

# Remote Learning Unit Plan

## In two weeks-- what could you learn that you've always wanted to know?

*Overview:* Newsela's Remote Learning Unit Plan is a two week long unit that you can use to remotely guide students through the process of investigating something they are passionate about within and beyond Newsela.

*Assessment:* Students will deliver a presentation in the format of their choice on their research about a topic of their choice, compiled with a variety of digital sources.

*Delivery:* Try as much as you can to simulate your school day digitally. It's suggested that teachers assign students the materials for the day at the time they would normally start school-- whether teachers do this through a whole class video chat or email the materials individually. Students should be held accountable for submitting their work by a time that same day equivalent to the amount of class time they would normally have to complete their work. Teachers should aim to spend time during the day reaching out to students as they would in a small group or conference-based setting, and then set aside time to review student work during the day.

### *Pework:*

- Make sure all students have [Newsela accounts set up](#) and [classes are rostered](#).
- Send out the [family letter](#) ahead of time to caregivers so that they will understand the parameters and expectations of the project.

### *Materials:*

- [Rubric](#)
- [Family letter](#)
- [Brainstorming Worksheet](#)
- [Proposal Worksheet](#)
- [QFT protocol](#)
- [Graphic organizer 1](#), [graphic organizer 2](#), [graphic organizer 3](#)
- [Newsela Distance Learning Toolkit](#)

## Day 1: Brainstorm

*Objective:* Students will brainstorm the topic for their passion project by identifying at least 3 Newsela articles they can use for it and by filling out their brainstorming worksheet.

*Materials:*

- [Brainstorming Worksheet](#)

*Grade Level Adjustments:*

- Elementary: Consider giving students the option to draw in their brainstorm.
- High School: Consider pushing students to brainstorm using other sources of inspiration-- like conversations with friends, social media, hobbies, or community involvement.

*Student Actions:*

- Students spend their day brainstorming a passion project. They will start by filling out the worksheet to help them come up with ideas for what they could potentially work on.
- Students will deliver their brainstorming worksheet to you by their EOD.
- Once they zero in on their topic, they will begin to use Newsela to find more information about their topic with the goal of finding 3 articles they can use for their project.

*Teacher Actions:*

- During the day, make yourself available as much as possible for students to bounce ideas off of if they need support.
- Once students submit their brainstorms, review them and identify anyone who might benefit from added support. Confer with those students today or tomorrow to make sure they've selected a strong topic-- this part is super important to making sure students continue to be invested in the work!

## Day 2: Proposal

*Objective:* Students will finalize the topic for their passion project by completing and submitting their proposal worksheet.

*Materials:*

- [Proposal worksheet](#)
- [QFT protocol](#)

*Grade Level Adjustments:*

- Elementary: Consider asking students to identify 1-2 articles they are interested in using rather than 3.
- High School: Consider pushing students to identify and additional 1-2 articles outside of Newsela that they are interested in using.

*Student Actions:*

- Today the bulk of students' work is focused on their proposal, which involves:

- Crafting a series of questions that support their investigation
- Choosing one of those questions to drive the session
- Finding their first 3 sources of information through Newsela
- Students will deliver their proposal worksheet to you by EOD.

*Teacher Actions:*

- Confer with any students whose brainstorms needed support yesterday.
- Once proposals begin to come in, quickly review and identify the students whose proposals will need support. These may be the same students whose brainstorms needed help as well! You can use the next day as an extension day if students continue to need assistance on their proposals.

## Day 3: Reading period

*Objective:* Students will explore the topic for their passion project by annotating the 3 Newsela articles they have chosen.

*Materials:*

- None-- this can be reviewed in Newsela

*Grade Level Adjustments:*

- Elementary: You may want to share a graphic organizer that students can use to organize their notes rather than using annotations.
- High School: You may want to encourage students to explore beyond Newsela on this day to find more sources of information.

*Student Actions:*

- Today, the bulk of students' work is focused on digging into their Newsela articles and taking notes that are related to their topic.
- Students should complete the write prompt, quiz, and annotations on the articles they have chosen. They can use [this video](#) to learn more about how to do that.
- Students will have taken these actions on 3 articles by EOD.

*Teacher Actions:*

- Start the day by finishing up with any proposal extensions that still needed support.
- As the day goes on, use Newsela to check in on how students are doing with the articles they have chosen. You can use [this video](#) to learn more about how to use the binder in Newsela to check their annotations.

## Day 4: Reading period

*Objective:* Students will explore the topic for their passion project by taking notes on 3 articles outside of Newsela.

