

Page Per Year Plan™

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Will Fitzhugh 3 July 2003

For several years (since about 1999), I have suggested, to those who doubt the ability of U.S. high school seniors to write academic history research papers, that schools should start on our Page Per Year Plan, which would work as follows:

Each first grader would be required to write a one-page paper on a subject other than herself or himself, with at least one source.

A page would be added each year to the required academic writing, such that, for example, fifth graders would have to write a five-page paper, ninth graders would have to write a nine-page research paper, with sources, and so on, until each senior could be asked to prepare a 12-page academic research paper, with endnotes and bibliography, on some historical topic.

This would gradually prepare students for future academic writing tasks, and each senior could graduate from high school knowing more about some important topic than anyone else in the class, and he/she may also have read at least one nonfiction (history) book before college. This should reduce the need for remedial instruction in writing (and perhaps in remedial reading as well) at the college level.

At each grade level, teachers will need more time to help students plan their papers and to evaluate and comment on them when the papers come in, but with our Page Per Year Plan, all students would be likely to graduate from U.S. high schools with better academic expository writing and better reading skills.

The Concord Review
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