

Tools for Teachers

Choose a Topic Research Portfolio

These documents can be adapted to meet the needs of students in your specific context. Available for download at sarahepennington.com

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3-19-2022

ABC Book of (topic) Portfolio Assignment:

Directions:

Find at least one word that relates to your topic for each letter of the alphabet. The word can be a technical term, piece of equipment, person's name, etc. For some letters, such as X, Q, and Z, you may have to "cheat" a little by finding a word that has that letter in it. (For example, end Zone for Z.) In your ABC book, you need to include the word and its definition. Make sure to write the definitions in your own words and cite where you got your information.

When creating your book, please put only one letter of the alphabet on each page. Artwork may consist of your own artwork, clipart, or pictures. All artwork needs to relate to one of the words on the page where the art appears. For 26 pages, you need a minimum of 10 illustrations.

Example alphabet: (All information from Dr. Pennington's brain)

Topic: Theater

A: Acting – pretending to be someone/something you aren't

B: Blocking – Planning out the actors' movements on stage

C: Cast – the actors in a production

Comedy – a funny play that has a happy ending

D: Director – the person in charge of a play. They tell the actors what to do, where to move on stage, etc.

Rubric for ABC Book of... Assignment:

Category	Percentage	4	3	2	1
Information given	50%	All definitions are clearly written and apply to the topic.	Most definitions are clearly written and apply to the topic. (1-2 issues)	Many definitions are clearly written and apply to the topic. (3-4 issues)	Few definitions are clearly written and apply to the topic. (5+ issues)
Artwork	25%	All artwork clearly applies to a term on the page where the illustration appears. Artwork is easily identifiable.	Most artwork clearly applies to a term on the page where the illustration appears. Artwork is mostly identifiable. (1-2 issues overall)	Some artwork clearly applies to a term on the page where the illustration appears. Artwork is somewhat identifiable. (3-4 issues overall)	Little artwork clearly applies to a term on the page where the illustration appears. Artwork is rarely identifiable. (5+ issues overall)
Mechanics	15%	Grammar, spelling, & punctuation excellent (0-1 errors)	Grammar, spelling, & punctuation very good (2-3 errors)	Grammar, spelling & punctuation need attention (4-5 errors)	Grammar, spelling & punctuation poor (6+ errors)
Quality product	10%	Finished product is neat, and attractive. Information is presented in an interesting manner.	Finished product is neat or attractive. Information is presented in a somewhat interesting manner.	Finished product is neat or attractive. Information is presented in a manner that does not cause reader/viewer interest.	Finished product is not neat or attractive. More attention to presentation is needed.

Read/review a book involving (topic) Portfolio Assignment:

Directions:

Find a fiction book that involves your topic. For example, if your topic was soccer, you could read Tangerine by Edward Bloor or The Million Dollar Kick by Dan Gutman. After reading your book, do the following:

- Write a brief summary of the book. Don't give away the ending!
- Explain what you like/dislike about the book.
- Answer the following questions:
 - How important was (topic) to the plot of the book? Could (topic) have been left out without hurting the storyline?
 - Were there any inaccuracies about (topic) in the book? If so, what were they and how could they be corrected?
 - Could reading this book inspire someone to take an interest in (topic)?
 - Was prior knowledge of (topic) necessary to help in understanding this book? If so, what knowledge was needed?

Read/review a book involving ... Assignment:

