

## Quarter 4 Project: TED Talk

Mr. Eble, AP Language & Composition

You'll end the year with a speech directed towards your fellow students in the style of a TED talk.

TED stands for Technology, Entertainment, Design. You certainly don't have to talk about topics in each of these areas, but the general idea behind this assignment is the TED motto: "Ideas worth spreading."

Thus, you should present on such an idea—one that interests you and that will interest your classmates and drive them to think and act in a different way. Typically, TED talks follow this structure:

- Anecdote / Opening as a Lead-in that sets up the theme of the talk
- Presentation of Research / Ideas (a mix of Claims of Fact / Value)
- Claim of Policy

You should follow this general structure in your **7-10 minutes** talk to your classmates, which should be accompanied by a Power Point or a Prezi that serves as a supplement to the spoken part of your presentation.

Because I don't want you to stand in front of your classmates and ramble about a topic just based on your own experiences (which are certainly valuable, but not sufficient to fill this space), you should **research your talk topic and support it with 5-10 pieces of relevant, sufficient, credible evidence.**

You should print your talk (which you don't have to follow verbatim), as well as your PPT slides and your Works Cited page.

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### Part 1—Proposal / Initial Research

For 4/2 (A) / 4/1 (B), you'll complete the following as an opening to your TED talk:

- 1.) A proposal of your talk topic: Explain the topic you'd like to research and present to your classmates, providing explanations behind your interests and your goals. Also, tell me what you already know.
- 2.) Initial Research: You'll present two sources that will provide background for your talk. For each source, you should complete the CRAAP test (see page two of this document), a way for you to assess sources. As you won't use every source that you find, this is a great way for you to assess the research you do.

You can see a sample of this assignment on pages three and four.

Please print this work and bring it to class.

**Proposal / Initial Research:** 50-point grade

I'll assess you on the thoroughness of your CRAAP testing (15 points per source), as well as your explicit explanation of your interests and goals.

**The CRAAP Test:** A series of questions for determining the value of a source (web, print, speech, photo...anything!)

**Currency:** The timeliness of the information?

- When was the information published or posted?
- Has the information been revised or updated recently?
- Does your topic require current information, or will older sources work as well?
- Are the links functional? If not, why? What does this say about the source?

**Relevance:** The importance of the information for your needs.

- Does the information relate to your topic or answer question? How?
- How would you use this in your paper?
- Who is the intended audience? How can you tell?
- Is the information at an appropriate level? (I.E. not too elementary or advanced for your needs)
- Have you looked at a variety of sources before determining this is one you will use?
- Would you be comfortable citing this source in your research paper? Why or why not?
- Does this source reveal any other areas for which you'd like to do more research? Explain.

**Authority:** The source of the information.

- Who is the author / publisher / source / sponsor?
- What are the author's credentials or organizational affiliations?
- Is the author qualified to write on the topic?
- Is there contact information, such as a publisher or email address?
- Does the URL reveal anything about the author or source? (.com, .edu, .gov, .org, .net)

**Accuracy:** The reliability, truthfulness, and correctness of the content.

- Where does the information come from?
- Is the information supported by evidence?
- Has the information been reviewed or refereed?
- What further research should I do to add to the discussion started by this source?
- Can you verify any of the information in another source or from personal knowledge?
- Does the language or tone seem unbiased and free of emotion? If it doesn't, how can it fit into your argument? (if at all)
- Are there spelling, grammar, or typographical errors?

**Purpose:** The reason the information exists.

- What is the purpose of the information? Is it to inform, teach, sell, entertain, or persuade?
- Do the authors / sponsors make their intentions or purpose clear?
- Is the information fact, opinion, or propaganda? How can you tell?
- Does the point of view appear objective and impartial?
- Are there political, ideological, cultural, religious, institutional, personal biases?

**These questions are not exhaustive**, and you don't have to use every one. *However*, you should utilize them for evaluating how sources fit into your argument.

**You will not have to complete this explicitly for every source.**

**On the next two pages, you'll see a sample annotation.** *Your format should fit this model.*

Bill Jones

Mr. Eble

AP English Language and Composition

31 March 2014

TED Talk Proposal: Genetically Modified Organisms in Our Food Supply

**Proposal:** Besides the fact that I *have* to eat in order to survive, I simply love food—not just the process of eating it, but the entire narrative that exists around it. From farm to table (and even beyond that), I’m fascinated by the entire spectrum of food, from the kitchen-level preparation to the geopolitical influences of hunger.

