

February 12, 2008

Dear 6th Grade Parents,

From now through May my students will be working on their **country research reports**. Reading, writing, social studies, art, keyboarding, and library skills are involved in the completion of this project. The students are receiving this detailed packet, which explains how to complete the report. **Please review this packet in detail with your child.** This report will be a **major** part of their grades in **writing and social studies** for the final trimester.

The reports are due on May 14. Extra credit points will be given if they are turned in early.

The reports must be written on computer. Students will have opportunities to work on their reports in the school library and in our classroom. They will be able to use the school computers during our regular computer lab times, plus supplemental times I will be scheduling. They will also be able to use the school computers after school – either in the library, lab, or in my classroom. If they have access to a computer outside of school, please read the instructions on how to save documents in the correct format. I've seen too many kids lose data and time by not saving documents in the proper format.

Mrs. Haupt will be helping each student find information about his or her country. You might also consider a trip to the public library for additional materials.

Between now and the due date – **May 14** – I expect each student to work on his or her report, possibly every night, as homework. If your child should say he or she has no homework, remind him or her that the country report is homework.

Besides the written report, each student must have **a decorated cover**, and must make **a detailed map** and **a color drawing of his or her country's flag**. This is very time consuming!

The reports will be on display at Baywood's Open House, which will be May 21, but there will be no grades given by then.

Each student will be given a large manila envelope in which they should keep all their report information, as well as this packet. They will most likely be given at least one book about their country from Mrs. Haupt. **THEY MUST BRING THESE TO SCHOOL WITH THEM EACH DAY. Extra credit points will be given at the end of this project to each student who still has his or her envelope and packet. POINTS WILL BE TAKEN AWAY EACH TIME YOUR CHILD DOESN'T HAVE HER OR HIS PACKET OF MATERIALS (INCLUDING THE BOOK) AT SCHOOL.**

Report writing is an extremely important skill, which will be used many times during each student's educational career. This project should give them an excellent beginning in mastering this process. Good work habits, timely completion of tasks, and **GOOD TIME MANAGEMENT** (no procrastinating!) will be extremely important to the success of this project. Parents can help by keeping track of their child's progress. Thank you for your support.

Yours truly,
Mr. Snapp

Parents, please sign and return by Thursday, February 14

I am aware that my child will be completing a country report, which will be a major part of his or her writing grade for the last trimester. I have reviewed this packet with my child and we understand the requirements. I understand that the report is due on Wednesday, May 14. I understand that there will be extra credit points awarded if the report is turned in early. **I further understand that my child's grade will drop one letter grade for each day that it is late after May 14**

PARENT SIGNATURE: _____

I am aware that I will be completing a country report, which will be a major part of my writing grade for the last trimester. I have reviewed this packet with my parent and we understand the requirements. I understand that the report is due on Wednesday, May 14. I understand that there will be extra credit points awarded if the report is turned in early. **I further understand that my grade will drop one letter grade for each day that it is late after May 14.**

STUDENT SIGNATURE: _____

Country selected: _____

Directions for Completing Your Country Report – 2008

Writing

THE REPORT MUST BE WRITTEN IN SENTENCES AND PARAGRAPHS. Start each paragraph by indenting *approximately* 5 spaces. Use of English will be the most important part of your grade.

Format

THE REPORT MUST BE WORD PROCESSED ON COMPUTER. You must use either Times New Roman or Arial fonts. The body text should be size 11. Headings should be size 20. (The sizes on the Title Page can be larger.) Put two spaces between sentences. It should be double-spaced. However, I don't want the kids to do this until I teach the lesson. They should type it single-spaced, and we'll double-space it later. There should be one blank line (double-spaced) between each article and the heading for the next article.

Cover

You must have a cover on your report. I recommend purchasing some sort of cover. If you need me to provide materials for your cover, let me know. The cover should contain the name of your country, your name, the date of completion, and some sort of artwork related to your country. This could be hand-drawn, computer printed, or whatever. Grading will be based on completeness (having all of those elements), neatness, organization, and effort. If you draw your own artwork, I won't grade based on how good an artist you are. Rather, I'll grade based on how much effort your work shows. **DO NOT USE A PLASTIC COVER WITH A SLIP-ON PLASTIC SLEEVE.** If you don't heed this warning and use this type of cover, you will receive zero points for your cover.

