

Genius Hour

Course Description:

Genius Hour is about growth mindset, student-driven learning and giving students a choice to do or learn something they've always wanted to know more about. Students are encouraged to explore their own individual passion projects, which helps students to see that their own creativity, problem-solving, and passion can lead them to make huge contributions to our world.

Course Sequence:

Unit 1: Generating Ideas for a Passion Project: 1-2 weeks

Unit 2: Research and Note-taking: 5-6 weeks

Unit 3: Creating and Presenting: 1-2 weeks

Pre-requisite:

None

Genius Hour Unit 1

Content Area: Language Arts/Technology	
Unit Title: Finding Your Passion	
Grade Level: 8	
<p>Unit Summary: In this unit students will understand the concept of a passion project, and they will start thinking about their passion. They will narrow their topics and develop a driving question.</p> <p>21st Century Themes and Skills: Creativity and Innovation, Communication and Collaboration, Critical Thinking & Problem Solving, Information, Media, and Technology Skills, Life and Career Skills</p> <p>Interdisciplinary Connection: Students individual projects will connect to other disciplines depending on their interests(careers, music, architecture, history, economics, ecology, game design, art, and sports).</p>	
Standards (Content and Technology):	
CPI#:	Statement:
NJSLS Standards	
W.8.7.	Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.
W.8.8.	Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
Career Ready Practices	
CRP2.	Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.
CRP4.	Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.
CRP5.	Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions.
CRP6.	Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
CRP7.	Employ valid and reliable research strategies.
CRP8.	Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
CRP11.	Use technology to enhance productivity.
Educational Technology Standards	
8.1.8.A.1	Demonstrate knowledge of a real world problem using digital tools.
8.1.8.A.3	Use and/or develop a simulation that provides an environment to solve a real world problem or theory

<p>Unit Essential Question(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is a passion project and what is its purpose? ● What is your passion? ● What is a driving question? ● How do you write a strong driving question? 	<p>Unit Enduring Understandings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students will understand their actions and inactions have consequences. ● Students will understand their passion and purpose for learning.
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Unit Learning Targets/Objectives:

Students will...

- Understand the purpose of creating a passion project
- Develop an idea for their own passion project
- Learn the qualities of a strong driving question
- Students will write a strong driving question

Formative Assessments:

- Teacher observation
- Discussion

Summative/Benchmark Assessment(s):

- Project

Alternative Assessments:

- Worksheets
- Journal reflection

Resources/Materials :

What is Genius Hour Intro Video https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=NMFQUtHsWhc

Project Inspiration Links

- <https://oostburg.k12.wi.us/middle-school/8th-grade-genius-hour/>
- <https://www.middleweb.com/28123/idea-starters-for-the-genius-hour-classroom/>
- https://gms.goshenlocalschools.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=462238&type=u&pREC_ID=1113359
- <https://www.sciencebuddies.org/science-fair-projects/project-ideas/video-computer-games>
- <https://www.20timeineducation.com/20-project/20-time-ideas>

Modifications:

Special Education Student/504

- Allow errors
- Rephrase questions, directions, and explanations
- Allow extended time to answer questions
- Provide one-on-one assistance
- Accept participation at any level
- Consult with Case Managers and follow IEP accommodations/modifications

At-Risk Students

- Provide extended time to complete tasks
- Consult with Guidance Counselors and follow I&RS procedures/action plans
- Consult with classroom teacher(s) for specific behavior interventions
- Provide rewards as necessary

English Language Learners

- Assign a buddy, same language or English speaking
- Allow errors in speaking
- Rephrase questions, directions, and explanations
- Allow extended time to answer questions
- Accept participation at any level, even one word
- Modified assessments/assignments, as needed

Gifted and Talented Students

- Provide extension activities
- Build on students' intrinsic motivations
- Consult with parents to accommodate students' interests in completing tasks at their level of engagement

- Give tests orally, as needed
- Allow spelling errors
- Assess comprehension through alternative means (gestures, demo, drawings)
- Allow open book tests
- In open book tests, indicate page number in textbook where answer is found
- Provide study guides and/or outlines
- Allow extended time for test completion, as necessary
- Use reduced text, so that print is not dense
- Adapt reading to reflect language proficiency
- Allow errors in speaking
- Allow errors in writing
- Allow spelling errors
- Use group projects rather than individual work
- Allow extended time for project/work completion, as necessary
- Adapt reading to reflect language proficiency
- Break down tasks into manageable units as needed
- Rephrase/Repeat questions, directions, and explanations, as needed
- Give instructions/directions in writing and orally, as needed
- Highlight key vocabulary
- Provide video on subject
- Use books on tape/CD
- Adapt reading to reflect language proficiency
- Provide hands-on activities and explanations
- Accept participation at any level, even one word
- Allow extra processing time
- Question student to check for understanding
- Break down tasks into manageable units as needed
- Repetition and review of previously learned material
- Give instructions/directions in writing and orally, as needed
- Use of translation dictionaries to locate words in native language

