History Challenge
Digital Storytelling Unit
(Community Engagement/Art)

Designing Patriotism

Designed for Middle and High School Students

Table of Contents	Range of Activities
	• WPA, TRAP and Great Depression Research • Exploration of the Concept of American Patriotism, Then and Now • Community Interviewing • Artistic Mural Design • Digital Literacy Skills: Video Pre-production, Production and Post-production • 21st Century Skills: Creativity, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, Presentational Skills

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.

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

After the Great Depression, the American Government enacted a multitude of programs through the New Deal to provide relief, recovery, and reform to the struggling country. One of these programs was the **Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP)** that created murals and sculptures for federal buildings and housing projects as part of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The WPA would "fund patriotic art projects in an effort to rally dispirited American citizens." Some of these murals can still be seen up in Post Offices around the country, where they depict scenes ranging from local beauty and splendor to historical events and geography.

Imagine a new Treasury Relief Art Project is enacted to fill up blank school hallways or public square walls with a mural – photographic, painted or projected – with "patriotic art projects" – projects that reflect current events, issues, or stories affecting either your community or the country as a whole. In this Meridian Stories Challenge, your challenge is to research the history of TRAP as it relates to this concept of 'patriotism'; research what this word means today to your team and the community

around you; and then design a contemporary TRAP installation. If possible, create the installation, although that is not required for this Challenge.

The Meridian Stories video is a documentary of this creation process that is designed to be screened by town or school administrators that have the funds to support the creation of this mural. It should cover a) a summary of the origins of this initiative (TRAP) along with historical interpretations of patriotism during the 1930s; b) what patriotism means to you; c) your interviews with the community; d) your creative design process; and e) your final mural design. Keep in mind that you don't have to create the actual mural.

Deliverables include:
- Meridian Stories Documentary
- Background Paper (at teacher's discretion)
- Dominant Themes (at teacher's discretion)
- Preliminary Design (at teacher's discretion)

Process
Below is a suggested breakdown for the students' work.

During Phase I, student teams will:
- Research WPA art programs and their installations to see historical definitions of patriotism. Also check into previously installed art funded through TRAP or by the WPA in general.
  - As you begin to go through this process, keep in mind that the final deliverable is a short documentary. Documentaries are designed to 'document' the process that your team is going through to complete this visual design, so you may want to start shooting footage from the very first step of the process.
- Come up with a bulleted list of ideas about what patriotism used to mean in America, keeping in mind that your final video needs to present some historical information about patriotism in the 1930's...in contrast to how that word is viewed today.
  - *Teacher's Option*: **Background Paper** - Teachers may require the teams to hand in a list of five ideals that represent what patriotism meant during the 1930s.
- Now, decide what patriotism means to you. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to this question.

- o Questions to consider include: Does it mean protecting the freedom of speech? Does it mean guaranteeing equal opportunities for all? Does it include religion in any way?
  - o In order for the WPA to fund this public art, it needed to fit in to their mission quoted above ("...in an effort to rally dispirited American citizens."), so clarity for your team about what patriotism means will be helpful moving forwards. In other words, when people experience your mural, what do you expect that experience to engender?
  - o Create a list of five potential patriotic topics you may want to depict in your mural—these may change later. These topics need to reflect topics that are important to you and your team.
- Once you have identified the core components of what this word means to your team, conduct at least two interviews with community members about what patriotism in America means to them. This is a public work of art you are creating, so the community's input is important.
  - o We strongly recommend that you videotape these interviews to include in your final pitch video (in fact, they are a requirement!). Be sure to get written permission from your interviewees to appear in your video, which will be posted online on the Meridian Stories website.
  - o In order to record and edit, your participants may need to sign a Release Form giving you permission to record, edit and post this discussion online. Research generic and simple Release Forms online to find the right language for you.
  - o Some possible questions to ask your interviewees include:
    - ▪ What are three issues that define what 'being American' means?
    - ▪ What does the phrase "American Dream" mean to you?
    - ▪ What's the most 'patriotic' thing that you have ever done? How was that 'patriotic'?
  - o Try to steer your interviewees towards specific words and actions relating to patriotism rather than broad topics or conceptual definitions.
- Write an outline about what you have discovered to be the themes of your patriotic mural based on a combination of your team's personal beliefs and what you have learned from your interviews.
  - o *Teacher's Option*: **Dominant Themes** - Teachers may require the teams to hand in a summary paper outlining their conclusions about the dominant patriotic themes that will inform their mural design.
- By the end of this Phase, your team should have a clear sense of the intent and execution of the Treasury Relief Art Project, the current patriotic themes that will inform your visual design, and have footage from your a) internal

brainstorming sessions; and b) interviews, that will be integrated into your final documentary video.

During <u>Phase II</u>, student teams will:
- Pinpoint locations of potential installation spaces.
- Debate and decide what materials will be used to create the installation. Is this a painting? A photographic collage? A sculptural installation? In the actual materials used, your team can deviate from the original intentions of TRAP: this does not have to just fit on a wall.
- Brainstorm what basic design the installation will have—nothing needs to be set in stone yet. You just want to have some direction about what imagery and techniques will be used in the piece. Your goal here: to look for ways to translate your conclusions about patriotism into something visual.
  - Maybe it is creating large-scale photos of classmates to represent diversity and overcome stereotypes like in [this project](#), or maybe it's something completely different. Create a sketch or mock-up of what you want the installation to look like. This can either be done with computer software or by hand. Ask an art teacher or IT for help!
- Decide what visuals and shots you want for your final video so you know what parts of the process you may want to film. Remember—it's always a better idea to have too many good shots than not enough!
  - *Teacher's Option*: **Preliminary Design** - Teachers may require the teams to hand in a preliminary design for input and feedback.
- Create an outline for what the final video will look like. Ideas to consider include:
    - What footage do you have so far and how do you want to organize it?
    - What will the final story line be? Keep in mind that there are numerous stories to tell here. It's the story of the word 'patriotism', then and now. It's also a story about creativity. And it's a story about your team and your community and the values that you share. Which is the most important story to focus upon?
    - What pieces of the story are still missing; that you still have to shoot?
    - How will you present the historical information on TRAP and the interpretation of 'patriotism' during that time?
    - How are you going to present your new design? Will it be hand drawn or digitally created?

