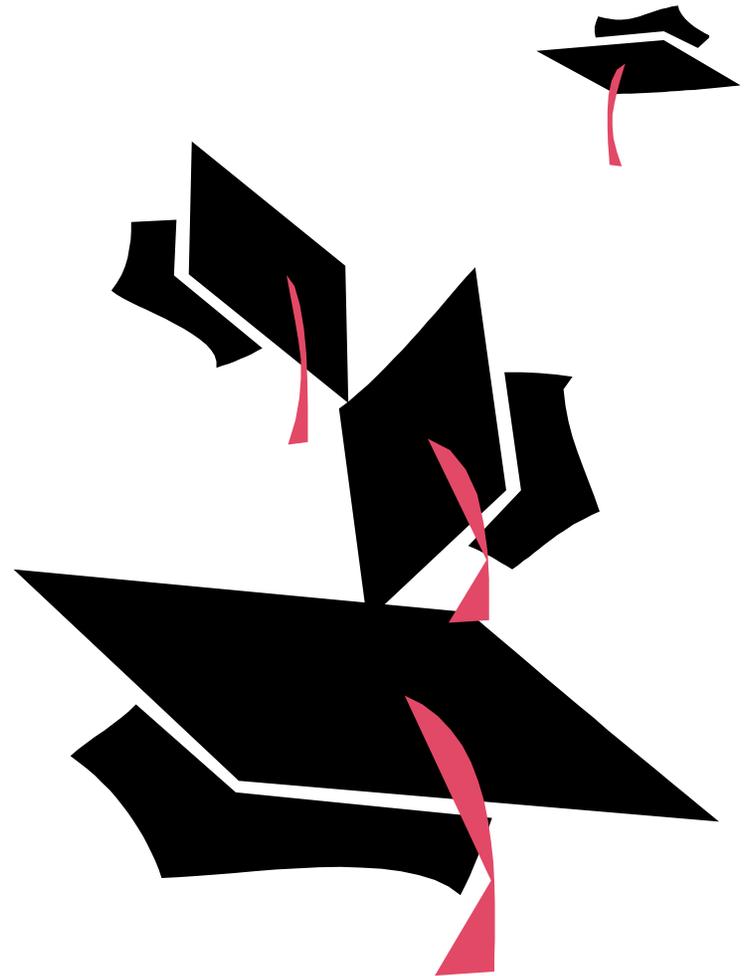


**D**EFENSE **O**F **G**RADUATION

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**SHALOM HIGH SCHOOL**

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# INTRODUCTION

When you become a candidate for graduation, you have reached a stage in your life when you must begin planning what you will do after high school. It is important to realize that you have acquired the skills and attained the maturity that will allow you to leave high school confident of success.

After you have become a part of the Shalom family, decided that completing high school is an important personal goal, and begun to demonstrate mastery of Shalom's graduation competencies, we believe you are ready to take a reflective look at your educational progress. We believe that before you are allowed to graduate, you should know you are ready for what lies ahead and be able to defend your readiness to graduate.

Therefore, all Shalom seniors are required to develop a Defense of Graduation Portfolio (the D.O.G.) that compiles the best work of their high school careers. Seniors must present this Portfolio to a graduation committee consisting of staff, parents, Shalom graduates, and community members. The purpose of this book is to help guide you in the development of the Portfolio and the presentation to the graduation committee.

# SAMPLE EVALUATION FORM

AREA	RATING	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
AUTOBIOGRAPHY/ SELF-ASSESSMENT/ POST HIGH SCHOOL PLAN			
ENGLISH			
LIFE SKILLS			
MATHEMATICS			
SCIENCE			
SOCIAL STUDIES			
SENIOR ELECTIVE			

## CO = COMPETENT

*Above average work. To earn this rating, students should be able to:*

- demonstrate knowledge of the materials, but less flexibility in applying it
- give a presentation that is fairly confident and well-prepared, but basically “by the book” rather than directed by their personal choices and passions

## SA = SATISFACTORY

*Average work. To earn this rating, students should be able to:*

- demonstrate adequate preparation and knowledge of material and/or be able to verbally defend knowledge

## UN = UNACCEPTABLE

*Work that must be revised. To earn this rating students will:*

- demonstrate little mastery of the information
- demonstrate visible lack of preparation in a given area

FOR STUDENTS TO SUCCESSFULLY DEFEND THEIR READINESS TO GRADUATE, THEY MUST RECEIVE AT LEAST A SATISFACTORY RATING FROM A MAJORITY OF THE GRADUATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ALL SEVEN (7) AREAS. ANY AREA IN WHICH A STUDENT RECEIVES A MAJORITY OF UNACCEPTABLE RATINGS MUST BE REVISED AND PRESENTED AGAIN TO THE COMMITTEE.