One particular area of interest for me surrounds genetic modification—the process by which scientists enter into the DNA-level attributes of a food and alter its makeup in order to create different traits that are more suitable for the economic and gastronomical needs of this world. From producing fortified rice for third-world economies to making square tomatoes (really...square...), geneticists have discovered that they can augment and alter the fundamental elements of food. Yet, being a student of Mary Shelley and *Frankenstein*, I’ve always been interested in the limits of science and humanity’s understanding of nature. Victor Frankenstein instilled in me an early fear of Promethean overreaching. With all of the promises and utopian dreams of genetic modification, I worry that such technology will only be used to line the pocketbooks of corporate interests instead of the stomachs of the world’s neediest children.

Thus, I’d like to present to class about the definition and reach of genetically-modified foods. Though I don’t want to take a necessarily polemic stance against genetic modification, I want to demonstrate to class the possible consequences of relying too heavily on this element of our changing global food web. While this is only one part of the problem with hunger in the third world and obesity in the first, I hope to highlight this issue in order to provide an entrance for students to understand the larger issues at play here.

Charles, Dan. “Farmer’s Fight with Monsanto Reaches the Supreme Court.” *NPR.org*. National Public Radio. 18

February 2013. Web. 19 February 2013. <http://www.npr.org/blogs/thesalt/2013/02/18/171896311/farmers-fight-with-monsanto-reaches-the-supreme-court>

**Currency:** This source was published about a year ago, and it demonstrates one fight in a series of many between small farmers and Monsanto. While *The Future of Food* (a movie source I’m using) demonstrates this conflict over the past decade, this news story provides a very recent example.

**Relevance:** In light of its current relevance, this report of “a classic David-and-Goliath [case](#)” with, “[o]n one side... a 75-year-old farmer in Indiana named Vernon Hugh Bowman...[and] on the other, the agribusiness giant Monsanto” (Charles) provides a relevant entrance into my topic—whether or not agribusiness firms should be able to patent life. Because National Public Radio is, well, *national*, being that it’s projected to a general audience, as the prose is generally clear and journalistic, I would feel comfortable using this source as an opener for my talk. I would like to find some opinions about this topic, so I’m considering finding more relevant editorials that will help me gain a more informed opinion on the subject.

**Authority:** Again, NPR is a reliable source, as it covers national and local affairs. I’ve also learned from years of listening that it’s willing to admit its mistakes, as it airs “corrections” and letters/emails from listeners who note inaccuracies. Thus, I should keep an ear open for any of those in regards to this story throughout the next few days. My only issue with this source is that many critics deem NPR a left-leaning news source, so I searched the internet for other accounts of the story, particularly from Fox News (see the source Gillam, Carey “U.S. Agriculture Wary as Monsanto Heads to Supreme Court” from Fox Business News). Regardless of that perceived bias, in this blog post on *The Salt* (NPR’s food blog), Dan Charles shows a kind of journalistic balance, as he provides “both sides of the story,” with information taken from interviews with Bowman, David Snively (Monsanto general counsel), and a number of seed distributors.

**Accuracy:** As stated in the Authority part of this evaluation, I’ve checked news coverage of this story on multiple outlets, including Fox News, *The New York Times*, and *The Washington Post*. Charles demonstrates journalistic balance, as he provides many perspectives from various sources with different stakes in this battle. While he certainly follows Bowman’s perspective, he doesn’t utilize overly biased language in speaking about Monsanto. Also, in searching Moeller’s “Opposing Viewpoints” database, I’ve learned that this example is one of many in a long string of small farmers being sued by the biotechnology corporation, most notably in the *Schmeiser v. Monsanto* case from the Canadian Supreme Court (*The Future of Food*).

**Purpose:** The purpose of this blog is to inform readers of recent developments in food technology and science. This particular story demonstrates the ramifications of the pending Supreme Court case, which stems from a 1999 trial against the 75 year-old farmer from Indiana. While Charles certainly presents Bowman’s perspective, there’s little inherent bias, so this source can be deemed journalistic fact. I’d like to do more research to demonstrate the broader scientific, legal, and moral issues at play here.