*Materials:*

- [Graphic organizer 1](#)
- [Graphic organizer 2](#)

- [Graphic organizer 3](#)

*Grade Level Adjustments:*

- Elementary: Teachers may want to suggest a limited number of outside websites for students to draw from. Teachers may also want to limit the number of articles students look for to 1 or 2.
- High School: Teachers may want to increase the number of articles students are finding outside Newsela. Teachers may also want to encourage students to look at scholarly articles or databases if your school has access to those.

*Student Actions:*

- Students will spend today taking notes on articles that are outside of Newsela. This is a great time for them to:
  - Fill in gaps in understanding
  - Answer outstanding questions
  - Get new perspectives
- It might be a good idea to prepare students with some basic media literacy tools and strategies before they dive in. The [News Literacy Project](#) has great resources for media literacy.
- Students will deliver their notes to you by EOD.

*Teacher Actions:*

- Start off by finishing up any annotations checks still needed from yesterday.
- From there, conference with students who will need the most support-- possibly those who were most challenged by the earliest stages of the project.

## Day 5: Reading period

*Objective:* Students will explore the topic for their passion project by taking notes on 2 other media sources.

*Materials:*

- [Graphic organizer 1](#)
- [Graphic organizer 2](#)
- [Graphic organizer 3](#)

*Grade Level Adjustments:*

- Elementary: Teachers may want to suggest a limited number of outside websites for students to draw from. Teachers may also want to limit the number of articles students look for to 1.
- High School: Teachers may want to increase the number of media sources students are finding outside Newsela. Teachers may also consider opening it up to reviewing full books, movies, documentaries, etc. (This could also serve to extend the project.)

*Student Actions:*

- Students will spend today taking notes on what they learn from media sources. This is a great time for them to:
  - Fill in gaps in understanding



- Answer outstanding questions
- Get new perspectives
- It might be a good idea to prepare students with some basic media literacy tools and strategies before they dive in. The [News Literacy Project](#) has some great resources for media literacy.
- Students will deliver their notes to their teacher by EOD.

*Teacher Actions:*

- Check in with any remaining students who didn't finalize annotations yesterday.
- Help any students who might need assistance with finding their 2 media sources. Teachers may need to go over searching skills with students or help them to evaluate resources.

## Day 6: Draft Day

*Objective:* Students will construct the first draft of their final presentation on what they've learned about their topic by using the rubric.

*Materials:*

- [Rubric](#)

*Grade Level Adjustments:*

- Elementary: While this project purposely leaves it open-ended, students may need more explicit instruction on what their presentation should look like. It might be helpful to relegate the presentation to just a few options (ie. [Prezi](#), [Buncee](#), Google slides, [Flipgrid](#)) and within a mini lesson explain to them how to create the presentation.
- High School: Encourage students to think outside the box on how they could share their knowledge. Could they design a mini-course to teach this new information? Is there a link to social media they could use to share their knowledge? Can they edit a video to post to Youtube?

*Student Actions:*

- Students will spend the bulk of their day putting together the first draft of their presentation.
- Students will deliver this draft to their teacher by EOD.

*Teacher Actions:*

- There will be a lot to review at EOD today, so throughout the day try to get a feel for where students are in the process of drafting.
- Once the drafts come in, get a feel for where students are. The next several days are devoted to self and peer evaluation. Teachers should be prepared to give the feedback themselves if need be.

## Day 7: Self Evaluation Day

*Objective:* Students will evaluate their own work by using the rubric in order to check for holes in their presentations.

*Materials:*

- [Rubric](#)

*Grade Level Adjustments:*

- Elementary: Teachers may want to go over the rubric in more detail or remove a few rows to simplify it.
- High school: Teachers may want to move more quickly from self-evaluation to peer evaluation and give students the next day as an additional draft day.

*Student Actions:*

- Based on the draft they have made, students should spend this day scoring themselves on the rubric.
- Students will deliver their self-evaluation to their teacher by EOD with areas starred where they need improvement.
- Students can then identify one major thing they can do to improve their presentation through the day before bringing it to peers.

*Teacher Actions:*

- At the start of the day, make sure students understand what they will be graded on and what the qualifications of the rubric are.
- Once teachers have received each student's self evaluation, they should fill in the gaps by providing students with their own thoughts where necessary. This might be a moment to push students past dialing it in.

## Day 8: Peer Evaluation Day

*Objective:* Students will evaluate the work of a peer by using the rubric in order to check their peers' presentations.

