

Genius Hour Lessons

Genius Hour was born out of an idea that major industry leaders have been using to help foster a creative and productive workspace. These giants of industry have been giving 20% of employee work time to pursue passion projects. Here at Saint George's School (and other schools across the country), we have adopted this 20% time and call it Genius Hour.

Finding a passion can be a daunting challenge for many middle school students, so we spend a majority of the Fall brainstorming project ideas together. Each student writes ideas on sticky notes for our middle school hall, create word clouds, brainstorm on tables, make "Passion" brackets, and listen to podcasts. The biggest part about finding a passion is the collaboration between peers to help one another truly find what one is passionate about before diving into their own projects.

After brainstorming a passion, students choose a topic or an interest and generate a guiding question. Over the next five months, they create a presentation to share with their classmates and the community. Some of the projects from this past year include creating doggie gift bags to raise money for animal shelters, learning to crochet with their grandma, making a coloring book from scratch and donating it to a local children's charity, designing a shoe in collaboration with Nike, learning French, creating custom Car Fresheners in the shape of Elon Musk (cleverly called Elon Musk Musk), running a mile in under six minutes, learning how to live-stream sporting events in the Covid-Era, and the list goes on.

We believe that Genius Hour is a valuable use of that 20% of class because it allows us to teach fundamental skills such as organization, management of time, research and writing, communicating with professionals, and public speaking. These are all skills that are valuable no matter what profession students want to pursue after they leave Saint George's School, and allows the

student to choose the vehicle in which they learn all of these skills. It also promotes the creativity we want all of our students to maintain as they move through their academic and professional lives.

— Matt Melka, MS Social Studies Teacher



Counter Clockwise from Above: Students giving their Genius Hour presentations including cooking up a dish to share, showing watercolor paintings, baking breads and chocolate chip cookies, presenting the Elon Musk air freshener, and explaining how to make an athletic shoe.

