



History Challenge Digital Storytelling Unit

Forgotten Female Heroes

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.

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

Understanding history is essential to creating progress, as individuals and as a society, but what if parts of that history were missing? This is a common problem when it comes to a woman's place in history; women are underrepresented or forgotten, yet their accomplishments are equally as important as their male counterparts. All around the world there are women missing from our history lessons and textbooks, and it's time we try to remedy that.

In this challenge, your group will pick an underrepresented influential woman from any time period of your choosing (or as assigned by your teacher) and develop a two-four minute game show called tentatively, "What Did I Do?" that showcases who she was and what she accomplished. This video will be formatted in a game show style, in which you will record two teams of your peers (or family members ...or teachers!) that will go through a short, three-round game to guess what this woman did. At the end of the game show you

will conclude your video with a short 45 second documentary-style segment explaining exactly who this woman was and what her accomplishments were.

The video should express why this woman was influential to history and why her accomplishments should be recognized. The viewers should come away from your video with a better sense of why history needs to be more inclusive of women and their roles. Most importantly, be creative! The most successful videos will both entertain – keep the viewer engaged for the entire length – and educate: deliver significant content that will both inform the audience about the woman you have chosen, as well as make the larger case for the full inclusion of the role of women in our understanding of history.

Deliverables include:

- Game Show Video + Short Documentary
- Research Summary (at teacher’s discretion)

Process

Below is a suggested breakdown for the students’ work.

During Phase I, student teams will:

- Begin researching. There are plenty of websites and articles that detail the accomplishments of many powerful, but forgotten women in history. Consider using words like “underrepresented” or “forgotten women” when Googling for information.
- As a group, pick a woman who you think you could create a compelling “What did I do?” video and who interests you; about whom you think your peers need to know.
- Do some digging. Using both primary and secondary sources (at least two of each), learn as much as you can about who this woman was and what her contributions to society were. Make sure you understand her impact completely.
 - *Questions to Consider:*
 - Does your research reveal a sense of her voice, her words, her character?
 - Were her accomplishments and impact recognized and celebrated at the time or only retrospectively?
 - Why is it important that her contributions be understood at all?

- Decide on the most important facts and stories about this woman.
 - **Teacher's Option - Research Summary:** Teachers may require that student teams hand in a two-page summary of their collective research about the woman they chose, with full source citations.

During Phase II, student teams will:

- Begin to build the format for the game show portion of the video.

There are many ways to develop a game show. For this Challenge, we recommend a very simple approach: The host makes a statement about this person, and the players – in teams or as single competitors - make a guess. If done correctly (i.e., you don't give them quite enough information), they won't get it right. Round II: another statement and another round of guesses. For this Round II, the players should have, say, a 50% chance of guessing 'what she did'. Then Round III – the final statement... should practically give it away. The players answer and the game is over.

Example: The first round could sound something like "I grew up in Germany. I studied molecular biology at Oxford University. I was very interested in gene mutation." Have both teams guess what they think this woman did and if they get it wrong, continue on with the next clue. After both teams have had the opportunity to guess three times, reveal who this woman was and what she did.

While this is our recommended approach, the team is free to develop the game in any fashion that they like. Additional game format questions to consider include:

- Are there Bonus Rounds and if so of what do they consist?
- What happens if the players get it on one try?
- Perhaps the game isn't just about 'what this person did'? What other facets about this person could be turned into a game that yields information about her?
- The example above uses the first person "I". Is this how you want to present your forgotten female hero?
- Whatever you decide in terms of formatting, keep it simple: the game part of this should not take more than three minutes of your maximum length of four minutes.

- Once you have decided on your format, what facts from your research will you use in your game show?
- Simultaneously, create an outline for your 45 second documentary-style biography. What new information will you include in the biography that is not communicated in the game show?
- Draft the script of the game show.
 - This Challenge asks you to shoot real players playing this game. This is not a ‘scripted game show’. In order to showcase your game in the most effective way, we recommend planning to play and shoot the game at least three times so that you can provide Meridian Stories with your best take.
- Pre-produce the Game Show portion of the video – consider what it is you are shooting and what it is we, in the end, will be seeing and hearing.
 - Seeing – Decide where (we recommend that you do not shoot in this in a school classroom) and how you want the video to be shot. What props will you use? What decorations? People?
 - Hearing – What does this final product sound like? Will you use music or sound effects to bring us into your gaming experience? A quick look at a few game shows on television may give you some ideas for how to enhance your video with music and sound effects.
- Draft the script of the short biographical video.
- Select images to accompany the short biography. This biography is not meant to be a complicated video – just select a few images or video, if it exists – that captures the essence of your select figure.
 - Creating a storyboard is often useful for the documentary portion of the video. Attaching text to picture in a storyboard can make organizing this part of the final video much easier.