Category	Percentage	4	3	2	1
Summary	50%	Summary is well written and interesting. Information is given about the five w's & h of the book without giving away the ending.	Summary is well written and interesting <u>or</u> Information is given about the five w's & h of the book without giving away the ending.	Summary is somewhat well written and interesting <u>or</u> Information is given about most of the five w's & h of the book without giving away the ending.	Summary is poorly written and interesting <u>or</u> Information is given about some of the five w's & h of the book or summary gives away the ending.
Questions answered relating to (topic)	25%	Book clearly involves/relates to (topic) and questions are answered clearly and completely.	Book clearly involves/relates to (topic) and most questions are answered clearly and completely.	Book somewhat involves/relates to (topic) and/or some questions are answered clearly and completely.	Book barely involves/relates to (topic) and/or few questions are answered clearly and completely
Mechanics	15%	Grammar, spelling, & punctuation excellent (0-1 errors)	Grammar, spelling, & punctuation very good (2-3 errors)	Grammar, spelling & punctuation need attention (4-5 errors)	Grammar, spelling & punctuation poor (6+ errors)
Quality product	10%	Finished product is neat, and attractive. Information is presented in an interesting manner.	Finished product is neat or attractive. Information is presented in a somewhat interesting manner.	Finished product is neat or attractive. Information is presented in a manner that does not cause reader/viewer interest.	Finished product is not neat or attractive. More attention to presentation is needed.

Careers in (topic) Portfolio Assignment:

Directions:

No matter what your portfolio topic, someone has a career involving it! Find information about at least two career possibilities that involve your topic. Answer the following questions about each career:

1. What does this career involve (job duties)?
2. What education is needed?
3. What other skills are needed for this career?
4. How do you get started in this career?
5. What sort of job environment does a person in this career work in? (Outside? In an office? Travelling?)
6. What is the pay scale for this career?
7. Is this career something you would be interested in? Why or why not?

After researching each career and answering the questions above, compare the careers you have researched. What differences do you see between each career? Is one more closely tied to your topic to the other? Explain how?

You need a minimum of three references for this portfolio assignment. There is no limit on the number of references that may be a web site for this assignment, but make sure that all your information comes from reputable sources.

Note: One good resource for this assignment is the Occupational Outlook Handbook, which can be accessed on-line at <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/>.

Other possible sources include professional organizations, and government agencies.

Careers in ... Assignment:

Category	Percentage	4	3	2	1
Required information included	50%	All questions about the chosen careers are answered clearly and completely. Careers are compared and comparison questions are fully answered.	Most questions about the chosen careers are answered clearly and completely. Careers are compared and comparison questions are answered.	Some questions about the chosen careers are answered clearly and completely. Careers are compared and comparison questions are compared, but not well.	Many questions are left unanswered or are answered in a confusing manner or no comparison has been done between the careers.
Appropriate references	25%	At least three references are cited, All references are reputable sources.	At least two references are cited are from a reputable source.	At least one reference is cited and from a reputable source.	No references cited or used within this assignment.
Mechanics	15%	Grammar, spelling, & punctuation excellent (0-1 errors)	Grammar, spelling, & punctuation very good (2-3 errors)	Grammar, spelling & punctuation need attention (4-5 errors)	Grammar, spelling & punctuation poor (6+ errors)
Quality product	10%	Finished product is neat, and attractive. Information is presented in an interesting manner.	Finished product is neat or attractive. Information is presented in a somewhat interesting manner.	Finished product is neat or attractive. Information is presented in a manner that does not cause reader/viewer interest.	Finished product is not neat or attractive. More attention to presentation is needed.

Current Events Portfolio Assignment:

Directions:

Find a news article that involves your topic. It may come from a newspaper, magazine, or reputable web site. (This article will need to be turned in with your completed assignment.)

Summarize the information in the article.

Fully answer three of the following questions: (Please note that not all questions will apply to every article. Use your judgment to choose questions that apply to your article.)

1. How will the event(s) in this article affect your ability to enjoy (topic)?
2. Does the information in the article affect your feelings about (topic)?
3. Is this article fair in its presentation of (topic)? How?
4. Does the writer seem to know a lot about (topic)? What clues do you see that tell you about his/her level of knowledge?
5. Does the information in the article affect people other than those interested in (topic)? If so, who else does it affect and how?
6. Is something in the article unusual or unique? What? How?
7. Is there background information the reader would need to know to understand this article? If so, provide basic background.
8. Are there questions left unanswered in the article? If so, what are the questions? Why do you think these questions were left unanswered?

