Project-Based Learning Checklist

Before the Project:

- **Establish Main Themes**
  - Identify the Essential Question (real-world challenge) that students will tackle throughout the project.
  - Set project objectives. (Which 21st-century skills will students be able to demonstrate by the end of this initiative?)
  - Learn which skills students must acquire before the start of the project in order to be successful.

- **Map Out the Scope**
  - Envision what the final project(s) will be and prototype it.
  - Choose a rubric or evaluation system.
  - Choose a format for student reflections at the end of the initiative.
  - Outline a full timeline for the project, including the two weeks before the project starts.
  - Identify opportunities for cross-curricular collaboration. (Will students be learning about a relevant topic in a different subject area?)

- **Identify Necessary Resources**
  - List out all the resources and materials that students will need access to in order to complete their projects (such as tools, supplies, technology, and software applications).
  - If necessary, book classrooms or labs for student work, or a school bus for a field trip.
  - Seek out experts in the community who could present on a topic or participate in final evaluation of the projects.

At the Start of the Project:

- **Set Expectations**
  - Introduce the Essential Question (real-world challenge) to students.
  - Go over the PBL timeline with students.
  - Provide students with the rubrics they will be graded on at the end of the project.
  - Ask students to sign an "Expectations and Agreement" letter outlining the scope of their project and their commitment to it.
  - Send home a letter to parents providing an overview of the PBL initiative.

- **Help Students Plan their Project**
  - Separate students into small groups to work on tackling the Essential Question with a realistic project.
  - Ask students to identify a measurable goal for their project that aligns with the teacher-introduced Essential Question.
  - Ask students how they will measure the success of their goal.
  - Have students identify what they will turn in for evaluation at the end of the project (for instance, a presentation, campaign, video or product).
  - Ask students to outline the necessary research and tasks they must complete in order to achieve their project goals.
Have students identify which group members will be responsible for certain tasks, and what the due dates for those tasks will be.

**During the Project:**

- **Give Students the Reins – but Help them Stay Focused**
  - Schedule regular check-ins to keep students on track (this could take the form of quizzes, workshops, class discussions, graphic organizers, assigned readings, or one-on-one meetings).
  - Bring in experts to provide feedback on the students’ in-progress work (or to provide more context on a topic).
  - If possible, collaborate with colleagues to bring in relevant subject material from other classes into the project discussions or scope.

- **At the End of the Project:**
  - **Evaluate Success**
    - Each group should present their final project to a public audience.
    - Students should complete a self-evaluation (going over how they contributed to their group, what they would change in the future, and what they learned from the project).
    - Groups should deliver a measured analysis on how successful they were in achieving their project goals.
    - As a teacher, complete your own self reflection: What would you do differently? What did you learn?