

**BUSINESS LAW RESEARCH PAPER DUE BY Monday March 10, 2006**  
**Students are advised late papers will not be accepted.**

Students are to prepare a research paper using Modern Language Association (MLA) format including parenthetical citations, footnotes (if appropriate) rather than end notes, and a Works Cited page for their sources. **At least three separate major sources** for information must be used. Print media as well as the Internet may be used for all sources, **but citations must be in proper format**. The research paper should be at least six (6), and no more than twelve (12) pages of text, **excluding the works cited page**. The paper must be typewritten; **handwritten papers will not be accepted for a grade**. If access to a computer or typewriter is a problem see me immediately. Research instruction and time in the school library will be provided during class periods. MLA formatting guidance will be made available.

Students are to select the topic for their paper from the attached list **or an alternative topic approved by the teacher and agreed to by the student's parents or guardians**.

**If the student selects one of the listed crimes as their research subject the following topics are to be addressed:**

- Cite the appropriate Virginia or Federal statute defining the crime. List and explain the prima facie elements of the offense.
- Describe the range of penalties provided in the statute. If there are sentencing guidelines at the state or federal level for the crime, summarize the guidelines. Include the components of the formula the guidelines say the judge uses in deciding the sentence.
- Provide statistical information describing the frequency of occurrence of the crime for the state or federal level for at least the last three years. (Inclusion of additional years of data or a table or chart to provide statistical data will each earn extra credit.)
- Provide a discussion of demographic information about the perpetrators and victims of this type of crime, e.g., gender, race, age, recidivism rate, means by which the crime was committed (e.g., if homicide what "weapon" was used, if embezzlement was it accomplished through computer manipulation, check forging, skimming of receipts, etc.)
- Include a discussion of the impact of this type of crime on our society. Include subject matter such as: economic costs of enforcement and trials; economic impact of sentencing outcomes (costs per year for incarceration, executions, etc.); trends in how society has tried to deal with this crime (include prevention efforts if any).

**If the student selects a research topic from the list, other than a crime, their research paper is to include the following:**

- A clear statement of the issue they have chosen to research, (e.g., Should the U.S. retain capital punishment for crimes?)
- A discussion of the background of the issue (e.g., The effectiveness of capital punishment as a deterrent has been the subject of debate for many years. Further the question has also been debated as to whether capital punishment is more costly to the taxpayers than other forms of punishment. My research briefly explores recent developments in the debate about the need to retain capital punishment for certain crimes in the U.S. Legal system.)
- A summary of facts upon which the conclusion(s) of the research paper are based. This may include statistics, opinions of experts, legislative history, judicial opinions, anecdotal information, etc.
- A summary of the conclusion the researcher has reached based upon the facts, with a brief explanation of why they have taken this position.

**This paper will be graded with a maximum value of 100 points and will count as 20% of the students overall grade for the nine week grading period.** Proper formatting, minimum length of the paper, and use of required sources (number and type) will constitute 20 points of the grade. How fully the paper covers the factual content requirements stated above will constitute 50 points of the grade. The remaining 30 points will be based upon the thoroughness, accuracy, and analytical approach used to support the research findings. See the attached grading rubric **which must be attached to your paper when it is turned in for grading**.

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**Select a Topic for Your Research Paper From the Following List**

**Or Submit an Alternative Topic for Approval**

**Crimes**

Arson	Larceny
Automobile/Vehicle Theft	Mail Fraud
Burglary	Racketeering (RICO)
Embezzlement	Rape
Forgery	Robbery and/or Theft (all but auto)
Homicide	Wire Fraud

**Issues** (Take a **Pro** or **Con** position on one of these issues. **Do not** present **both** sides.)

Effectiveness of Alternative Disputes Resolution Processes

Effectiveness of Lemon Laws

Effectiveness of Small Claims Courts

The Retention of Capital Punishment in our Judicial System

Use or Effectiveness of Sentencing Guidelines and Mandatory Minimum Sentences

Tort Law Reform (e.g., Should we set statutory limits on damages?)

Charging and Sentencing Juveniles as Adults in the Criminal System

Establishing a National DNA database

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STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

TOPIC SLECTED: \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

