15-point plan for managing projects

+ Can be used for large and small, written and oral (exam) assignments and projects.
+ Can be used for projects in which *existing knowledge* is to be communicated and projects in which knowledge is to be *produced and communicated* (research).
+ This form is intended for use as a checklist and a catalogue for inspiration which reduces the risk of forgetting anything significant.
+ The points are not all equally relevant for all projects.
+ The right-hand column is an attempt to show the corresponding phases of the classic five canons.

	Written projects	Oral projects	

1 — Reflect
Create an overview of the project framework. What are you supposed to produce?

Written: What is the topic? What does the thesis statement require? What are you supposed to produce? What do the academic regulations and the teacher require? What is the time frame? How many pages are you allowed to write/do you have to write? Which genre? Which forms of presentation?

Oral: What have you been asked to do? What are your audience's qualifications? What do they already know? What should they get out of it (knowledge, inspiration, skills)? Where will it take place? How is the room furnished and what kind of technology is installed? What will happen before and after?

2 — Innovate
Be creative and have ideas. Use simple tools.

Never simply start writing a text or making slides. What is interesting? What is relevant? What is untested? Use simple methods: *Brainstorm. Mind mapping. The pentagon method. The dice method.* Use a relatively long time doing this. You can use the tools you find at studypedia.au.dk or elsewhere

3 — Probe
Map your existing resources. You have some already.

What do you already know about the topic and similar topics? Which sources and resources do you already have? In which areas do you lack knowledge? Where can you find the knowledge you need? How difficult is it to obtain? What are your strengths? How can they be used for the project?

INVENTIO

4 — Organise
Plan the work process.

This is a meta-level with regard to the content of the project:
What do you have to do and when? Make a plan of times, activities and deadlines. Count backwards from the time of submission. Some things can be planned quite precisely – others have to be more flexible because they depend on what happens along the way. Make the plan carefully and be prepared to revise it as you go along. Nobody sticks to a plan from start to finish.

5 — Problematise
Get a clear overview of the project content. Use the pentagon from the book *Den gode opgave* (Danish).

Exploratory genre (for creating knowledge)
• Thesis statement
• The motivation for the study
• The topic of the study
• The theoretical framework
• Procedure, method and research design

Explanatory genre (for preexisting knowledge)
• The message and content
• Content included and excluded.
• Organisation
• Argumentation

6 — Elaborate
Find (more) knowledge. Research, explore and investigate.

+ Existing knowledge: read sources. + New knowledge (research): data, empirical data, interviews.
(This varies a lot from course to course, and from topic to topic. So it is difficult to say anything general. A lot of time needs to be spent on this. Don't be fooled by the small number of words in this point.)

DISPOSITIO

7 — Produce
Read and write.

Written: Write, read, write, read and reflect. This is not the final text. You will produce more 'research text' than you end up with in the assignment. The outline and thesis statement will be adjusted on an ongoing basis.

Oral: Write content notes, read and reflect. Do not make the (final) slides yet.

8 — Adapt
Adapt to the target group.

Written: Draw up a language strategy. Who is the target group? What do they know already? What is the importance of this?

Oral: What is your role in relation to the audience (ethos)? How can you involve the audience? What type of rhetorical devices do you want to use (rhetorical toolbox).

ELOCUTIO

9 — Communicate
Write the final text.

Written: Stop the expansive reading. Only read to check what you have already written. Formulate and finish writing. Keep the target group in mind. Deselect passages. Rearrange the content if necessary.

Oral: Make a verbatim manuscript (in spoken language), make slides and prepare other visual tools (blackboard, flip chart, folk dancing?).You can also make handouts or bring along other things to engage your audience.

10 — Conclude
The results of the study. What have you learned?

Written: Write the conclusion. What are the results of the study? Be open-minded about the results. Remember to answer the thesis statement! Is the reasoning in the text good? Is it coherent? If not, go back to step 5.

Oral: What are the central points for the audience? These should be written on one of the first and one of the last slides. The most significant aspects can always be boiled down to a few points – otherwise, you have not prioritised well enough and must go back to point 5.

11 — Revise
Make the text better.

Written: Read the text carefully. *Always ask for feedback.* The three steps of revising:
• Content, topics and structure.
• Language and wording.
• Errors and characters.

Oral: Proofreading the text. Colours and effects? Animations, sound and images? Does the number of slides match the time frame? You must be able to get through everything in the allotted time – otherwise something has to be removed.

MEMORIA

12 — Repeat
Practise several times.

Print your manuscript – perhaps in the form of cue cards. Practise the presentation several times – preferably with a practice audience.

13 — Submit
On time.

Written: As an uploaded or printed version. Make sure all formal requirements are in order:
• Exam cover page?
• Number of copies?
• Appendices and other documentation?

Oral: Get there in good time. Bring the necessary items (computer, cables, adapter, handouts, books, water bottle etc.). 'Be present'. Trust your plan. Stick to the time frame. Speak clearly and calmly. Stand up. Enjoy!

14 — Evaluate
Go through the process. Remember your experiences for next time.

This is a meta-level with regard to the content of the project:
How did the process work out? What have you learned – and what should be done differently/better next time? What did you do well in the process? Did you discover new strengths or weaknesses in yourself? How can they be used or handled? Are you satisfied with the result and grade? Can you get feedback from the teacher? Did the feedback help you to make progress? Do you have any advice for yourself for the next project?

ACTIO

15 — Celebrate

Remember to celebrate the completion of one piece of work before starting the next. Be good to yourself. Victory! Go out with your girlfriend or boyfriend. Take a foot bath. Buy a dog.