

*Future Explorations*  
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**Introduction and Rationale**

Since the students are well on their way through their senior year, the students in my College Prep. Writing class will be researching, exploring, and writing about possible careers in which they would perhaps major and study in college. Often students begin college without a clue as to the options that are awaiting them. This lesson plan will require the students to research, interview, and write about some of the options they will have explored and created for themselves through this lesson. At the end of this unit, the students will be able to conduct a proper interview, they will be able to research any given topic, and they will be able to write an essay with all of the information they compiled which can be used for future references.

This activity was one that I did during my senior year English course and it was very useful in making a decision about my major in college. The students need to be able to explore their options; they need to be able to get their feet wet before they are thrown into college academia. With the research and interviews that they will perform with this project, they will gain an insight into the many majors that they can choose from. The students will be able to enter the college atmosphere with the knowledge they need to enroll in the right classes for what they want to do.

The students will have a lot of responsibilities in regards to this project. It will be left up to them, which fields they want to research, and they will have to seek out professionals to interview about the career they might be interested in getting into. As the teacher, I will be a resource to the students by providing them with lessons on how to

conduct proper research, as well as how to write and conduct a proper interview. The students will be able to locate, organize, and use information from various sources to answer questions, solve problems, and communicate ideas. They will be able to analyze and evaluate information acquired from various sources and apply that information, concepts and ideas to communicate in a variety of formats. Within their papers, the students will use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and structure. They will compose a well-organized and coherent piece of writing for this specific purpose.

This unit follows the Standards for The English Language Arts, stated by the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English:

2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods and many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g. philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experiences, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features.
5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize

data from a variety of sources to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes.

The students in this class enrolled in it for a reason. Whether it was because they wanted to better prepare themselves for their college English courses, or because their parents/counselor thought it would be a good idea, this course will prepare them for their higher-level education. Each class period is very valuable to the students. This unit will help the students prepare for their college education, and allow them to get a head start on choices they will have to make in the near future. The information that they gain about research, and interview will be resources they can use for the rest of their lives.

**Unit Title: *Future Exploration*****Day One**

**Orientation:** This is the first day of the unit on *Future Exploration*. For this unit, the students will incorporate skills they have already acquired such as writing formal papers, gathering research, as well as learning new concepts such as how to conduct a proper interview, and how to write an annotated bibliography.

**Learning Goals:** Today, the students will learn what the next unit of study is about. By the end of the first day, the students will be able to explain the purpose of the *Future Exploration* unit, understand and explain how their work for the unit will effect their own lives in the future, and understand and explain the assignments they will be completing during this unit.

**Preparation:** The teacher needs to prepare a typed rubric for the unit to hand out to the students, generate free write prompts for the students to write to. The students do not require any preparation activity.

**Materials:** The teacher needs to have enough copies of the rubric for every student in the class.

**Activities:**

1. The teacher will introduce the *Future Exploration* unit to the students. The teacher will hand out the rubric for the unit, and the class will collectively go over the rubric. Have the students read different components of the unit aloud in order to involve them in the planning.
2. The teacher should explain the purpose that the unit will have upon the student's lives, and try and receive any input from the students about how they feel about the unit.
3. The teacher should go through the assignments that the students are to complete, and clarify any questions they may have pertaining to the unit. Probe the students to address things that they like about the unit, and work together as a class to change the things that do not go over well with them.
4. Free Write-Have the students write about their plans for the future. In order to generate some ideas provide prompts such as the following:
  - ◆ If you could be anything what would it be?
  - ◆ If you could go to any college, where would you?
  - ◆ What are your three dream jobs?

5. The teacher should request that whomever would like could share their free write with the entire class. This should generate discussion as to what the students are thinking about for their futures, and hopefully the discussion will spark ideas for other students.

6. Homework- the students should think about three majors, universities, or careers that they would like to research for this project. They should write them down on a sheet of paper for the following day's lesson.

7. Back-up Activity- the teacher will have a Jeopardy game prepared for students to play. The categories will consist of information on different majors, colleges, careers that they students may be interested in.