# STANDARDS

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Any written parts of the D.O.G. Portfolio should be composed in clear, grammatical English that reflects the expected proficiency level of a high school graduate. In order to meet these high standards, you are expected to understand that it is necessary to do **rough drafts** of the Portfolio, and then a final, **corrected draft** before submitting it to the graduation committee. The final product should be relatively error-free – a clear reflection of your pride in your education.

Neatness and organization are also stressed in the D.O.G. Portfolio. It must be **typed** on standard size theme paper. A binder or folder can be used to hold and protect the completed Portfolio.

**Section headings** and **sub-section headings** are recommended to promote clarity and readability in the Portfolio. **Photographs, charts, drawings,** and **appendices** with samples of your work are also encouraged. The style of the Portfolio writing should reflect your individual creativity.

# THE SEVEN AREAS

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THE OPTIONS LISTED FOR YOU ARE SUGGESTIONS. YOU SHOULD FEEL FREE TO DEVELOP OPTIONS ON YOUR OWN TO DEFEND EACH AREA. YOU ARE ALSO ENCOURAGED TO MAKE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN AREAS AND/OR CONCEPTS.

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<b>AUTOBIOGRAPHY/SELF-ASSESSMENT/ POST HIGH SCHOOL PLAN</b>
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This is your life. It is not meant to be a third grade-level chronology of events. Instead, the autobiography should reflect your growing understanding of your own place in the world. Just as each student is an individual, each autobiography will be unique and different.

In the autobiography, there is a wide range of appropriate subjects. It is especially important to concentrate upon things that influenced your personal growth and development. Because it involves most of your life to date, education will probably be the most important and largest part of the autobiography. It is expected that you will summarize your education as a matter of course. But, you should also analyze your educational career. It is also expected that you will provide a vision for where you want to go in the future and a plan for how to get there. This post high school plan should include a resume.

# DEFENSE OF GRADUATION EVALUATION GUIDELINES

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The Defense of Graduation Portfolio and its presentation will be evaluated in the following two ways:

## I. COMMENTARY

*Committee members will evaluate the students using a commentary. On a sheet provided, the members will write their opinion on the strengths and weaknesses in each area of the student's Portfolio and presentation.*

## II. RATING SCALE

### **EX = EXCELLENT**

- Superior quality work. To earn this rating, students should be able to:*
- keep the focus and attention of the committee
  - give a presentation that flows from themselves rather than being "pulled out" by the committee
  - show creativity in their choices of books, topics, etc.
  - "know their stuff" - be able to use their knowledge flexibly
  - speak and write clearly
  - speak with confidence and passion, demonstrating a heartfelt interest in the issues and questions that arise

All questions for the student should be relevant to the work presented – we want to avoid turning the committee questions into “trivial pursuit.” You should be looking for evidence that the students have the skills and maturity to be successful once they leave Shalom.

There is no one way to do a D.O.G. Portfolio. Just as individuals are widely different, individual Portfolios will (and should!) reflect the differences that exist among people. Creativity and individualism in the Portfolio are not just encouraged – they are necessary! Style and a good proportion of content should be individual just as students themselves are individuals.

The purpose of the Portfolio is to make a clear statement about the individual’s *PRIDE* in his/her abilities and accomplishments. We believe the way to achieve pride is to work for excellence.

## ENGLISH

You should be able to demonstrate your competency in reading, comprehension, thinking, and writing. The autobiography can provide further evidence of your proficiency in English.

### **Your Portfolio could include the following possibilities:**

- Samples of papers written for class
- Major literary paper such as a book report, an analysis of a work of literature, or a comparison of two literary works
- Editorial/argumentative paper exploring both sides of an issue- Samples of creative writing such as poetry, myths, short stories, etc.
- Project showing interconnectedness of two or more of the following: a literary work, the author, and/or the historical context of the piece.

