

## THE I-SEARCH PAPER

The I-Search paper addresses an issue of injustice in the world that the writer would like to see reformed.

This means, of course, that the writer should give some serious thought to what pushes her buttons, what makes her shake her head in disbelief, what makes her want to jump in and resolve the problem. **What situations disturb, irritate, confuse or excite?** This issue could be occurring globally, nationally, in New York State, or in your hometown.

To begin, we have to **wonder** (a wonderful habit of mind to have acquired) for this particular project. You will work with a group of peers in order to generate as many ideas as possible. Regarding this phase of the project, we encourage students to consider Mercy's Critical Concerns, since they all address issues of social justice. As an additional incentive, you are reminded that if you address one of the five concerns, you could be getting a head start on the Motto Project that will be completed during senior year...Two for one!

With that said, let's turn to our peers and compose a long list of issues about which we care enough to take action. Besides the fact that each person in your group should contribute at least two ideas, the only rules are:

Your topic chooses you.....trust your ideas.

Be curious

Leave your bubble. Risk learning something totally new!

Be realistic

Since this involves an interview, it would be helpful if you already know an expert in the field.

Make it relevant to your life and what you value.

### Part I:

You will discuss what you already know about your topic in a one to two page essay. Think of all the places you've read about, seen or heard references to, for example, "I already know that.....I love to read and that reading lets me explore places I have never been to. I also know that there are many people right here in Rochester who do not have access to books. I know there are public libraries all over, but not everyone can get to them. There have been articles in the newspaper about the lack of resources in schools today and no funding to buy supplies."

Groups will discuss and share idea such as:

1. Lack of education materials for children who live in poverty.
2. Lack of proper nutrition for the same population.

3. Lack of protection for endangered plants.

Before selecting one topic, **ask the following questions:**

1. What interests me about each of these topics? Be specific.
2. What do I want to learn or hope to accomplish from doing research?
3. Which one intrigues me the most?

Next step: convert choice into a research question which will become the title of the I search paper. Like this:

Question“ What do I need to know and be able to do in order to provide education materials to children who live in poverty?”

Title: **Lack of Educational Materials for Children Who Live in Poverty.**

**GROUP ACTIVITY:** discuss topics, ask questions, and convert one concern into a question.

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**The I-Search paper** has 5 components:

Part 1—What I already know (approximately one page).

Part 2—What I want to know (approximately one page).

Part 3—The story of my search (must be between 4-5 pages).

Part 4—The interview (approximately one to two pages).

Part 4—What I learned ( approximately one to two pages).

Part 5—Works cited page.

## **Part II: What do I want to know?**

So, what is it that you need to know? What are your questions?

“I want to know ...exactly what is being done and what has been tried that did not work. Why didn't it work? How can we get books in these kids' hands? Would publishing companies be willing to help? Would it be possible to start a program of shared read-alouds with children who are interested? Do some of my friends have books they might want to donate?”