

All about “Genius Hour”

Redefining “GENIUS”

"Genius is the act of solving a problem in a way no one has solved it before. It has nothing to do with winning a Nobel Prize in physics or attaining certain levels of schooling. It's about using human insight and initiative to find original solutions that matter. Genius is actually the eventual public recognition of dozens (or hundreds) of failed attempts at solving a problem. Sometimes we fail in public, often we fail in private, but **people who are doing creative work are constantly failing.**" - Seth Godin (*emphasis added*)

What is Genius Hour?

Genius hour is a program that allows students to explore their own passions and encourages creativity. It is an opportunity to experience failure and success in a safe and supportive environment. Genius Hour is student-led, and it is up to the students to push and pace themselves.

Student Expectations

- 1) Students must be willing to change their mindset and be okay with failing. Each student will likely experience failure in this program. Students will eventually realize that failure is actually a wonderful **opportunity**, and they will find excitement in the process!
- 2) Students should not focus on a “grade” or “points” in this program. A grade will not be given. Students will focus on the bigger picture and purpose of learning by pushing themselves. In this group, a student’s motivation needs to be **intrinsic**—not for a grade or any other reason.
- 3) Students will be required to pick something they are **passionate** about, and create a **project**.
- 4) Students will complete this project at their **own pace**. There will only be a few assignments with due dates:
 - **Project Pitch** (present to the group what you plan to do so you can receive constructive feedback)
 - **Proposal Paper** (hand in and conference with Mrs. Jones)
 - **Weekly Reflection Sheet** (write what was completed during the week)
- 5) To be a part of Genius Hour, regular classwork must be completed **on time** and be **well done**.

Parent/Guardian Expectations

This is an extra activity that is not required, and most of it will need to be completed outside of school. If students want to participate in Genius Hour, they need to discuss it with their parents. If a student is participating in the program, parents will need to be supportive and help as needed.

The main thing we ask is that parents help their child find websites to research the chosen topic. Once this is done, **please email at least 3 websites** to Mrs. Jones that you are comfortable with your child using at school when they work on the project. Students and parents will also be responsible for getting the **resources and supplies** needed to complete the project.

Additional Information/Resources

Dig deep in these websites and learn about Genius Hour! Check out what other students have done. Learn about people in this world who failed over and over again, only to make something great come out of it.

Video about Genius Hour: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FEQzKH7v0-Q>

Video a student created about Genius Hour: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=09Kw0_ncs3I

What is Genius Hour? <http://barton4thgrade.weebly.com/what-is-genius-hour.html>

Project Ideas and Tools: <http://5thgradeaim.weebly.com/project-idea--tool-collections.html>

Helpful websites for various projects: <http://barton4thgrade.weebly.com/project-links.html>

Student:

Mark one box:

I, _____, would like to **participate** in the Genius Hour Program. I have read and I understand all the expectations in this letter.

I, _____, would like to **opt out** of the Genius Hour Program. I realize I am welcome to join at any time now, and will let Mrs. Jones know if I want to.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian:

Mark one box:

I would like my child, _____, to **participate** in the Genius Hour Program. I have read and I understand all the expectations in this letter.

I would like my child, _____, to **opt out** of the Genius Hour Program at this time.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____