance you will produce, how this is a stretch beyond your current knowledge and skills, and a pledge to avoid plagiarism. A sample Letter of Intent and the Letter of Intent Rubric will be given to you in your capstone workshop.

How do I pick a project?

The ACA Senior Capstone Project is one of the most important assignments of your high school career. Because you will dedicate considerable time and attention to your Capstone Project, you need to consider your choice of project very carefully.

Types of senior projects: (just ideas...if you have a different one, please propose it)

- Design a Product, Service, or System
- Improve a System
- Plan and Organize an Event or an Activity
- Case Study
- In-depth Independent Study on a topic/subject
- Service Learning (in-depth, extensive)
- Internship/Externship

Unacceptable projects:

No stretch or challenge: biography report, babysitting your niece, creating a family photo album. Although these are worthwhile activities, they demonstrate no rigor

Partial work- If you say you are going to write a novel, you may not turn in only three chapters with a promise to finish your novel during your college years. This product cannot be judged in its incomplete form

Illegal or non-school appropriate activities

Pre-planning:

Pre-planning activities will be done during the first round of ACA workshops. You will look at your ACA credit plan (what credits you still need to graduate), LDP goals, and consider things you would like to do, learn, understand, see, improve, create, or experience. Keep in mind that your project should maintain your interest for an extended period of time, meet the approval of the ACA staff, and be one which will stretch your abilities and allow you to grow as a learner.

Will I be allowed to change topics once I have received my approval?

Once your project is approved by the ACA staff, you may begin work. Keep in mind that while your project may evolve over time, you will not be able to change the overall project topic (thesis, driving question) unless exception is granted by the ACA staff. Be very thoughtful in your selection of the topic on the front end. Making you approved topic selection work in part of the learning experience.

Paper Topics/Related Projects Examples:

The following sample projects reflect stretch and challenge. Only finished projects reflecting quality will be accepted.

Project Topic	Paper Topic	Products/Performances
Harlem Renaissance	Impact of Harlem Renaissance on African American history	Oral interpretation performance of Langston Hughes' poetry
Healthy Choices-Exercise	Negative effects of high-impact exercise	Develop and choreograph a low-impact exercise program
Mask Making	African mask making	Design and create an African mask
Culinary	Characteristics of southern cuisine	Develop artifacts for a southern cuisine restaurant including advertisement, signage, menu, and sample dishes
Photography	Special effects in digital photography	Create and exhibit a variety of digital photos using different special effects
World War II	Experience of soldiers during World War II	Interview a World War II veteran and create a multi-media presentation chronicling his/her experiences during the war
Civil Rights Movement	Explore the Civil Rights Movement in Memphis	Create a photo essay about the Civil Rights Movement in Memphis

ACA Senior Capstone Research Paper



What do I write about?

The research paper should complement the topic that you have selected for your ACA Senior Capstone Project. (See project topics/related paper ideas in the previous section.) The paper will allow you to explore what is currently known about your topic. Information from your research paper will lead to the development of your product or performance.

A research paper is not just a report; it must include a thesis statement that declares the main idea of the paper, that makes a statement about the subject, and that engages the reader. *This component of the Capstone Project will prepare you for research papers you may write in your post-secondary education.*

Research Paper Minimum Requirements

Your paper must:

- Be word processed.
- Be a minimum of 7-10 pages excluding the title page or works cited page.
- Have a cover page that identifies the title, student, English teacher, and date.
- Use a minimum of five resources;
 - One must be a Primary Source
 - Not all of your secondary sources can come from google search
 - Students encouraged to use *EBSCO Host, North LMC*
- Be properly formatted with one-inch margins, double spacing, and twelve-point Times New Roman font.
- Use accurate MLA in-text citations (also called parenthetical documentation) and works cited page.
- Use charts and graphs when appropriate, but no decorative clipart or drawings. This is a serious scholarly paper.
- Be stapled in the upper left-hand corner.

ACA Senior Capstone: The Product or Performance



How can I show what I know?

After you have written your research paper, you will demonstrate what you have learned by creating a product or performance that will be an extension of your research/topic.

The Product

The second component of the ACA Senior Capstone Project is the creation of a product, a physical artifact or a performance, that demonstrates what you have learned during your research process. It could be an African mask you designed and produced, a photo essay of the Civil Rights Movement in Memphis that you created, or a video of your oral interpretation performance of Langston Hughes' poetry. Whatever you select for your product or performance needs to be high quality, show your learning stretch, demonstrate much time and effort, and represent a connection to your research paper. A tri-fold board filled with photographs only is not acceptable.

Product/Performance Minimum Requirements

Your product must:

- Be a physical, tangible product or a videotape of your performance
- Be an extension of your research
- Be high quality and reflect time and effort as documented in your Project Log
- Be a demonstration of your learning stretch

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ACA Senior Capstone Presentation Requirements

All capstone presentations will be done during the final seminar round of the school year and will include a senior exit interview with a community member as well as an evaluation of your final senior portfolio

Presentation Components:

- I. Introduction of your Senior Capstone**
 - a. What was your driving question?
 - b. Did it change? If so, why?
- II. Research Process**
 - a. Describe your primary and secondary research
 - b. Explain any challenges you encountered with your research process
- III. Paper Process**
 - a. Challenges, thoughts, evaluation
 - b. Personal reflection
- IV. Product Explanation**
 - a. Explain- show pictures, evidence, etc....
 - b. Visually show us what your capstone project was about
- V. Conclusion**
 - a. What is the relevance of this project?
 - b. How has this project made you look at other things in your future?
 - c. What advice would you give to the seniors next year about their capstone project?

Presentations can be in any format you wish and should be between 5-10 minutes long.

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