

Genius Hour Semester Project Guidelines

This semester you will be engaging in a semester-long project in which you will explore a topic of your choosing based upon your own interests. In this exploration, you will also select **how** you plan to share what you have learned. This presentation or final product must be representative of all that you learned and should answer whatever driving question you sought to answer. Finally, it should represent your best work as it will become a part of your year-long writing portfolio.

What is Genius Hour? Genius Hour is a concept based off of time offered to employees at companies such as Google and 3M. These companies have been known to offer their employees “20% time” where 20% of their time at work can be spent exploring their own company-related projects. Products like Gmail, Google Docs, and Post It notes came about from such projects.

How will Genius Hour work? Periodically, you and your classmates will be given time to freely explore a topic of your choosing. This will be structured in that you will be expected to show evidence of your research and work on your final presentation or product along the way. You will receive grades for this work and feedback from a variety of sources (i.e. your teacher and classmates) to help you remain focused.

Genius Hour Process and Checklist:

1. _____ Brainstorm topics
2. _____ Choose one topic of focus
3. _____ Construct a driving question
4. _____ Draft a Genius Hour research proposal
5. _____ Research your topic in search for answers to your driving question
6. _____ Compile a list of your sources and works cited to be submitted along with your final product. This will become your annotated bibliography.
7. _____ Revisit your research proposal and driving question (step 4).
8. _____ Create your final product to show what you learned
9. _____ Present your driving question, your research findings, and your final product to the class.
10. _____ Put your Genius Hour Semester Project onto your online portfolio

Step 1: Genius Hour Topic Brainstorm

Due Date _____

Make a list of topics you find interesting in your everyday life. For example, you can choose a sport such as soccer, a hobby such as knitting, a subject such as still life drawing, a world issue such as gender equality, etc.

Step 2: Topic Selection

Due Date _____

Next, choose one topic that really speak to you and create either a Bubble or Circle Map to brainstorm on that topic.

Step 3: Driving Question

Due Date _____

What specifically do you wish you find out about your selected topic? Generate five questions you wish to answer through your research. They must be broad enough to need over a month's worth of time for exploration, but narrow enough to be answered within that same time frame. Some possible examples could include:

- In what ways can gaming help students learn?
- How is school different in the United States from other countries?
- How has skateboarding evolved as a sport?
- It has been said that "those who forget history are doomed to repeat it." In what ways has this been true in American/20th Century/Georgia history?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Next, choose one of the driving questions above. You need to choose the best one which should be one you are interested in exploring for the rest of the semester.

Circle or highlight that chosen driving question.

Step 4: Research Proposal

Due Date _____

First of all, what is a research proposal? A research proposal is a document created to show what it is that you plan to research, how you plan to research it, and what question(s) you are aiming to answer in your research. There are many ways to construct a research proposal. For the purpose of this project, you will follow the format below.

This is your rough draft. After submitting your rough draft you will be informed as to whether your research proposal is acceptable. You may be asked to re-do your proposal with certain changes. Do know that you will need to submit a final draft of this after it has approved.

Genius Hour Research Proposal

Topic: (What overall topic do you wish to study? This can be one word.)

Driving Question: (What question do you want to answer in your research?)

Research Method: (How do you plan to research your topic to answer your driving question? A thorough project will utilize a variety of research avenues such as surveys, polls, reading existing studies, videos, and personal experiments. This needs to be at least one 10+ sentence paragraph in length.)

Final Product: (What will you create to show what you learned through your research? Be creative. This product will take up at least half of your time and needs to be very thorough. In short, your product needs to be able to teach your classmates what you have learned. It also needs to show how you have become an expert on this topic. In this space, you need to also explain how your product will teach others and show what you have learned.)

Step 5: Research Your Driving Question

Due Date _____

While you research your driving question, consider the questions below:

- Where can you gather information to answer your driving question?
- Do you need to do any experiments, polls, or surveys to find information to answer your driving question?
- Is there any hands-on experience you can get to help complete your research?
- What do you need to know to become an expert in this topic?
- What do you need to know in order to create a product to demonstrate what you have learned?

