History Challenge
Digital Storytelling Unit

Nation Building: The Movie Trailer

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

Presidential proclamations, government treaties, and Congressional Acts trace the arc of our collective heritage. The National Archives houses original documents dealing with decisions of national sovereignty, commerce, slavery, and war. Written by the prominent actors on the national stage at the time, they present a vivid record of every key turning point in US History.

This Challenge asks teams to create a movie trailer that tells the story behind one such keystone document. The ten documents below have been selected from the National Archives. Each marks a turning point, when a decision had to be made at a moment when our nation was being tested. Perhaps it was as momentous as the Louisiana Purchase Treaty in 1802, which doubled the size of our fledgling nation and set the stage for westward expansion. Just as significant are the initiatives taken by presidents to shape American policy to meet their objectives, such as Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal, which instigated the infamous "Trail of Tears", or James Monroe's 1823 speech to Congress warning Europe against colonial designs in the Western Hemisphere, which became known simply as the "Monroe Doctrine".

Select a document from the ten provided below. Research the social, geographic, and political context surrounding it. Then create a one to two minute movie trailer advertising a movie that is based on your selected document. Focus on the conflict or tension that precipitated it. Study the characters involved, what motivated them, and the drama that ensued. What was at stake?

Keep this in mind: the single objective of a movie trailer is to convince the viewer to pay money for the movie ticket. That is your goal as well.

Here are the ten documents from which to choose:

1. Louisiana Purchase Treaty (1803)
http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=18

2. Monroe Doctrine (1823)
http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=23

3. President Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal (1830)
http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=25

4. Emancipation Proclamation (1863)
http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=34

5. Treaty of Fort Laramie (1868)
http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=42

6. Sherman Anti-Trust Act (1890)
http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=51

7. Keating-Owen Child Labor Act (1916)
http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=59

8. President Franklin Roosevelt's Order to Relocate Japanese Americans (1942)
http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=74

9. Executive Order to Desegregate Central High School (1957)
http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=89

10. Civil Rights Act (1964)
http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=97

<u>Deliverables</u> **include:**
- The Movie Trailer
- Narrative Outline (at teacher's discretion)
- Shooting Script (at teacher's discretion)

The Process

Below is a suggested breakdown for the students' work.

During <u>Phase I</u> student teams will:
- Select one of the ten documents from the list provided. They are in the public domain, and may be reproduced without permission; the links lead you to a Web site maintained by the National Archives.
  - o The teacher may place whatever restrictions he/she needs in order to focus teams on a certain topic or time period.
- Research and outline the historical context that lead up to the document. Your research should include at least two secondary sources. Here are some questions to ask as you conduct your research:
  - What were the social, economic, and/or strategic currents that brought about the need for that specific document? Were they regional, national, or global in scope?
  - Who were the primary players that championed the document's writing?
  - What were the document's ramifications? What reactions did it instigate and what happened in the country immediately after the document "came out"?

- Pick two or three characters and research their stories. The characters do not all have to be key players who were instrumental in creation of your selected document. Imagine, for example, belonging to a Native American tribe in the eastern United States when President Jackson ordered you and your people from your ancestral homeland.
  - What beliefs or principles brought your characters to the point where your document was written, perhaps altering the national trajectory?
- At the end of this you have the main characters for your storyline.
    a. ***Teacher's Option***: <u>Narrative Outline</u> – Teachers may require that teams hand in a paper or detailed flow chart that succinctly outlines the key story elements and characters from start to finish of the document in question. All resources must be properly cited.
- Brainstorm how you are going tell this story within the short time confines of a movie trailer. From which point of view will your story originate, or from which character or constituency? Will it be told objectively, or be sympathetic to a particular side or cause?
- While there is no specific movie trailer formula that must be followed, there are a couple of considerations to help guide your story formatting.
  1. If you have access to Apple's iMovie ™, there is an iMovie trailer template. While we recommend that team not use this template, you can study it as a model for how to design your movie trailer.
  2. Look at movie trailers from some of your favorite movies. Many are online at the movie's website. As a team, study them and take notes. How do the trailers set up the story? How much information do they give away and how much do they withhold? How do they end? Movie trailers are, among other things, exercises in pacing: what changes in pace do you notice from the trailer's start to finish?
  3. Look at movie trailers from a selection of movies that you haven't seen. Which ones leave you *really wanting* to see the movie? How did they accomplish that? In the end, pick the ones that you like the best; identify what you liked best about them; and begin to create your own movie trailer template.
  4. Listen to this 6 minute NPR story from January, 2012, "The Art of the Modern Movie Trailer" http://www.npr.org/blogs/monkeysee/2012/01/15/145227280/the-art-of-the-modern-movie-trailer

During <u>Phase II</u> student teams will:

- Conduct Creative Research - This assignment asks that you create a move trailer about a historic moment in history, as linked to a specific document. Take some creative license – we are talking 'historical fiction'.
- Begin to identify a few key scenes you'll need to include in your movie to tell your story. Brainstorm about what you think might have gone on — in the Oval Office, on floor of the House or Senate, or in the bedroom, living room, kitchen, taxi cab, bus, diner, screened in porch -- of your main characters, at key moments in your story.
- Decide on a movie trailer format, as based on the research process outlined above. Create a move trailer rundown – or storyboard -- that outlines the action and time for each scene.
  - The final movie trailer must reveal a substantive understanding of the Document your team has chosen. (Please look at the Evaluation Rubric for content expectations.)
- Select your key scenes and write the script.
  - *Teacher's Option*: Shooting Script – Teachers may require that teams hand in a Shooting Script.
- Finalize the entire move trailer rundown.
- Pre-produce the trailer:
  - Scout locations for shooting (if this is being shot on location);
  - Create costumes, props and other set pieces, as needed;
  - Prepare the logistics for the actual shooting of the trailer; and
  - Rehearse the scenes.

