

Dear Parents,

As we continue our Grade 7 year together, I am excited for the students to begin their Genius Projects.

**What is Genius Hour?**

Genius hour is a movement that allows students to explore their own passions and encourages creativity in the classroom.  It provides students a choice in what they learn during a set period of time during school (more information can be found at geniushour.com).

**Genius Hour Projects**

Genius Projects will be linked with objectives outline in the Ontario Curriculum documents. All the curriculum links that are being covered can be found on the attached rubrics.

Specifically the Genius Projects will integrate objectives from Language Arts, The Arts, Math, Social Studies and Science. Furthermore, students will develop life skills such as planning, collaboration, communication, meeting timelines, and following through on commitments. These experiences inspire self-direction, pride and responsibility in each student.

**Working on It**

Students spend 1 hour a week researching a topic that they are passionate about. They are to find a creative way to share it with their peers once the project is complete. Students are encouraged to plan Genius Projects at school. They may need your help purchasing materials required for their projects. It will be up to the parents and student to decide if they want to undertake projects that require extra materials/time at home.

A requirement is that students always have work to do at school during assigned work periods. Some basic materials (paper, paint, tape, some science equipment or art supplies) will be available through the school.

**Accountability**

Students are required to present their finished Genius Hour product to his/her peers in a creative way. Every two weeks students are responsible for blogging about their progress in our classroom Edmodo. They must also comment on peer’s blog postings.

**How is it graded?**

The Genius Hour projects are not graded in a traditional format. Students will not be evaluated on their finished project, but instead on their process: goal setting, research, reflections (blog) and final presentation. Some projects may be much more involved and difficult than others. In addition, some students will start and finish their projects, while others may run out of time before the end of the timeline.  Distributing grades on the quality of the final project is not what the Genius Project is about. Instead, it is designed for students to learn through their own inquiry and reflection.

**What are the requirements?**

1.**GOAL SETTING:** Students must have teacher approval of their project and a detailed outline that will demonstrate their inquiry process (see attached rubric).
- The project can be about anything as long as it’s school appropriate and answers one of these prompts:

* I am going to create a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* I am going to document my experience doing / trying \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* I am going to learn and demonstrate how to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Students will be asked to share their planning guide with their parents. Parents will be asked to sign the planning sheet indicating that they have seen the sheet, approve of the project and are aware of the steps required.

2. **RESEARCH:** Student will need to hand in all the research that they have collected during their genius project. It may be useful or not, but this allows for critical reflection . They will be asked to blog about their research and include referencing for all credible sources found.

3. **BLOGGING (Reflection):** Students will reflect on their learning and progress in a bi-weekly blog entry. They will have a specific format to follow that outlines what should be included. In addition to a bi-weekly blog entry, students will be asked to comment on another students post. Outlines and examples will be provided. Both the post and the comment will be evaluated using a rubric.

4. **PRESENTATION:** Students will present their findings to the class at the end of the 10 weeks (even if the project is not "finished"). Their presentation can be made in a presentation format of their choice (powerpoint, prezi, animoto, etc.). Details on what needs to be included will be given to students ahead of time and a rubric will be used to assess.

If you have any questions , comments or concerns please email me at lcopeland@scdsb.on.ca

I look forward to sharing in your child’s creativity and success!

Ms. Copeland

Grade 7 Teacher
Angus Morrison School

**My Genius Hour Project Plan**

**For my Genius Hour Project I will be working with:** ­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Our/My Project will be:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**I/We are going to:**

 Learn About (e.g. History of a place, water issues)

 Learn to Do (e.g. computer skills)

 Learn to Make (e.g. a trebuchet, a windmill)

 Learn to Create (e.g. a website, art project, or a story)

 Learn to Test (e.g. a science experiment)

 Learn to Change (e.g. an environmental project)

 Other?

**The goal of my Genius Hour project is to:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**This project is a good project because:**

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**What do I already know about this topic?**

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**My final product will be:**

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I will be expected to write one post each week about my progress on the classroom blog. I will comment on one of my peer’s blogs each week. I would love feedback!

**Evaluation:** We will work as a class to develop success criteria for each stage and will co-create rubrics for assessment together.

