Existentialism

Goal:
You have three days to work with your group to research existentialism and create 1-10 Google Slides (not to exceed number of group members) to present existentialism, existential thinking or existential crisis with a creative and unique slant that offers more than what is on these pages. You must include some form of media (informative, narrative or argumentative), and you must answer one question. The bulk of your presentation should be level 4. There are no other instructions.

1. Research
2. Slant, respond and create
3. Media
4. Level 4
5. 3 days

Definition: “I think therefore I am.’ Though reduced now to the level of cliché, Rene Descartes’ famous maxim sums up perfectly the philosophical underpinnings of existentialist thought. Existentialism has its roots in the writings of several nineteenth and twentieth century philosophers, among them Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, and Søren Kierkegaard. The philosophy is by most standards a very loose conglomeration of perspectives, aesthetics, and approaches to dealing with the world and its inherent difficulties. There are therefore countless permutations and flavors of existentialism which cross disciplinary lines and modes of inquiry. In the most general sense, existentialism deals with the recurring problem of finding meaning within existence. From this perspective, there are no meanings or structures that precede one’s own existence, as one finds in organized religion. Therefore, the individual must find or create meaning for his or her self. Existentialist thought has garnered an unfair reputation for pessimism and even full-blown nihilism. This reputation is somewhat understandable. The idea of created meaning strikes some as ultimately meaningless or even absurd. Some of the popular tropes associated with existential philosophy, such as angst, boredom, or fear, likewise strike the average observer as dripping with pessimism. However, nothing in the philosophical train of thought of existentialism dictates a negative view of humanity or reality. In fact, much of the philosophy revolves around the limitless capacity for ethically and intellectually engaged persons to enact change in the world. Positive change is then an imperative for the true existentialist; otherwise existence is a complete void. To put it another way, it is not simply enough to “be.” One has to be “something” or life truly lacks meaning or purpose. From this point of view, existentialism has the potential to indeed be a very positive means of approaching reality” (Literature Network at online-literature.com).

http://www.online-literature.com/periods/existentialism.php
Research/Slant Options (Choose one):

Literary Political Pop Culture Cultural
Historical Philosophical Psychological Religious
Scientific Musical Artistic Mathematical

Student Choice (get teacher approval)

Existential Questions to Consider (Choose 1):

What’s the meaning of life? Which apocalyptic dystopia is most likely?
What’s the most important moment of our lives? Are there limits to human creativity?
Why am I here? Is life unfair?
Do people change? Do we have any control in life?
Why? What is our purpose?
Does truth exist without evidence? Do soul mates exist?
What’s more important, the means, or the ends? How do you give yourself without losing yourself?
What is the difference between living and existing? Student Choice (Get teacher’s approval)

Do people have a right to be happy or should they have to earn it?
How do you know you are not dreaming right now?
What one piece of advice you would give others about life?
What is the greatest force or power in the universe?
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<tr>
<th>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.2</th>
<th>Meaning of life...found!</th>
<th>Definition of meaning and life as separate entities.</th>
<th>“I think; therefore, I am” (Descartes).</th>
<th>Huh?</th>
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<td><strong>Research</strong></td>
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**EXISTENTIAL CRISIS • Ages 7+**

“The Game That Never Ends!”

I don’t like this game, mom.

Well, tough luck... rules say we don’t stop till we all die alone...