

Passion Project

Background: Early in the novel *October Sky*, Homer Hickam Jr. finds himself envying the miners who head to and from work every day, knowing their place in the world. After the Russians launch their satellite, Sputnik, however, Hickam is inspired to begin building rockets. His process is studded with small successes and tremendous failures along the way – including blowing up his mother’s fence – but the knowledge he gains along the way fuels his passion. Finally, he says, “I realized I didn’t have to envy [the men from the mine] anymore: I also knew now who I was and what I was going to do.” Inspired by this, we will identify a particular passion we would like to pursue throughout the year, using it to either inform or improve society.

Objectives:

- You will identify your interests and develop a project to complete this year.
- You will create a guided proposal to persuade Julie to approve your project.
- You will independently (but with guidance and frequent check-ins) complete a yearlong pursuit of your passion.
- You will showcase your passion with a visual display and verbal presentation at our end of the year Passion Project Fair.



Process:

1. Complete a *Who am I?* brainstorm. Share and brainstorm together with partners or groups.
2. Write a guided proposal to propose your year-long pursuit.
3. Brainstorm questions and resources to accomplish your goals.
4. Develop a schedule for your work.
5. Complete your project both in class and outside of school. During this time, you will evaluate options, troubleshoot obstacles, collaborate, collect background information, manage your schedule, and create resources.
6. Create a presentation to share your work with your classmates.
7. Write a guided reflection.

Notes:

- Pay careful attention to which parts of this project may be worked on outside of class.
- Due dates are not set in advance for class projects, since we work on them together and stay together as a group. Periodic “status of class” checks will help you realize if you’re falling behind.
- Please see the rubric and use it to guide your work during this project.

Assessment: Assessments will be in the form of dialogue with Julie and grades on individual project components. Please see the rubric for details to guide you during your work.