During Phase III, student teams will:
- Shoot the video.
- Edit the video, adding stills and graphics as desired.
- Post-produce the video, adding music and sound effects as desired.

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 Tips – These are short documents that offer student teams a few key tips in the areas of creativity and production.

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

Media Innovators and Artists	Meridian Tips
On Script Writing – Kent Pierce **On Non-Fiction** – Margaret Heffernan **On the Importance of Character in Storytelling** – Scott Nash **On Editing** – Tom Pierce	"Building Characters" "Creative Brainstorming Techniques" "Creating Storyboards, Framing a Shot" "Video Editing"

Evaluation Rubric – *Nation Building: The Movie Trailer*

CONTENT COMMAND			
Criteria	**1 - 3**	**4 - 7**	**8 - 10**
Clarity of Content	The historical content is not presented clearly	The historical content is presented clearly	The historical content is presented clearly and compellingly
Resonance of Content	The historical context and ramifications of the scene are not clearly communicated	The historical context and ramifications of the scene are clearly communicated	The historical context and ramifications of the scene are communicated with insight
Historical Figures	The historical figures and their roles in this event are not presented clearly	The historical figures and their roles in this event are presented clearly	The historical figures and their roles in this event are presented clearly and compellingly
STORYTELLING COMMAND			
Criteria	**1 - 3**	**4 - 7**	**8 - 10**
Story	The narrative is hard to follow and not enticing	The narrative is clear	The narrative is clear, engaging and enticing
Character	The characters are not easily distinguishable from each other	The characters service the trailer effectively	The characters are engaging, entertaining and thoughtfully executed

MEDIA COMMAND			
Criteria	**1 - 3**	**4 - 7**	**8 - 10**
Editing	The trailer feels patched together and the overall editing detracts from the narrative	The trailer generally flows, servicing the narrative	The trailer is edited cleanly and effectively, propelling the narrative forward
Movie-Trailer Genre	The marriage of pacing and graphics to key story elements is ineffective	The marriage of pacing and graphics to key story elements is effective	The marriage of pacing and graphics to key story elements is dynamic and effective
Music and Sound Effects	The selective use of music and sound effects detract from the drama inherent in the trailer	The selective use of music and sound effects service the trailer	The selective use of music and sound effects enhance the drama inherent in the trailer
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 the selected document important, and how was it influential in the evolution of US history?
2. What are the specific dynamics – individual or societal – at play in the evolution and signing of a single historical document such as the one selected?
3. How has information gathered from primary sources enhanced your understanding of the topic? How is the information from these sources different from the information gathered from secondary sources?
4. How does one research, select and organize content from a variety of sources in order to present a compelling, cohesive and historically accurate narrative?
5. By converting a historical document into a narrative that humanizes the document, how has your understanding changed or deepened?
    a. How has immersion in the production of digital media deepened the overall educational experience?
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 be familiar with a wide range of critical American historical documents and understand why one specific document can re-direct the destiny of the US.
2. The student will understand that significant historical events often occur as a result of the actions of a few individuals.
3. The student will understand how combining primary and secondary sources can help one to reach a more complex and nuanced understanding of history.
4. The student will understand the processes involved in researching content from a variety of sources; selecting relevant information from those sources; and organizing this information in a way that yields narrative cohesion and historical accuracy.
5. The student will gain a new understanding of a key historical moment by approaching it through the elements of narrative.
    a. The student will know the basic constructs of using video media to effectively communicate character and a story.

6. The student will utilize key 21st century skills, with a focus on creativity, critical thinking and digital literacy, in their process of translating literary content into a new narrative format.
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 *Nation Building: The Movie Trailer* 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 & History/Social Studies;** and
2. The **Themes of Social Studies**, as outlined by **National Council of Social Studies (NCSS)**.

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

Common Core Curricular Standards – English Language Arts Standards

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.
W3 **WRITING** **Text Types and Purposes**	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

	structured event sequences.		
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.
SL1 **SPEAKING AND LISTENING** **Comprehension and Collaboration**	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.
SL5 **SPEAKING AND LISTENING** **Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas**	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.
L3 **LANGUAGE**	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when	Apply knowledge of language to understand how	Apply knowledge of language to understand how

Knowledge of Language	writing, speaking, reading, or listening.	language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.	language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
RH2 **HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES** **Key Ideas and Details**	Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.	Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.	Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships 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 – 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.
Theme – Individuals, Groups and Institutions

Institutions such as families and civic, educational, governmental, and religious organizations exert a major influence on people's lives. This theme allows students to understand how institutions are formed, maintained, and changed, and to examine their influence. In schools, this theme typically appears in units and courses dealing with sociology, anthropology, psychology, political science, and history.

Theme - Power, Authority, and Governance

One essential component of education for citizenship is an understanding of the historical development and contemporary forms of power, authority, and governance. Through this theme, learners become familiar with the purposes and functions of government, the scope and limits of authority, and the differences between democratic and non-democratic political systems. In schools, this theme typically appears in units and courses dealing with government, history, civics, law, politics, and other social sciences.

Theme – Civic Ideals and Practices

An understanding of civic ideals and practices is critical to full participation in society and is an essential component of education for citizenship. This theme enables students to learn about the rights and responsibilities of citizens of a democracy, and to appreciate the importance of active citizenship. In schools, the theme typically appears in units or courses dealing with civics, history, political science, cultural anthropology, and fields such as global studies, law-related education, and the humanities.