## LIFE SKILLS

You should be able to identify and discuss the skills needed by an independent human being to be a productive member of this society.

*Your Portfolio could include a paper or presentation about the following topics, using material covered in class:*

- Parenting skills/Effective parenting
- Sexual responsibility
- Importance of self-esteem
- Being a smart consumer
- Importance of values in the workplace
- Goal-setting
- Decision-making skills
- Value of community service
- Advantages and problems with living in a multicultural society

## EXPECTATIONS OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Every Shalom senior is required to compile and present a Defense of Graduation Portfolio, which contains evidence of the student's ability and understanding in seven areas. The purpose of the Portfolio is twofold. In part, the D.O.G. Portfolio exists to help each student make a defense of his or her readiness to graduate. Secondly, however, the Portfolio is a unique opportunity for our graduating seniors to take an in-depth look at themselves – past, present, and future.

The D.O.G. Portfolio is a culmination of the student's high school experience here at Shalom. The Portfolio must be compiled by each student and reviewed by his or her counselor before it can be presented to the graduation committee. In addition to presenting the Portfolio, a student must meet the following requirements in order to graduate:

- **accumulate 22 credits**
- **demonstrate 300 competency skills**
- **pass proficiency tests in math and reading**

Prior to the presentation of the Portfolio, the Shalom staff will have evaluated students in math, English, science, social studies, and life skills. We are asking you to assess the student on the following:

- **the student's knowledge of the material presented**
- **the student's preparation of the material presented**
- **the student's presentation of the material**

## SEVICE LEARNING / COMMUNITY SERVICE

Service learning and Community Service are opportunities for you to get involved with your community in real ways. Service-Learning integrates community service with instruction and reflection to enrich your learning experience, teach civic responsibility and strengthen our communities.

### **What Service-Learning/Community Service Looks like:**

If students collect trash out of an urban streambed, they are providing a valued service to the community as volunteers. If school students collect trash from an urban streambed, analyze their findings to determine possible sources of pollution, and share the results with residents of the neighborhood, they are engaging in service-learning.

### **What qualifies as service-learning and community service:**

- Students cannot be paid for their service
- The work must benefit someone outside the student's immediate family
- The service may not be part of a criminal justice sanction

A minimum of 25 hours of service learning/community service must be completed for the portfolio.

When choosing your service-learning/community service project, you must work closely with your advisor. Your project should showcase your interests and talents and include either a detailed journal of your experiences and/or a reflective paper.

## MATHEMATICS

You should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the practical uses of math, as well as basic math operations: addition, subtraction, long division, multiplication, fractions, decimals, percentages, basic geometry, etc.

### *Your Portfolio could include the following possibilities:*

- Algebra Application: solving a real-world problem using more than one skill you learned in algebra.
- Geometry Application: solving a real-world problem using more than one skill you learned in geometry.
- Decision-Making Problem: a project that requires you to make a choice based on mathematics.
- Mathography: a written theme about your math experiences, your uses of math outside school, and your expectations for using math after high school.
- Mathematical Investigation: this could include a research project, math on the job interview, a study over time, or a statistical investigation.

*You may wish to include standardized test scores (e.g. CTBS, ACT), tests and worksheets, etc. in your Portfolio.*

## SCIENCE

You should be able to summarize courses taken at Shalom; demonstrate an understanding of the scientific method; and be able to discuss how advances in technology influence the scientific worldview. You should also expect to be asked your opinion on the limits (if any) of this worldview.

*Your Portfolio could include the following possibilities:*

- Series of short essays on these or other topics
- Research paper on a single topic
- Description or presentation of a controlled experiment which shows practical application of the scientific method

## SOCIAL STUDIES

For your D.O.G., you should focus on demonstrating an understanding of one of the following areas: Government, History, and Geography. You should *analyze the purpose* of studying one of those areas. You should also discuss the *function* of your chosen area. Finally, you should discuss your *own interpretation* of your chosen area. You should be able to answer the question, “Where and how do I fit into Social Studies?”

*Your Portfolio could include the following possibilities:*

- Research paper
- Timeline showing interconnectedness of different historical periods
- Book report on a reading not from the classroom

*You may wish to include materials from the other social studies areas in your Portfolio.*