*Materials:*

- [Rubric](#)

*Grade Level Adjustments:*

- Elementary: Be intentional about partnering. Teachers may want to select for the students who they will be evaluating, or, on the other hand, it might create more investment to allow them to sound off on whom they would like to work with.
- High school: Teachers may want to consider doing a group consultancy protocol instead of a one-on-one feedback exchange.

*Student Actions:*

- Students will spend their time today giving one another thoughtful feedback. Teachers can choose how they would like this to take place. Teachers might suggest that students video conference or email one another the completed rubric.

- Students will deliver the completed rubric for their peer to both the teacher and the peer by EOD.

*Teacher Actions:*

- Teachers may want to begin the day by establishing guidelines for giving feedback to one another, especially if this is a practice students haven't done much before. The more teachers can model this the more successful student feedback will be.
- Once students begin to respond, check to make sure they have completed faithfully and look for any gaps that may need to be filled.

## Day 9: Final Draft Day

*Objective:* Students will finalize their presentations by incorporating the feedback they've received from the past 2 days.

*Materials:* Nothing new

*Grade Level Adjustments:* Should not be necessary on this day

*Student Actions:*

- Students will spend their day completing their final presentations based on the feedback they have been given.
- Students will not need to deliver anything today, but they should be in touch with their teacher about their status.

*Teacher Actions:*

- This is a bit of a buffer day! It definitely would be a good idea to support students that may need help.

## Day 10: Submission Day

*Objective:* Students will submit their final presentations by digitally sharing them with peers.

*Materials:* Nothing new

*Grade Level Adjustments:* Should not be necessary on this day.

*Student Actions:*

- Students will deliver their final presentation to their teacher by EOD.
- Students may also have the opportunity to present to their teacher and peers on this day.

*Teacher Actions:*

- This should be a day of celebration! Start by recognizing the hard work students have done. Teachers may want to start on a group video call and highlight some of the fantastic work they have seen.
- On the other hand, if students need more time to work, this might be a great opportunity to give them a little extra time.

## Extension Opportunities

If you will be distance learning for longer than two weeks, there are several points in this lesson plan that you could expand.

- *Days 3-5: Reading Period:* Extend by providing more time to find **more resources** related to the topic.
- *Day 4: Reading Period:* Extend by providing more time to learn about **media literacy**. [Common Sense](#) and the [News Literacy Project](#) can be great resources for this. In some cases there are entire units available, so feel free to leverage them.
- *Day 6: Draft Day:* For longer presentations, it might be appropriate to provide an extra day or two to put together a draft. As suggested for elementary students, it might be worth breaking down each part or several parts of the rubric into action steps for students to be able to attend to each one.
- *Day 8: Peer Evaluation Day:* Teachers might provide an extra day for more peer feedback with another group of students. Teachers could decide to have students work the first day with a group assigned by the teacher and another day with peers of their choice.
- *Day 10: Submission Day:* Teachers might spend time having students present to a small group or the rest of the class. This can add a day or two to the unit plan.

## Troubleshooting

- *I have so many students! How will I be able to support all of them?* This would be a great project to tackle with your **grade team or department** so that you can actively support students working remotely. If you teach a large number of students, consider discussing this with other teachers as a distance learning solution during your school closure time so that you can distribute the workload. While you could give this project out to a large number of students at once, it will be more effective if you can actively check their work and hold them accountable, since those factors are hardest to control in a distance learning setting.
- *I can't picture my students being invested in this. How can I motivate them to take it seriously?* Front-loading the motivation factor will make the biggest difference in their long term investment in the project. First, make sure that as much as you can, you have kept **caregivers** up to date on the plan and that they are well positioned to support students in their distance learning project. When you **frame** the project as students, make sure you reinforce how exciting a learning opportunity it actually is! Self directed learning on any topic they want will be an awesome way for them to pursue something they're already interested in, and gives them a lot of control in how they spend their time over the next few days. In addition, helping them choose a **topic** that they love based on a strong brainstorm early on in the project will go a long way toward sustaining their interest, so as much as you can, concentrate your efforts on supporting them there-- even if you won't consistently be able to support them as much later on.
- *I'm not sure how to make sure my student will get this done. How can I keep them accountable?* Conferring regularly will be the best way for students to feel seen in the work that they are doing. As much as you can, be in contact with them-- whether through email, video chat, Google hangouts, or other means. You may want to start off your day with a





collective video call so that students can share with one another what they have been working on as exemplars. You can also “confer” with students over email or a video chat platform if your school district approves.

