



# History Challenge Digital Storytelling Unit

## *Sports Casting History*

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](mailto:info@meridianstories.com).

**Let's get started.**

## The Challenge

Imagine being a sportscaster, reporting live, based on images being streamed to you from a GoPro camera on Paul Revere's hat. Fun, right? What if you were there at Washington's re-crossing of the Delaware? Or a fly-on-the-wall as Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser decided to nationalize the Suez Canal Company in 1956. Or in the room when Benedict Arnold was confronted at West Point for being a traitor?

In this Challenge, your team must pick a key moment in world History and create a play-by-play account of the action, with a broadcaster and color commentator. The visual re-creation of the historical moment can be done in any style the team wants: from animation or storyboards, to live action re-creations. However, the focus of this Challenge is not on elaborate visuals, but on the historical content, as presented through the dialogue of the sportscasters. In choosing your moment be sure to choose one that focuses on a small cadre of individuals. Do not pick a moment that a) happened in public, like the landing on the moon in 1969; or b) is massive in scope, like a battle scene.

### **Deliverables include:**

- Sports Casting Video

- Sequence of Events (at teacher's discretion)
- Analysis of Historical Moment (at teacher's discretion)
- Summary Paper (at teacher's discretion)
- Shooting Script (at teacher's discretion)

## Process

Below is a suggested breakdown for the students' work.

### During Phase I, student teams will:

- Select an event – one that has clear historical resonance - for teacher's approval.
- Read a primary source document about that event.
- Read a contemporary synopsis/analysis of the same event (secondary source).
- Using real and, if desired, imaginary characters from this event, outline the sequence of events that comprise your moment or event.
  - **Teacher's Option: Sequence of Events** – Teachers may require that their teams hand in their detailed outline of the select historical moment.
- Once the main sequence of actions that comprise your moment has been identified, analyze the event. In this analysis, consider asking these questions:
  - What are the historical implications of this event?
  - What might have happened if a different decision had been made or the circumstances unfolded differently?
  - What are the key events that led up to the moment that you have chosen to present?
  - What have you learned about the personalities of these historical figures and how have those personalities shaped this historical moment?
- This analysis will serve as the content for your color commentator.
  - **Teacher's Option:** Analysis of Historical Moment – Teachers may require that their teams hand in the results of their analyses of the ramifications of this historical moment. OR
  - **Teacher's Option:** Summary Paper – Teachers may require that teams write a one to two page paper that summarizes the historical event, the primary characters involved and its overall

significance, citing the primary and secondary sources that were used.

### **During Phase II, student teams will:**

- Brainstorm with your team about the action in your scene.
  - At this point, your team should have two documents. In the first, you have identified the known historical facts of the scene that you have selected. In the second, you have collected analyses of the significance of this scene. The first will be the foundation for a) the content of the video that you create – your historical re-creation; and b) the script for your play-by-play announcer. The second will be the foundation for your second voice: the color commentator. A ‘color commentator’ is the one who provides the analysis, context, background and statistics, to complement the ongoing action.
- Begin to write the script for your sportscasters. Teams are encouraged to be inventive in their interpretation of this television genre. Here are some thoughts to consider:
  - Keep in mind this question: in what ways does your historical moment resemble a dramatic sports moment? And, which sports do you most want to mimic? Golf? Hockey? Olympic Gymnastics? Football?
  - Sportscasters aren’t always just stationed in the booth. What is your configuration?
  - Sportscasters often invite ‘players’ in for interviews. Is this an approach that your team wants to include?
  - Finally, watch some sports and just close your eyes and listen. If you are confused about these different roles, watch some sports.
    - **Teacher’s Option: Shooting Script** - Teachers may require that their teams hand in the shooting script.
- Brainstorm about visual production issues. These issues include: a) how to present imagery for the scene (dramatic re-creation, paintings and photos from the period, animation or your own drawings or dioramas); b) how much screen time for the sportscasters; and c) the role of audio and music. (Teams may use people other than their own team members as characters in the drama.)
  - Teams do not have to provide voices and dialogue for the characters, if you are producing an actual scene. We will make the assumption that the two sportscasters can hear everything in the

room and therefore all audio can come just from the broadcasting booth.

