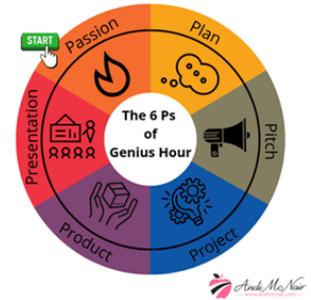


Middle School Genius Hour

Dear Student and Parents,

Starting next September you (the student) will choose and begin to work on a project you are passionate about. You will work on it here at school throughout the whole year and present your work at the Genius Convention in May.



The above image created by Andi McNair gives you an idea of the **6P's of Genius Hour**. They are outlined here for you to gain a better understanding of the scope of this project.

Passion: Every Genius Hour project starts here. What are you passionate about? What do you WANT to learn about? Passion is what drives the project, makes it meaningful, and makes it theirs. Passion comes from a desire to know more. Merriam-Webster defines passion as "a strong feeling or enthusiasm for something or about doing something". This is where you choose a topic to research for your project.

Plan/Research: Who will be your outside expert? What materials will you need to complete the project? What will you need to do each day to reach your goals? How much time will you need? September-November, you will conduct research on the topic using a minimum of 5 resources. You must consider all of these before making a final choice. You will complete a framework outline in September to help you get to the next step.

Pitch: In December you will pitch your idea in "Kids Shark Tank" presentation to your classmates and me to get feedback on your project idea. This will afford you an opportunity to tweak your plan, do additional research and revise your approach as necessary.

Project: In January students will embark on the "doing" part of the project. Students make, design, create whatever it is that they have decided for their project and complete the work here at school. This is when the learning and the passion become very evident. The classroom is now turned into a "Make It" space or a "Lab" where students will use the scientific/engineering process regardless of their topic to organize their work and successfully reach their project goals.

Product: The product is what is produced by the end of **March, beginning of April** and can be shared with the greater community. This may be a YouTube video (with teacher approval), a tangible prototype of your idea, a printed/digital book that you have written about your topic, or the analyzed results of a student conducted experiment, etc. Sharing your end product makes it real, relevant, and brings even more meaning to the learning behind Genius Hour.

Presentation: Finally, students present their projects to the school community at **the end of May** at the Genius Convention. We will work April through May to work on the presentation boards here at school. Students in both 7th and 8th grades display their work on a tri-fold at the convention where they will defend their work in a peer and faculty review.

The three page attached document must be completed over the summer and **brought to science class Friday September 9th**. Take time this summer to discover your passion and think about a topic you might want to choose to work on throughout the year. Be Passionate! Be Creative! Be Genius!

Mrs. Banyai

Brainstorming Worksheet

Rate yourself in the following qualities. Genius = creating and producing. That's from the original meaning of the word!

Quality	Yes, I Have it! (5)	Where are you on the continuum between "Yes, I Have it!" (5) and "Not yet!" (1)	Not yet! (1)
Ambiguity - I'm OK with a little confusion, knowing there is more than one way to do the job.	I don't need to ask the teacher a lot of questions. I can think for myself and get the job done.	5 4 3 2 1	I have to be told exactly how to do every job. There is only one right way to do the job.
Inquisitiveness - I ask questions and want answers.	I am curious and I look up things that interest me. I'm a lifelong learner.	5 4 3 2 1	I don't ask questions just for the joy of learning, and I don't really want to learn new things.
Generating Ideas (brainstorming) - I create lots of possible ideas.	I am able to fluently create a list of ideas. I use my imagination.	5 4 3 2 1	I cannot see beyond the obvious ideas. I am easily frustrated. I may be lazy.
Originality of Ideas - I create unique ideas!	I can think outside the box and I have a great imagination. I think of ideas that others never even thought of.	5 4 3 2 1	I can only think 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.
Flexibility/ Adaptability - Mentally, I can bend easily any which way and not break.	I can think of new ways to do things when I get stuck. I can recognize other people's good ideas.	5 4 3 2 1	I am not willing to change my ideas or think of better ones.
Self-Reflection - I can look honestly at myself and evaluate my work.	I can honestly go through my work and know what's right or wrong.	5 4 3 2 1	I lie about my work. I can't or won't look honestly at the things I do well and the things that need more work.
MOVE TO NEXT PAGE TO CONTINUE			
Quality	Yes, I Have it! (5)	Where are you on the continuum between "Yes, I Have it!" (5) and "Not yet!" (1)	Not yet! (1)

Risk Taking - I'm not afraid to try something difficult for fear of failure. As Edison said: "I have not failed...I have succeeded in proving that 1000 ways will not work."	I'm not afraid to try anything even if I don't do well at it. I keep trying, and find a new way that might work.	5	4	3	2	1	I don't try new things for fear of failing. I try a couple times and give up altogether.
Expertise - I am proud and thankful to know a lot about one or more subjects. I am an expert.	I know I am good at one or more things, and I am not afraid to share my knowledge with others.	5	4	3	2	1	I don't try to be expert at anything. I don't want to be. Or I pretend to not know anything.
Persistence – I can stick with a project even when it gets hard. I understand that the word passion comes from the base word for "suffering."	When the going gets tough, I work harder. I have grit, determination, and perseverance. I want to keep going and finish a difficult task.	5	4	3	2	1	I usually quit when I run into a snag. I switch genius hour projects often whenever it gets too hard.

Problem Identification Sheet

Using the ideas you generated on your brainstorming worksheet, develop a researchable question that will help you answer your complex problem.

Inquiry Question:	Reasons:	Teacher's Initials:
Example: How can I build a rocket that flies at least 50 feet in the air? (I am going to research different models of homemade rockets and then <u>build one</u> to see how I can get it to go higher. Then, I'll create a presentation to share my results.)	I have always loved science, especially anything to do with space. I have watched YouTube videos about homemade rockets using bottles of pop and air pumps and I am very curious to see if I can find a better way.	Show your teacher before you get started!