Rubric for Current Events Assignment:

Category	Percentage	4	3	2	1
Article pertains to the student's portfolio topic	10%	Article clearly pertains to the topic, either through clearly stated association or sensible association made by the student.	Article somewhat pertains to the topic, either through stated association or sensible association made by the student.	Article slightly pertains to the topic, either through stated association or association made by the student.	Article does not pertain to the topic.
Article summary	25%	Article is clearly summarized. Important points are communicated.	Article is well summarized. Most important points are summarized. (Missing 1 important point)	Article summary missing many important points. (Missing 2 important points)	Article summary leaves out majority of important points of article. Missing 3+ important points)
Questions answered	40%	Three chosen questions apply to article and are answered completely and clearly.	Three chosen questions apply to article and are answered completely <u>or</u> clearly.	Three chosen questions apply to article but are not answered completely or clearly.	Three chosen questions do not apply to article <u>or</u> are answered in a confusing manner.
Mechanics	15%	Grammar, spelling, & punctuation excellent (0-1 errors)	Grammar, spelling, & punctuation very good (2-3 errors)	Grammar, spelling & punctuation need attention (4-5 errors)	Grammar, spelling & punctuation poor (6+ errors)
Quality product	10%	Finished product is neat, and attractive. Information is presented in an interesting manner.	Finished product is neat or attractive. Information is presented in a somewhat interesting manner.	Finished product is neat or attractive. Information is presented in a manner that does not cause reader/viewer interest.	Finished product is not neat or attractive. More attention to presentation is needed.

Create/invent for (topic) Portfolio Assignment:

Directions:

The goal of this assignment is for you to create or invent something that can be used in (topic). It can be a tool, gadget, outfit, etc. You can create a totally original invention or make improvements to an already existing item used for (topic). The invention or improvement must be your own idea.

You may present your project in a variety of ways, including, but not limited to:

- A prototype of the invention which is presented to the class
- A series of drawings/sketches of the invention showing it from various angles and labeling important parts
- A PowerPoint presentation introducing the invention

You must also include an explanation of your invention (written format, which could be an essay, a brochure, etc.) which includes the following:

1. How you came up with the idea for this invention or improvement
2. Need for the item or improvement
3. Cost to purchase
4. How you might market it to encourage people to purchase the item

Create/invent for ... Assignment:

Category	Percentage	4	3	2	1
Required information Included in written explanation	30%	All questions are answered clearly and completely.	Most questions are answered clearly and completely <u>or</u> all questions are answered, but some answers are unclear.	Some questions are answered clearly and completely <u>or</u> all questions are answered, but some answers are confusing.	Questions are answered in a manner that is confusing and unclear <u>or</u> questions are not answered.
Invention	45%	Invention is clearly useful in (topic). Invention shows excellent student understanding of (topic). Invention is creative and new.	Invention is useful in (topic). Invention shows good student understanding of (topic). Invention is creative and new.	Invention is somewhat useful in (topic). Invention shows limited student understanding of (topic).	Invention is not useful in (topic). Invention shows no student understanding of (topic).
Mechanics	15%	Grammar, spelling, & punctuation excellent (0-1 errors)	Grammar, spelling, & punctuation very good (2-3 errors)	Grammar, spelling & punctuation need attention (4-5 errors)	Grammar, spelling & punctuation poor (6+ errors)
Quality product	10%	Finished product is neat, and attractive. Information is presented in an interesting manner.	Finished product is neat or attractive. Information is presented in a somewhat interesting manner.	Finished product is neat or attractive. Info is presented in a manner that does not cause reader/viewer interest.	Finished product is not neat or attractive. More attention to presentation is needed.

Famous person involved in (topic) Portfolio Assignment:

Directions:

Choose a person who is influential in (topic). This person can be the inventor/creator, a well-known participant or supporter, etc. Your finished product will need at least four references from reputable resources. You will need to answer the following questions about this person:

1. When/where was this person born?
2. What is the person's educational background?
3. What was his/her family like?
4. How did the person become involved/interested in (topic)?
5. Why is this person well known when it comes to (topic)?
6. Is this person still alive? If so, where does he/she live now?

