



**Mount Pleasant Central School District**  
**AP Research, Capstone**  
*Department Philosophy*

*How can original research contribute to solving real-world problems or expanding what we know? In this class, students will design and conduct an independent, yearlong research project on a topic of personal and academic interest. Our main goal is to help students master the process of inquiry—developing questions, collecting and analyzing data, and communicating their findings effectively. Assessment will primarily be based on the academic paper and oral defense that make up the AP Research performance task.*

Unit Title	Month	Content	Vocabulary	Standards	Skills	Big Ideas	Assessments
<b>Unit 1: Introduction to the Research Process</b>	Sept.	Overview of AP Research course expectations, ethics in research, overview of the QUEST framework, and academic integrity.	Inquiry, ethics, validity, credibility, plagiarism, reliability, context	Understand the expectations of the AP Research process and the ethical responsibilities of researchers.	Understanding academic integrity; identifying ethical considerations; planning an inquiry timeline.	Ethical research begins with curiosity, honesty, and respect for intellectual integrity.	Diagnostic reflection; ethics case study discussion; timeline and topic interest inventory.
<b>Unit 2: Developing a Research Question</b>	Sept.	Identifying topics of interest, narrowing focus, recognizing gaps in existing literature, and forming a focused research question.	Topic, focus, research question, scope, feasibility, gap, alignment	Develop a focused, researchable question based on background reading and areas of interest.	Formulating and refining questions; identifying feasible and meaningful topics; using exploratory research tools.	Strong research questions arise from genuine curiosity and a clear understanding of a gap in existing knowledge.	Research question proposal and peer feedback; short written rationale explaining feasibility and focus.
<b>Unit 3: Literature Review and Source Evaluation</b>	Oct.	Conducting literature searches, evaluating source credibility, and synthesizing scholarly perspectives to build context.	Synthesis, literature review, credibility, perspective, context, summary, source evaluation	Analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information from multiple sources to establish a research context.	Reading scholarly articles critically; taking annotated notes; identifying connections and patterns.	Scholarly research builds on the ideas of others through critical reading and synthesis.	Annotated bibliography; literature review draft; synthesis discussion.

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<b>Unit 4: Methodology Design and Proposal</b>	Nov-Dec	Learning and selecting qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods; designing procedures and creating the research proposal.	Methodology, variables, population, sampling, procedure, reliability, validity, proposal	Design an appropriate and ethical method of inquiry and justify methodological choices in writing.	Developing and testing methods; writing a clear proposal; seeking and incorporating feedback.	Methodological choices shape how we approach questions and draw conclusions.	Methodology proposal and justification; presentation of research design; feedback conference.
<b>Unit 5: Data Collection and Analysis</b>	Jan-Feb	Collecting data or evidence, organizing and analyzing results, and interpreting findings using appropriate methods.	Data, analysis, interpretation, trends, findings, significance, implications	Collect, organize, and interpret data or evidence effectively and accurately.	Applying data collection methods; organizing results; using software or coding systems to analyze data.	Data and analysis transform raw information into meaningful insights.	Data analysis chart or table; interpretation memo; mini-conference presentation of findings.
<b>Unit 6: Writing and Presentation</b>	March-April	Drafting, revising, and finalizing the academic paper; creating visuals; practicing the presentation and oral defense.	Thesis, argument, evidence, revision, structure, oral defense, presentation	Communicate findings clearly through writing and oral presentation with logical organization and evidence.	Writing coherently; integrating evidence effectively; designing and delivering an engaging presentation.	Clear communication and revision refine complex ideas into persuasive arguments.	Draft sections of research paper; full paper submission; practice oral defense and peer critique.

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Unit 7: Reflection and Sustained Inquiry	May-June	Reflecting on challenges, learning, implications, and how inquiry extends beyond AP Research into future academic work.	Reflection, metacognition, limitations, implications, transfer, growth	Reflect on the learning process, implications, and transfer of research skills beyond the course.	Reflecting critically on the research process; identifying future directions; self-assessing strengths and areas for growth.	Reflection transforms research into lifelong inquiry and personal growth.	Final reflection essay; presentation of learning; future research proposal or transfer statement.