Table of Contents

Your report must have a table of contents. **This should be about the last section you complete, even though it appears at the front of your report.** The reason is that as you add things to your report, the pages on which you find things change. You will only know the final layout of your report, including page numbers, at the *end* of the process. Finish your table of contents when everything else is finished.

Extra Credit

You will receive extra credit points for each day your report is turned in early. You can also earn extra credit by including items that are not required.

Extra credit items could include:

- charts
- travel brochures
- a timeline of important historical events
- postcards
- pictures
- weather maps
- an art project
- objects from your country
- cooking a food dish from your country
- doing a craft from your country
- etc.

Various Sections – Directions – What to Include

Later in this packet I will list the various topics you are to report on. I will give suggestions for things you should include in each section. **THESE ARE ONLY SUGGESTIONS.** Not every suggestion will apply to your country.

I don't want you to include every single fact in your report. I'm not asking you to write a book (and I don't have time to read 27 books.) There are basically two types of things you should include – **THINGS THAT ARE IMPORTANT, OR THINGS THAT ARE INTERESTING.** IT'S UP TO YOU TO DECIDE WHICH FACTS ARE IMPORTANT, although you can always ask me for advice on whether a fact you've discovered is important or not. Additionally, if you read something about your country that isn't really important, but it's *really* interesting, put that in. It will make your report interesting to read.

Bibliography

You must include a complete bibliography. Mrs. Haupt and/or I will be giving you detailed instructions on how to list the resources you use. However, **IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU WRITE DOWN EACH SOURCE YOU USE AS SOON AS YOU START USING IT – ESPECIALLY WEB PAGES!!!** For web pages, write down the URL (<http://www.....>) for each page you use. For books, write the title, author's name, and copyright date.

Plagiarism

YOUR REPORT MUST BE WRITTEN IN YOUR OWN WORDS. It's okay to use terms or two- or three-word phrases that you find in your research, but don't copy whole sentences. Anyone caught plagiarizing will be required to rewrite the report, and their grade will be severely lowered. If you have a good reason to copy a sentence or phrase from a book, it's okay, but put it in quotation marks, and tell who originally wrote or said it.

Report Sections

You must include each of these sections in your report. However, *the specific items* listed for each section are only suggestions. IF THEY DON'T APPLY, DON'T INCLUDE THEM. If you find something important or interesting that isn't listed, do include it.

Cover

The cover should contain:

- the name of your country
- your name
- the date of completion
- some sort of artwork related to your country. This could be hand-drawn, computer printed, or whatever.

Grading will be based on

- how **complete** it is (having all of those elements)
- neatness
- organization
- effort. If you draw your own artwork, I won't grade based on how good an artist you are. Rather, I'll grade based on how much effort your work shows.

DO NOT USE A PLASTIC COVER WITH A SLIP-ON PLASTIC SLEEVE.

Title Page

Just inside your cover should be a title page. It should say the name of your country, your name, and the due date (May 14). It should all be centered.

Table of Contents

This should be about the last section you complete, even though it appears at the front of your report. This is because you'll be making lots of changes to your report, and things won't always be on the same page. Wait till you're finished so you're sure what page each section starts on.

It should have:

- The major sections of your report listed
- The pages on which each section can be found, from the first page to the last. **Example: History-----pages 9-11**

Facts In Brief

Include the following facts, if they apply. (These facts may also appear in other sections of your report. That's okay.)

- Official name (tell what it means or where the name came from, if you can)
- Name of capital city
- The area of your country in both square miles and square kilometers
- The population of your country during the most recent census (include the date of the census)
- The major ethnic groups
- The official language(s) of your country
- The major religions in your country
- What type of government does your country have?
- Currency or monetary unit (money)
- The average life expectancy for men and women

Geography

- a. What are the different major land regions?
- b. What is the climate like?
- c. Are there any major mountain ranges? Any important individual mountains?
- d. What are the highest and lowest elevations in your country?
- e. Are there any important rivers or lakes?
- f. Are there any important or interesting natural wonders? (Like the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, Death Valley, etc.?)
- g. What types of ecological environments are there? Jungles? Deserts? Rain Forests?
- h. What kind of native animals can you find in your country?
- i. What are the major cities? How many cities are there with a million or more people?

