

Student-Led Project: Teacher Packet

We have a hunch that you encourage your students to dream big. You're always encouraging your students to think creatively: about the clubs they'd like to start, the languages they'd like to learn, the books they'd like to read, and the skills they'd like to master. We want to help you bring those student dreams to life.

How It Works

1. Introduce a student-led project to your students.

- Make sure your classroom is [eligible for DonorsChoose.org](#)
- Explore the [student-led projects](#) already on our site
- Plan for any restrictions from your school or district on projects students can submit

2. Guide students through creating their project idea.

- Help students brainstorm their creative ideas
- Guide students in writing a project essay using [the student packet](#)

3. Create the project on DonorsChoose.org.

- Select "Create a student-led project" on your Projects page and follow the directions from there
- Review the project with your students to make sure everything looks as it should before you click "Submit"

4. Help your students promote their project.

- Guide students through creating a fundraising plan
- Share progress with your students as your project is funded
- Check with parents before students advertise using social media

5. Thank the donors who made it all possible.

- After we ship you the materials, take photos of your project in action
- Guide students through writing about the donations' impact
- Upload the photos and the students' impact letter online



Frequently Asked Questions

What kinds of projects can my students create?

These projects can be for your classroom or for any student organizations (like clubs, sports teams, or performing groups). Students can create them individually, in small groups, or as a whole class. As long as it's a product of student creativity that students will help bring to life, it's a student-led project.

My kids need inspiration! How can I help get the creativity flowing?

Letting them browse through the student projects currently on the site might be a good idea. Students have come up with ideas like a comic book club, school garden, costumes for a school play, visit from a local celebrity, class trip to go camping, student-run recycling initiative, prep for the SAT/ACT, science fair project supplies, musical instruments for a school band, student-curated classroom library, literary magazine, access to AP materials, classroom furniture, awareness campaign for a local issue—the sky's the limit.

How can I introduce my students to this idea?

For this one, we checked in with some veteran teachers. Here were their recommendations.

Suggestions for middle school:

- Announce this opportunity in class and brainstorm ideas together
- Turn project submission into a contest, with students or the teacher picking their favorite project idea and essay to submit
- Organize students into teams that have different leadership roles in parts of the project, from writing the project essay to designing a marketing plan
- Include this as an assignment in a persuasive writing unit

Suggestions for high school:

- Advertise this opportunity in a classroom newsletter, school newspaper, bulletin board flyer, or morning announcements
- Introduce the idea to students at the beginning of the year and welcome students to brainstorm on their own
- Present the option to a specific group of students, like school government officers, an after-school club you supervise, or an AP class
- Include this as an assignment in a research-based project

How can I help my students pick out the right materials?

If you're supporting one student or just a few students in creating a project, you can shop together. But if you're working with a whole class, it might make the most sense for students to write out the materials they're requesting and then have you shop on their behalf.



How can I shop for the materials my students want?

You'll be shopping through the Go Shopping page in step two of creating your student-led project. Make sure that the materials students are requesting are available through [our vendors](#) and don't violate any school regulations. (Many schools and districts have specific restrictions on the materials students can use, especially with technology.)

How much can a student-led project cost?

The materials your students request must cost more than \$100, and your teacher account must have enough points to support the total cost of materials.

Do I need extra points to create a student-led project?

You [earn and spend points](#) just as you do with a typical project. Depending on the price of the materials your students are requesting, you'll need 1-4 points to submit your project.

Who keeps the materials?

Because you're the teacher managing this project, the materials will remain the property of your school. Year after year, the resources you helped your students request will remain with you to support another group of learners. For a more detailed look at this, check out our [Materials Ownership Policy](#).

I have an awesome idea for a project, but my students don't seem so keen.

You can still submit your idea as a project on our site! We've been supporting teachers' classroom ideas for almost 15 years. Just click the "Create a project" button in your account when you log in, and design your own project for your classroom this year.

What tips can I give my students to spread the word about their project?

Challenge both yourself and your students to come up with creative ways to fundraise: flyers, morning announcements at school, emails, fundraising events like car washes or bake sales, or anything else to raise awareness of your project. Just keep in mind that before students start posting about a project using social media, you'll want to check in with parents to get their OK.

How long should my students' essay be?

There are character limits! Each question students will be answering has a minimum response of **180 characters** and a maximum of **500 characters**. To make sure that you don't have any headaches typing in your students' essays into the project later, direct your students to write between 4-7 sentences for each question.

I have more questions. Where should I go?

Please [contact us](#). We're happy to help!