OR

Is this person deceased? When & how did he/she die?

7. What other accomplishments is this person known for?
8. Tell an interesting/funny story you found about this person.

Rubric for Famous person involved in ... Assignment:

Category	Percentage	4	3	2	1
Information given	50%	All questions are answered, and information is given in a clear and understandable manner.	All questions are answered, and information is given in a mostly understandable manner <u>or</u> most questions are answered in a clear and understandable manner.	Some questions are answered, and information is given in a clear and understandable manner <u>or</u> all questions are answered, but information is difficult to understand.	Few questions are answered, or writing is unclear and difficult to understand.
Appropriate references	25%	At least four references are cited. All references are reputable sources.	At least four references are cited. One reference is not a reputable source.	Two to four references are cited. More than one reference is not a reputable source.	One reference cited <u>or</u> all references are not from reputable sources.
Mechanics	15%	Grammar, spelling, & punctuation excellent (0-1 errors)	Grammar, spelling, & punctuation very good (2-3 errors)	Grammar, spelling & punctuation need attention (4-5 errors)	Grammar, spelling & punctuation poor (6+ errors)
Quality product	10%	Finished product is neat, and attractive. Information is presented in an interesting manner.	Finished product is neat or attractive. Information is presented in a somewhat interesting manner.	Finished product is neat or attractive. Information is presented in a manner that does not cause reader/viewer interest.	Finished product is not neat or attractive. More attention to presentation is needed.

Future possibilities in (topic) Portfolio Assignment:

Directions:

Answer the following questions about your portfolio topic:

1. What possibilities can you see in the future of (topic)?
2. How will it grow/change?
3. Will it become more or less popular as time passes? Why?
4. What future technologies could improve/change it?
5. What other issues could affect (topic) in the future?

This assignment will involve a combination of research & your opinions. Make sure to use facts from your research to support your views and projections. You will need at least two reputable resources cited for this assignment.

Future possibilities in ... Assignment:

Category	Percentage	4	3	2	1
Questions answered	50%	Questions are answered clearly and the student uses facts to support projections for the future.	Questions are answered somewhat clearly and/or student occasionally gives projections and opinions without supporting facts.	Questions are answered, but answers are sometimes difficult to understand. Little factual information is used to support projections.	Many questions are left unanswered or are answered in a confusing manner. Almost no factual information is used to support projections.
Appropriate references	25%	At least two references are cited. All references are reputable sources.	At least one reference is cited and is a reputable source.	Multiple references are from questionable sources.	No references cited or used within this assignment.
Mechanics	15%	Grammar, spelling, & punctuation excellent (0-1 errors)	Grammar, spelling, & punctuation very good (2-3 errors)	Grammar, spelling & punctuation need attention (4-5 errors)	Grammar, spelling & punctuation poor (6+ errors)
Quality product	10%	Finished product is neat, and attractive. Information is presented in an interesting manner.	Finished product is neat or attractive. Information is presented in a somewhat interesting manner.	Finished product is neat or attractive. Information is presented in a manner that does not cause reader/viewer interest.	Finished product is not neat or attractive. More attention to presentation is needed.

Government involvement for (topic) Portfolio Assignment:

Directions:

The government is involved in just about everything these days, in one way or another. Whether it's making laws to regulate, assigning a department to oversee, or just making safety recommendations, some level of government is involved in your topic. For this assignment, you will discover just how the government is involved in (topic). You may choose any level of government, from local up to federal in order to find some involvement in your topic. Answer the following questions:

1. How is this level of government involved in (topic)?
2. Does this government involvement affect your ability to participate or enjoy (topic)? If so, how?
3. What prompted the government to become involved in (topic)? Was it a safety issue? Something else?
4. Is there a particular department or area of government that is in charge of overseeing (topic)?
5. What laws have been passed regulating or limiting (topic)?
6. In your opinion, is there too much government involvement in (topic)? Not enough? Explain.

For this assignment, you should have a minimum of three resources cited.

