

PURSUIT OF PASSION



ELA & READING

6-8

GRADES 6-8

This guide links the *Pursuit of Passion* unit to the research strand of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for English Language Arts and Reading (ELAR). *Pursuit of Passion* can be linked to additional TEKS from ELAR and other subjects as well based on the student's choice of topic. *Pursuit of Passion* allows students in kindergarten through grade 10 to explore the relationship between their personal interests and future opportunities. By connecting the two, students will gain well-rounded perspectives that help guide them toward professional or academic future goals. For example, students may understand the dynamic relationships between self and environment, as addressed in the Social Studies TEKS, and students may relate the arts to history, society, and culture, as addressed in the Fine Arts TEKS. Since this unit involves a variety of learning experiences, its products can document student learning over time through annual Pursuit of Passion projects, demonstrating student growth and providing a reflection of progress. The following text details the *Pursuit of Passion* unit and includes the applicable English Language Arts and Reading TEKS. The final section of this document presents the applicable Texas College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) adopted by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) on January 24, 2008.

Description of Unit

Students will research a topic of their choice based on an interest-directed area and will relate it to curriculum standards in two subject areas. Students will learn about the history of a chosen field of study and its current development. They will also report their personal involvement with the topic and its significance. Students are expected to spend an appropriate amount of time choosing a topic that serves both academic and personal learning. Each student's final product will include a creative presentation of the student's work.

Pursuit of Passion (Kindergarten–Grade 10)

1

Goals

Students will meet these goals in their explorations:

- Understand the relationship between personal interests and society
- Become familiar with various career and study opportunities related to interests
- Learn about the purpose of their field of study within society
- Develop the essential skills of logical thinking, creative problem solving, intellectual risk taking, and communication
- Explore unanswered questions and generate new questions
- Generate new ideas
- Build and apply critical thinking skills

Phase I. Learning Experiences

1. Introduce the idea of exploring hobbies and interests in depth and from different perspectives. Describe a path connecting one's personal hobby or interest to a related profession and the importance of being open to related topics found in research. Online tools such as interest inventories can be useful in seeking topics related to interests. Helpful websites include the following:

<http://www.iccweb.com> (HS)

<http://www.powayusd.com/projects/EdTechCentral/MAPS/MS101/InterestInventories.htm> (HS)

<http://www.kidbibs.com/learningtips/inventory.htm> (K-12)

<http://school.discoveryeducation.com/schrockguide/edres.html> (K-12)

2. Demonstrate how brainstorming with webs or graphic organizers can help students map thoughts and ideas easily. By connecting related topics, students will produce their own topic pool to choose from. In order to help students document ideas, offer quick brainstorming tips before they begin, such as starting with simple ideas, writing down all possible topics, and developing related areas of focus. You may also want to provide the following links as additional internet resources during the brainstorming process:

http://www.ggu.edu/university_library/research_assistance/research_assistance_research_process#refine

<http://www.studygs.net/writing/prewriting1.htm>

http://www.sussex.ac.uk/library/infosuss/planning_a_search/concepts.shtml

3. Have a class discussion about why each project is important. Incorporate personal experiences and discuss the benefits of enjoying work (academic and professional). The discussion goal is to engage students by pointing out the project's focus on their individuality and application of interests. You may use these questions to guide the discussion:

- What is the difference between work you enjoy and work you dislike?
- What is your favorite hobby/interest and why?
- What aspects of your hobby/interest make it fun?
- What careers also involve these aspects?
- How can involvement in your hobby/interest impact others?

- If you had unlimited resources and time available for your hobby/interest, what would you do?
4. Present an overview of a hands-on activity. Through observation and involvement outside of their own lives, students can gain a literal understanding of how individual interests can drive life decisions and create ways to impact society. You may want to provide examples of activities for students, such as photography, interviews, and community service involvement.
 5. Explain to students about the state curriculum standards and why it is important to connect their areas of study to the TEKS. Ask students to think about what TEKS they could identify related to possible topics of interest. Be sure to explain the concept of TEKS so students have a clear understanding of what to look for. Introduce the TEKS applicable for each class's specific grade level (or higher grade levels as appropriate) and provide examples of how a project can make use of various subject area TEKS. Show students where to find the TEKS online at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=6148>.
 6. Have a class discussion about why discipline-based research is essential to pursuing scholarly interests in such diverse fields as medicine, education and communication. Discuss different research methodologies. Explain various strategies for planning research and designing effective qualitative and/or quantitative data collection. This will be helpful for students to understand how different information can be useful for different topics and settings. The *Gifted and Talented Teacher Toolkit* includes a section on research processes that may be useful for this discussion and can be found at http://www.texaspsp.org/toolkit/GT_Teacher_Toolkit.html. Students should provide proof of research outside of the classroom, and flexibility with the project requirements will allow them to explore original ways to investigate their topic.
 7. Have the class develop a sample timeline and/or checklist detailing tasks and targeted deadlines. Such tools can be helpful in remaining organized and continuing to move forward with the project. Both can be combined into one document that students include in their project. A checklist example is available at <http://homeworktips.about.com/od/paperassignments/a/researchchecklist.htm>.

