

Creative Kids Go Pro Unit Plan

Title: Creative Kids Go Pro

Description: Student public relations teams seek to benefit a local business or community organization by publishing informational brochures.

At a Glance

Grade Level: 6-8

Subjects: Social Studies, Language Arts, Visual Arts

Topics: Community Service, Graphic Design, Public Relations

Higher-Order Thinking Skills: Problem Solving, Decision Making

Key Learnings: Design and Composition, Desktop Publishing

Time Needed: 5 weeks, 30-minute lessons, 3 lessons per week

Background: [Odyssey Story](#) from Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Unit Summary

Students learn about community businesses and service organizations, and choose one to help by producing informational brochures. As a public relations "agency," students assess the needs of their client and produce a brochure that heralds an upcoming event or publicizes the organization's contribution to the community. Students collaborate with publishing experts and learn how to apply design elements to meet the purpose of a client.

Curriculum-Framing Questions

- **Essential Question**
How can we help our community?
- **Unit Questions**
How do organizations communicate with people?
What role does public relations play?
How can we help an organization communicate a message?
- **Content Questions**
How can we use the basic elements of design to address the purpose of a brochure?
What are the steps for designing and drafting a publication?

Assessment Processes

View how a variety of student-centered [assessments](#) are used in the Creative Kids Go Pro Unit Plan. These assessments help students and teachers set goals; monitor student progress; provide feedback; assess thinking, processes, performances, and products; and reflect on learning throughout the learning cycle.

Instructional Procedures

Prior to Instruction

If you are not familiar with desktop publishing and photo-editing programs, begin by taking a course or seeking assistance from other teachers, parents, or students.

At least one month in advance:

- Identify local businesses or community organizations that could benefit from having a brochure that publicizes their organization or promotes an upcoming event
- Collect sample brochures that represent a variety of purposes, approaches, and uses of color, imagery, and design elements

Setting the Stage

Begin the unit by asking the Essential Question, *How can we help our community?* Ask students to think individually about the question and then discuss their responses with each other. Ask for volunteers to share their responses with the whole class.

Introduce the project by telling the students that they will be forming a public relations “agency” to help a local business or community organization. Ask the Unit Question, *How do organizations communicate with people?* Have students talk in their groups and then record their ideas in their journals. Ask the groups to share their thinking with the entire class. Explain to students that they will be exploring this question throughout the project.

Identify several local businesses or organizations that could use help with their public relations. If possible, invite them to the class to give short presentations about their organization and its needs. To prepare for this, ask students how they will determine which organizations to help. Together, develop a set of student-generated criteria for deciding which organization to support. In doing so, discuss the decision making process that they plan to use to evaluate the organizations.

Have each student complete an evaluation of each organization using student-generated [criteria](#). After all the presentations, review the results and discuss.

As students are choosing which organization to help, they can schedule visits to the organization, read publications about the organization or topics related to the work of the organization, and conduct other fact-finding research to help them in their decision-making process. The whole class can choose the same organization or small groups can work with different organizations.

Gathering Information

Once the students have identified the businesses or organizations to help, ask the students to consider the Unit Question, *How can we help an organization communicate a message?* Tell students that in order to provide the best product, they will need to discuss details of the product with the client. For example, they should discuss the following details about the project:

- Purpose
- Information to impart
- Design ideas
- Timeline
- Printing options

Organize small groups of students into a public relations agency, assigning roles such as graphic designer, account manager, writer/editor, and photographer. Have them brainstorm questions they would ask the client based on the preceding criteria. For example, *What is the purpose of this communication piece?* Each group should write

down their final questions and hand them in for review. Explain that each account manager will go with the teacher to meet with the client and ask their questions.

With student representatives, meet with the client and discuss the details of the project, identifying what the final product will be and scheduling future meetings to review drafts. If the final product is printed professionally, collaborate with the client to select a printing company, and schedule a time for a class representative to meet with the client and printer.

After the account managers return to their groups, have each group go through a process of deciding what information they need to present and how best to present it. As they do so, have them complete the [project plan](#) to help them. The project plan guides them through the decision making process and provides a document to track progress for the group, teacher, and client. The plan also gives insight into the students' metacognitive processes.

The directions presented in this Unit Plan assume that the final product is a brochure. Ask students to gather brochures from their homes and community.

