

Wanted - Research Assistants - A Webquest

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Tell students they have contracted with an imaginary company to research one of the issues related to sustainable agriculture. As part of their contract, they will create a brochure and commercial for the company. Use a computer and projector to show the class the movie, The Meatrix. This can serve as a springboard for a class discussion on sustainable issues. List these on a poster or board. Send students to Sustainable Table www.sustainabletable.org Direct them to select and read through “Issues” on the left-hand side. Each student selects three issues that particularly interest them and take notes as they read about them in detail.

At the end of this class, students are required to write their parents a one paragraph note informing them about the project and what a “sustainable issue” is.

Teams made up of two or three “Research Assistants” decide which issue they will address in their brochure and commercial. The teacher provides a list of possible, local experts and websites. Research Assistants check the phone book and university websites for additional contacts.

Begin by reviewing proper citation format for the bibliography and a short lesson on how to create a brochure using a school software application. (We use Appleworks.) Sample brochures from businesses or local attractions are helpful. Share rubrics for brochures and commercials with students.

Team members compare notes; decide what to include in their brochure and how to set it up. They work together to type text and insert graphics, check grammar and spelling. Completed brochures should be printed in color and each team member receives a copy.

Next, teams write a script for a commercial that informs the public about one or two issues they have chosen. They may recruit other students as “extras” if needed. Type and print scripts in a size 48 font for ease in reading at a distance.

Provide sticky notes for students to write down needed props; these notes go home so all props can be brought the first taping day. (Suggestions: a variety of hats, jackets, eyeglass frames with no lenses, wigs, posters with appropriate scenes for backgrounds.) Teams fill out a sheet telling who is in each scene and its location.

Students can do the taping and be shown how the video is put into the computer if

time allows. However, in order to save class time, ask two adults familiar with the equipment to video tape while the teacher supervises other teams. They may use this time to: find informative “still” shots; listen to sound files to accompany their commercials; research, rehearse and refine their productions.

Assign each team a specific computer so they can download video onto the hard drive in their last names. If possible, give the teams an additional, adjacent, networked computer to use when listening to sound files and searching the Internet.

Create a seating chart noting the computer on which each team’s movie is stored. Those who download the video should be given a copy of this chart so they can record on it the numbers corresponding to the beginning and end of the video segment.

(Sometimes you will need to go back and grab a short video segment.)

26 (1 Hour) Sessions (Minimum time for one class of 24 students.):

1- individual research at [Sustainable Table](#)

1- project introduction, expectations, rubric, suggestions, format, samples, choosing teams, brainstorming; review of bibliography format, resources and hardware available: scanner, digital camera, digital video camera

2 - print research

2 - online research

3 - create and print brochure

2 - write and edit script

1 - type and print scripts

2 - rehearse; list props and settings; fill out planning chart; choose sounds

4 - taping sessions for each class of 24 students or 12 teams; rest continue research

1 - teacher demonstration of iMovie

6 - team work on projects

1- share projects with class

Sharing Methods:

- export to video camera to burn a DVD; show on projection screen or transfer to VCR tape
- save as QuickTime and burn on CD; will open on Mac or Windows platform
- save as E-mail movie and send home
- save as QuickTime for Web movie and place on webpage