Phase II. Independent Research

A. Research process

1. Selecting a topic. Class discussions, brainstorming tools, and interest inventories should help the student choose a topic. Once the student uses these tools and reaches a preliminary decision on a subject of study, he should conduct initial research to confirm the availability of information and to help narrow the topic.
2. Asking guiding questions. Once the student has selected a topic, she should think of three to five guiding questions, such as the following:
 - What is the historical context of my topic?

- What are important points in my topic's history?
- Who affected my topic's history?
- What purposes does my topic serve?
- What would society/the world be like without my topic?
- Why would other people consider my topic important?
- What may be the future of my topic?

While these examples are general, the student's questions about the area of study should be specific to the chosen topic. The questions should lead her to form individual research-based opinions. The student should also develop a hypothesis or some possible answers to the questions.

3. **Creating a Topic Proposal.** The student should include appropriate components in the Topic Proposal. (See attachment #2.) Examples follow:
 - Chosen topic
 - Resources he will need to find answers to questions, such as primary and secondary sources, correspondence with experts on the subject, etc.
 - Hands-on activity ideas
 - Related TEKS

The student should identify TEKS from **two** topic-related subject areas that will be addressed throughout this project. The Topic Proposal must be approved by the instructor.

4. **Creating a timeline.** Using the sample timeline/checklist prepared by the class, the student will map out a timeline for her specific project. This will help the student stay organized as she progresses toward project completion.
5. **Conducting the research.** The student should use resources identified in his Topic Proposal as well as additional resources he discovers. During this stage, the student needs to keep a log, notes, and/or resource process sheets to document all the sources he uses and what he learns from each one. The student should remain focused on the purpose of his research as determined by his guiding questions. However, that purpose may evolve as the student conducts his research.
6. **Discussion of progress.** Throughout the research process, the student may run into challenges due to lack of available information or even evolving interest. Allotting class time to discuss research concerns and issues while also exchanging tips with other students can help provide a status report for the student and instructor and help the student find ways to overcome obstacles.

B. The product

The student should express, through the design and creation of an original product, what she has learned about her chosen topic of study. The complete project should include quotations, examples, and details as appropriate and should follow appropriate stylistic rules. Since the goal of the project is to encourage student examination of her own passion and its bigger picture, the

student's point of view, voice, and reflection should be included. Also, the relationship between topic and the real world should be evident. An important factor is the product's authenticity; therefore, the student should be creative in designing her product. For example, product ideas that incorporate research could be filming a movie or designing and carrying out an experiment. Some useful websites for more product ideas include the following:

<http://makezine.com/>

<http://www.instructables.com/>

The student should be able to provide confirmation of participation in an outside activity. If the product is tangible and used in presentation nothing more may be required. The instructor may want to consider requiring evidence for proof of completion. The student must complete a reference list/Works Cited page that includes an appropriate collection of references.

C. Communication

Each student presents his research. The student is free to design and create a presentation fitting for the topic and information that includes key aspects of the product. Depending on the grade level, the presentation may range from 5-20 minutes in length and should be followed by an unscripted Q&A session with audience members.

Instructors may want to provide ideas and examples of creative ways to present, for instance through a student-designed class lesson or an interactive game. The websites used previously for product ideas may be useful to help generate presentation ideas.

D. A completed project includes all of the following:

1. The Topic Proposal including TEKS addressed
2. A log, notes, or resource process sheets
3. Timeline/checklist
4. The product
5. Proof of participation in an outside activity, if needed
6. A Works Cited page
7. An audiotape or videotape of the presentation, including an unscripted Q&A session

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

The unit may address the following TEKS:

English Language Arts:

Grade 8

*Research-related TEKS – These are the same for **grades 6-8** (Prefix = course number)*

- 8.22 Asks open-ended research questions and develop a plan for answering them
- 8.23 Determines, locates, and explores the full range of relevant sources addressing a research question and systematically records the information they gather

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| 8.24 | Clarifies research questions and evaluates and synthesizes collected information |
| 8.25 | Organizes and presents ideas and information according to the purpose of the research and their audience |

Texas College and Career Readiness Standards

This unit may address the following Texas College and Career Readiness Standards:

English Language Arts:

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|-------|--|
| V.A.1 | Formulates research questions |
| V.A.2 | Explores a research topic |
| V.A.3 | Refines research topic and devise a timeline for completing work |
| V.B.1 | Gathers relevant sources |
| V.B.2 | Evaluates the validity and reliability of sources |
| V.B.3 | Synthesizes and organizes information effectively |
| V.B.4 | Uses source material ethically |
| V.C.1 | Designs and presents an effective product |
| V.C.2 | Uses source material ethically |