People – Way of Life

- a. Do the people wear any unusual types of clothing?
- b. What kinds of houses do people live in?
- c. What kinds of food do people eat in your country? Drink?
- d. Religion – Are there important or interesting details beyond what you put in Facts in Brief?
- e. What do the people do for recreation or entertainment?
- f. How advanced is health care in your country? What is the infant mortality rate?
- g. Is there a national sport? What are the most popular sports? Are there any professional sports teams?
- h. How important are the arts? Are there any major symphony orchestras, opera companies, or dance companies?
- i. Are there any important tourist attractions (besides the natural wonders you listed in Geography)?

History

Write about the history of your country. **Don't try to list every event you read about** – only include what's **important** or **interesting**. MAKE SURE AND INCLUDE ALL THE IMPORTANT OR INTERESTING EVENTS IN THE 20TH CENTURY.

Government

- a. What type of national government does your country have?
- b. Who is the chief executive right now, and what is his or her title?
- c. Is there a legislative body? What's it called? Is there more than one?
- d. Would you say your country is a "free country?" Explain.
- e. How long has your country its present form of government?
- f. Can people vote in your country? Who can vote? What age do you have to be? Are there other qualifications you must have in order to vote?
- g. How important are the courts in your country? Can you find out anything about the court system?
- h. Does your country have armed forces? Is there an army? Navy? Air Force? Marines? Are people required to serve in the military? Just men or both men and women? What ages can/must people be to be in the military?

Economy

- a. What are some of the important industries?
- b. How important is agriculture? What are some of the important agricultural products from your country?
- c. What are the major exports?
- d. What natural resources does your country have?
- e. Is there any mining?
- f. How advanced is your country technologically?
- g. How are goods sent to market? Trains? Ships? Planes? Trucking? By camel?

Conclusion

Write a conclusion. This shouldn't be too long. **Tell at least three of the most important or interesting facts that you learned.**

Appendix 1 –Map

- YOU MAY TRACE THE OUTLINE OF YOUR COUNTRY. Trace in pencil, but go over the outline of your country with a **thin, black pen or marker**)
- **ALL COLORING MUST BE DONE WITH COLORED PENCILS, NOT MARKERS.**

Make sure and include the following items on your map:

- **A compass rose.** Put this in an empty section of your map. You may decorate it and make it fancy, but make sure it's neat, readable, and accurate.
- **Title.** At the top of the page in the center, write "Map of _____". There should be some space between the title and the top of the map.
- **Scale** – this should be on a blank section of the map, not in the margin outside the map.
- **Important cities.**
- **Capital city** – indicate with a small star inside a circle (★)

- **Important bodies of water** – rivers, lakes, bordering oceans. Water should be colored blue.
- **Important mountains or mountain ranges.**
- **Other important geographic regions** – jungles, rain forests, deserts, etc.
- **Label the surrounding countries** (if there are any). Show the borders until they go off of the map. **COLOR THE SURROUNDING COUNTRIES WITH LIGHT GRAY.**
- **You should lightly color your country.** You may choose a color, or better, try and show different regions with different colors. Mountains would be brown, forests might be green, etc. Look at some maps in atlases and see how they are colored.

Appendix 2 - Flag

- Use white, unlined typing paper.
- Your flag should nearly fill up the piece of paper.
- Neatness counts!

- You may use markers, crayons, or colored pencils – whichever is neatest. (MARKERS ARE OKAY ON THIS, BUT NO ON THE MAP.)
- If your flag has small, intricate details, do your best. You'll be graded on effort and following directions, not your artistic ability.

Appendix 3 – Extra Credit?

- a. If you have any extra credit items, put them here.

Bibliography

- a. Your bibliography should be the last thing in your report.
- b. Mrs. Haupt and/or I will give specific details for how to cite each resource you use.

- c. You should try and have at least five different sources.

Country Report Grading

Your report will be graded using the following criteria:

Category	Points Possible
Cover	10
Title Page	5
Table of Contents	10
Facts in Brief	10
Geography	10
People – Way of Life	10
History	10
Government	10
Economy	10
Conclusion	5
Map	10
Flag	10
Bibliography	10
Accuracy/Importance/"Interestingness" of information	20
English	40
Neatness	10
Extra Credit for Not Losing Packet	10
Extra Credit for Turning Report In Early	???
Other Extra Credit	???
Total (Not Including Extra Credit)	190