- How will you convince your school or town council that your installation is a worthy addition to your community? This video is essentially 80% documentary and 20% pitch video to the town council.
- Write the script/outline for the remainder of your video.
- Pre-produce the video:
  - Scout locations for shooting (as necessary);
  - Research, as necessary, the still images that you will integrate into your video; and
  - Prepare the logistics for the actual shooting of the video.
- Begin the final design of your installation.

During Phase III, student teams will:
- Complete the design work on your installation.
- Complete the video shooting, scripting, and recording.
- Complete the post-production (editing).

Meridian Support Resources

Meridian Stories provides two forms of support for the student teams.
1. Media Innovators and Artists – 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.
2. Meridian Resources – These are short documents that offer student teams a few key tips in the areas of creativity, production, game design and digital citizenry.

Recommended review, as a team, for this Challenge include:

Media Innovators and Artists	Meridian Resources
On Photography – Michael Kolster *On Making Documentaries* – Margaret Heffernan *On Interviewing Techniques* – Tom Pierce *On Editing* – Tom Pierce	"Creative Brainstorming Techniques" "Conducting an Interview" "Creating a Short Documentary" "Six Principles of Documentary Film Making"

Evaluation Rubric – *Designing Patriotism*

CONTENT COMMAND			
Criteria	**1-3**	**4-7**	**8-10**
Historical Content	The historical content is not presented clearly	The historical content is evident, but not presented thoroughly	The historical content is presented clearly and compellingly
Mural Design	The mural design does not effectively or creatively communicate the ideas on which it is premised	The mural design adequately communicates the ideas on which it is premised	The mural design effectively and creatively communicates the ideas on which it is premised
Resulting Ideas About Patriotism in America from Historical, Communal, and Personal Contexts	The final set of ideas are unclear and not well substantiated	The final set of ideas are clear and supported	The final set of ideas are thoughtful, authentic, and well documented

STORYTELLING COMMAND			
Criteria	**1-3**	**4-7**	**8-10**
Community Research – The Interviews	The research from the community is not substantive	The research from the community is adequate	The research from the community is substantive and persuasive
Documentary Format	The film does not demonstrate a clear grasp of the qualities of a documentary	The documentary is engaging and informative	The documentary demonstrates exceptional skill and aptitude for the genre
Overall Narrative Clarity and Presentation of Information	The narrative is hard to follow	The narrative is presented clearly	The narrative is presented clearly and compellingly, stimulating the viewer's interest in the topic and design

MEDIA COMMAND			
Criteria	1 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 10
Sound Design	The mix of music and sound did not enhance the documentary	The mix of music and sound serviced the documentary	The mix of music and sound greatly enhanced the documentary
Editing	The video feels patched together and the overall editing distracts from the narrative	The video flows, but there are occasional editing distractions	The video is edited cleanly and effectively, resulting in an engaging video 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 WPA and the Treasury Relief Art Project?
2. What did 'patriotism' mean to people in the depressed 1930's and what does that word mean today, in our more prosperous but politically divided times?
3. How has information gathered from primary sources – your interviews – enhanced your understanding of patriotism in America? How is the information from these sources different from the information gathered from secondary sources?
4. What is the best way to research attitudes and gather ideas from a community of adults and youth in order to yield clear direction and possibly consensus?
5. How does a work of art add meaning to your community (and country) and your understanding of that community (and country)?
6. 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?
7. How has working on a team—practicing one's collaborative skills—changed the learning experience?

Student Proficiencies

1. The student will have a comprehensive understanding of the purpose the WPA served during the Great Depression and what the Treasury Relief Art Project was.
2. The student will have a developed understanding of what the word 'patriotism' meant for Americans in the 1930s and how that meaning has changed in our current day.
3. The student will understand how combining primary and secondary sources can help one to reach a more complex and nuanced understanding of the topic at hand (patriotism in America).
4. The student will participate in a variety of research methods for the purposes of culling community attitudes and ideas about a given topic.
5. The student will understand more about the history and character of their community and country.
    a. The student will understand the meaningful relationship that can exist between a work of art and the community and country to which it refers.
6. The student will utilize key 21st century skills, with a focus on creativity, critical thinking and digital literacy, in their process of translating their personal and public data collection into a work of art and a story.

7. 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 *Designing Patriotism* Challenge addresses a range of curricular objectives that have been articulated by two nationally recognized sources:

1. The **Common Core Curricular Standards – English Language Arts;** and
2. 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.

Common Core Curricular Standards
English Language Arts Standards
English Language Arts Standards – History/Social

Standard	8th	9th/10th	11th/12th
RI1	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.
RI7	Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.	Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which derails are emphasized in each account.	Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.
W2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection,	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection,

		organization, and analysis of content.	organization, and analysis of content.
W4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
W5	With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
W7	Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.	Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.	Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
W8	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.
W9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to

	support analysis, reflection, and research.	support analysis, reflection, and research.	support analysis, reflection, and research
SL1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.	Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.	Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
SL2	Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.	Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.	Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.
SL4	Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.	Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.	Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.
SL5	Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.	Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.	Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.
RH9	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.