Organizing the Information

When you and the class have collected a broad set of brochures, have students meet in their public relations groups to discuss the purpose and basic design features of each brochure. For example, when they examine a brochure for a preschool, they might note the use of primary colors, playful fonts, and children's drawings. A banking brochure might be a more somber tone with its use of neutral tones and conservative fonts. Conduct a class discussion to share students' observations. Have students analyze the brochures and discuss the purpose of each, the approach, and the use of color, imagery, and design elements.

Have each group gather the necessary information from their client(s). This might include information from meetings with the manager/director or employees, interviews with customers/clients, information from literature about the organization or issue, photos, and other images that will be included.

Designing the Product

Discuss elements and principles of design. Bryan Peterson's book *Using Design Basics to Get Creative Results* provides good samples and descriptions of the four basic elements: line, type, shape, and texture. The book also discusses the primary design principles: balance, contrast, unity, color, and value. The resource section of this unit plan lists additional design guides. After students are aware of the basic design features, have them identify how graphic design elements and principles are presented in the brochure collection they just reviewed.

Revisit the Unit Question, *What role does public relations play?* Review students' project plans and their timelines. Discuss intermediate steps with the students and add details to their timelines.

In their groups, have students brainstorm ideas for their brochures. Remind students that text, imagery, and design elements all contribute to the message in a brochure. They need to take all of these into account as they design their brochures.

Have students sketch and then mock-up their brochures on computers, identifying possible fonts, layouts, and elements. Be sure to have the graphic designers take the lead on this.

Ask each group to share their ideas with the whole class and gather feedback from peers. If doing one class brochure, lead a class discussion and choose design ideas to include in the brochure. Select fonts, elements, color, and other design features from the different groups' efforts. Try to include some thematic elements that run through the entire piece. For instance, students creating a holiday brochure for a hotel client might choose a reindeer theme and draw reindeer eating in the hotel's restaurants, dancing in the ballroom, and sleeping in a hotel bed.

Creating the Product

Note: Include the client in the drafting process. Meet with a representative early on and again when the project is nearly complete.

Use desktop publishing software to create a page template. Set margins, fonts for headlines, picture placeholders, and text fields for required features.

Have the writer/editor create the content for the brochure while the graphic designer and photographer work on the art, which may include drawings and photographs. [Scan student artwork](#) and use photo-editing software to work with photos.

Guide students as they design and revise the brochure text and art, and collect elements for the page. Share the [project scoring guide](#) to help guide student work.

Presenting the Product

Meet with the client and print company to review a draft of the brochure and associated files. Incorporate feedback into the final draft and submit files to the printer for publishing. Be sure to give the students credit on the brochure.

Plan a final meeting with the client or invite the client to the class to present the final brochures. See a [sample letter](#) for ideas. If possible, have a party with the client!

Celebrate your success with the school community. Display the brochure in the classroom, and write about it in the school newsletter, Web site, and yearbook. Send brochures home to parents with a letter.

Assess the final product with the [project scoring guide](#). Have students reflect on their work. For ideas, look at [sample reflection questions](#). Invite students to share their thoughts with the class. Discuss the following questions:

- *How did we help our community?*
- *How did our publication help the organization?*
- *How did asking the right questions lead to satisfactory results?*
- *How did we use the basic elements of design to address the purpose of the brochure?*
- *What are the steps for designing and drafting a publication?*

Prerequisite Skills

- Desktop publishing skills, including copying, pasting, inserting, and modifying images
- Photo-editing skills

Differentiated Instruction

Resource Student

- Provide extra support, using teaching assistants, parent aides, and student helpers
- Modify the amount of work required
- Create teams that support all learners
- Reduce reading and writing requirements, and provide more visual aids and work samples
- Let the student act as a specialist in an area such as photography or art

Gifted Student

- Involve the student in meetings and other correspondence with the partner organization and printer
- Have the student serve as a specialist

