

The  
Think It Up  
**TEACHER'S GUIDE**

---

Think It Up™

# Why Think It Up?



## Planning Your Student-Powered Project

As a teacher, you're always looking for ways to get your students excited about learning. You want to help them find their voice, build academic and life skills, and change the world.

Planning a Think It Up project with your students has the potential to do all this and more. Across the country, teachers are using Think It Up student-powered projects to inspire their kids, build a community of supporters, and bring learning to life.

The following is a ready made lesson plan that will harness the work you're already doing in your classroom and take it to the next level – helping your students advocate for themselves through the power of crowdfunding and Think It Up.

A collaboration of Think It Up, EL Education and DonorsChoose.org, this plan will help you introduce student-powered projects in your classroom, guide the development of student project ideas, and culminate with a completed project essay.

## How to Get Started

- Review the Project Criteria on page 2.
- Review the lesson plan on page 3.
- Fill in as much of the Project Development Guide on page 4 as possible. Your goal is to capture your thinking before bringing in your student collaborators.
- Work with your students to fill out page 5 (see details in the lesson plan).

## Developing Your Idea

- [Watch](#) this webinar explaining how to craft a project proposal.
- When choosing a final product for your project, shoot for something that challenges students to show what they've mastered and speaks to an audience beyond your classroom. Examples include: play, dramatic reading, puppet show, photojournalism display, bulletin board display, TV/radio show, pop-up book, instruction booklet, explanatory poster, data analysis (charts, graphs, etc.), brochure, school lesson, oral report, flip book, notecards, trading cards, political cartoon, debate, petition, constitution/set of laws, political action, fundraising campaign, public service announcement, newspaper, magazine/journal article, pamphlet, letter to the editor, editorial, two-voice poem, book review.
- Share the latest! Post your project updates to [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#) with the hashtag #thinkitup.

# Project Criteria

Think It Up projects will be assessed against the following criteria:

**Curiosity and Deep Learning**

How well does the project inspire exploration of meaningful subject-matter and apply learning in a real-life context?

**Academic Rigor: Preparation for College, Careers and Life**

How well does the project identify and promote one or more specific academic skills?

**Citizenship, Character and Changemaking Skills**

How well does the project integrate social-emotional learning skills like empathy, respect, compassion, and citizenship into the school community?

**Student/Teacher Shared Leadership**

How well does the project empower students to take leadership roles as they work with their teacher to harness their passions and apply what they are learning to address real-world problems, generate new ideas, or make a difference?

**Collaboration**

How well does the project demonstrate that students share roles and responsibilities while working toward a common goal, anticipating challenges, and developing a plan to overcome obstacles?

**Plan For Quality Outcomes**

How well does the project demonstrate that the students and teacher set a feasible goal, a sensible timeline, and a means for assessing project success?

**Overall Quality and Demonstration of Innovation**

# Your Lesson Plan



**Grades: 7-12, Total Time: ~60 min**

---

## Hook (10 min)

Students read, respond to, and discuss the Think It Up Project Summary “Voices For Change.”

- Students pick up reading as they enter the classroom.
- Students read and annotate “Voices for Change” then answer response questions to gauge comprehension (ex. What “stories of today” did students study? What do these students hope to do with their new podcasting equipment?).
- They read, annotate, and answer the response questions.
- Students take turns and talk through the following guiding questions:
  - How did these students change their community?
  - What did they learn about during the project?
  - Why is their work important?
- Students share out responses to the whole class. Teacher creates an anchor chart of student responses.
- Resources: Voices for Change Project Summary: <http://donorschoose.org/project/1690284>; chart paper

## Direct Instruction (10 min)

Teacher does a think aloud for his/her own Project Development Guide.

- Explain the non-negotiables (content, standards, timeline).
- Explain the areas for student input and collaboration (community problem, product, tasks, etc.).
- Resources: Double-sided worksheet “Project Development Guide,” with front completed by teacher (see next page)

## Guided Practice (20 min)

- Students work in groups of 3-4 to brainstorm different ideas.
- The teacher circulates, providing feedback and guidance.
- Students choose their best ideas.
- Resources: Double-sided worksheet “Project Development Guide”, with front completed by teacher; notebook paper for extra notes

## Culmination (10 min)

Each small group writes a rough draft of the project proposal, using the [Think It Up Student Project Guide](#). This will be turned into the teacher at the end of class.

- Resources: [Think It Up Student Project Guide](#)

# Project Development Guide



1. List the academic standards/content students need to learn.

6. Identify your authentic (outside of school) audience.

2. Decide what text(s) students will read.

7. Identify local experts that can help.

3. List the skills students need to develop.

8. Choose places students can do research/fieldwork.

4. Identify a problem in your community that needs solving.

9. Map out your timeline.

5. Identify your products.

10. Decide what materials you need from DonorsChoose.org.

# Project Development Guide



1. List the academic standards/content students need to learn.

2. Decide what text(s) students will read.

3. List the skills students need to develop.

4. Identify a problem in your community that needs solving.

5. Identify your products.

6. Identify your authentic (outside of school) audience.

7. Identify local experts that can help.

8. Choose places students can do research/fieldwork.

9. Map out your timeline.

10. Decide what materials you need from DonorsChoose.org.