

Please follow the format of this Sample Integration Paper exactly on preparing the Integration Paper for your Heritage Institute Independent Study.

This paper will be sent to The Heritage Institute (THI) by your instructor, reviewed by THI, and then sent to Antioch University Seattle where it is kept on file along with your Credit Report.

SAMPLE INTEGRATION PAPER

Course Instructor Name
Course Name
Your Name

Date
Course #

Integration Paper

1. What I Learned vs. What I Expected From Taking the Course

I teach social studies at the middle school level and wanted to find out more how Oregon's past had shaped its present. Students should be able to make connections between the history of any part of the world and its present culture. I wanted to discover insights into the people who were responsible for Oregon's history, and generally gain fresh material in the form of documents, oral accounts, photos and museum displays that would help make the region's history come alive for students.

I have gained an enormous amount of information and understanding about local history from following the assignments in this course. In Portland, for example, the foresight of two men purchasing core acreage as a park reserve has given present day Portland a beautiful wooded section amidst all the asphalt and steel. I think it's important for children to know that these kinds of lessons from history can be used to guide our actions today--to learn we are not powerless, but can indeed make our mark on history like these men did.

In reading the diaries of pioneers and through oral interviews with local historians, I gained a deeper, more intimate appreciation for the inner strength and sheer determination required for people to make a journey of this kind. I also felt that the museum trips helped me to see better the multi-cultural aspect to our history, like when I visited the Pendleton Underground Museum and learned about the Chinese forced to live there. It is hard to accept that our history has passages as dark as those underground tunnels, and this makes it even more important to confront similar discriminatory attitudes and practices going on today with Hispanics, Middle Easterners, Jews and Asian peoples.

Overall, I would say my expectations were not only met, but they were exceeded compared to what I wanted to get from this course.

2. What Aspects of the Course Were Most Helpful & Why

I think the real advantage of this course is that I had the time to plan my own itinerary and visit historical spots first hand and talk to local historians. There is really no better teacher than hands-on experience; being able to visit the museums, see the underground tunnels, touch the old wagon ruts, in short, be there and, in doing so, be better able to imagine myself into the past reality. I also feel that reading the pioneer diaries was really helpful, as the personal accounts took history from the abstract and brought it home. I found the course workbook well designed and full of helpful book titles, and I like the fact that the assignments required me to get out and see history for myself.

3. What I Would Do Differently in Another Independent Study

I would like to not delay getting started, as I didn't begin my reading and real work until 3 months after signing up, and then only had six weeks left in summer to do the site and museum visits. If I were to do another history study like this, I would visit more local people who were longtime natives of the area in order to make a record of their oral histories. I love older people, older houses and towns, and find that many of our seniors have stories that can enrich our lives, if we will only pay attention and value what they have to offer. At the passing of my mother a few years ago, I realized how little any of us children had in-depth knowledge of what brought her to Oregon from Minnesota many years ago. She used to tell stories, and my siblings and I pieced together accounts of her life from that, but I wish we had formally asked her to record her recollections so that I could pass these on to my children. Consequently, I have become more aware of how important it is to keep a personal record of history.

4. How and When I Will Use What I've Learned

In our school, I chair a committee of social studies teachers which has an on-going project called Making History Real. Parents, the local county librarian and people from the area historical society have all joined forces to help enliven our history curriculum through planning of field trips, museums visits, student work internships at historical sites, videos and guest lecturers who come to school. This course will provide a lot of information to widen the horizons of our efforts and to shape curriculum, as my studies took me further into state history than just that of our immediate region. I'll use what I gained in the course to plan field trips and, perhaps, to have some of the people I talked to come and visit our school. I think if I can make history tangible like this for students, they, like I did, will come to have a better appreciation for the past and its effect on the present.

5. Instructor Contact and the Materials Provided

I really enjoyed working with the course instructors, their enthusiasm for history and dedication to teaching are apparent and a boost to my own teaching. The anthology of source material compiled in the workbook I have found invaluable. By taking the course independently, I was able to travel to locations a great distance from my home and then, right away, teach what I had gotten to my students. I found my students were more interested because of my greater enthusiasm and the authenticity of the material I used. I am really pleased with a course like this and found the instructors well prepared, knowledgeable and professional at all times.