

Research Assignment Overview

In the next few years, you will be challenged to purchase many items, from homes to game systems to cell phone plans. For this research project, you will choose one item that you think you may purchase in the next two-to-three years. Choose an item that is produced or offered by several vendors. Unique items will not meet the research requirements. Some ideas are listed below.

Once you have chosen a product or service AND completed your research, you will present your findings to the class via a slide show. In this way you will practice your presentation skills and your ability to persuade your audience to your conclusion (product or service with the best value).

You are required to research the item as to its reliability, value, and in some cases safety. Complete the following steps for a successfully research project.

1. Choose the item. This must be approved by your teacher.
2. Decide the five or six criteria that you will use to compare vendors. This must be approved.
3. Find five sources (On line or print) that:
 - a. point out the features of the product,
 - b. discuss safety and value,
 - c. compare your manufacturer with others that produce the same product.
4. Write the Resources page in APA format and turn it in.
5. Prepare a 10-15 PPT slide presentation:
 - a. use graphs to explain the differences in features, value, safety from various vendors;
 - b. use graphics to persuade the audience that your ultimate choice is best;
 - c. create a title slide;
 - d. incorporate your resources in the presentation;
 - e. use appropriate font, information, and animation.
6. Present the project to the class.

The Project

Everyday consumers make decisions of what products will give the best value. It is important to learn the process to making the decisions, especially in today's economic environment. From refrigerators to cars to game systems to lawn service, there are many providers and choices. Researching these products before purchasing saves consumers money and frustration.

Step One--Choosing the Product--Must have teacher approval

products

cell phone plan
stereo (sound) system
small appliances (i.e. toaster oven)
large appliances (i.e. washer)
TV
car
apartment--lease agreement

Services

day care
service agreements
lawn care
body shops (car repair)

Step Two--Researching Information

1. Use the Internet or published materials (usually from the manufacturer).
2. Check Consumer Report Type Sites, Recalls (www.recalls.gov), Better Business Bureau, and state consumer protection offices.
3. Check to ensure that if a license is require that it is up to date.
4. Shop--check sales circulars, promotions, and financing (if needed). What is the real cost? For example, if you must finance--what will the cost be once all interest is paid? What will be the cost if you make credit card payments?
5. If possible, look at an actual model. The adage is: Don't buy a pig in a poke. Ask questions of sales people and **write down the answers.**
6. Make a list of features you want and compare them to the features on the models.
7. Check out blogs and chat rooms that discuss your product. If batteries need replacing--do the generic work as well as the brand name, for example.
8. Make sure you keep accurate biographic information: author, date, publisher, city// Internet site// sales person's name, date of interview, place.

Step Three--choosing the models and criteria

1. Choose three models or service providers. Make sure the items are similar--that means they are comparable.
2. Choose the criteria--you will need seven to ensure a good choice: safety and price will be two of your criteria.
3. Complete a **Criteria Chart** and turn it in to your teacher.
4. Use the attached chart as a model.

Criteria Chart--Microwave

	Microwave 1 ABC manufacturer	Microwave 2 QRS manufacturer	Microwave 3 XYZ manufacturer
Capacity	.5 Cubic Feet	.6 Cubic Feet	.8 Cubic Feet
Power	600 watts	600 watts	800 watts
Size In inches	14 1/8h x 14 3/8 w x 14 1/4 d	9 2/3 h x 18 1/8 w x 12 3/4 d	11 1/8 h x 19 w x 14 1/8 d
Special Features	Seven auto settings, instant popcorn key, express defrost	Five power levels, 35 minute timer, time defrost	Eight presets, popcorn button, auto defrost, delay start
Weight in pounds	24	24	24
Safety Rating	Excellent--consumer reports	Very good--consumer reports	Excellent--consumer reports
Price	\$70	\$106	\$90

Based on the criteria above the best value is _____ because_____.

Day Care

	Day Care 1 ABC Kids	Day Care 2 QRS Kids	Day Care3 XYZ Kids
Capacity	50 children 6 mos to 11 years	70 children 6 mos to 11 years	90 children 6 weeks to 11 years
Ratio Adult to child	Baby 1: 4 Child (2 yrs) 1:10	Baby 1: 4 Child (2 yrs) 1:10	Baby 1: 4 Child (2 yrs) 1:6 Child (4 yrs +) 1:10
Program	Preschool (2 +) Tumbling, swimming	Preschool (2+) K-1 Dance, gymnastics, swimming	Preschool (2+) K Tumbling, gymnastics, swimming Homework help
Special Features	Separate Tot and Child playgrounds Cross back parking lot of strip center	Separate Tot and Child playgrounds Attached--behind building in strip center	Separate Tot and Child playgrounds Attached--free standing building
Providers' Education	High school, CPR	High school, CPR Certified K-1	High school, CPR for children 6 wks - 2 Associate degree Ed. Preschool Certified K-1
Safety Rating	Excellent--CPS	Very good--CPS	Excellent--CPS
Price Per week	Babies (until 2 or potty trained) \$145 Children (2-4) \$130	Babies (until 2 or potty trained) \$ 145 Children (2-4) \$130	Babies (until 2 or potty trained) \$145 Children (2-4) \$130

Based on the criteria above the best value is _____ because_____.