Here are five things we will need to do to prepare our project:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What we need to do (check those that apply)** | **Where will we do it? (home/school)** | **Who will do it?** | **When we need to do it:** | **Completed** |
| **Plan Project** |  |  |  |  |
| **Submit Proposal** |  |  |  |  |
| **Gather Materials** |  |  |  |  |
| **Work on Project** |  |  |  |  |
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| **Share and Evaluate Progress** |  |  |  |  |
| **Complete Project** |  |  |  |  |
| **Other** |  |  |  |  |

**Do you have any feedback or suggestions for us?**

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**Please sign below to show that you have discussed our/my plan for our/my Genius Project and that you agree to help us with the following:**

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**Parent Signature Student Signature**



**GOAL SETTING**

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| **ORGANZING INFORMATION** **1.5** identify and order main ideas and supporting details and group them into units that could be used to develop a summary, a debate, or a report of several paragraphs, using a variety of strategies**PRODUCING FINISHED WORK** **3.8** produce pieces of published work to meet identified criteria based on the expectations |
| APP | Few of the ideas are specific or detailedGoal needs to be refined to make it more attainable and realisticFew of the supporting ideas are logical and effectively build upon each other | Some of the ideas are specific or detailedGoal is somewhat attainable and realisticSome of the supporting ideas are logical and effectively build upon each other | Ideas are specific or detailedGoal is attainable and realisticMost of the supporting ideas are logical and effectively build upon each other | Ideas are very specific or detailedGoal is attainable and realistic, while at the same time challenging Supporting ideas are logical and effectively build upon each other |
| COMM | Finished product met few of the criteria outlined in classOverall, the goal was not logical and lacked visual appeal | Finished product met some of the criteria outlined in classGoal was basic, but information was in a logical order | Finished product met most of the criteria outlined in classGoal was logical and had several creative elements added to enhance final presentation | Finished product met and exceeded the criteria outlined in classGoal was creative, innovative, and logical |

OVERALL MARK:

Overall, the student demonstrated their understanding of the media text with:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| (L1) limited effectiveness | (L2) some effectiveness | (L3) considerable effectiveness | (L4) high degree of effectiveness |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |

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RESEARCH

Guidelines

A Genius Hour project would not be complete or beneficial if students already knew what to do. Or, if they were able to do a simple Google search and find everything they needed to know quickly, they find, the project has no benefits. The purpose of the genius project is to encourage critical thinking, creativity-based learners. Students will be required to conduct research for their Genius Hour project. It will require them to be critical thinkers and evaluate what they find. They will also be required to keep all the research that they find, helpful or not.

Requirements:

* Students will need to conduct thorough research for their topic
* They need to have a minimum of 5 sources
* Sources can be electronic (websites, articles, etc.) or print (books, magazines, newspapers, etc.)
* All referencing information for each source should be kept and detailed
* Research will need to be handed in at the end of the Genius Hour timeline (with presentation)
* Three paragraphs for three sources of research stating its effectiveness (useful or not) will be handed in with each source
* During the blog posts, students will need to make at least one blog post about their research and be very evaluative and critical of what they have found (useful or not) \*see blog post example.
* Students will be evaluated on their research and critical evaluation of it (see attached rubric)



RESEARCH

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| RESEARCH: 1.3 gather information to support ideas for writing, using a variety of strategies and a wide range of print and electronic sourceCLASSIFYING IDEAS: 1.4 sort and classify ideas and information for their writing in a variety of ways that allow them to manipulate information and see different combinations and relationships in their dataRESPONDING TO AND EVALUATING TEXTS 1.8 evaluate the effectiveness of a text based on evidence taken from that text |
| APP | Student includes very limited background information, facts and history relating to their topic. | Student presents some relevant background information, facts and history relating to their topic. | Student presents relevant background information, facts, statistics and history relating to their topic. | Student presents a high degree of background information, facts, statistics and specific examples from credible resources relating to their topic. |
| THI | Student includes very little facts to support their arguments/opinions and they are rarely embedded fluently and mostly presented in isolation. | Student uses some facts to support their argument/opinions and they are sometimes embedded fluently and sometimes presented in isolation. | Student uses facts to support their arguments/opinions that are embedded into their blog fluently and not presented in isolation. | Student uses facts and statistics to support their arguments/opinions that are embedded fluently into their blog and not presented in isolation. |
| THI/APP | Research evaluation shows no evidence of insight, understanding or reflective thought about the sources. | Research has been evaluated and student has provided minimal insight, understanding and reflective thought about the sources. | Research has been evaluated and student has provided moderate insight, understanding and reflective thought about the sources. | Research has been evaluated and student has provided comprehensive insight, understanding and reflective thought about the sources by making a statement supported by personal experience or research. |

OVERALL MARK:

Overall, the student demonstrated their understanding of the media text with:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| (L1) limited effectiveness | (L2) some effectiveness | (L3) considerable effectiveness | (L4) high degree of effectiveness |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |

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BLOGGING & COMMENTING

GUIDELINES

Now that we have set up our Genius Hour blog and are ready to go, there are some rules you need to follow.  The following are some *Blogging Guidelines for Students*.