Step 6: Compile a List of Sources and Works Cited

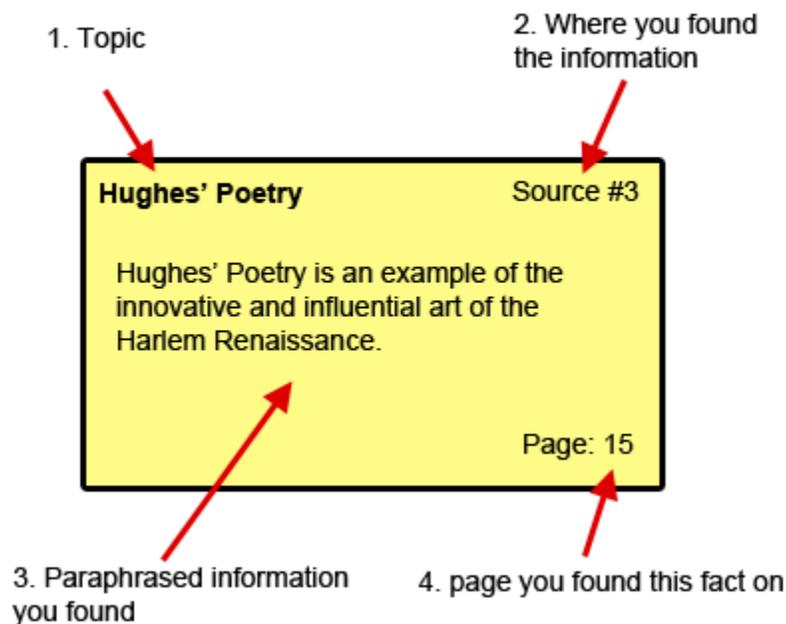
Due Date _____

As you look for information to answer your driving question, make a list of your resources. This list can be online on your KidBlog account (if so, create one blog post that you keep updating with links to sources that will aid your research). The list can also be a handwritten or typed one. In any format, you will need to have your sources clearly identified to help you construct your presentation and final product.

Some tips and suggestions:

- **KidBlog Post:** If you choose to use your KidBlog to record your resources, create a blog post entitled “Genius Hour Sources.” Copy and paste the link of each source you find and write a brief explanation of how that source will help you in your research beneath each link. This way you will not forget which links contain what information.
- **Handwritten:** Make a list on a sheet of notebook paper of all of the details of each source you find (this can also be done in a Word document). You must also write a brief summary of the information that source contains and how it can help your research.
- **Note Cards:** Use a pack of 3x5” notecards to help you organize your resources. On each card, write down the source, how it relates to the topic, and either a quote from the source or information that will help you in the creation of your final product. See the example below.

Here is a sample card:



More information about this method can be found here: http://www.gallaudet.edu/tip/english_center/writing/pre-writing_writing_and_revising/note_card_system.html

Step 7: Revisit Your Research Proposal and Driving Question

Due Date _____

Now that you have conducted some research, is there anything you wish to change about your research proposal or your driving question? If so, amend (change) your research proposal to reflect this. Be sure to indicate that it is a change from the original and explain why. Refer to the example below:

Name: Suzie Student Period: 1st Semester: Fall 2014 Topic: Motorcycles Driving Question: How are motorcycles better for the environment than cars?	Addendum 10/22/14: After my initial research, I found that all gas-powered vehicles are detrimental to the environment. As a result, I chose to change my research question to “what advances are being made in electric motorcycles?”
Research Method: For this topic, I wish to explore the benefits of motorcycle usage, with a focus on how they are better for the environment. I plan to research areas in which motorcycles are extremely popular and look at their reported smog levels. I will use that information in conjunction with their population figures and compare that to areas in which car usage is higher. I plan to use internet research of studies done on air quality as well as interviews of mechanics to answer my driving question.	
Final Product: For my final product, I will work with my brother who is a motorcycle mechanic to create a pocket motorcycle. In doing so, I wish to find out how the evolution of motorcycle engines have made them safer for the environment. I will create a commercial advertising this fact and will feature footage of me creating the pocket bike to support what my video. I will bring both the video and pocket motorcycle to class in order to demonstrate what I have learned.	

Step #8: Create Your Final Product

Due Date _____

Remember, your final product must match up with what you described in your research proposal. It must also clearly show that you put a lot of time, effort, and thought into creating it.