Lesson Name/Topic	Lesson Objective(s)	Time frame (day(s) to complete)
Introduction	-Understand the concept of a passion project and its purpose	1-2 days
Generating Ideas	-Use strategies to generate ideas for possible project topics -Use the internet to explore possible project topics	3-4 days
Driving Question	-Understand the qualities of a focused driving questions	1-2 day

	-Write a strong driving question	
Teacher Notes:		
Additional Resources:		

UDL Guidelines: Presentation Methods	UDL Guidelines: Action and Expression Methods	UDL Guidelines: Engagement Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present information through multiple media • Provide background knowledge • Offer alternatives for visual information • Offer alternatives for auditory information • Clarify vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimize access to tools and technologies • Use multiple media for communication • Guide appropriate goal-setting • Support planning and strategy development • Vary the methods for response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimize individual choice and autonomy • Minimize threats and distractions • Foster collaboration and community • Increase feedback • Develop self-assessment and reflection

Genius Hour Unit 2

Content Area: Language Arts/Technology	
Unit Title: Research and Note-taking	
Grade Level: 8	
<p>Unit Summary: In this unit students will dig deeper into their passion and begin researching. They will complete a project proposal and a tentative timeline. Students will learn about a variety of sources of information and the credibility of those sources.</p>	
<p>21st Century Themes and Skills: Creativity and Innovation, Communication and Collaboration, Critical Thinking & Problem Solving, Information, Media, and Technology Skills, Life and Career Skills</p>	
<p>Interdisciplinary Connection: Students individual projects will connect to other disciplines depending on their interests(careers, music, architecture, history, economics, ecology, game design, art, and sports).</p>	
Standards (Content and Technology):	
CPI#:	Statement:
NJSLS Standards	
RI.8.7.	Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.
RI.8.9.	Analyze and reflect on (e.g. practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) two or more texts that provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.
W.8.2.	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

W.8.7.	Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.
W.8.8.	Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
SL.8.1.	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
SL.8.4.	Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
Career Ready Practices	
CRP2.	Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.
CRP4.	Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.
CRP5.	Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions.
CRP6.	Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
CRP7.	Employ valid and reliable research strategies.
CRP8.	Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
CRP11.	Use technology to enhance productivity.
Educational Technology Standards	
8.1.8.A.1	Demonstrate knowledge of a real world problem using digital tools.
8.1.8.A.3	Use and/or develop a simulation that provides an environment to solve a real world problem or theory
8.1.8.D.2	Demonstrate the application of appropriate citations to digital content.
8.1.8.D.4	Assess the credibility and accuracy of digital content.
8.1.8.E.1	Effectively use a variety of search tools and filters in professional public databases to find information to solve a real world problem.

<p>Unit Essential Question(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What steps do you need to take to complete your passion project? • What are good, reliable sources for researching? • How do you give credit to your sources? • How do you write a formal email, create a survey, and conduct an interview? 	<p>Unit Enduring Understandings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will set a goal and create a detailed plan to achieve it. • Students will understand the importance of finding a variety of reliable sources.
<p>Unit Learning Targets/Objectives: <i>Students will...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a project proposal and timeline for their passion project • Evaluate a variety of sources for credibility • Create a running Works Cited page using MLA format • Conduct research including: emails, surveys, and interviews 	

Formative Assessments:

- Teacher observation
- Discussion

Summative/Benchmark Assessment(s):

- Project

Alternative Assessments:

- Worksheets
- Journal reflection

Resources/Materials :

MLA/Works Cited help <http://www.citationmachine.net/>

Tool to decode difficult text <http://rewordify.com/>

Video on surveys <https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-survey-research-definition-methods-types.html>

Katie Couric's how to interview video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4eOynrI2eTM>

Modifications:

Special Education Student/504

- Allow errors
- Rephrase questions, directions, and explanations
- Allow extended time to answer questions
- Provide one-on-one assistance
- Accept participation at any level
- Consult with Case Managers and follow IEP accommodations/modifications

At-Risk Students

- Provide extended time to complete tasks
- Consult with Guidance Counselors and follow I&RS procedures/action plans
- Consult with classroom teacher(s) for specific behavior interventions
- Provide rewards as necessary

English Language Learners

- Assign a buddy, same language or English speaking
- Allow errors in speaking
- Rephrase questions, directions, and explanations
- Allow extended time to answer questions
- Accept participation at any level, even one word
- Give instructions/directions in writing and orally, as needed
- Use of translation dictionaries to locate words in native language
- Modified assessments/assignments, as needed
- Give tests orally, as needed
- Allow spelling errors
- Assess comprehension through alternative means (gestures, demo, drawings)
- Allow open book tests
- In open book tests, indicate page number in textbook where answer is found
- Provide study guides and/or outlines
- Allow extended time for test completion, as necessary

Gifted and Talented Students

- Provide extension activities
- Build on students' intrinsic motivations
- Consult with parents to accommodate students' interests in completing tasks at their level of engagement