**Time:** These activities should take an entire fifty-minute period.

**Evaluation:** The teacher should know whether or not he/she succeeded in this lesson by the comments that the students have about the rubric for lesson, as well as they type of discussion that is generated from the free write. The students will know whether or not they are successful if they understand the rubric and why they need to complete the unit, if they complete the free write and are able to discuss their future aspirations.

**Unit Title: *Future Exploration*****Day Two**

**Orientation:** The students will learn what to expect as they enter into college. They will also learn what kinds of skills are needed to prepare for a career after High School or College.

**Learning Goals:** The students will gain an overview of the research process, for example, what constitute valuable or invaluable resources. After today's activities they will have the contact information for three people that they may want to contact for this project or in the future.

**Preparation:** The teacher should be prepared with what he/she feels to be proper researching materials. The teacher also needs to think about how he/she will maintain control over the students, as well as focus from them while they are surfing the Internet. The only prerequisite here is that the student is planning on attending a college or planning a career after high school.

**Materials:** Computer lab with Internet connection, or a printed copy of all handouts and web site pages that are used for this activity. The teacher may use overheads to convey research information. Have a list of the websites from the major universities in the state that the students can use in their research.

- Activities:**
1. The teacher should answer any questions that the students may have from the day prior.
  2. The students can share their top three choices of majors, universities, or careers that they plan on researching. It would be helpful if the teacher can share his/her information as to how he/she chose their major/career.
  3. The teacher will explain what constitutes a reliable source from the library or off the Internet. It would be helpful to have examples of good and bad sources to show the students. The teacher should explain the purpose behind the students formulating a research process of their own.
  4. The students should read and review the following web pages: College Prep ([http://www.bcit.tec.nj.us/JobSeeking/coll\\_prep.htm](http://www.bcit.tec.nj.us/JobSeeking/coll_prep.htm)) and all links inclusive to this section.
  5. The students should investigate different colleges or careers on the web. The link they can use to start their search: College and Universities (USA)

([http://dir.yahoo.com/Education/Higher\\_Education/Colleges\\_and\\_Universities/United\\_States/](http://dir.yahoo.com/Education/Higher_Education/Colleges_and_Universities/United_States/))

6. The students write a one-page essay covering the following issues, to make them accountable for their research.
- ◆ The career path that they are going to choose
  - ◆ The five colleges that offer majors for the career choice
  - ◆ Visit the web sites of each college and include information about the college and its courses
  - ◆ Include backup plan incase they decide to change majors, or career goals.
  - ◆ Find the contact information for the people in the majors/careers they are researching.

The teacher should circulate and assist the students in any way.

5. Homework- The students will need to prepare a typed outline of the three areas they are going to be researching, which will help them later on to restructure the information into a formal paper. The students will also need to come prepared to the next class period with the person they plan on interviewing for this project.

6. Back-up Activity- The teacher will have a career aptitude test at hand to pass out to the student to test what the students are good at, and could consider for possible majors/careers. The teacher can obtain one of these tests from a guidance counselor within the school. The answers will be compiled for the students for the next class period.

**Time:** These activities should take an entire fifty-minute period.

**Evaluation:** The teacher will know whether or not his/her lesson was successful by whether or not the students grasped the researching material information and if they researched the three majors/careers they chose with correct contact information. The students will be successful if they find the contact information for the three people. The students will know how to chart out their research project for the class.

**Unit Title:** *Future Exploration***Day Three**

**Orientation:** This is day three of the unit; today the students will be learning about Interviewing, since they will be conducting interviews for the unit project.

**Learning Goals:** The students will be able to approach someone for an interview, prepare intellectual interview questions, and conduct a proper interview after today's lesson.

**Preparation:** The teacher needs to research and prepare for the lesson on interviewing. They need to have examples prepared for intellectual interview questions and ready to conduct a mock interview with the students. The students do not need any prior preparation.

**Materials:** The teacher needs to have overheads made of proper interview questions and tips for proper interview etiquette. The students do not need any materials prepared in advance.

