**Project Introduction**

In lieu of reading a final novel, we’re going to end the year by creating our own… well, not necessarily a novel, but an anthology of flash fiction or short stories or poetry. We’ll vote on which genre to use or we might very well use all of them. This’ll be a team effort between both eighth grade classes, with everyone contributing at least one story or poem as well as working on one of several teams.

The plan is to publish our anthology through Smashwords, an online eBook distributor that will make our book available for purchase through its website as well as other large eBook retailers. We’ll also have to decide if we want to charge for the book or make it available for free, and if we do charge for it, what to do with the money (which is paid out quarterly). There’s a specific format we’ll have to follow in Smashwords, but that’ll be the responsibility of the editing team.

Speaking of teams…

**Avengers Assemble**

For this to work in the little time we have we’re going to need to divide into teams and everyone needs to hold themselves and their group members accountable. We’ll spend the rest of the year working on this, and it’ll likely also require working from home. But it’ll be worth it in the end as long as you put forth the best possible effort. Here are the teams:

**Design/Layout Team**: This team assists the editing team in creating unique and original titles for each section of the anthology, as well as linking them to the Table of Contents and Author Index. They also help determine any artwork or graphic needs for the book and lay out the front cover.

**Art/Photography Team**: This team also helps determine all artwork or graphic needs, then creates the desired artwork/graphics, as well as takes and edits digital photographs to accompany designated stories or poems. They are responsible for the visual element of the book.

**Editing Team**: This team is in charge of collecting and placing work in a categorized manner, meaning, according to the Smashwords format of hyperlinks and table of contents and compiling everything into a WORD document. In addition, the team will also lead the other formatting and mechanical issues — font style and size, spelling, grammar, etc.

**Marketing/Publicity Team**: This team’s main job is to publicize the book using a variety of methods, including social media, local news (TV and newspaper) and flyers. They will also write the press release, the book description for online sales, and design a website using Weebly, Wix or SquareSpace. The more we publicize the book, the better the sales.

**Event-Planning Team**: This team has the important task of preparing a successful launch party. They will put together an e-mail invite list of parents, teachers, students and friends for the party. Additionally, the team will gather and prepare all the necessary foods, drinks, utensils, decorations — donations are key — as well as organize the voting ballot for the class’ favorite stories or poems and the certificates for the winners. They will design the launch party program, host the event and select student speakers for the event as well. Their work is crucial to a successful campaign!

**What Does This Mean?**

Basically, you’re all going to partake in the writing, editing and publishing process of making a book. You will be responsible for every aspect of the process, giving you all real-world experience in design, authorship, publishing, and marketing. This is something very few kids your age, and most adults, have had — or will have — the opportunity to do. But again, it’s going to take A LOT of work in not a lot of time.

Here’s a quick breakdown of what we’ll need to complete this project:

* Book Cover
* Copyright Page
* Table of Contents (with hyperlinks to stories)
* Art and Photography
* Short Stories, Poems or Flash Fiction (from everyone)
* Team write-ups (team photo, list of names, and a description of the team process)
* Note from Mr. Hakim (either a preface or back-of-book note)
* Author Index
* About St. Paul
* Copy of the Press Release
* Contact Us
* Links to any Articles Written About the Book

**How Will You be Graded?**

Be that this is still school, I do still have to grade you during this process. That said, as long as you’re doing what you’re supposed to, you’ll be fine. Grades will be given weekly on a 20-point scale, with each day accounting for four points.

We have about four weeks to complete this, meaning, participation accounts for 80 points. You’ll also be graded on your submitted work (30 points) and your contributions to your team (20 points). In all, the project is worth 130 points.

**Do I Have to Participate?**

No, I’m not going to force you to participate and risk you hurting team chemistry among those who genuinely want to do this. That said, you’ll be missing out on an awesome opportunity. It’s up to you.

For those who don’t wish to participate, you will read *Diary of Anne Frank* as was originally intended. There will be assignments — questions, SOAPSTone, worksheets, etc. — related to the novel for you to complete, as well as in-class readings and assigned reading for homework.

**Project Timeline**

May 2 — Introduce eBook project; Discuss the teams and duties; Pass out permission slips; Begin cover design contest (Covers due May 10)

May 3 — Choose the writing genre (flash fiction, short story or poetry) and theme; Discuss Smashwords and the eBook publishing process.

May 4 — Return permission slips; Sign up for teams; Vote on book title

May 5 — Meet with teams to work out timeline and tasks; Start writing

May 9 — (Mr. Hakim out of building) Writing Day

May 10 — Front cover design due; Vote on favorite design; Marketing team uploads front cover and informational blurb to Smashwords for pre-sale use

May 11 — First Drafts due; Peer edit/review stories/poems; Create list of authors, story/poem titles and category titles; Determine artwork and photography needs

May 12 — Design/layout and art/photography teams meet to discuss timelines and tasks; All other teams meet to discuss tasks/updates

May 17 — Event planning team sends out evites and sets up list of party needs

May 18 — Deadline for submitting Final Drafts of stories/poems

May 19 — Deadline for submitting artwork and photos

May 20 — Process write-ups describing team jobs (for end of book); Marketing team distributes flyers and press release

May 23 — Deadline for process write-ups

May 24 — Deadline for putting it all together; Editing team does final read-through

May 25 — Event planning team submits program for copying; Students read through document and vote for their three favorites for the “Student Choice Awards” at the Book Launch Party

May 26 — Discuss process and how to improve for next year

May 27 — (Tentative) Book Launch Party

**Parent Permission Slip**

The eighth graders at St. Paul Catholic School are about to attempt a first for the school, the city, maybe even the state — they are embarking on a month-long project of writing, designing and publishing an anthology of short stories, poems and/or flash fiction using Smashwords, an online indie book distributor. They will do it all — the writing, the artwork and photography, the design, the layout, the marketing, the editing, the publishing, the event planning.

Before we can kick off the inaugural project, we need your permission on a few accounts. Please read, fill out and sign below if you would like your child to participate in the project.

Thank you!

Mr. Hakim

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (parent name), parent of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (student’s name), have read through the Publishing Project Process and Timeline and agree to the following (please check all that apply):

\_\_\_\_\_ I give permission for my son/daughter to participate in the project on Smashwords and acknowledge that my son/daughter’s creative work will be published for worldwide consumption in an eBook.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that by participating, my son/daughter will maintain the copyright on his/her work, but will be giving St. Paul the perpetual right to use this book as a fundraiser for the school, or to even give the book away for free should the school choose.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ I give permission for my son/daughter to appear in photos in the class eBook that show the class at work.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that the class publication will include author information, and I consent to the following being included for my son/daughter:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ First and Last Name, plus brief biographical information

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ First and Last Name only

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ First Name and Last initial only

Sign:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Help Wanted**: Also, if you or someone you know have any event planning, publishing or marketing experience and would like to come share your expertise with the classes, please let me know and give a day and times that work best for you.