Criteria Chart

Criteria	ABC manufacturer	QRS manufacturer	XYZ manufacturer
Special Features			
Safety Rating			
Price			

Based on the criteria above the best value is _____ because _____.

Step Four--The Resource Page

1. Keeping careful records when you do your research will help you complete this assignment.
2. You must list your sources on the Resource Page in APA format.
3. Use the attached information to help you format your paper.
4. Use Times New Roman 12 point font.

APA Quick Citation Guide

Here are some examples of common citation formats in APA (American Psychological Association) Style. For complete citation information, see the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. The following guidelines are based on the sixth edition (2009) of the Publication Manual. For information on using APA style for in-text citations, see our APA In-text Citation Guide.

A [tutorial](#) on the basics of APA style is available on the APA website.

Note: Citations with more than one line of text should have a hanging indent of 1/2 inch or 5 spaces.

Print Resources - including books and articles

Books

Important Elements:

- Author (last name, initials only for first & middle names)
- Publication date
- Title (in italics; capitalize only the first word of title and subtitle, and proper nouns)
- Place of publication
- Publisher

Book by a single author	Rollin, B. E. (2006). <i>Science and ethics</i> . New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
Book by two authors	Sherman, C., & Price, G. (2001). <i>The invisible web: Uncovering information sources search engines can't see</i> . Medford, NJ: CyberAge Books.
Book by three or more authors	Goodpaster, K. E., Nash, L. L., & de Bettignies, H. (2006). <i>Business ethics: Policies and persons</i> (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill/Irwin.
Book by a corporate author	American Medical Association. (2004). <i>American Medical Association family medical guide</i> (4th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
Article or chapter within an edited book	Winne, P. H. (2001). Self-regulated learning viewed from models of information processing. In B.J. Zimmerman & D.H. Schunk (Eds.), <i>Self-regulated learning and academic achievement</i> (2nd ed.) (pp. 160-192). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
Translation	Tolstoy, L. (2006). <i>War and peace</i> . (A. Briggs, Trans.). New York, NY: Viking. (Original work published 1865).

Articles from Print Periodicals (magazines, journals, and newspapers)

Find out more about the different types of periodicals here.

Important Elements:

- Author (last name, initials only for first & middle names)
- Date of publication of article (year and month for monthly publications; year, month and day for daily or weekly publications)
- Title of article (capitalize only the first word of title and subtitle, and proper nouns)
- Title of publication in italics (i.e., *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, *Newsweek*, *New York Times*)
- Volume and issue number
- Page numbers of article

Article in a monthly magazine (include volume # if given)	Swedin, E. G. (2006, May/June). Designing babies: A eugenics race with China? <i>The Futurist</i> , 40, 18-21.
Article in a weekly magazine (include volume # if given)	Will, G. F. (2004, July 5). Waging war on Wal-Mart. <i>Newsweek</i> , 144, 64.
Article in a daily newspaper	Dougherty, R. (2006, January 11). Jury convicts man in drunk driving death. <i>Centre Daily Times</i> , p. 1A. Rimer, S. (2003, September 3). A campus fad that's being copied: Internet plagiarism seems on the rise. <i>New York Times</i> , p. B7.
Article in a scholarly journal	Stock, C. D., & Fisher, P. A. (2006). Language delays among foster children: Implications for policy and practice. <i>Child Welfare</i> , 85(3), 445-462.
Book review	Rifkind, D. (2005, April 10). Breaking their vows. [Review of the book <i>The Mermaid Chair</i>]. <i>Washington Post</i> , p. T6.

Electronic Resources - including online articles, websites, and blogs

The following guidelines for electronic sources follow the recommendations in the sixth edition (2009) of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association.

Articles from the Library's Online Subscription Databases

Important Elements:

- Publication information (see Print Periodicals, above)
- DOI number (if available). More information about DOI numbers is available [here](#).
- If the DOI number is not available, APA recommends giving the URL of the publication. If the URL is not known, include the database name and accession number, if known: Retrieved from ERIC database (ED496394).

Magazine article with URL	Poe, M. (2006, September). The hive. <i>Atlantic Monthly</i> , 298, 86-95. Retrieved from http://www.theatlantic.com
Journal article with DOI	Blattner, J., & Bacigalupo, A. (2007). Using emotional intelligence to develop executive leadership and team and organizational development. <i>Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research</i> , 59(3), 209-219. doi:10.1037/1065-9293.59.3.209

Articles in Online Journals, Magazines and Newspapers

Important Elements

- Author (last name, initials only for first & middle names)
- Date of publication of article
- Title of article
- Title of publication (in italics)
- Volume and issue number (for scholarly journals, if given)
- Page numbers, if given
- DOI number, if given. More information about DOI numbers is available [here](#).
- If the DOI is not available, give the URL (Web address) of the article.

