

Teachers, we know you have a lot on your plate.

With a jam-packed curriculum and testing right around the corner, you don't have a second to spare—but you're still looking for new ways to get students thinking and growing in your classroom. Whether your kids could use equipment for science fair projects, materials for an end-of-unit presentation, or just practice putting their persuasive writing skills to work, a Student-Led Project can be the solution you need.

Here's a ready-made lesson plan that will introduce Student-Led Projects, help students come up with their project ideas, and culminate with a completed project essay. Below the general lesson plan is a specific plan from a ninth grade geometry classroom, to help get your wheels spinning on how this plan can be adapted for your specific subject area and grade level.

Lesson Plan

Objective: Students will write a persuasive proposal for a creative classroom project.		
<p>Hook: Students read, respond to, and discuss a short excerpt about crowdfunding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students pick up reading (“Crowdfunding tips for turning inspiration into reality”) as they enter the classroom. They read, annotate, and answer the response questions. The teacher leads students in a brief discussion, with guiding questions: <p><i>What is crowdfunding?</i> <i>Why do some crowdfunding ideas work, while others don't?</i> <i>How can crowdfunding help our classroom?</i></p>	<p>Time: 10 minutes</p>	<p>Resources: Excerpt from “Crowdfunding tips for turning inspiration into reality”</p> <p>(Versions available at 7th & 10th grade LEXILE)</p>
<p>Direct Instruction: Teacher outlines how DonorsChoose.org works, explains the guidelines for this student-led project, and leads a quick discussion on the parts of a successful project.</p> <p><u>How DonorsChoose.org works:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DonorsChoose.org works by having teachers post classroom projects for things they need—technology, field trips, basic supplies—and people from around the country donate to make the projects possible. When the project reaches its funding goal, DonorsChoose.org ships the materials to your classroom. Then you complete thank-yous to your donors to show them what you and your classmates could accomplish. <p><u>How your project will work:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You'll be deciding on the materials that you're requesting 	<p>Time: 15 mins</p>	<p>Resources: PowerPoint</p>

<p>and the description of how you'll use those items for your project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Already there's a donor (Think It Up) who will pay for the last half of the project, as long as you raise money for the first half. (So if you have a \$500 project, you just have to raise \$250—Think It Up will pay for the rest once you reach \$250.) • (If relevant): guidelines for the theme or end-goal of the project: i.e., must support your presentation at the end of this unit, or must be things you need for your science fair project. (See our example below for a look at how that can work.) • There are thousands of classroom projects, so you have to make sure that you make the donors want to support your project. <p><u>Discussion:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher frames discussion question: How can you make donors want to support your project idea? • Big responses to highlight (on board or chart paper): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An exciting idea ○ A great title ○ Materials that seem like they'd help you learn ○ A sense of who <i>you</i> are ○ Good grammar and spelling ○ A pricetag that seems reasonable—too expensive, and they might not think you'll reach your goal • Keep students' ideas visible for the activities that follow. 		
<p>Guided Application: In small groups, students brainstorm and outline their projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students break into groups of 3-4 to brainstorm different ideas. No bad ideas here—they're jotting down things as they consider them! • Students go through their list and pick out a few that they're interested in. The teacher circulates, providing feedback and guidance (5-10 minutes). • After getting the teacher's go-ahead, students go on to the next step of picking materials and outlining what they'd say in their project proposal. (10 minutes) 	<p>Time: 15-20 mins</p>	<p>Resources: Shopping guide Notebook paper (for brainstorming)</p>
<p>Culmination: Students write their student-led project essay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each group writes a rough draft of the project proposal, using the student packet. This will be turned in to the teacher at the end of class. 	<p>Time: 15 mins</p>	<p>Resources: Student packet</p>

To make students' projects a reality:

Using the [teacher packet](#) as a guide, create a Student-Led Project on your DonorsChoose.org account. If you have any questions along the way, [contact our team](#). We're here to help!

