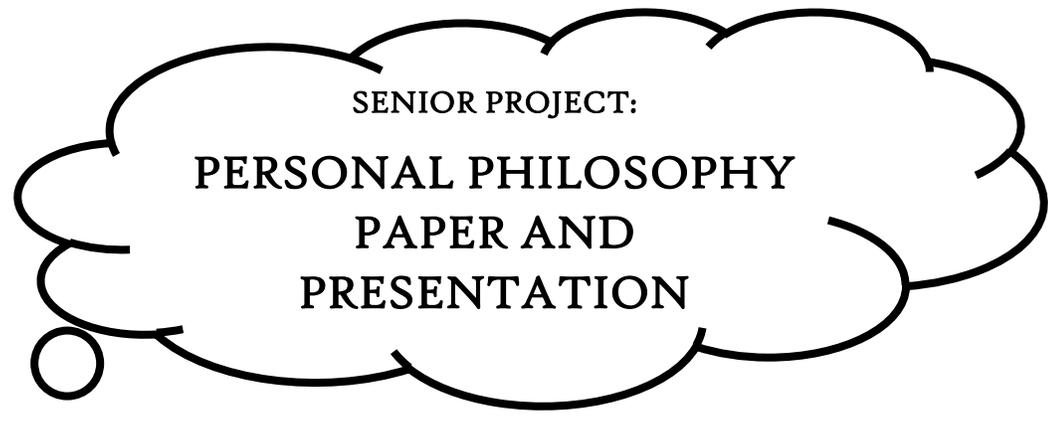


Senior Project:

PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY PAPER AND
PRESENTATION

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SENIOR PROJECT:

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Although your minds are probably looking forward rather than back at this stage in the school year, you are approaching a momentous transition in your lives—a change that connects your past, your present, and your future. It is appropriate to mark this important transition by engaging in an authentic process of soul-searching and reflection, and by using this process to express yourselves in a profoundly personal way. For lack of a better description, let’s call this a “personal philosophy” project.

As you begin to generate ideas for this project, you are encouraged to keep the following startling “truth” in mind: this will probably be the last opportunity you will have to truly express yourself before the end of your high school career. This realization should *automatically* call forth a whole series of other realizations, and together these should leave you with plenty of motivation to make this the *best* project you have ever put together. Among other things, you will surely want to prove, once and for all, that you have actually absorbed something from all these years of education. If that doesn’t work for you, perhaps you will want to seize this opportunity to have your “final say” and to “go out with a bang.” Still not motivation enough? You might want to consider the fact that this project could very well be the final puzzle piece that determines whether or not you complete this course with a respectable grade.

Although there is a great deal of leeway in the final written piece that you will produce, there are a few rather rigid guidelines for how you must lay the groundwork that precedes the paper. You are required to go through several stages of reflection, all of which have been clearly and precisely outlined for you below. As you will note, each stage of the project must culminate in a separate end-product, and all of these end-products must be attached to your final paper and submitted. All parts of the project, including the planning stages, will be graded.

Please read these instructions carefully:

STAGE ONE: TIMELINE

Make a list of “significant events” in your life which have influenced you, whether socially, psychologically, emotionally, intellectually, physically, spiritually, practically, or in any other way. These can be concrete occurrences such as change of schools, a divorce, or a move to another city, or they can be another kind of phenomenon or situation, such as a relationship. There should be at least 10 significant events on your list. Label each event with a date. If you can’t remember exact dates, try to be as accurate as possible. **Attach this list to your final project.**

STAGE TWO: EXPLANATION OF TIMELINE

Provide some details to describe or explain each event listed in STAGE ONE. There are many ways to unravel these events. For example, you might explain the emotions that a particular event provoked in you, how it changed your character, or the practical changes that took place as a result of it. **Submit these notes, in legible form, along with your final project.**

STAGE THREE: GUIDING PRINCIPLE OR THEME

Look at your collection of events from as many angles as you can, and see if any patterns or other organizational features begin to emerge. Attempt to find a meaningful way to categorize or “group” these events according to some governing principle—the “theme” of your life thus far. Here are a few examples of governing principles: RESPONDING TO ADVERSITY; MOVING TOWARD SELF-AWARENESS; CULTIVATING MY INNER SELF, LETTING GO OF ANXIETY, etc. **Describe the organizing principle in paragraph form, and submit this description along with your final project.**

STAGE FOUR: VISUAL

Use your list and your theme to create a VISUAL of some sort. You may use words, symbols, colors, lines, icons, photographs, or anything else you can think of. Possibilities are endless for this visual. For example, you may come up with a road map, a sculpture, a flow chart, a comic strip, a diagram, a collage, a children’s picture book, a quilt, or a treasure chest full of memorabilia. You *may* use technology to create the visual, but the final product must be a physical piece of some sort. **You will use your visual to make your presentation.**

STAGE FIVE: PAPER

Once you have completed all of the above, you may sit down to write your paper. The topic of your paper is wide open. The only requirements are that (a) it should emerge naturally as the culmination of stages 1-4; (b) it should be genuinely expressive; (c) it should be the best piece of writing you have ever produced in your life.

