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Introduction

We all remember a project we did in school, often with more vivid recall than we can summon for entire subjects or years. And for good reason. Projects command attention. They force students to grapple with new information, skills and technologies in ways that embed learning in memory. They contextualise education and help students truly understand why “I need to know that.”

This book contains ten projects designed to leave a lasting mark. These projects provide students with authentic tasks involving real problems, real products and real people, and use themes that hook young people. At the same time, they have teachers thoroughly in mind.

The secondary school curriculum is packed, and, as teachers well know, a project can quickly take on a life of its own. *Expeditions in Your Classroom* provides activities and materials that scaffold student tasks, set clear criteria for final products, and offer assessment tools and a detailed outline of project steps so that teachers can focus energy on instruction rather than project management.

About Project-Based Learning

In *Real Learning, Real Work*¹, Adria Steinberg describes the qualities of powerful projects: the six A's.

Authenticity

Students solve problems and questions that are meaningful and real. People outside school walls tackle the same challenges. What students create and do has value beyond school.

Academic Rigour

Students encounter challenging material and learn critical skills, knowledge and habits of mind essential for success in one or more disciplines.

Applied Learning

Students put their knowledge and skills to work in hands-on ways, and learn how to organise and manage themselves along the way.

Active Exploration

Students go into the field. They investigate and communicate their discoveries.

Adult Relationships

Students connect with adults with relevant expertise. They observe them, work with them and get support and feedback.

Assessment

Students play an active role in defining their goals and assessing their progress. Adults around them give them ongoing and varied opportunities to demonstrate progress.

¹Steinberg, Adria. *Real Learning, Real Work (Transforming Teaching)*. New York, NY: Routledge, 1998.

Introduction

Project Format and Materials

Each project contains the following materials:

Teacher Pages

- **Overview:** information on project learning goals, prior knowledge or experience needed by students, time needed for the project and team formation information
- **Suggested Steps:** a day-by-day view of how to deliver project activities
- **Project Management Tips and Notes:** suggestions for how to handle possible issues or information on project options and variations
- **Extension Activities:** suggested activities for extending the project or exploring related areas
- **Australian Curriculum Connection:** a list of ACELA elements students will meet through the project
- **Answer Key:** answers for Before You Go and Skill Check questions

Student Pages

- **Expedition Overview:** a description of the project challenge, learning objectives, key vocabulary terms, materials needed and web resources students use for project activities
- **Before You Go:** lead-in activities designed to review fundamental skills or knowledge needed for the project
- **Off You Go:** activities that support the core project, including guidelines and instructions for final products or presentations
- **Expedition Tools:** handouts and worksheets associated with project activities
- **Check Yourself:** two assessment tools that students use to check skill development (practice problems or questions) and evaluate their project performance overall

An example English Project Assessment Rubric is also included and can be used with any project.

Project Skills Chart

Projects challenge students to flex more than one mental muscle at a time and integrate skills they often see dissected and covered in discrete units of study. Each project in this book has a core skill focus, but also gives students an opportunity to practice other skills. Use this chart as a reference to help you find the best project for your needs.

C = Core skill

X = Other skills covered (sometimes optional)

Project	Page	Grammar/mechanics	Writing skills	Creative writing	Critical reading	Communication/public speaking	Visual presentation	Australian literature	World literature	Literary genres/responding to literature	Research skills
Calling All Characters	2			X	C	C	X	X		C	
The Literary Observer	20	X	C	X	C		X	X	X	C	
Junior Scientist Magazine	37	X	C				X		C		
Feedback, Inc.	51	X				C	C	X			
The Perfect Pitch	70	X	C	X		X					
Community Writers	88	C	C		X	X					
Comic Literature	104	X	C	C	X			X	X	C	X
On Air	125	X	C	C		C				X	
Literature Ambassadors	143				C	X		C	C	C	X
Point for Point	161		X		X	C					C

Calling All Characters

Overview

Students explore the art of characterisation and create a 10-minute “multi-voice” monologue on a theme they choose.

Time

Total time: 10 to 12 hours

- Before You Go – Character Study: 55 minutes in class and 60 minutes of homework
- Activity 1 – Operation Observation: one to two 55-minute class periods and 60 to 90 minutes of homework
- Activity 2 – Voices Monologue: three 55-minute class periods and 3 to 4 hours of homework

Skill Focus

- characterisation
- descriptive and narrative writing skills
- presentation skills

Prior Knowledge

- analysing prose
- story structure and elements

Team Formation

Students work on this project individually.

Lingo to Learn – Terms to Know

- **character:** a person or anything presented as a person in a literary work
- **characterisation:** the method a writer uses to develop a character
- **direct characterisation:** method in which the writer makes direct statements about a character, tells the reader what the character is like or has another character do so
- **dynamic character development:** when a character’s values, understanding, views and so forth change during the course of the story
- **indirect characterisation:** method in which the writer reveals character information through the character’s thoughts, words, actions and how others react to him or her
- **static character development:** when a character does not undergo any important internal change and is essentially the same at the beginning and end of the story

Calling All Characters

Suggested Steps

Preparation

- Choose three or four examples of great characterisations. Choose disparate approaches. You can use them throughout the project to inspire students. Examples include Samuel's relationship with his grandfather in Ursula Dubosarsky's novel *The First Book of Samuel*, and a budding friendship in Steven Herrick's *The Spangled Drongo: A Verse Novel*.

