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Overview Why do so many great works of literature have unhappy endings? In this project, students work collaboratively to deeply understand what makes a story engaging for its audience. Through their in depth analyses of short stories in the literary canon, students explore the components of a short story, with particular emphasis on resolution. To put their learning to the test, students work in a combination of flexible groups to produce a multimedia 'choose your own adventure story,' with the goal of garnering the most support for their story path from an authentic audience.

Driving Question Why How can we, as writers, experiment with endings to maximize our story's appeal to readers?

Student Reflections "The most enjoyable part of this project was communicating with different people and getting to know them better. This way I was able to make new friends." —K.Y.

"I think that we used all of the five C's in this project. We had to communicate when we decided what to write or what shape we wanted our story to take. We had to collaborate in our groups so that our stories wouldn't be all over the place. We had to be creative in this story to make it interesting and fun to write. We had to use critical thinking in order to decide what would make sense in our story. Finally, we used citizenship in this project to not get angry or frustrated at others who wanted to take the story in a different direction. The most valuable thing that I learned in this project is that I should push and make sure other people understand and work with my ideas. In the past I would say something and no one would notice or really think about my idea. Now, I know how to stress things that I think would work in order to make sure they get into the project." —B.C.

"The most valuable thing I learned during this project is how fun the concept of group writing can be. Exasperating at times, yes, but very fun. If I could redo this project, I would have probably put my ideas out there more and not have been so shy about it." —N.C.

"The most enjoyable part of this project was coming up with a story completely on our own. I added one of the most important details of the story and it felt really cool to have a part in writing a story." —J.S.

Teacher Reflection This project taught students some invaluable lessons about the nature and nuances of collaboration. The project was a nice foray into creative writing and understanding the elements of short stories, but the true value was in learning to work together, finding one's own strengths, and advocating for oneself.

Lessons Learned If I were to do this project again, I would incorporate more time for revision and peer critique. I would also extend the literary analysis throughout the project rather than concentrating the study of literary texts at the front end of the project.

Did Project Meet Goals? 4 out of 5 (Likely to Recommend)

Postcard

PBL Unpacked (on page 2)

As identified using "Unpack My PBL" within www.pbllounge.org



PBL Unpacked

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WANTS

Public Project

- Interacting:* Interactive Story
- Producing:* Other Student-created Content
Multimedia Text
- Revising/Iterating:* Revise a Product or Service
Leverage Multimedia Technologies
- Presenting:* Integrate Spreadsheets & Graphs

Media Produced

- Interactive Media:* Online Survey
Interactive Multimedia Text
- Digital Content:* Audio Media
Digital Text
- Computer-based:* Multi-media Software Generated
- Artistic Composition:* Fictional Narrative

Real World Exploration

- Humans in the World:* Implications of Decisions

Authentic Industries & People

- Career & Technical:* Arts & Entertainment
Printing, Publishing & Authorship

NEEDS

Project Parameters

- Project Timeframe:* 5-6 Weeks
- # of Project Members:* Small Group
Large Group
Flexible Group
- Grade Level:* High School
- Authentic Connections* Peers
Community Members
Industry Representatives

Success Skills

- Creativity:* Brainstorm
Design/Create
Improve/Refine
- Communication:* Point of View
- Collaboration:* Develop Trust
Encourage Others
Incorporate Feedback
Maximize Strengths of Team Members
- Critical Thinking:* Assemble Parts of a Whole
- Instilled Citizenship Values:* Interact Respectfully In-person / On-line
Strong Personal / Work Ethic

Areas of Knowledge & Understanding

- Literary Studies:* Literature
Creative Writing

