

Teacher Directions and Notes

Project-Based Learning

Lesson Objective

Students will be introduced to the concept of project-based learning and start to brainstorm their final assignments

Time: One class period

Purpose

- By including project-based learning, the unit's final assignment becomes more student-driven and authentic. Since project-based learning is focused on creating a 'product' to address a real-world problem, students are gaining a wide variety of skills such as problem solving, creative and critical thinking, communication skills, social justice advocacy, etc.

Materials Needed

- Copies of student handout – project-based learning

NOTE: For ESL and/or emergent learners, consider completing the research component of the assignment as a collaborative effort.

The final product can still be different and done independently but having a group choose the same topic and complete research can provide necessary support in the process so more can be put into that final product.

You could also have the entire project be done as a collaborative effort as long as group members each know what is expected of them during the process.

Step-By-Step Directions

1. Introduce the day's lesson by letting your students know that you'll be talking about their final assignment for the unit.
2. Provide an overview of project-based learning. (What it is is included on the handout.) Highlight some of the benefits/importance of project-based learning:
 - Student-driven – Students get to choose their topic/issue (with teacher approval) and so it allows them to pursue their interests and curiosity.
 - Real-world connection – Since the topics/issues and final 'products' all connect to the nonfiction book and thus to real-world issues, students gain an added understanding of the world beyond the classroom.
 - Flexibility/Choice – Students can pick their topic/issue and their 'product' (with teacher approval).
 - Skill development – The process and final product will provide students' the opportunity to flex some of their skills in different ways. This includes communication, research, presentation, collaboration (if applicable), problem solving, critical and creative thinking. This means a mix of hard and soft skills that are useful beyond the classroom too!
3. Give students some time to review the handout and to brainstorm some ideas for their final projects.
 - **NOTE:** Some students will have an immediate idea and others will need more support in choosing a viable topic/issue and suitable final product. On the following page are added suggestions for topics/issues and final products that can help guide you and your students.
4. If ready, students can begin to outline their project. Once the topic/issue and product are teacher approved, then students can outline their plans for different work periods.
 - **NOTE:** These plans for different work periods may change but having an initial plan is idea. On the day of each work period, have students first review their step X plans. If revising and they don't have space on the handout, they can record their goals on a sticky note. This provides some accountability to students and provides a guide to teachers as they wander to check in with different students.

NOTE: Provide students a deadline to submit their proposals so you can review/approve them before they start their work periods. There will be some students who will quickly be able to get started in the first work period and others who will need to review their proposals (this is to be expected). In class, you can conference with those students who need revisions. If there are a lot and they don't have an approved/viable project by the first work period, they can at least decide on an issue and begin to research.

Project-Based Learning Ideas

These are just ideas—you can do something not on the list. But remember that the project must include a research component, an actual problem, a final product, and an audience who will see that product.

1. Create (and post) a series of social media videos/posts (Instagram, TikTok) that address a particular issue related to the book and try to raise awareness or call to action.
2. Create a multimedia campaign about an issue (youth justice, wrongful convictions – a particular person’s case, death row legislation, mass incarceration, etc.) to raise awareness and/or call to action.
3. Write a series of at least 3 letters about an issue related to the book and send to appropriate/actual people.
4. Plan an event to raise awareness, fundraise, or call to action (letter writing, social media posts, etc.) about a specific issue related to the book.
5. Research and write an opinion piece or nonfiction article about an issue related to the book for a local or national newspaper. Submit the work.
6. Research and deliver a “TED Talk” about the issue you are researching. You can submit the TED Talk to your classmates or submit it in an online format.
7. Create a series of infographics about you issue (Supreme Court, particular cases or individuals, major issues such as youth in prison, work of EJI, etc.)
8. Make a photo documentary or film documentary about the issue you are researching.
9. Design and create a website about the issue you are researching.
10. Write (and draw) a children’s book that addresses this issue in language that a child would understand.
11. Write and record a podcast about the issue you’re researching or conduct an interview with a suitable person about this issue.
12. Design and create a mural or large-form artwork about the issue you’re researching. Submit the mural to an actual person who could showcase it in a meaningful place.
13. Write a proposal to change a local, state, or federal law that you deem unjust. After researching and writing, submit the proposal to an applicable/actual person.
14. Create a series of lessons to raise awareness about the issue you’re researching with a particular audience in mind.
15. Design and create a game to learn about the issue you’re researching or how to navigate the legal system.