- Use reduced text, so that print is not dense
- Adapt reading to reflect language proficiency
- Allow errors in speaking
- Allow errors in writing
- Allow spelling errors
- Use group projects rather than individual work
- Allow extended time for project/work completion, as necessary
- Adapt reading to reflect language proficiency
- Break down tasks into manageable units as needed
- Rephrase/Repeat questions, directions, and explanations, as needed
- Give instructions/directions in writing and orally, as needed
- Highlight key vocabulary
- Provide video on subject
- Use books on tape/CD
- Use reduced text, so that print is not dense
- Adapt reading to reflect language proficiency
- Provide hands-on activities and explanations
- Accept participation at any level, even one word
- Allow extra processing time
- Question student to check for understanding
- Break down tasks into manageable units as needed
- Repetition and review of previously learned material
- Give instructions/directions in writing and orally, as needed
- Use of translation dictionaries to locate words in native language

Lesson Name/Topic	Lesson Objective(s)	Time frame (day(s) to complete)
Proposal	-Complete a project proposal -Create a tentative timeline of project steps	2-3 days
MISO Model	-Understand research is more than a Google search -Define MISO (media, information, survey, observation) -Brainstorm possible sources of information in each category of MISO	2-3 days
Credibility	-Learn tips to help evaluate a sources credibility -Evaluate the credibility of their sources	1-2 days
MLA	-Understand the basics of MLA format -Create a Works Cited page	1-2 days
Note-taking	-Understand the essentials elements of research notes	1-2 days

	-Develop a method for taking notes	
Experts	-Write a formal email to an expert	1-2 days
Survey	-Understand the purpose of a survey and the different types of survey questions -Create a survey using GoogleForm	2-3 days
Interview	-Learn how to prepare to conduct an interview -Write interview questions	2-3 days
Research	-Research and record information about their topic	10-15 days
Teacher Notes:		
Additional Resources:		

UDL Guidelines: Presentation Methods	UDL Guidelines: Action and Expression Methods	UDL Guidelines: Engagement Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present information through multiple media • Provide background knowledge • Offer alternatives for visual information • Offer alternatives for auditory information • Clarify vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimize access to tools and technologies • Use multiple media for communication • Guide appropriate goal-setting • Support planning and strategy development • Vary the methods for response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimise individual choice and autonomy • Minimize threats and distractions • Foster collaboration and community • Increase feedback • Develop self-assessment and reflection

Genius Hour Unit 3

Content Area: Language Arts/Technology
Unit Title: Creating and Presenting
Grade Level: 8
Unit Summary: In this unit students will learn the difference between active and inactive action. They will decide what kind of action they are going to take, and they will plan how they are going to share their passion project journey. They will then create, practice, and give a presentation.
21st Century Themes and Skills: Creativity and Innovation, Communication and Collaboration, Critical Thinking & Problem Solving, Information, Media, and Technology Skills, Life and Career Skills

Interdisciplinary Connection: Students individual projects will connect to other disciplines depending on their interests(careers, music, architecture, history, economics, ecology, game design, art, and sports).

Standards (Content and Technology):

CPI#:	Statement:
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NJSLS Standards

RI.8.7.	Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.
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W.8.7.	Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.
W.8.8.	Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
SL.8.1.	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
SL.8.4.	Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
SL.8.5.	Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.
S.L.8.6.	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Career Ready Practices

CRP2.	Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.
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CRP5.	Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions.
CRP6.	Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
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Educational Technology Standards

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8.1.8.E.1	Effectively use a variety of search tools and filters in professional public databases to find information to solve a real world problem.

Unit Essential Question(s):

- What is the difference between direct and indirect action?
- How do you plan a presentation?
- What makes an engaging presentation?

Unit Enduring Understandings:

- Students will understand the ways (direct or indirectly) they can take action and make changes.

- Students will understand what makes an engaging presentation.

Unit Learning Targets/Objectives:

Students will...

- Understand the difference between direct and indirect action.
- Outline, practice, and share their final presentation
- Reflect on their personal learning styles and use the knowledge to facilitate self-growth

Formative Assessments:

- Teacher observation
- Discussion

Summative/Benchmark Assessment(s):

- Project

Alternative Assessments:

- Worksheets
- Journal reflection

Resources/Materials :

Project videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xesU5mxPUfU&feature=youtu.be>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=4&v=Cap6bNRB6i8

Modifications:

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Lesson Name/Topic	Lesson Objective(s)	Time frame (day(s) to complete)
Action	-Understand the difference between direct and indirect action	1 day
Outline	-Use a graphic organizer to outline their final presentation	1-2 days
Create & Practice	-Understand the do's and don'ts of oral presentations -Create a final presentation	4-6 days

Midland Park Public Schools

	-Edit and practice presenting	
Present	-Present passion project journey to peers	1-2 days
Teacher Notes:		
Additional Resources:		

UDL Guidelines: Presentation Methods	UDL Guidelines: Action and Expression Methods	UDL Guidelines: Engagement Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Present information through multiple media ● Provide background knowledge ● Offer alternatives for visual information ● Offer alternatives for auditory information ● Clarify vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Optimize access to tools and technologies ● Use multiple media for communication ● Guide appropriate goal-setting ● Support planning and strategy development ● Vary the methods for response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Optimise individual choice and autonomy ● Minimize threats and distractions ● Foster collaboration and community ● Increase feedback ● Develop self-assessment and reflection