- Activities:**
1. The teacher greets the students and explains that for the next two days the focus will be on interviewing. The teacher should write the three main activities that will be covered during the two-day's class periods on the board for every student to see.
  2. The teacher will ask the class who has either interviewed someone or been interviewed by someone before. This should generate a discussion about the topic and lead into the topic of how to ask someone to interview them. Example: Unless you have only one or two brief questions, make an appointment for your interview and reveal what general questions you plan to ask.
  3. The teacher then will give the students information on how to prepare for an interview, and the importance of research prior to the interview. This also includes writing effective interview questions, and how to prepare for the unexpected questions. The teacher will provide an overhead of good sample questions the students can look at.
  4. For the last few minutes of class, the teacher will have the students begin to write the interview questions that they would like to ask. For the

interview, they need ten questions total. What they do not finish in class will be their homework for that evening.

6. Back-up Activity- If the day's activities are not going so well, the teacher can have the student's pair up and interview each other. This will allow the students to practice their interviewing skills. Then have the students introduce the student they interviewed to the entire class.

**Time:** These activities should take an entire fifty-minute period.

**Evaluation:** The teacher will know if he/she is successful in this lesson if the students can point out what is good or bad about the mock interviews. The students will be able to come up with questions of their own and feel comfortable making the appointment to interview someone for their project.

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**Day Four**

**Orientation:** The students had just worked on interviews the class prior and had to come up with interview questions for homework.

**Learning Goals:** Today the students will be conducting mock interviews, which will help them when they need to interview the professional in the field they are researching. They will learn how the interview process normally runs and what they can improve upon.

**Preparation:** The teacher needs to be prepared with roles that the students need to play. He/she should have a bunch of titles prepared and the students can pick out of a hat who they are to act as. The students should have a draft of interview questions prepared.

**Materials:** The teacher should have a bucket or hat and the titles cut up in strips so the students can pick which role they will play for the mock interview. The students will have a list of questions prepared from the homework the night before.

- Activities:**
1. The teacher will open the class by explaining that the students will be participating in mock interviews during class. She will then have the students pick out of a hat what role they are to play. She will have the roles split evenly, half as professional roles, the other half as student interviewer.
  2. After the students pick roles, they will participate in a free write activity. This is to help the students get into role better. Depending on which role the students have, the professionals will write as if they were working in that field, for example, about their day as a teacher or how they feel about being interviewed. Those students with the Student Interviewer role will write about their feelings before the interview or what they hope to accomplish.
  3. The teacher will signal the students to get with their partner, and begin the mock interview. If the teacher is not participating in the mock interviews, he/she should circulate to make sure that the students are on task and no side conversation is going on.

4. Once the mock interview is over, the teacher will ask the students to free write again in order for them to collect their thoughts and step out of role. The teacher can prompt the student to write about what worked well, what did not, what questions they would add or delete from the interview.

5. The teacher will ask any student who would like to share their free write to share with the class. This should generate discussion as to what the students feel good or bad interviews are. The teacher can add in what she witnessed while the students were in role.

6. Homework- the students will find and bring in two sources that they are using for their project along with two index cards.

7. Back-up Activity- if these activities should cut short, the teacher could begin a lesson on Resumes. There are numerous website where he/she can print information off of on how to do a resume, and what to include.

**Time:** These activities should take an entire fifty-minute period.

**Evaluation:** The teach will know whether or not he/she was successful with this lesson by the way the students handle the mock interviews. If they follow along and understand the concepts that were covered in the previous day's lesson, the students will be able to successfully complete the mock interviews.

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**Day Five**

**Orientation:** At this point, the unit is half way over; the students should be working on their projects at home, while in the mean time, during class, they are learning new concepts and skills to complete this project.

**Learning Goals:** The students will understand the purpose of an Annotated Bibliography, and they will know how to complete one for their project. They will practice with two of their sources during class, and complete the rest of their annotated bibliography at home. The purpose of the annotated bibliography is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited.

**Preparation:** The teacher needs to be prepared with the correct information on citing MLA style. He/she should be prepared with overheads of examples for the students to follow. The students need to have researched two sources for their project to bring into class.