Day 1

1. Give an overview of the project and review project materials.
2. Read or listen to one or two examples of good characterisations. Discuss what makes them work.
3. Review the definitions of direct versus indirect characterisation and static versus dynamic character development. Ask students for examples from books and movies they know.
4. Explain Before You Go: Character Study and assign a due date.

Homework

Have students work on Before You Go: Character Study.

Day 2

1. Solicit examples from student character studies in progress. Discuss.
2. Consider having students pair off and help each other with their characterisations. For instance, partners can talk about how they see each other (dominant characteristics, traits and so forth). Diplomatically provide ground rules (be kind!) or structure activities to support interaction. For example, have students come up with ten adjectives they would use to describe their partner.
3. Read aloud and discuss another example of great characterisation in literature. Alternatively, discuss an example that doesn't work (choose a bad movie or television show) and why.

Calling All Characters

Homework

Have students complete Before You Go: Character Study.

Day 3

1. Have students present their character studies.
2. Discuss each. Ask students: What is the characteristic or trait, and what evidence reveals it?
3. Explain Activity 1: Operation Observation and assign a due date.

Homework

Have students work on Activity 1: Operation Observation.

Day 4 – Activity 1 Due Date

1. Ask a variety of students to read their characterisations.
2. Have students trade their characterisations with a partner and create a short role-play involving both of their characters.
3. Invite students to perform role-plays.

Day 5

1. Explain Activity 2: Voices Monologue (final product).
2. Assign a due date.
3. Indicate whether students should work in class, at home or elsewhere.

Monologue Due Date

1. Have students perform monologues.
2. Ask students to give feedback on characters.
3. Prompt discussion by asking questions. Examples: What really helped define characters? How do they relate to the theme?

Calling All Characters

Final Day

1. Have students complete the Skill Check worksheet.
2. Review answers.
3. Have students complete the Self-Assessment and Reflection worksheet and submit it (optional).

Project Management Tips and Notes

Before students start writing their monologues, meet with each one to review plans and Monologue Prep Sheets. You may want to meet again to review the draft script.

Suggested Assessment

Use the sample English Project Assessment Rubric or the following point system (out of 100):

Team and class participation	10 points
Expedition Tool: Character Study Notes	10 points
Activity 1: Operation Observation	20 points
Expedition Tool: Monologue Prep Sheet	10 points
Activity 2: Voices Monologue	45 points
Self-Assessment and Reflection	5 points

Extension Activities

- Record or videotape monologues.
- Perform monologues in front of an audience, such as family members or another class.

Australian Curriculum Connection

Language

Addresses: ACELA1528, ACELA1529, ACELA1532, ACELA1534, ACELA1536, ACELA1764, ACELA1539

Literature

Addresses: ACELT1619, ACELT1620, ACELT1621, ACELT1803, ACELT1622, ACELT1623, ACELT1625, ACELT1805

Calling All Characters

Literacy

Addresses: ACELY1719, ACELY1804, ACELY1720, ACELY1721, ACELY1722, ACELY1723, ACELY1725, ACELY1726, ACELY1727, ACELY1728

Answer Key

Check Yourself! Skill Check

1. *Characterisation* is creating or representing a character in an artistic work by describing or developing aspects of his or her character: appearance, background, motivations, beliefs, values, intentions, actions and so forth.
2. An author might use physical information to convey psychological traits or a connection to a past event; use dialogue with another character; tell a story or backstory; or describe an environment or objects the character controls (home, car and so forth).
3. An author uses events, actions, dialogue, clothing, descriptions and so forth.
4. Answers will vary. Possible answers:
not enough research or thought (superficial or underdeveloped characters); creating characters the reader can't relate to (they're inflexible, unbelievable or unrealistic); bad or unnatural dialogue; too much direct characterisation and using the character or another character to tell the reader what a character is like or how he is feeling (telling the reader outright "that guy is a jerk" instead of implying it indirectly by describing a moment that highlights the fact).

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Calling All Characters

Challenge

What are clues to your character? The things you laugh at? Your signature? How you treat a shop clerk or a dog? Good authors drop clues like these and more to bind you to the heroes, villains and other inhabitants of their fictional worlds. For this project, you will study character and characterisation up close by observing yourself and people around you. You will also create characters of your own and weave their voices together into a powerful monologue you will perform.

Objectives

- To understand how an author reveals and develops character
- To strengthen your narrative and descriptive writing skills

Project Activities

Before You Go

- Character Study

Off You Go

- Activity 1: Operation Observation
- Activity 2: Voices Monologue

Expedition Tools

- Character Study Notes
- Snapshot in Words
- Monologue Prep Sheet

Other Materials Needed

- notebook
- computer with Internet access
- tape recorder (optional)

Lingo to Learn – Terms to Know

- character
- characterisation
- direct characterisation
- dynamic character development
- indirect characterisation
- static character development