

THAYER ACADEMY



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Dear Freshman Parents,

As we begin the winter term, I wanted to touch base with you about the World History research project that will occupy your 9th grade children throughout the course of the term. This project has long been a staple of the freshman history curriculum, and as a department we are committed to making this project as successful as possible. I'd like to explain the project briefly and enlist your invaluable support.

We have designed this project to focus on the research *process* and not just the final product. As such, each World History teacher has provided (or will shortly provide) a detailed list of elements that are involved in this project. Such steps will include, among other things, a statement of purpose, source requirements, note cards, a thesis proposal, an outline, a first draft, and a final draft with documentation (a bibliography and parenthetical references). All these steps along the way, up to and including the final draft, will earn grades. The term grade will, therefore, reflect the process and not just the final paper.

As I tell the students in my classes, the key to success as they work through this project is to pay attention to requirements and deadlines. Effective preparation early on usually translates into a better experience when it is time to write first and final drafts. Students who really immerse themselves in this process will undoubtedly learn a lot about the research process and will gain valuable skills applicable to projects they will do in their future high school career, in college, and beyond.

To that end, this is my sincere request: please encourage your children as they work through this project. Get them to your public library to look for available resources. Ask them about their project at home, at the dinner table, in the car. What are they finding? What's been interesting so far? What kind of argument is emerging from their research? But *please* don't do their work for them—or allow a tutor to do that work. Such involvement, while not frequent, does happen on occasion. It is honestly agonizing for a teacher to try to grade a student for work a parent or tutor has done. Such work, by definition, represents plagiarism, presenting someone else's work as one's own. When the case is clearcut, the work will earn a "0" and will need to be redone. Most significantly, though, our students will not benefit from this process if they do not engage *themselves* in the process. So please, let them do their own work.

If you have any questions about this project or our expectations, please feel free to contact me or your child's history teacher.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads 'Matthew Dunne'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Matthew Dunne