1. Only post things that you would want everyone (in school, at home, in other countries) to know. Ask yourself: Is this something I want everyone to see?
2. Do not share personal information.  Ask yourself: Could someone find me (in real life) based on this information?
3. Think before you post.  Ask yourself: What could be the consequences of this post?
4. Know who you’re communicating with.  Ask yourself: Who is going to look at this, and how are they going to interpret my words?
5. Consider your audience. Ask yourself: Do I have a good reason/purpose to do this?
6. Know how to give constructive feedback. Ask yourself: What will I cause by writing this post?
7. Treat other people the way you want to be treated. Ask yourself: Would I want someone to say this to me?
8. Use appropriate language and proper grammar and spelling. Ask yourself: Would I want this post to be graded for proper grammar and spelling?
9. Only post information that you can verify is true (no gossiping). Ask yourself: Is this inappropriate, immature or bullying?
10. Anytime you use media from another source, be sure to properly cite the creator of the original work. Ask yourself: Who is the original creator of this work?

Commenting Guidelines

As a blogger, you will be commenting on other people’s work regularly. Good comments:

* are constructive, but not hurtful;
* consider the author and the purpose of the post;
* are always related to the content of the post;
* include personal connections to what the author wrote;
* answer a question, or add meaningful information to the content topic;
* follow the writing process. Comments are a published piece of writing.



BLOGGING

What will my blog post include?

The weekly blog post should include the following:

* Students must comment on their current progress to date. This may include information they found, the process they have taken to date and their next steps, etc.
* The post must demonstrate their understanding of the project and MUST be reflective to the process. For example, it should include what they have learned so far, how they feel about that, connections they can make, etc.
* They should be using correct vocabulary that relates to their given topic
* It should be written from their point of view, using their voice and adding in their personality
* It should be free from convention errors and written fluently without text language or abbreviations.
* Should include links to websites (during the research and planning portions), pictures taken along the way to document your process and progress.

Ex. Amanda B. – Creating a Stop Animation Film

This week I collected research on what stop animation films are and how to make them. I visited 7 sites about what stop animation films are. Out of those 7 sites, there were 3 that I found the most useful. The first was stop motion pro: <http://www.stopmotionpro.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=161>
It was useful because not only did it tell me what exactly it is, but is has a “how to” video for producing your own and the website offers a free trial for a program that helps you create it. This is definitely a good thing and it will be a site that I consider using when I am going to start planning my own video. The second site was called Creative Skill Set: <http://www.creativeskillset.org/animation/careers/stop/article_4636_1.asp>
It was useful because it described in detail what it is. What I liked best about this website is that it also told me what career routes I could take if I was interested in doing this. It also listed all the skill set required so I can prepare myself and be ready for it as a career. The final website I found useful was a video link from youtube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3iH1aUOS_0>
It was extremely useful because I am a visual learner and I was able to see what exactly it is. He made some great comparisons to flip books and at the same time gave me a brief idea of how I would be able to make it own my own.
There were a lot of websites that I found that were not useful. These included Wikipedia and general search engine websites. I want to make sure that I get all my research from a reliable source and therefore want to make sure it is a trusted site.
My next step will be to research and figure out a software program I can use and to brainstorm ideas on a stop animation film to create. Any ideas?



COMMENTING

What will my comment include?

* You must connect to the post in some way
* You need to comment on relevant information only
* Including links, references and materials to assist or inform the blogger is always recommended
* Your opinion on the post or the topic needs to be included
* Your comment must/should be free from all convention errors
* Written in proper paragraph/sentence form
* No text, short form or abbreviations
* Sources that you have used or shared need to be acknowledged

Ex. Stephan R. – Commenting on Amanda B’s post

Amanda, I really enjoyed reading your post about stop animation. I think you are on the right track for research. I agree that Wikipedia isn’t a reliable website and that you should be looking for more credible sources. Good job. The three websites you listed sound great and it seems like you are starting off well. I have a friend of mine that has done stop animation before. He used Lego and did it with an app. This is the app he used <https://itunes.apple.com/ca/app/stop-motion-studio/id441651297?mt=8> –it is only $0.99 and you can use it on your iPad and make it from there. It also allows you to choose themes and backgrounds for you animation. If you don’t have an iPad you could even download it onto your iPhone.



