



History and STEAM Challenge Digital Storytelling Unit

Climate Change IS History – Rap Battle

Designed for Middle and High School Students

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Introduction

This Digital Story Telling Challenge will take two to four weeks to complete. This Challenge targets key Human Life Skills – creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, digital literacy and presentational skills – in equal measure with the curricular content. Delivering on all those learning goals requires student immersion and time. The results, as based on our research, are a high level of student engagement, deep learning, and 100% teacher endorsement.

The following Challenge:

- Should be completed by collaborative teams of two to four students but can be completed independently, if desired.
- Is aligned to nationally recognized Curricular Standards.
- Contains an Evaluation Rubric that allows the teacher to clearly score and appraise the students' work.
- Is designed to be integrated into the classroom in alignment with existing curricula.
- Can be assigned as an extra credit project to teams of students that you think would benefit from this kind of immersive, deep learning experience. Additionally, will work well in informal educational settings.
- Should follow the rules of Digital Citizenry in their proper usage and/or citation of images, music and text taken from other sources. See the Digital Rules area in the free Media Resources section of the Meridian Stories site for guidance.

The [Media Resources](#) section also contains many other **free support materials** from short videos featuring professionals in the field – Artists and Innovators– to short written documents that cover everything from storyboarding to creative brainstorming, interviewing techniques to game design.

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While it is helpful to have a Technology Integrator involved, they are not usually necessary: the students already know how to produce the media. ***The teacher's primary function in these Challenges is to guide the students as they engage with the content. You don't need to know editing, sound design, shooting or storyboarding: you just need to know your content area.***

At the end of the Challenge, it is often fun and useful to have a screening of all the media productions – they are all designed to run under 4 minutes each. Students can vote for their favorite videos that can then be screened in a larger assembly-like setting for the whole grade to see. Or this work can be presented as part of a student showcase for parents and friends. Presentational Skills is another Human Life Skill that this project enables.

Our research indicates this to be a really useful exercise for two additional reasons:

1. Students actually learn from their peers' presentations – it is useful to hear a perspective that is not just the teacher's; and
2. The public setting – painful as it is for some students – provides them with an opportunity to 'own' their work and to be more accountable.

Finally, if you are interested to learn more about the community of schools who annually participate in the [Meridian Stories Competitions](#) – a community that is characterized by a friendly competitive spirit; feedback from Mentors on each submission; and the rewarding of digital badges in content, storytelling and digital literacy – please return to the Competitions section of the website or inquire at info@meridianstories.com.

Let's get started.

The Challenge

As the last Ice Age was coming to an end about 12,000 years ago, the global environment underwent radical change. The world was warming, glaciers melted, and sea levels were rising. Plants, animals, and entire ecosystems had to adapt.

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So did human cultures. For example, as rising seas inundated low-lying coastal areas, people inhabiting these areas were forced to migrate to higher ground. One place where this is known to have occurred is the vast area between present-day Denmark and England known as Doggerland, now under the North Sea. As homelands slowly became inundated, the forced evacuation to higher ground created history's first known cases of climate refugees.

Historians and scientists are actively studying such areas today. Of particular interest are questions surrounding how these climate migrants were received by people inhabiting their escape route from rising seas. The answers provide a cautionary tale for the climate struggle unfolding today: rising sea levels are already causing problems in low-lying parts of the world, including the United States. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, formed under the auspices of the United Nations, predicts that sea levels will rise 7 to 24 inches between 1990 and 2100.

Flash forward to the year 2066. Coastal populations are again on the move. Create a narrative using real modern-day nationalities that draws from two perspectives: one from the perspective of the climate refugees, and the other from the perspective of the people who are being swamped by newcomers to their homeland. But this is no ordinary narrative. Desperation, tension, survival, and security: the perfect ingredients for an epic rap battle!

Deliverables include:

- Rap Battle Video
- Geographic Migration Scenario (at teacher's discretion)
- Draft Script (at teachers' discretion)

Process

Below is a suggested breakdown for the students' work.

During Phase I, student teams will:

