

AP Research

Summer Assignment Overview

There are three tasks described below. Completing them prior to your return to school will help provide you with a solid foundation to begin your year in AP Research.

AP Research students (on the list provided to me by the counseling department) have been added to the “AP Research Summer 26-27” Schoology group. All assignments can be found and completed there.

- **Reminder: Use the RCSD1 Portal (<https://launchpad.classlink.com/richlandone>) to access Schoology from anywhere. Your log in and password are the same as your laptop login.**
- **Please email Mr. Clark (andrew.clark@richlandone.org) if you need to be added to the Schoology class for summer.**

The screenshot shows a Schoology course page for "AP Research Summer 2026-27: Section 1" at Dreher High School. The page features a left-hand navigation menu with options like Course Options, Materials, Updates, Gradebook, Grade Setup, Mastery, Badges, Attendance, Members, Analytics, Workload Planning, OneNote Class Notebook, and TeachingBooks.net. The main content area displays a list of materials under the heading "All Materials". This list includes three folders: "Task 1: Read The Course And Exam Description", "Task 2: Exploring High Scoring Papers", and "Task 3: A Compost Heap of Ideas", each with a gear icon for settings. Below the folders is a PDF document titled "AP Research Summer 2026-2027.pdf" (139 KB) with a gear icon. On the right side, there is an "Upcoming" section for Tuesday, August 4, 2026, showing a task titled "Task 2 Dropbox" at 11:59 pm, also with a gear icon. At the top right, there are icons for a calendar and notifications.

Task 1: Reading the Course and Exam Description (CED)

- Purpose: Get a long-range view of the course. Understand, at least in the abstract, what your major tasks for the year will be. Get a handle on what you are committing to.
- Time expectation: 30 minutes max
- The CED is posted as a PDF on Schoology.
- **Skim** pages 1-20 and 59-62
- As you read through the document, you may have questions, comments, or concerns you would like addressed early in the school year. Please post them in the “CED Questions Parking Lot”

Task 2: Exploring High Scoring Sample Papers

- Purpose: The paper you submit to the College Board accounts for 75% of your AP score. The better you understand the format and structure of a paper, the better you will be able to create one of your own.
- Time expectations: Budget one to one and a half hours per sample paper read (x2 papers = 2-3 hours). They are long, dense, and unfamiliar.
- **Comb through** (aka give a slow, detailed reading) **two high scoring sample paper** (a variety of high scoring samples are posted on Schoology)
- **Annotate each paper as you read**
 - Physical (printed copy) or digital annotations are fine.
 - Note if you are printing copies of papers: Some of these papers have *exceptionally long appendices*. You do not need to print (or annotate) past the Works Cited / Reference page
 - Food for thought / things to annotate for:
 - What are the different sections of this paper?
 - What is the function/purpose of each section?
 - How does the writing differ between sections? (e.g. use of sources)
 - How do the different sections connect to one another?
- If you annotate digitally, submit online. If you annotate on paper, bring your annotated copies to class on the first day of school.

Task 3: Generate a compost heap of ideas (adapted from Garaczko 2025)

For those who don't garden: A compost heap is a pile of scraps that slowly "cooks" and turns into rich, fertile soil. You wouldn't want to eat it, but you'll have better luck growing something if you have some compost to spread around.

- **Purpose:** Capture some real-life curiosity. Give ideas a chance to interact with other ideas. The best research questions combine real-life experience and genuine interest. The purpose is not to one-shot your research question; that never really works well. Instead, give yourself some avenues to explore. Let your ideas cook.
- **Directions:**
 1. Take four blank sheets of paper and fold them all hamburger-style to make yourself a booklet
 2. Put a title on the front cover
 3. **Each week** add one or two entries to your heap to yield at least ten entries
 - a. Each entry should get its own page
 - b. Record the date you added the entry
 - c. Say what the source of your curiosity/point of interest was
 - d. Say why you thought it was cool or interesting
 - e. Record questions this source makes you ask
 4. What makes a good source?
 - a. Books – non-fiction or fiction – that you are reading for pleasure or other classes
 - b. Podcasts, Videos
 - c. Museum exhibitions
 - d. The things you notice in your daily life that stick with you!
 5. I'm looking for breadth (cast a wide net) not depth. Your ideas/sources/scraps *might* relate to similar topics but they may also be scattered with no obvious connections.
 6. Time expectations: 15 minutes a week. If writing about your sources feels onerous, you are doing too much. The hardest part is remembering to do it. **Set a recurring alarm on your phone.** That being said, 150 minutes (15x10) of writing and reflecting the day before school returns will feel onerous and worse **your ideas won't have time to cook.**

If you find yourself repeatedly thinking back to one of the scraps you add, days, weeks or months after you add it, that's a good sign that it may be a good topic to explore. For some of you, eventually two or three scraps may be combined to form a unique research topic that is interdisciplinary. That's the beauty of the compost heap; disparate ideas may live side-by-side and cook down. As you pile onto the heap, look for connections between the scraps and pay attention to what makes your heart go pitter patter