**Materials:** The teacher needs to have his/her overheads prepared. The students need to come in with two of their sources, either the actual book or copies of a journal that they found, as well as two index cards.

**Activities:**

1. The teacher greets the students and checks to make sure that the students have at least two sources with them that day. For those students that do not have any sources, they are to follow along with the person sitting next to them.
2. The teacher explains that an annotated bibliography is a list of citations to books, articles, and documents. Each citation is followed by a brief (usually about 150 words) descriptive and evaluative paragraph, the annotation. The purpose of the annotation is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited.
3. The students cite their two sources on the index cards that they brought with them to class, using the sheet that they were given.
3. The teacher shows an example of an abstract on an overhead and explains the difference between an abstract and an annotation. Abstracts are the purely descriptive summaries often found at the beginning of scholarly journal articles or in periodical indexes. Annotations are

descriptive and critical; they expose the author's point of view, clarity and appropriateness of expression, and authority.

4. The teacher then explains the process of writing an annotation:

◆ Write a concise annotation that summarizes the central theme and scope of the book or article. Include one or more sentences that (a) evaluate the authority or background of the author, (b) comment on the intended audience, (c) compare or contrast this work with another you have cited, or (d) explain how this work illuminates your bibliography topic.

5. The teacher opens up the class for the students to ask any questions.

6. The teacher puts a one-page article on the overhead, the students read the article and write an annotation to go along with it. The students should be told that the annotation they write is going to be collected at the end of class. The teacher should circulate the classroom during this time to make sure the students are working constructively, and check to make sure that their index cards are correct.

7. Homework- the annotated bibliography is due on Tuesday of the following week. The homework is to work on their paper, their annotated bibliography, and their presentations for next Thursday and Friday.

8. Back-up Activity- Take the students to the library so they can look up more sources for their project or since it is Friday, have them read a book of their choice of free-write for the rest of the period.

**Time:** These activities should take an entire fifty-minute period.

**Evaluation:** The teacher will know whether or not he/she was successful with this lesson, if the students are able to complete their index cards, and from the sample annotation that they complete during class. The students will be successful if they can complete the annotation activity, and are confident enough to work on their own at home.

**Orientation:** This is beginning the second week of the unit. This week the students will learn about resume writing, workshop their papers, and present on their research findings and interview.

**Learning Goals:** The students will learn the basic format for a resume, and write their own during class. This is a skill that they are going to need to know in the future, and will help them develop new writing skills.

**Preparation:** The teacher needs to develop a resume format the students can follow. The students do no need and prior preparation.

**Materials:** The teacher needs to prepare overheads and handouts to give to the students so they can use them for future references. Computer lab with Internet connection, or a printed copy of all handouts and web site pages that are used for this activity. It would be helpful to have a list of the websites that the students can use when they write their own resumes.

**Activities:**

1. Greet the students and give them a prompt for a free-write. This free write is to get the students thinking about all the things they have done in high school. They can list out their activities, or they can write a letter to the next senior class about things they should follow in example, etc.
2. The teacher will explain the function a resume serves when the students will be job searching.
3. Teacher explains to the students that they will be doing a sample resume. The teacher will have numerous examples on overheads for the students to look at. The teacher will show that there is a difference between a business resume, an education resume, etc.
4. For the rest of the class the students will work on their resumes with the use of the computers.
5. The teacher should provide useful websites that can help the student's format their resumes, and use for future reference.
6. Homework- the students should work on their papers and presentation. The annotated bibliography is due the next day, so they should work to finish that. There is no homework due tomorrow; they will just be working on their papers during class.
7. Back-up Activity- the students can work on their papers, or go to the library to research.

**Time:** These activities should take an entire fifty-minute period.

**Evaluation:** The teacher will know if the lesson was successful if the students understand what a resume is and can complete their own resume with what they have participated in thus far.

**Unit Title:** *Future Exploration*

**Day Seven**

**Orientation:** Today will be a workday for the students. Today's class will be meeting in the library so that the students can make use of computers, media lab, and references.

**Learning Goals:** The students will learn the importance of using time wisely. If they take advantage of the hour that they have to concentrate solely on their presentation or paper, they can get a lot done.