English Language Learner

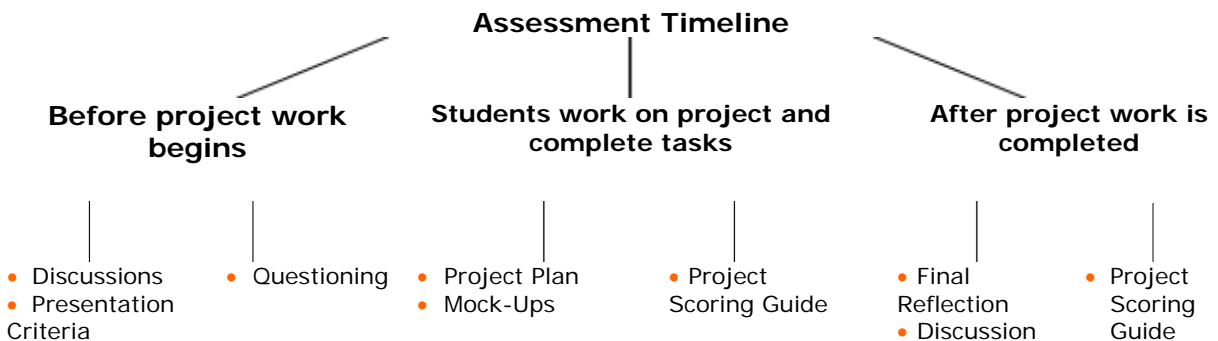
- Create a brochure in the student's first languages
- Modify work requirements
- Use visual aids
- Pair the student pair, if possible, with a more proficient bilingual student

Credits

Karrie Deitz participated in the Intel® Teach Program, which resulted in this idea for a classroom project. A team of teachers expanded the plan into the example you see here.

THINGS YOU NEED (highlight box)

Assessment Plan



Students meet in small groups to brainstorm ideas while the teacher listens to their ideas to gauge their interest level and to begin to identify roles that students might assume during the project. Students create [criteria](#) for choosing an organization which is used during the presentations. This criteria is used to select an organization and reveals the decision making process used to weigh and evaluate the needs of each organization, student interest, and the value added by the students' work. Students develop questions for the client, which are reviewed by the teacher to

ensure that students are on track and will be prepared for the client meeting. During the project work, students create a [project plan](#) to guide the project development. The plan is also used as a tool to discuss the project with the client and for teachers to track students' work. Before students delve into final products, they share their mock-ups with the class and get feedback for revisions. A [project scoring guide](#) helps to guide work and ensure success. Students complete a [final reflection](#) and engage in a discussion about the project to share their learning and provide feedback.

Targeted Content Standards and Benchmarks

Targeted State Frameworks/Content Standards/Benchmarks:

British Columbia, Canada Instructional Technology Standards

- Students will use technology as a communication tool. They will design, develop, publish, and present using technology resources for audiences inside and outside the classroom.

Social Studies Skills and Processes Standards

- Students will apply critical thinking—including questioning, comparing, summarizing, drawing conclusions, and defending a position—to make reasoned judgments about a range of issues, situations, and topics
- Demonstrate effective research skills including: accessing information, assessing information, collecting data, evaluating data, organizing information, presenting information, and citing sources
- Demonstrate effective written, oral, and graphic communication skills
- Demonstrate skills and attitudes of active citizenship, including ethical behavior, open-mindedness, respect for diversity, and collaboration

English Language Arts

- Organize details and information about materials they have read, heard, or viewed using a variety of graphic forms
- Interpret and report on information obtained from more than one source to inform others

Visual Arts

- Students perceive and respond to images in ways that demonstrate their understanding of the visual elements and principles of art and design
- Students create images that communicate their understanding of and appreciation for the visual elements and principles of art and design and how they are used to communicate
- Students create images that demonstrate their ability to communicate effectively using a variety of materials, technologies, and processes

Student Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Learn about programs that benefit their community
- Use problem solving skills to develop a product for a local organization or business
- Understand the role of public relations

- Apply basic elements of design to a publication
- Apply desktop publishing skills
- Work cooperatively in small groups

Materials and Resources

Printed Materials

- Peterson, B. (1996). *Using design basics to get creative results*. Cincinnati, OH: North Light Books.

Internet Resources

- Goinhome Web site
www.goinhome.com*
Updates on articles, columns, research, and graphic design projects
- Jiskha's Homework Help
www.jiskha.com/art/visual_arts/ped.html*
Principles and elements of design

Other Resources

- List of community businesses or charitable organizations
- Variety of sample brochures

Technology—Hardware

- Computers to create brochures
- Scanner to scan artwork and images
- Digital cameras to take pictures of prototypes

Technology—Software

- Desktop publishing to design brochures
- Image processing to process brochure pictures
- E-mail to correspond with partner organizations and printer