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- Decide on a specific geographic setting for your rap battle. Begin by researching communities that are today threatened by rising sea levels. Choose a community.
- Decide specifically where the people would migrate. This search may even include your own community.
- Research the historical precedents for human migration as a result of climate change. (*For example, see:* <http://education.nationalgeographic.com/maps/doggerland/>)
- Research the current stories that are making the headlines about mass migration because of political strife, which is often combined with elements of climate change. While this Challenge is not about those stories – is not about migration because of political instability - there is much to be learned from the current strife. As of the writing of this Challenge (Fall, 2015), Iceland is petitioning to let more Syrian immigrants in while Hungary is building a wall to keep them out. What are the stories that came out of people uprooting their homes and communities and migrating into a new and perhaps foreign land? Think about how you want to portray the changes they see happening to their environment, economy, and important cultural artifacts and sites.
- Remember, this rap battle has two sides – the refugees, as well as the people inhabiting the place where the refugees hope to resettle. Are they responding with sympathy and compassion? Hostility and fear? What stories surround the battle to map migration pathways into (or away from) one country or another? Make sure to use primary and secondary sources of information. This analysis will serve as the content for your rap.
 - ***Teacher's Option: Geographic Migration Scenario*** – Teachers may require student teams to develop a two-page outline depicting an actual scenario of climate refugees in a specific, real-world location, citing all primary sources.
- By the end of this phase, the teams should have 1) Clearly identified the futuristic migrant movement, from country/region A to country/region B; 2) conducted research, drawing from historical and current events, that reveals the perspectives of each side; and 3) drawn up a list of arguments on both sides that will serve as the basis for your rap battle.

During Phase II, student teams will:

- Begin writing the lines to your rap. Be inventive in how you present the predicaments of both sides in your selected locations. Think about the music – beat that will accompany your lyrics.
- Brainstorm visual production ideas. These may include: a) how to present the rap scenario in front of the camera, b) where the scene(s) will be shot, and c) the role of audio and music. Things to take into consideration:
 - Rap battles usually have audiences – the rappers feed off of the energy of the audience. Will yours be shot in front of an audience? Or perhaps presented on a stage, using audience sound effects and laugh tracks to simulate a reaction.
 - This is a visual medium, so you have the freedom to present this in many ways. You may want to consider a music video approach – with lots of editing and visuals. The rappers, for example, could be rapping directly to the camera, appealing to you, the viewer, for support of their position.
- Keep in mind the tone and structure that you want to set in this rap battle. Although “rap battle” seems to invite a loud and ornery tone, you can evoke plenty of emotional energy in a slow, heart-wrenching dialogue too. Listening and response characterize good rap battles: one side hears the other and then responds. They don’t just yell their points over the other. They respond and in responding, the debate builds and climaxes. How will your rap battle embrace that quality?
- How will this battle be resolved? As a team, do you see that there should be a winner? How will you depict that? Or will the result be, more or less, a draw? What position are you, as a team taking on this issue and how will you communicate that in your rap battle.
 - ***Teacher’s Option: Draft Script*** – Teachers may require student teams to hand in a draft of their script for review.
- Pre-produce the scene: scout the location(s); create the set and costumes, if any; prepare the logistics, and rehearse, rehearse, and rehearse again.
- Finalize the script.

During Phase III, student teams will:

- Shoot the video.

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- Edit the video, adding stills and graphics if desired.
- Post-produce the video, adding music and sound effects as desired.

Meridian Media Resources

<p>Meridian Stories provides two forms of support for the student teams:</p> <p><u>Meridian Innovators and Artists</u> – This is a series of three-to-four-minute videos featuring artists and innovative professionals who offer important advice, specifically for Meridian Stories, in the areas of creativity and production.</p> <p><u>Media Resource Collection</u> – These are short documents that offer student teams key tips in the areas of creativity and production.</p> <p>Recommended for review as a team specifically for this Challenge:</p>	
Meridian Innovators and Artists	Media Resource Collection
<p><i>Rhythm and Movement in Video</i> — Charlotte Griffin</p> <p><i>On Editing</i> — Tom Pierce</p> <p><i>On Sound Design</i> — Chris Watkinson</p>	<p>“Creative Brainstorming Techniques”</p> <p>“Sound Editing Basics”</p> <p>“Producing – Tips for the Shoot”</p>

Evaluation Rubric – *Climate Change IS History – Rap Battle*

CONTENT COMMAND			
Criteria	1 – 3	4 – 7	8 – 10
Geographic Choices	The choice of countries/regions does not reflect a plausible	The choice of countries/regions does reflect a plausible	The choice of countries/regions reflects a plausible and thoughtful forecast for

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	forecast for climate change ramifications	forecast for climate change ramifications	climate change ramifications
Articulation of Positions	The team did not present a convincing case for either side of the rap	The team presented each side with moments of argumentative strength	The team did present a convincing case for both sides of the rap
The Debate	The interchange – the exchange of ideas – and its resolution did not thoughtfully engage the viewer	The interchange – the exchange of ideas – and its resolution did thoughtfully engage the viewer	The interchange – the exchange of ideas – and its resolution left the viewer with new ideas and perspectives to consider
STORYTELLING COMMAND			
Criteria	1 – 3	4 – 7	8 – 10
Rap Genre	The rap is hard to follow and/or does not flow or build	The rap is clear and well-presented	The rap is engaging and is presented clearly, building to dramatic conclusion
Characters	The characters are not easily distinguishable from each other	The characters service the story effectively	The characters are engaging, entertaining and believable
MEDIA COMMAND			
Criteria	1 – 3	4 – 7	8 – 10
Visual Design	The presentation of the rap is not visually interesting or supportive of the content	The presentation of the rap is visually interesting and reflects the content well	The presentation of the rap is visually stimulating and thoughtful
Sound Design	The mix of music, voice and sound effects does not service our engagement with the video	The mix of music, voice and sound effects services our engagement with the video	The mix of music, voice and sound effects greatly enhances our engagement with the video