Cross-Disciplinary Standards:

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| I.B.2 | Constructs well-reasoned arguments to explain phenomena, validate conjectures, or support positions |
| I.B.3 | Gathers evidence to support arguments, findings, or lines of reasoning |
| I.B.4 | Supports or modifies claims based on the results of an inquiry |
| I.C.1 | Analyzes a situation to identify a problem to be solved |
| I.C.2 | Develops and applies multiple strategies to solving a problem |
| I.D.3 | Strives for accuracy and precision |
| I.F.1 | Attributes ideas and information to source materials and people |
| I.F.2 | Evaluates sources for quality of content, validity, credibility, and relevance |
| II.A.1 | Uses effective prereading strategies |
| II.A.4 | Identifies the key information and supporting detail |
| II.A.5 | Analyzes textual information critically |
| II.A.6 | Annotates, summarizes, paraphrases, and outlines texts when appropriate |
| II.A.8 | Connects reading to historical and current events and personal interests |
| II.C.1 | Understands which topics or questions are to be investigated |
| II.C.2 | Explores a research topic |
| II.C.3 | Refines research topic based on preliminary research and devise a timeline for completing work |
| II.C.4 | Evaluates the validity and reliability of sources |

- II.C.5 Synthesizes and organizes information effectively
- II.C.7 Integrates source material
- II.C.8 Presents final product
- II.D.3 Presents analyzed data and communicate findings in a variety of formats
- II.E.1 Uses technology to gather information
- II.E.2 Uses technology to organize, manage, and analyze information
- II.E.3 Uses technology to communicate and display findings in a clear and coherent manner
- II.E.4 Uses technology appropriately

Attachment #1



Student Profile and Participation Agreement

Name: _____

School: _____ Grade: _____

Home Address: _____

City: _____ Zip Code: _____

Student I.D. Number: _____

Course enrolled in as a participant: _____

For students:

I am aware of the requirements for the Texas Performance Standards Project. I agree to full participation. I understand that written materials I submit will not be returned to me, so I should keep copies of everything submitted. I also understand that my project may be used for future training; if so, every effort will be made to disguise my identity.

Student signature: _____ Date: _____

For parents/guardians:

I am aware of the requirements for the Texas Performance Standards Project. I approve of my child's participation. I understand that written materials my child submits will not be returned, so he/she should keep copies of everything submitted. I also understand that my child's project may be used for future training; if so, every effort will be made to disguise his/her identity.

Parent/Guardian signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed name: _____

Please return to your teacher.

Pursuit of Passion (Kindergarten–Grade 10)

Attachment #2

Sample Topic Proposal

Chosen research topic: _____

Why you chose this topic:

What you hope to gain through research of this topic:

How this topic relates to your life:

Sources you are considering using to find information on your topic:

Activity you are considering for the hands-on portion of the project:

Subject-related TEKS addressed throughout your project:

(These can be found here: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=6148>)



Documento adjunto #1

**Perfil estudiantil y acuerdo de participación**

Nombre: _____

Escuela: _____ Grado: _____

Domicilio del hogar: _____

Ciudad: _____ Código postal: _____

Número de identificación del estudiante: _____

Curso en que se matriculó el participante: _____

Para los estudiantes:

Soy consciente de los requisitos para el Proyecto de los estándares de desempeño de Texas (Texas Performance Standards Project). Estoy de acuerdo en participar completamente. Entiendo que los materiales que entregaré no se devolverán, así que yo retendré copias de todo lo que entregaré. También entiendo que mi proyecto se podrá usar para capacitación en el futuro. Si se utiliza, se hará todo lo posible para ocultar mi identidad.

Firma del estudiante: _____ Fecha: _____

Para los padres/tutores (guardianes):

Soy consciente de los requisitos para el Proyecto de los estándares de desempeño de Texas (Texas Performance Standards Project). Yo doy permiso para que mi hijo/a participe en el proyecto. Entiendo que los materiales que entregaré mi hijo/a no se devolverán así que él/ella debe retener copias de todo lo que entregará. También entiendo que el proyecto de mi hijo/a se puede usar para capacitación en el futuro. Si se utiliza, se hará todo lo posible para ocultar su identidad.

Firma del padre/tutor (guardián): _____ Fecha: _____

Nombre en letra de molde: _____

Favor de regresar este papel a tu maestro/a.

Pursuit of Passion (Kindergarten–Grade 10)

Documento adjunto #2

Ejemplo de una propuesta de tema

Tema elegido para investigar: _____

¿Por qué elegiste este tema?

¿Qué esperas aprender a través de tu investigación de este tema?

¿Cómo se relaciona este tema a tu vida?

¿Qué recursos estás considerando usar para encontrar información sobre tu tema?

¿Qué actividad estás considerando para la experiencia directa del proyecto?

¿Qué TEKS relacionados con la materia se abordan a través de tu proyecto?

(Estos se pueden encontrar en: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=6148>)