Article in an online scholarly journal	Overbay, A., Patterson, A. S., & Grable, L. (2009). On the outs: Learning styles, resistance to change, and teacher retention. <i>Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education</i> , 9(3). Retrieved from http://www.citejournal.org/vol9/iss3/currentpractice/article1.cfm
Article in an online magazine	Romm, J. (2008, February 27). The cold truth about climate change. <i>Salon.com</i> . Retrieved from http://www.salon.com
Article in an online newspaper	McCarthy, M. (2004, May 24). Only nuclear power can now halt global warming. <i>Earthtimes</i> . Retrieved from http://www.earthtimes.org

Interviews (including information from sales personal)

According to the APA Publication Manual, because a personal, unpublished interview consists of unrecoverable data, there is no need to cite it in the reference list. Cite personal communications in text only.

example:

K.W. Schaie (personal communication, April 18, 1993)

Blogs & Wikis

Note: Wikis are collaborative web pages that anyone can write and edit. Information found on a wiki is not necessarily contributed by experts.

Blog post	Jeremiah, D. (2007, September 29). The right mindset for success in business and personal life [Web log message]. Retrieved from http://www.myrockcrawler.com
Wiki entry	Happiness. (n.d.). In <i>Psychwiki</i> . Retrieved December 7, 2009 from http://www.psychwiki.com/wiki/Happiness

Web Sites

Important Elements

- Author (if known)
- Date of publication, copyright date, or date of last update
- Title of Web site
- Date you accessed the information
- URL (Web address) of the site

Web site with author	Kraizer, S. (2005). <i>Safe child</i> . Retrieved February 29, 2008, from http://www.safechild.org/
Web site with corporate author	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). (2008, February 15). <i>Stop underage drinking</i> . Retrieved February 29, 2008, from http://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov
Web site with unknown author	<i>The Nittany Lion Mascot</i> . (2006). Retrieved February 29, 2008, from http://www.psu.edu/ur/about/nittanymascot.html
Page within a Web site (unknown author)	Global warming solutions. (2007, May 21). In <i>Union of Concerned Scientists</i> . Retrieved February 29, 2008, from http://www.ucsusa.org/global_warming/solutions

Step Five--The Presentation

Creating an Effective PowerPoint Presentation

Virginia Montecino

Hints for a successful presentation:

- Plan carefully
- Do your research
- Know your audience
- Time your presentation
- Practice your presentation
- Speak comfortably and clearly

Effective PowerPoint Slides

- Use design templates
- Standardize position, colors and styles
- Include only necessary information
- Limit the information to essentials
- Content should be self-evident
- Use colors that contrast
- Be consistent with effects, transitions and animation
- Too many slides can lose your audience

Text guidelines

- Generally no more than 6 words a line
- Generally no more than 6 lines a slide
- Avoid long sentences
- Larger font indicates more important information
- Font size generally ranges from 18 to 48 point
- Be sure text contrasts with background
- Fancy fonts can be hard to read
- Words in all capital letters are hard to read
- Avoid abbreviations and acronyms
- Limit punctuation marks

Clip Art and Graphics

- Should balance the slide
- Should enhance and complement the text, not overwhelm
- No more than two graphics per slide

Step Six--Presentation Content

Slides

1. Title Slide
 - a. Product Name(i.e. cell phone plan)
 - b. Your name
 - c. Date
2. Slide Two
 - a. Overview
 - b. Why it is important to have the product?
 - c. What are the benefits of having this product or service?
 - d. What are the alternatives to not having the product or service?
3. Slide Three
 - a. Each manufacturer--why chosen?
4. Slide Four
 - a. Overview of Criteria
 - b. Explain why each is important for your evaluation
5. Slides Five-Eleven
 - a. Each criteria applied to each manufacturer
 - b. You may want to do graphs here
6. Slide Twelve
 - a. Consider the other choices then
 - b. Explain your choice--which is best.

Consumer Research Rubric

Name _____

	<i>Peer Draft</i>	<i>Final Draft</i>	<i>Teacher's Comments</i>
DOCUMENT DESIGN			30%
1. The PowerPoint® is easy to read.			
2. Format is attractive and effective.			
3. The project has visual appeal.			
AUDIENCE ANALYSIS & ADAPTATION			20%
1. The topic, the comparisons and the format are appropriate for the intended audience.			
2. The has PowerPoint® been produced with the user's needs in mind.			
CONTENT			30%
1. Information is complete and well organized.			
2. Project instructions were followed.			
3. The project fulfills a useful purpose.			
MECHANICS			10%
1. Word choice is correct, concise and precise.			

Rough Draft--10%

Partner's signature, indicating review conference _____