# 2025-2026 AP Research Summer Project

Ms. Lissa Borchers
elisabeth.borchers@dvusd.org

Welcome to AP Research! This class follows a research framework called QUEST. It mimics the type of research that is expected in many college-level courses and focuses on Big R research. Big-R Research refers to research projects that are extensive in scope, typically involving large datasets, comprehensive methodologies, and rigorous analysis. This type of research aims to contribute significantly to a particular field of study, often addressing complex questions that require a thorough investigation and validation of findings. Big-R Research is essential in forming the foundation for further studies, guiding practical applications, and influencing policy decisions. QUEST stands for:

Question and Explore
Understand and Analyze
Evaluate Multiple Perspectives
Synthesize Ideas
Transform and Transmit

The Question and Explore phase of AP Research is about identifying topics that interest us, lightly investigating, and posing questions about the issues that arise from the topic. Since you will spend a lot of time next year delving deeply into a topic, the last thing you want to do is choose a topic that, ultimately, you really don't care about. The goal of this summer homework is to expose you to diverse topics you may have never considered otherwise. You are not choosing a final topic, but instead, considering many, but there is a good chance this assignment could inspire your Big R research project for the 2025-2026 school year. Therefore, possibly the most important prep work you can do this summer is to explore and be curious!

Your summer project is to create a slideshow with seven slides total. On six of the slides,you will create a list of questions about 6 different "sources of inspiration." Ideas for sources (you are not limited to this list): documentary films, concerts, newspaper or magazine articles, nonprofit organizations, museum exhibits, historical sites, botanical gardens, athletic events, the mall, state and national parks, places of worship, conversations with interesting people, plays, ceremonies, social media, restaurants, podcasts etc.

You can be inspired by things you do this summer, or you can be inspired by something you just want to know more about (maybe a special interest you have, something you saw on the internet, etc.).Try to visit places or do something, but if you can't, the internet is a helpful resource. For example, I recently saw a TikTok about a café in South Korea where you can drink tea while playing with meerkats, so then I needed to know why meerkats were in South Korea and whether they make good pets and what they eat. You never know what might trigger a desire to do some research.

Prepare one slide for each source (you will have six source slides total). Include:

- a short explanation of the source and the circumstances of your visit/interest
- any relevant, thought-provoking images
- Most importantly, try to conjure up as many questions related to the source in as many disciplines* as you want (your goal: at least five questions per source). Note: We will share ideas with each other the second week of school, so make sure you are being thoughtful and taking your time. You may not use your idea, but you could spark something for one of your classmates, and if you are lucky, you will find your topic/focus for next year through this assignment.

Once you have at least five questions on your slide, underline the one that you think is your strongest (cannot easily be answered and fits into the idea of Big R research) question from that group.

Then, create one last slide that reflects on your six sources and the questions you have posed. Please answer the following questions. Each response should be a short paragraph.

- What ideas are currently resonating with you the most? Why? You may or may not choose one of these ideas for your year-long project, but are there any you are drawn to?
- If you were going to choose one question from your list, which is calling to you as of right now? Why?

*A discipline is also known as a field of study. AP Research uses six disciplines (which can be seen on the next page).

The six disciplines that AP Research uses are:

**Art** (paintings, sculptures, literature, music, dance, architecture, film, theater): communicates thoughts and emotions in a creative way, uses skill and imagination to form aesthetic products/productions
**Math**: uses quantitative interpretation of real world conditions to explain how the universe behaves, creates models and theories that allow even more complex devices to be created
**Social Science** (includes economics, psychology, politics, linguistics, anthropology, cultural studies, etc.): studies how humans function individually and as a group/society, including how different circumstances change behaviors
**Physical/Natural Science** (also known as Hard Sciences, includes chemistry, biology, physics, environmental science, etc.): tries to explain how the universe (planet) functions and sometimes attempts to solve problems, finds patterns in the natural world
**Humanities**: studies how different people experience life, explores the values of different cultures
**History**: studies the causes and effects of historical events to help understand times, trends, wars, tensions, social problems, etc.

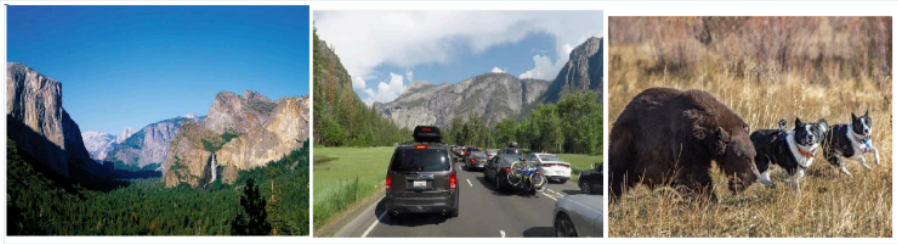
**Your slides will be due the first week of school on Canvas. Please contact me with questions!**

## EXAMPLE of the Source Slides!

**Explanation:** This is one of America's best known national parks. I'm not truly sure why though – it's pretty, but other than hiking, you spend most of the day looking for places to park. After visiting, I think I'm more interested in human aspects of the park.

**Circumstances:** I visited the park in June for three days.

### Source #1: Yosemite National Park



**Questions I Thought Of**

1. Physical/Natural Science: Could the "bear dog" program they have (uses a particular breed of dog to chase off repel nuisance bears from populated areas so they don't have to be euthanized) be copied and used in urban places in Arizona for nuisance coyotes or bobcats?
2. Social Science: What is the ratio of foreigner visitors to American citizens? Follow up: What is the main reason foreign visitors go to the park (what are their expectations)?
3. Art: Which famous national park has more published photographs – the Grand Canyon or Yosemite?
4. Art/Social Science: How realistic are image searches of Yosemite – are the photographs online accurate, or is the reality of the park a lot more crowded and dirty?
5. History: The guide said there are unmarked First American burials all over the valley floor. Is there a record or map of who is there? Is there any value in creating that?
6. Social Science: Does their social media presence actually drive visitors to the park, or do they come just because it's famous?
7. Humanities: There's a law prohibiting the collection of eagle feathers in that area. Does this law impact the traditions of the First American people in the area? Are they or should they be exempt and what is required to prove exemption?
8. Physical/Natural Science: Did the larger than normal amount of rainfall this year have any impact on this year's fire season?
9. History: Who is the oldest person buried in the cemetery; how hard is it to get records of this person's life and death if I wanted to do an ethnography?

## When you are done with this assignment, you will have 7 slides. 6 slides like the sample above and 1 reflection slide.