**Preparation:** The teacher needs no prior preparation. The students need to have some of their project done to work on in class.

**Materials:** The teacher does not need any special materials, the students need to bring their resources, rough drafts, and presentation plans to work on during class.

**Activities:**

1. The teacher will take attendance
2. The teacher will allow the students the rest of the time to work on their project, letting them know that he/she is there to assist them in any way.
3. The teacher needs to remain visible by the students, so they are somewhat under control.

**Time:** The students will have the entire fifty-minute class to work on their projects.

**Evaluation:** The successfulness of this class period is basically left up to the students. It is their responsibility to work on their papers and they are left on the honor system for this class period.

**Unit Title:** *Future Explorations*

**Day Eight**

**Orientation:** This is the final day of the unit, before two days of presentations. Today the students will workshop their papers with their peers in a Peer Revision Workshop.

**Learning Goals:** The students will work with one another to make critical comments about each other's paper. This workshop is to help the students to look objectively at another student's paper, work together to improve upon each other's paper.

**Preparation:** The teacher does not need any prior preparation; the teacher can prepare guidelines for the students to follow when critiquing their peer's papers. The students need to have their papers pretty much completed.

**Materials:** The teacher needs to have copies of the guidelines that the students can follow when they are critiquing their peer's paper. The students need to have hard copied of their paper for students to read and mark on.

- Activities:**
1. The teacher will write the timetable for the lesson on the board.
  2. The teacher will explain what the process is for the workshop and what should occur during class time.
  3. The students will get into a group of three students; the students will exchange papers. They students are free to mark up the student papers; they are not to look for grammatical errors, but things that can make the content of their paper stronger.
  4. After about ten minutes the student will exchange papers, and the process will begin again.
  5. After another ten minutes the students will receive their own papers back from their peers, and they will discuss the comments that they made on each other's papers.
  6. The teacher will then have the student's free write on their Peer Revision Workshop experience.
  7. Homework- the students need to prepare their five-minute presentations for the next two days of class.
  8. Back-up Activity- the teacher will have the students work individually on their papers, while each student will conference with the teacher for about five minutes.

**Time:** These activities should take an entire fifty-minute period.

**Evaluation:** The teacher will know whether or not the workshop was successful by the responses that the students make about the workshop, and he/she can tell if things are working out with the students if they circulate the room attentively while the students are work shopping. The students will be successful if they feel they have made critical comments for their peers, and if they too have received comments that will help them to revise their papers for the better.

**Unit Title:** *Future Exploration*

**Days Nine and Ten**

**Orientation:** These are the final two days of the *Future Exploration* unit. The students will be wrapping up all of their research and written work by presenting their project to the class.

**Learning Goals:** The students should learn from what they other students present, as well as how much work they put into their project, and hopefully the students will realize how their work will pay off later on.

**Preparation:** The teacher needs to have prepared a grading rubric, which the students should also have so they know what they are being graded upon. The students need to have their presentations ready.

**Materials:** The teacher does not need any materials. The student need to have their presentations ready, along with note cards or any visual aids that they will use.

**Activities:**

1. The student take turns volunteering to present their presentations. After the volunteers have gone, the presenters will start from the beginning of the alphabet.
2. The students should know that they are to state whom they interviewed and the main thing that they learned. Also, the students need to cover the most important thing they learned about each major/career.
3. The students in their seats, listening to the presentations will be provided with critiquing the presenters. They will write one thing that the

presenter did well with, one thing the presenter needs to work on, and one question for the presenter.

These activities will be repeated for day nine and ten. The only thing that is different is that the homework for Friday, day ten, is that the students write a reflective two-page paper about the unit, the work they did, their paper, and the presentation.

**Time:** These activities should take an entire fifty-minute period.

**Evaluation:** The teacher will know if this unit is successful by the papers that the students hand in, and by their presentations. Also, when the teacher reads their review papers, he/she will know if the unit was an overall success or not. The students should feel a sense of accomplishment, as well as a sense of comfort in have done the research they would need to do eventually anyhow.

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