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Editing	The piece feels patched together and the overall editing detracts from the narrative	The piece works, but there are occasional editing distractions	The piece is edited cleanly and effectively, resulting in a seamless viewing/listening experience
HUMAN SKILLS COMMAND			
Criteria	1-3	4-7	8-10
Collaborative Thinking	The group did not work together effectively and/or did not share the work equally	The group worked together effectively and had no major issues	The group demonstrated flexibility in making compromises and valued the contributions of each group member
Creativity and Innovation	The group did not make a solid effort to create anything new or innovative	The group was able to brainstorm new and inventive ideas, but was inconsistent in their evaluation and implementation of those ideas	The group brainstormed many inventive ideas and was able to evaluate, refine and implement them effectively
Initiative and Self-Direction	The group was unable to set attainable goals, work independently and manage their time effectively	The group required some additional help, but was able to complete the project on time with few problems	The group set attainable goals, worked independently and managed their time effectively, demonstrating a disciplined commitment to the project

Essential Questions

1. What are the human dynamics involved in forced mass migrations, historically? How does the history of this topic, combined with current events, allow us to predict patterns in the near future?
2. How does one research, select and organize content from a variety of sources in order to present a compelling, cohesive and historically accurate narrative?

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3. By converting a historical event into a narrative that humanizes the event, how has your understanding changed or deepened?
4. How has immersion in the creation of original content and the production of digital media – exercising one’s creativity, critical thinking and digital literacy skills - deepened the overall educational experience?
5. How has working on a team – practicing one’s collaborative skills - changed the learning experience?

Student Proficiencies

1. Students will have analyzed the phenomena of mass migration – as seen through the lens of history and current events - and created predictive patterns for the near future.
2. Students will be able to contextualize and craft arguments from historical evidence from a variety of sources and connect patterns of continuity and change over time to larger historical processes.
3. The student will gain a new understanding of a key historical event by approaching it through the elements of narrative.
4. The student will utilize key 21st century skills, with a focus on creativity, critical thinking and digital literacy, in their process of translating historical content into a new narrative format.
5. The student will have an increased awareness of the challenges and rewards of team collaboration. Collaboration – the ability to work with others - is considered one of the most important 21st century skills to develop in students as they prepare for life after secondary school.

Curricular Correlations

The *Climate Change is History – Rap Battle* Challenge addresses a range of curricular objectives that have been articulated by two nationally recognized sources: The **Common Core Curricular Standards – English Language Arts & History/Social Studies**; and the **Themes of Social Studies**, as outlined by **National Council of Social Studies (NCSS)**.

Below please find the standards that are being addressed, either wholly or in part.

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Common Core Curricular Standards: English Language Arts & History/Social Studies

The Standard	8th	9th/10th	11th/12th
RI1 READING INFORMATIONAL TEXT Key Ideas and Details	Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
W8 WRITING Research to Build and Present Knowledge	Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.	Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.	Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.
RH2 HISTORY/ SOCIAL STUDIES	Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct	Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas	Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships

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Key Ideas and Details	from prior knowledge or opinions.	develop over the course of the text.	among the key details and ideas.
RH3 HISTORY/ SOCIAL STUDIES Key Ideas and Details	NA	Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.	Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.
RH9 HISTORY/ SOCIAL STUDIES Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.	Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.	Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

Goals – NCSS – The Themes of Social Studies

Theme – People, Places, And Environments

This theme helps learners to develop their spatial views and perspectives of the world, to understand where people, places, and resources are located and why they are there, and to explore the relationship between human beings and the environment. In schools, this theme typically appears in courses dealing with geography and area studies, but it is also important for the study of the geographical dimension of other social studies subjects.

Theme – Time, Continuity and Change

Through the study of the past and its legacy, learners examine the institutions, values, and beliefs of people in the past, acquire skills in historical inquiry and interpretation, and gain an understanding of how important historical events and developments have shaped the modern world. This theme appears in courses in history, as well as in other social studies courses for which knowledge of the past is important.

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Theme – Production, Distribution, and Consumption

This theme provides for the study of how people organize for the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services, and prepares students for the study of domestic and global economic issues. In schools, this theme typically appears in units and courses dealing with economic concepts and issues, though it is also important for the study of the economic dimension of other social studies subjects.