**BLOGS Name:**

**POSTS**

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| **RESPONDING TO AND EVALUATING TEXTS 1.8** evaluate the effectiveness of a text based on evidence taken from that text**METACOGNITION 4.1** identify a variety of strategies they used before, during, and after writing, explain which ones were most helpful, and suggest future steps they can take to improve as writers**RESEARCH 1.3** gather information to support ideas for writing, using a variety of strategies and a wide range of print and electronic sources**VOICE & WORD CHOICE 2.2 & 2.3** establish a distinctive voice in their writing appropriate to the subject and audience & regularly use vivid and/or figurative language and innovative expressions in their writing**PROOFREADING 3.6** proofread and correct their writing using guidelines developed with peers and the teacher |
| THI/APP | Postings show no evidence of insight, understanding or reflective thought about the topic.Postings present no specific examples or links to websites, or the links provided are of poor quality and do not add to the information presented.Postings do not stimulate dialogue/comments and do not connect with the audience. | Postings provide minimal insight, understanding and reflective thought about the topic.Postings present a specific viewpoint but lack supporting examples or links and not all links enhance the information presented.Postings are brief and unimaginative and reflect minimal effort to connect with the audience. | Postings provide moderate insight, understanding and reflective thought about the topic.Postings present a specific viewpoint that is substantiated by supporting examples or links and not all links enhance the information presented.Postings are generally well written with some attempts made to stimulate dialogue and comments. | Postings provide comprehensive insight, understanding and reflective thought about the topic by making a statement supported by personal experience or researchPostings present a focused viewpoint this is substantiated by examples or links to relevant websites or documents that enhance the information presented.Posting are creatively and fluently written to stimulate dialogue and comments. |
| COMM | Postings do not reflect the author’s personality and word choice does not bring the topic to life. | Postings reflect almost no personality and little attempt is made to use effective word choice to bring the topic to life. | Postings reflect a bit of the author’s personality through word choices that bring the topic to life. | Postings reflect the author’s unique personality through expressive and carefully selective word choices that bring the topic to life. |
| COMM | Written responses contain numerous grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors.  The style of writing does not facilitate effective communication. | Written responses include some grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors that distract the reader.  | Written responses are largely free of grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors. The style of writing generally facilitates communication. | Written responses are free of grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors. The style of writing facilitates communication. |

OVERALL MARK:

Overall, the student demonstrated their understanding of the media text with:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| (L1) limited effectiveness | (L2) some effectiveness | (L3) considerable effectiveness | (L4) high degree of effectiveness |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |

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**BLOGS Name:**

**COMMENTS**

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| **RESPONDING TO AND EVALUATING TEXTS 1.8** evaluate the effectiveness of a text based on evidence taken from that text**FORM 2.1** write complex texts of a variety of lengths using a wide range of forms**SENTENCE FLUENCY 2.4** vary sentence types and structures for different purposes with a focus on using a range of relative pronouns, subordinate conjunctions and both the active and passive voice**PROOFREADING 3.6** proofread and correct their writing using guidelines developed with peers and the teacher |
| THI/APP | Simple comment which lacks insight, depth or is superficial. The entry is short and frequently irrelevant to the key question, original post or concept. Does not express opinion clearly. Shows little understanding. | Simple comment showing some insight, depth and are connected with original post, or a comment. The comments are short and may contain some irrelevant material. Offers some personal comments or opinions these may not be on task. Shows some understanding. | The comment show insight, depth and are connected with post and or comments. Entries may contain some irrelevant material.Personal opinion is expressed in an appropriate style.  | The comment shows insight, depth and evaluation. They are connected with original post and subsequent comments.Entries are relevant with links to supporting material.Personal opinion is expressed in an appropriate style and is clearly related to the thread or post.  |
| COMM | Poor spelling and grammatical errors. Short 1 or 2 sentences. Lacks structure or flow. Written in informal language, abbreviations or txt. | Some poor spelling and grammatical errors. The comment has some structure, but the entry does not flow. The comment contains several sentences. The construction is mainly formal containing few abbreviations or txt style language. | Few spelling and grammatical errors. Comment has structure and the entry flows. The comment contains sentences or paragraphs. Refers to other posts or comments. | Spelling and grammatical errors are rare. Comment has structure, Flow and is constructed to enhance readability. Sources are acknowledged and other posts and comments are linked to. |

OVERALL MARK:

Overall, the student demonstrated their understanding of the media text with:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| (L1) limited effectiveness | (L2) some effectiveness | (L3) considerable effectiveness | (L4) high degree of effectiveness |
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The final step in our Genius Hour projects is to SHARE! Students will have to share their findings, process, outcome, etc. with the class as their final task. Student can choose a media format that they are comfortable using to do this. The possibilities are endless! Listed below are the success criteria that students should follow in order to be successful for this step!

