

Gift Projects from days gone by:

Here are a few examples of things students have done in the past. Please remember that your grade is based on process. The thing you do only receives 2 out of 10 points. So, keep to your process.

If you are already doing something you think would qualify, ask yourself if there is any risk, does it seem creative, inventive, different? Does it take you outside your comfort zone in any way? Is it too easy?

Make sure you know who the gift is for. In your statement you will talk about that. However, often times, we start out thinking the gift is for one person and it ends up being for someone else. That's okay too as long as you notice.

Okay...here are some things people have done:

1. The stop motion animated film of a flower opening and closing. It was something the student noticed, appreciated and wanted to share with the class. It took all day to shoot and then he had to compile it into a film with music.
2. A student whose mother died when she was 12 decided to make a book with pictures of all the important events she missed. The student wrote some notes about the event as if she were telling her mom and took it to the cemetery. Not only did the book constitute something viewed in time, her trip to give it to her mom was also documented.
3. Someone who was very much changed by her involvement with the sport of softball, decided to go back to the playground of her youth, where she first learned and loved the sport. She brought yellow ribbon and tied it to the chain link fence in a beautiful pattern. She also took an old glove, bat and shoes and tied them to the fence as gifts for someone else. A Thank You note was included. This was all documented.
4. A student who liked to walk in a certain part of the woods near his home had noticed that over the past few years, people were throwing trash in the area. He cleaned the section of woods as a gift to the forest. Documented of course.
5. A student who lived near the Hudson River wanted to give back... her gift was actually a reciprocation. Since she loved the river so much, she gave herself to it. On a cold November day, she stood on a dock and fell backwards into the water. It was filmed. How she wrote about the project made it work.
6. A student whose family owned a bakery in Queens decided to make a family album for her grandfather who had immigrated to the US. He had suffered much hardship to start the bakery, and many people in their family worked there. She made a book with

pictures from the early days through now with all the family members and employees who loved her grandfather as much as her.

7. A student went down to Times Square with a friend to document his project. He had a sign that said, Free Hugs. He walked up to people on the street asking if they needed a Hug. It was cute and remarkably successful. Even crabby people smiled.
8. A student who had been estranged from her father because of interfamily issues, asked her father to dinner. She had a list of questions she asked him. It was documented in film so we could see him and hear the audio part. During the dinner, her father, who was being very unemotional and direct, began to cry. He was so happy to be talking with her, his emotions got the best of him.
9. A student went to an inter-city day care center and read books to the children.
10. A student went to the nursing home and spent the day with her grandmother, painting her nails and singing songs.

Here are things that didn't work so well:

1. giving toys to children for Christmas... didn't have any risk and was basically buying something to give away.
2. Teaching a niece to read. It was something that didn't take any risk nor was it something she couldn't have done any day of the week without the assignment.
3. Putting a bird's nest back in a tree.