Step #9: Present your Driving Question, Research Findings, and Final Product

Due Date _____

This is pretty self-explanatory. Show what you wished to find out, what you learned, and what you created to show what you learned. You will be evaluated on the rubric below:

	Not Yet Meeting	Minimally Meets	Fully Meets	Exceeds Expectations
Creativity	-Copied off someone -not really creative -messy and no detail -not best effort	-bit messy, some detail -some effort, but not enough -not your best -rushing your work	-used creativity to choose topic, not copied -good detail, good effort -	-used creativity to choose topic, original, not copied -excellent detail and effort -
Use of Class-time	-not finished -not using time wisely -talking with friends -wandering around room -passing notes -not getting anything done	-sometimes using class time wisely -talking with other groups sometimes -getting some things done	-not wandering unless need something -use class time wisely -may take short breaks but working hard -focussed	-uses class time wisely and may spend some time at home working
Sharing of Knowledge/ Presentation	-not explained well -short -not interesting -one partner does all the work -speaking quietly and cannot hear you -looks bored	-explained some details -not able to answer questions -both partners share in presentation	-presentation was good, answered questions -used a lot of detail -speak loud and clear -enthusiastic about topic	-all detail is given clearly and subject is knowledgeable about topic -eye contact with crowd -loud and clear -edited -practiced presentation
Explaining/Knowing "WHY" you are doing your topic	-"I don't know"	-may have some answers but not able to go into detail	-goes into detail about topic and able to answer questions -fully able to answer WHY	-knows exactly what they did and WHY -passionate about topic -enthusiastic

Rubric courtesy of: http://katlingatsr.weebly.com/uploads/1/3/1/3/13134687/genius_hour_rubric.docx

Step #10: Put Your Genius Hour Project into Your Online Portfolio

Due Date _____

Your final task is to preserve your work by including record of your project, the product you created, and what you learned onto your KidBlog online portfolio. Create a blog post with the title "Genius Hour Project: (Then insert your driving question here)." The post should then include the following:

- A brief explanation of what you wished to find out and what drove you to pursue this topic,
- Your research proposal as an attachment or embedded into the post,
- A link, pictures of, video of, or other evidence of your final product (this needs to be enough so that another classmate could understand what you learned and how you presented it without explanation),
- Any other materials you used in your research process, and
- A link to your blog post with your sources and a brief explanation of how each source lent itself to your project research (this was done in the research portion of the project).

****Last, but not least, complete the self-assessment on the following pages:**

Name: _____ Class Period: _____ Self-Assessment Date: _____

Genius Hour Self-assessment Rubric

(courtesy of: <http://geniushour.wikispaces.com/Resources+%26+Documents>)

Genius = creating and producing (from the original meaning of the word)

	Highest expectation "I couldn't have done much better."		Lowest expectation "I have a lot of improvements to make."
Effort How much time did you put in?	I spent a good amount of time outside of class reading, researching, and learning about my topic.	←-----→ 5 4 3 2 1	I mostly just flipped through books and glanced through stuff on the internet during class. I didn't spend much time outside of class on my project.
Inquisitiveness How motivated were you to ask questions and want answers.	I was curious and I looked up things that interested me. I'm a lifelong learner.	←-----→ 5 4 3 2 1	I didn't ask many questions just for the joy of learning, and I wasn't really interested in learning new things.
Originality of Ideas Did you create unique ideas?	I thought outside the box and used my imagination. I think of ideas that others	←-----→ 5 4 3 2 1	I only thought of ideas that others thought of first. I don't like new ways of doing things. I just want to stick with the old way.
Overall Learning for Genius Hour Project	Overall, I learned a lot about my topic and I don't think I could have learned much more given the time I had.	←-----→ 5 4 3 2 1	Overall, I didn't really learn much about my topic. I don't know much more than when I started my project.
Overall Quality of Presentation	My presentation was interesting and engaging for my classmates and showed how much I learned.	←-----→ 5 4 3 2 1	I didn't put enough time into my presentation. It could have been more creative and engaging.

Circle one of the answers below:

- 1) Did you pursue something you were interested in? **yes no**
- 2) Did you learn something? **yes no**

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3) Even though you are not receiving a “traditional grade” for this genius hour project, based on your effort and learning, what grade would you give yourself? Explain why.

4) Did what you shared with the class help (the world, community, yourself, animals, etc.) in some way? **yes** **no**

Explain why you circled the above answer in the space below:

5) For your next genius hour project, would you do differently in terms of what you did and how you presented your project?

6) Write down 3 ideas or topics that you would like to explore for your next genius hour project:

- Topic #1: _____
 - Why? _____
- Topic #2: _____
 - Why? _____
- Topic #3: _____
 - Why? _____