Lesson Plan: Geometry, 9th grade

<p>Objective: Students will write a persuasive proposal for a creative classroom project that explains volume formulas and uses them to solve problems (CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.HSG.GMD.A1-3).</p>		
<p>Hook: Students read, respond to, and discuss a short excerpt about crowdfunding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students pick up reading (“Crowdfunding tips for turning inspiration into reality”) as they enter the classroom. • They read, annotate, and answer the response questions. • The teacher leads students in a brief discussion, with guiding questions: <p><i>What is crowdfunding?</i> <i>Why do some crowdfunding ideas work, while others don't?</i> <i>One of our goals for the coming weeks is to bring what we've learned about volume to life by creating largescale versions of the spheres, cylinders, cones and pyramids we've been studying.</i> <i>How can crowdfunding help our classroom?</i></p>	<p>Time: 10 minutes</p>	<p>Resources: Excerpt from “Crowdfunding tips for turning inspiration into reality”</p> <p>(Versions available at 7th & 10th grade LEXILE)</p>
<p>Direct Instruction: Teacher reviews recap of three past lessons on the volume of a sphere, cylinder, pyramid, and cone. Teacher outlines how DonorsChoose.org works, explains the guidelines for this student-led project, and leads a quick discussion on creating a successful project for life-size versions that illustrate calculating the volume of a sphere, cylinder, pyramid or cone.</p> <p><u>How DonorsChoose.org works:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DonorsChoose.org works by having teachers post classroom projects for things they need—technology, field trips, basic supplies—and people from around the country donate to make the projects possible. • When the project reaches its funding goal, DonorsChoose.org ships the materials to your classroom. • Then you complete thank-yous to your donors to show them what you and your classmates could accomplish. <p><u>How your project will work:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You'll be thinking of a life-sized model you'd like to make of a sphere, cone, cylinder or sphere and deciding on the materials that you need to build those models. You'll write a description of how you'll use those items for your project and how these models will be used to better our school. • Already there's a donor (Think It Up) who will pay for the last half of the project, as long as you raise money for the first half. (So if you have a \$500 project, you just have to raise \$250—Think It Up will pay for the rest once you reach \$250.) • There are thousands of classroom projects, so you have to make sure that you make the donors want to support your 	<p>Time: 15 mins</p>	<p>Resources: -Recap of lessons on volumes of sphere, cylinder, pyramid, and cone -PowerPoint</p>

<p>project.</p> <p><u>Discussion:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher frames discussion question: How can you make donors want to support your project idea? • Big responses to highlight (on board or chart paper): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An exciting idea: e.g. we want to make our own ice cream cones by using what we've learned about the volume of a cone to optimize for making the most cones with the fewest ingredients. Then we'll develop a marketing plan to sell these cones to a local ice cream store. ○ A great title, e.g. "The geometrically perfect ice cream cone" ○ Materials: think of everything we'll need to bring this project to life from start to finish, e.g. flour, sugar, mixers, mixing bowls, paper, protractors and rulers for measurement, boxes for packaging the finished product, etc. ○ A sense of who <i>you</i> are ○ Good grammar and spelling ○ A pricetag that seems reasonable—too expensive, and they might not think you'll reach your goal • Keep students' ideas visible for the activities that follow. 		
<p>Guided Application: In small groups, students brainstorm and outline their projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students break into groups of 3-4 to brainstorm different ideas. No bad ideas here—they're jotting down things as they consider them! • Students go through their list and pick out a few that they're interested in. The teacher circulates, providing feedback and guidance on which of these projects best address the goals of real-life calculations of the volume of geometric shapes (5-10 minutes). • After getting the teacher's go-ahead, students go on to the next step of picking materials and outlining what they'd say in their project proposal. (10 minutes) 	<p>Time: 15-20 mins</p>	<p>Resources: Shopping guide Notebook paper (for brainstorming)</p>
<p>Culmination: Students write their student-led project essay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each group writes a rough draft of the project proposal, using the student packet. This will be turned in to the teacher at the end of class. 	<p>Time: 15 mins</p>	<p>Resources: Student packet</p>

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