

20% Project Homework for the Weekend

Follow these directions precisely:

1. Get a clean sheet of blank paper, standard printer size or larger.
2. Grab a pack of colored pencils or markers.
3. In the center of the page, write down a topic that truly interests you. (The topic might be a word, “baking” or “lacrosse” or it might be a phrase or sentence, “I want to learn to speak and write Russian.”)
4. Draw a cloud or circle around your topic.
5. Brainstorm ideas that relate to your topic. Use different colors, lines, and shapes to categorize your ideas. Create subtopics or subcategories.
6. Include questions in your brainstorming? “How do I write a novel?” “Do I start with characters?” “Should I know the ending first?”
7. Fill your paper even if it takes all weekend. Start a new sheet if you get irritated or think of a new topic.
8. By the end of the weekend, write a paragraph about what you might pursue for your project. Include a research-based question, a possible final product, and some steps you might take. You may use the format below if you wish. ***This assignment does not constitute a contract. You will be given more guidance next week and time to change your mind.***

Examples

Questions:

How difficult would it be to learn ballroom dancing?

How much bird imagery does Shakespeare use in his plays and why does he use it?

Products:

I will produce a step-by-step video of how to learn the tango. The video will include a final performance that includes a costume.

I will produce an extensive portfolio that includes information about each of Shakespeare’s birds both in their habitats and in his plays.

Steps:

- I will contact local dance experts and conduct interviews.
- I will research dance steps on YouTube.
- I will use Twitter to connect with dance troupes around the world.
- I will research the history of classic dances.

It’s okay to fail the project, but it’s not okay to fail to produce.¹

¹ The point of this project is not about attaining perfection. It’s about pursuing a passion and learning everything that you can. And sometimes, it is in our failures that we learn the most.