Government involvement in ... Assignment:

Category	Percentage	4	3	2	1
Required information Included	50%	All questions are answered clearly and completely.	Most questions are answered clearly and completely <u>or</u> all questions are answered, but some answers are unclear.	Some questions are answered clearly and completely <u>or</u> all questions are answered, but some answers are confusing.	Questions are answered in a manner that is confusing and unclear <u>or</u> questions are not answered.
Appropriate references	25%	At least three references from reputable sources cited.	At least two references from reputable sources cited.	At least one reference from a reputable source cited.	No references from reputable sources cited or used within this assignment.
Mechanics	15%	Grammar, spelling, & punctuation excellent (0-1 errors)	Grammar, spelling, & punctuation very good (2-3 errors)	Grammar, spelling & punctuation need attention (4-5 errors)	Grammar, spelling & punctuation poor (6+ errors)
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History of (topic) Portfolio Assignment:

Directions:

Research the history of your topic. For your finished product, you will need at least four references. Resources can include books, magazine and newspaper articles, internet sources, and interviews with experts. Please remember rules on properly citing sources to avoid the appearance of plagiarism.

Your completed assignment needs to answer the following questions, which may need to be modified slightly to fit your topic:

1. Give basic information about (topic). What is it? What is involved?
2. Who invented/discovered (topic)?
3. When/where was (topic) created/discovered?
4. How/why was (topic) created/discovered?
5. How has (topic) changed over time? Is there a reason for these changes?
6. What do you think is ahead for/in (topic)? Why do you think this?

Rubric for History of... Assignment:

Category	Percentage	4	3	2	1
Information given	50%	All questions are answered and information is given in a clear and understandable manner.	All questions are answered and information is given in a mostly understandable manner <u>or</u> most questions are answered in a clear and understandable manner.	Some questions are answered and information is given in a clear and understandable manner <u>or</u> all questions are answered, but information is difficult to understand.	Few questions are answered or writing is unclear and difficult to understand.
Appropriate references	25%	At least four references are cited. All references are reputable sources.	At least four references are cited. One reference is not a reputable source.	Two to four references are cited. More than one reference is not a reputable source.	One reference cited <u>or</u> all references are not from reputable sources.
Mechanics	15%	Grammar, spelling, & punctuation excellent (0-1 errors)	Grammar, spelling, & punctuation very good (2-3 errors)	Grammar, spelling & punctuation need attention (4-5 errors)	Grammar, spelling & punctuation poor (6+ errors)
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Math & (topic) Portfolio Assignment:

Directions:

How is math used in (topic)? No matter what your topic, math is important in some aspect. For example, golfers need to know the distance from the tee to the hole. Discover and discuss the math involved in (topic). What math knowledge can improve a person's enjoyment or understanding of (topic)? You will need at least three references for this assignment.

Rubric for Math & ... Assignment:

Category	Percentage	4	3	2	1
Information given	50%	Math concepts are clearly related to (topic) and explained in understandable terms.	Math concepts are somewhat related to (topic) and/or explained in mostly understandable terms.	Math concepts are vaguely related to (topic) and/or explained in somewhat understandable terms.	Math concepts are not clearly related to (topic) and/or explained in confusing/unclear terms.
Appropriate references	25%	At least three references are cited. All references are reputable sources.	At least two references are cited <u>or</u> one reference is not a reputable source.	One to two references are cited. More than one reference is not a reputable source.	No references used.
Mechanics	15%	Grammar, spelling, & punctuation excellent (0-1 errors)	Grammar, spelling, & punctuation very good (2-3 errors)	Grammar, spelling & punctuation need attention (4-5 errors)	Grammar, spelling & punctuation poor (6+ errors)
Quality product	10%	Finished product is neat, and attractive. Information is presented in an interesting manner.	Finished product is neat or attractive. Information is presented in a somewhat interesting manner.	Finished product is neat or attractive. Information is presented in a manner that does not cause reader/viewer interest.	Finished product is not neat or attractive. More attention to presentation is needed.