During Phase III, student teams will:

- Finalize the game show and documentary script.
- Finalize the documentary storyboard.
- Shoot the game show video (several times with different players, aiming for your best ‘take’)
- Create a rough cut of the short biography.
- Edit the two video components together, adding stills and graphics as desired and finalizing the documentary portion of the video.

- Post-produce the video, adding music and sound effects as desired.

Meridian Support Resources

<p><i>Meridian Stories</i> provides two forms of support for the student teams:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <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. 2. <u>Media Resource Collection</u> – These are short documents that offer student teams key tips in the areas of creativity, production, game design and digital citizenry. <p>Recommended review, as a team, for this Challenge include:</p>	
Meridian Innovators and Artists	Media Resource Collection
<p><i>On Nonfiction</i> – Margaret Heffernan</p> <p><i>On Documentary Films</i> – Sarah Childress</p> <p><i>On Memoir and Nonfiction Writing</i> – Liza Bakewell</p> <p><i>On Sound Design</i> – Chris Watkinson</p>	<p>“Six Principles of Documentary Film Making”</p> <p>“Guide to Royalty Free Music and Sound Effects”</p> <p>“Creating Storyboards, Framing a Shot”</p> <p>“Creating a Short Documentary”</p>

Evaluation Rubric – *Forgotten Female Heroes*

CONTENT COMMAND			
Criteria	1 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 10
Research Depth	The research collected and shared reflects a cursory understanding of the subject	The research collected and shared reflects an adequate understanding of the subject	The research collected and shared reflects a thoughtful understanding of the subject
Clear Narrative of the Subject's Experience	The narrative does not enhance our understanding of the subject or her importance in history	The narrative somewhat enhances our understanding of the subject and her importance in history	The narrative enhances our understanding of the subject and her importance in history

STORYTELLING COMMAND			
Criteria	1 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 10
Game Show Format	The game show was not engaging and did not enlighten the audience about the woman's achievements and importance	The game show was somewhat engaging and enlightened the audience about the woman's achievements and importance	The game show was engaging and entertaining, and enlightened the audience about the woman's achievements and importance
Biographical Documentary	The documentary is not informative or illuminating	The documentary is informative	The documentary is informative, well-organized and illuminating

MEDIA COMMAND			
Criteria	1 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 10
The Visual and Audio Presentation of the Game show	The location, props and sound design do not demonstrate a commitment to presenting a convincing game show style.	The location, props and sound design demonstrate a commitment to presenting a convincing game show style.	The location, props and sound design demonstrate an understanding of the elements that compose a game show format
The Visual Presentation of the Documentary	The visual flow of the documentary does not create a compelling video or a visually appealing story.	The visual flow of the documentary creates a somewhat compelling and visually appealing story.	The visual flow of the documentary creates a compelling and visually appealing story.

Cohesion of Documentary and Game Show	The game show and the documentary do not work well together as a cohesive whole	The game show and the documentary do work well together as a cohesive whole	The game show and the documentary together present a powerful narrative about a forgotten female hero.
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. Why is it important to recognize that women are underrepresented in our understanding of global history?
2. Who is one woman that has been ignored by history and what has research using primary and secondary sources about this woman taught you?
3. How does the form in which the information is communicated, a game show/documentary video as opposed to a research paper, enhance your understanding of the topic?

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. The student will understand the global implications of leaving women out of history and why this needs to change.
2. The student will come away with an appreciation and deep understanding of one historical female figure.
3. The student will understand the differences in communicative power between text and imagery; between a research paper and presenting a video that capitalizes on both fun gaming techniques and traditional documentary storytelling.
4. The student will utilize key 21st century skills, with a focus on creativity, critical thinking and digital literacy, in their process of translating their encounter with history into a combined video game show and documentary that is intended to educate.
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 *Forgotten Female Heroes* Challenge addresses a range of curricular objectives that have been articulated by the new **Common Core Curricular Standards – English Language Arts and History/Social Studies**. Below please find the standards that are addressed, either in whole or in part.

Common Core Curricular Standards – Social Studies

<i>Standards</i>	<i>8th</i>	<i>9th / 10th</i>	<i>11th / 12th</i>
RH1 Key Ideas and Details	Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.	Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and	Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an

		origin of the information.	understanding of the text as a whole.
RH8 Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.	Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims.	Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.
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.
RI6 READING: INFORMATIONAL TEXT Craft and Structure	Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.	Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.	Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.
W2 WRITING Text Types and Purpose	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, organization, and analysis of content.	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.
SL1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and	Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-	Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-

<p>SPEAKING AND LISTENING</p> <p>Comprehension and Collaboration</p>	<p>teacher- led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>SL5</p> <p>SPEAKING AND LISTENING</p> <p>Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas</p>	<p>Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>L1</p> <p>LANGUAGE</p> <p>Conventions of Standard English</p>	<p>Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.</p>	<p>Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.</p>	<p>Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.</p>
<p>L5</p> <p>LANGUAGE</p> <p>Vocabulary Acquisition and Use</p>	<p>Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.</p>	<p>Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.</p>	<p>Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.</p>