



# VJAS VOICE

The Virginia Junior Academy of Science's Quarterly Publication

October 2015

As this school year's first marking period comes to a close, VJAS and VAS officers are working hard to make VJAS 2015 successful! We look forward to more incredible research and science in the upcoming year.

## Website Announcement

Our new website is live at [www.vjas.org](http://www.vjas.org)! While it is still in beta phase, it is very user-friendly and more modern. Our old website can still be found at <http://66.147.244.216/~vacadsci/vjas-1.htm>

## Upcoming Symposia

VJAS 2016 will occur at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, VA from May 17-19. Please see our [Bulletin Board](#) for information about upcoming deadlines and symposium.

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### *VJAS Student Government:*

*President: Mr. Ben Rhoades*

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UNIVERSITY OF  
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*where great minds get to work*

## Ideas Matter

There are many methods of finding an excellent experiment topic, but you always want to keep in mind the resources, skill level, and your interest level associated with any project. While you want to challenge yourself in skill level, remember that judges always prefer a thorough understanding over a *seemingly* impressive project. Make sure you understand the resources, including time and cost, involved with your project and plan accordingly. Lastly, think about your interest in a topic. Regardless of whether a science experiment is required at your school, you will have to dedicate a substantial amount of time to this project. The best motivators are neither grades nor potential outcomes, but passion and curiosity.

Another important rule of thumb when thinking of science projects is originality; if you can search your title on Google and a paper with a very similar experimental design shows up, you may want to think about what to do to make your project original. Plagiarism should be avoided at all costs! At VJAS, we have a zero-tolerance plagiarism policy, and papers found to have been plagiarized will be disqualified.

One great way to think of ideas is a free-form brainstorming session. Turn on a timer for 15 minutes, and write down any questions or observations that come to mind. The only rule is that you cannot erase any work!

If you are unsure of which category of science to research, look to your favorite science class in school for inspiration, and branch out from there. You may also want to look at the science and mathematics behind “everyday things,” such as music or food. The bottom line is that you can turn almost anything into a great science experiment.



Photo courtesy of  
Reona Pereira, Secretary and Historian

# WHY JOIN VJAS?

In the past years, we have been seeing new interest in VJAS, and the quality of research is constantly improving. There are many reasons to join VJAS, including becoming a published researcher, scholarship opportunities, networking opportunities, and potentially being able to present to a State Academy of Science.

You will also have an increased and first-hand understanding of math and science. Even if you are not sure how interested in science you are, the lessons of research and presentation will be invaluable no matter what field you choose to pursue.

# Science Paper Resources

There are many excellent resources from VJAS, including the handbook, available at the [VJAS.org/rules--guidelines-forms.html](http://VJAS.org/rules--guidelines-forms.html)

[Grammarly.com/1](http://Grammarly.com/1) is a great spelling, grammar, and plagiarism checker.

Some rules that are often ignored until the last minute, such as making sure to write your procedure in paragraph form instead of list form, the 12-page limit (not including the Appendix), and more can be found in the Student Checklist in Appendix A in the Official Appendices to the Handbook.

General, Scholarship, and Special Interest Forms can also be found here.

If you are looking for scientific papers to cite, try <http://guides.lib.jmu.edu/VASJR>. It is a free resource from James Madison University.

## Contact Us

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