**PRODUCTION:**The presentation MUST include the following:

★ GOAL: Students must outline what their goal was (the purpose of their genius hour project).

★ RESEARCH: A quick outline of how the research was conducted, what sites/sources were valuable, what sites/sources were not, etc.

★ PROCESS: A detailed description of the steps taken to date. This can be done with pictures, videos, point form, etc.

★ OUTCOME: Students must comment on the outcome of the project. Did you succeed in reaching your goal? If not, how come? If you made a model or physical object bring it in to show us!

★ CONNECTION: Connections need to be made to your project. Did you enjoy it? Why or why not? What did you learn? What could you change or would you do differently next time?

★ MEDIA: The presentation must include at least 2 different types of media. Video,pictures, links, websites, animation, etc.

★ LENGTH: Presentations should be about 5 minutes in length.

**EDITING ROOM:**

**✂** Remember to edit your presentation. Good presentations have been edited several times! Be a good Producer and EDIT your work! No one wants to see a finished product with spelling mistakes – yuk!

**DIRECTORS NOTES:**

☝The following sites can be used: animoto, prezi, powerpoint, moviemaker sites, etc. If there is another cite or media outlet you wish to use just run it by your teacher first.

☝Each presentation will be made to the class. So make sure you practice and prepare ahead of time.



PRESENTATION

CONTENT

|  |
| --- |
| POINT OF VIEW: 1**.**5 demonstrate understanding that different media texts reflect different points of viewORGANIZING IDEAS:1.5 identify and order main ideas and supporting details and group them into units CLASSIFYING IDEAS: 1.4 sort and classify ideas and information for their writing in a variety of ways that allow them to manipulate information and see different combinations and relationships in their dataEXTENDING UNDERSTANDING 1.6 extend understanding of texts, including increasingly complex or difficult texts, by **connecting the ideas** in them to their own knowledge, experience, and insights, to other texts, and to the world around them |
| TH | Accurately identified the point of view determined by their genius project with limited evidence | Accurately identified the point of view determined by their genius project with some evidence | Accurately identified the point of view determined by their genius project with considerable evidence  | Accurately identified the point determined by their genius project text with thorough evidence  |
| K/U | The inclusion of the goal, research, outlined processed and end result are limited and basic with a few missing. | Has included some of the following: the goal, research, outlined processed and end result. | Included the goal, research, outlined processed and end result. | Has included the goal, research, outlined process and end result with detail. |
| THI | Ideas were not presented in a logical order and information did not transition from one section to the next. | Ideas were occasionally present in a logical format making it difficult to follow from one section to the next. | Ideas were clearly presented and follow a logical order that led the audience from one section to the next | Ideas were clearly presented using transition words to connect ideas and led the audience from one section to the next. |
| APP | Student selected a topic that showed a very limited personal connection or interest.Connections and an evaluation to the goal was not made. | Student selected a topic that showed some personal connection and experience.Some connections and evaluation to the goal was made.  | Student selected a topic that showed clear personal experience and connections.Connections and an evaluation were made to the goal, process and outcome. | Student expertly selected a topic that showed personal experience and knowledge. Strong connections and an evaluation to the goal, process and outcome were developed and evident.  |

CHOICE OF MEDIA TEXT

|  |
| --- |
| MEDIA FORMS: **3.2** identify an appropriate form to suit the specific purpose and audience for a media text they plan to create |
| APP | Created a presentation that offered limited challenge | Created a presentation that offered some challenge  | Created a presentation that offered a considerable challenge  | Created a presentation that offered a high degree of challenge  |

PRODUCTIONS

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| --- |
| PRODUCING MEDIA TEXTS**: 3.4** produce a variety of media texts of some technical complexity for specific purposes and audiences, using appropriate forms, conventions, and techniques |
| TH | Included a limited amount of media to enhance the presentation (pictures, music, video, webistes/links, etc). | Included some media elements to enhance the presentation (pictures, music, video, webistes/links, etc). | Included a variety of media to enhance the presentation (pictures, music, video, webistes/links, etc). | Included complex media components to enhance the presentation (pictures, music, video, webistes/links, etc), showing an understanding of their audience. |

OVERALL MARK:

Overall, the student demonstrated their understanding of the media text with:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| (L1) limited effectiveness | (L2) some effectiveness | (L3) considerable effectiveness | (L4) high degree of effectiveness |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |

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