You may write in any style you wish, provided you manage to communicate something essential and authentic about your true self to your reader. You may wish to write a once-act play, a There is no prescribed length for this paper, but keep in mind that with a topic as complex as this one, you will need to be a wordsmith. Either you will need lots of words, or you will need VERY well-chosen ones.

NOTE:

Stages 1-3 (timeline, explanation, and guiding principle) must be submitted along with Stage 5 (final paper). Find a colorful and original way to bind these together using a three-ring binder, folder, box, etc. Make sure the stages are all numbered, and remember to put your name on your project.

STAGE SIX: PRESENTATION:

You will use stages 1-5 to make a presentation which will constitute 20% of your final grade on this project. Please read the following guidelines carefully:

Timing and Preparation:

- (o) Your presentation should be approximately 4 minutes long, and **MUST NOT EXCEED 5 minutes. TIME YOUR PRESENTATION AT HOME.** If you go over your time limit your grade will suffer.
- (i) You **MUST BE PREPARED** on the day when you have been scheduled to present. A finite number of days have been set aside for these presentations, and there will be no “make-ups” possible.

Components of your presentation:

- (1) **Share your visual.** You must bring your visual (stage 4) with you and use it in your presentation.
- (2) **Provide at least a glimpse of your personal philosophy paper, including the stages.** This can be in the form of reading an excerpt from your paper (there probably won't be time for you to read the entire piece), an explanation of your visual, a separate piece of writing written expressly for this presentation, or anything else you can think of.
- (3) **BE CREATIVE!** The style of the presentation is up to you. It can be interactive, can involve music or dance, can be delivered in costume, can be sung or acted, can be in the form of a letter... Try to think of it as a performance piece, and avoid a straightforward “For my personal philosophy, I wrote about...” approach. In addition to the two elements above, you can include any other components you wish.

Assessment Criteria

Please see the attached assessment rubric to understand how you will be graded on this project.

PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY PROJECT: ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

BREAKDOWN	ORAL PRESENTATION: 20 POINTS
PERSONAL EXPRESSIVENESS <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 5px auto;"/> 10	Did you take the assignment seriously? Did you speak from the “depths of your being?” Did your presentation reveal profound thought and “soul-searching?” Were the thoughts, feelings, and ideas you expressed authentic and sincere? Was there evidence that you had stretched your intellect and your emotions to their limits, and that you had undergone a genuine process of reflection in putting this project together?
DELIVERY AND POISE <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 5px auto;"/> 5	Was your presentation style graceful, confident, strident, communicative, fluid, and engaging? Did you have good eye contact, and did you remain poised? Did you command your audience well?
ORIGINALITY / CREATIVITY <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 5px auto;"/> 5	Did you indulge your creative side in putting this presentation together? In addition to being personally expressive, did your presentation function as an artistic statement in its own right? Are your classmates likely to remember your presentation forever?
STAGES: 15 POINTS	
STAGES 1-3 <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 5px auto;"/> 10	Did your timeline and explanation represent an authentic process of self-reflection and “soul-searching? Was there evidence of attention and care in identifying and analyzing the major events of your life? Was stage 3 original, daring, and thoughtful?
STAGE 4 <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 5px auto;"/> 5	Was your visual a meaningful part of the process of self-reflection and self-expression? Did your visual complement the other stages of your paper? Was your visual thoughtfully prepared and carefully executed? Was your visual “artistic” and original?
PAPER (STAGE 5): 65 POINTS	
CONTENT <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 5px auto;"/> 25	Was your paper lively and engaging to read? Was it fully expressive? Did your paper seem like the end-product of an authentic process of self-examination? Was your paper long enough to do justice to the subject matter you took on? Did your paper somehow “reveal” you to your reader?
STYLE <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 5px auto;"/> 20	Did you make a judicious choice of genre and approach for your paper? Regardless of the genre you selected, was your paper representative of your very best writing? Were the tone and voice of your paper consistently maintained? Did the paper contain a clear personal style that was both individualized and mature? Were your meaning and message effectively transmitted to your audience?
LANGUAGE <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 5px auto;"/> 20	In general, did you respect the rules and conventions of the English language in your paper? Is your spelling 100% correct? Did you avoid the “cardinal sins” that students are often guilty of: run-ons, fragments, agreement problems, verb tense shifts, and capitalization mistakes? Did you make vibrant, colorful, and precise word choices?