- Please note that while the visualization of the scene is being evaluated in one category, the focus of this Challenge is on the audio presentation of the content.
- Pre-produce the scene:
  - 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 scene; and
  - Rehearse the scene.

**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

<p><i>Meridian Stories</i> provides two forms of support for the student teams:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> </ol> <p>Recommended review, as a team, for this Challenge include:</p>	
<b>Meridian Innovators and Artists</b>	<b>Media Resource Collection</b>
<p><i>On Scriptwriting and Comedy</i> – Kent Pierce</p> <p><i>On Acting for Film and Stage</i> – Janet McTeer</p> <p><i>On the Importance of Character in Storytelling</i> – Scott Nash</p> <p><i>On Nonfiction</i> – Margaret Heffernan</p>	<p>“Creative Brainstorming Techniques”</p> <p>“Sound Recording Basics”</p> <p>“Creating Storyboards, Framing a Shot”</p> <p>“Video Editing Basics”</p>

## Evaluation Rubric – *Sports Casting History*

<b>CONTENT COMMAND</b>			
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>1 - 3</b>	<b>4 - 7</b>	<b>8 - 10</b>
<b>Clarity of Content</b>	The historical content is not presented clearly	The historical content is presented clearly	The historical content is presented clearly and compellingly
<b>Resonance/Analysis of Content</b>	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
<b>Key Historical Figures</b>	The key historical figures, and their roles in this event are not presented clearly	The key historical figures, and their roles in this event are presented clearly	The key historical figures and their roles in this event are presented clearly and compellingly

<b>STORYTELLING COMMAND</b>			
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>1 - 3</b>	<b>4 - 7</b>	<b>8 - 10</b>
<b>Story</b>	The translation of a historical moment into a dramatic scene is not effective	The translation of a historical moment into a dramatic scene is effective	The translation of a historical moment into a dramatic scene is inventive and compelling
<b>Sports Genre</b>	The overall scene does not reflect the urgency, drama or pacing of a sports event	The overall scene does reflect the urgency, drama or pacing of a sports event	The overall scene fully embodies the urgency, drama or pacing of a sports event
<b>Script – The Announcers</b>	The announcers and their varied roles are not distinguished, nor are they interesting	The announcers and their varied roles are distinct and interesting	The announcers and their varied roles are distinct, engaging and insightful

<b>MEDIA COMMAND</b>			
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>1 - 3</b>	<b>4 - 7</b>	<b>8 - 10</b>
<b>Editing</b>	The visual interplay between the scene and the sportscasters is rough	The visual interplay between the scene and the sportscasters is effective	The visual interplay between the scene and the sportscasters is well timed
<b>Visualization</b>	The visualization of the historical moment is not effective	The visualization of the historical moment is effective	The visualization of the historical moment is imaginative and compelling
<b>Sound and Music</b>	The selective use of sound effects and music detracts from the drama inherent in the scene	The selective use of sound effects and music supports the drama inherent in the scene	The selective use of sound effects and music enhances the drama inherent in the scene
<b>HUMAN SKILLS COMMAND</b>			
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>1-3</b>	<b>4-7</b>	<b>8-10</b>
<b>Collaborative Thinking</b>	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
<b>Creativity and Innovation</b>	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
<b>Initiative and Self-Direction</b>	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. In your historical event, what is at stake - for the characters and the country - in the moment that you are choosing to dramatize?
2. How did the individual personalities involved shape the actual outcome?
3. How has information gathered from primary sources allowed your team to 'be in the moment' in a more productive way? How is the information from these sources different from the information gathered from secondary sources?
4. By converting an iconic historical moment into a narrative that revolves around a human, personal scene, how has your understanding changed or deepened?
5. 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?
6. How has working on a team – practicing one's collaborative skills - changed the learning experience?

## Student Proficiencies

1. The student will be able to discuss the meaning and ramifications of the historical event in question
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 a historical event.
4. The student will understand the power of narrative to communicate meaning effectively.
5. The student will utilize key 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, with a focus on creativity, critical thinking and digital literacy, in their process of translating historical content into a new narrative format.
6. 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 21<sup>st</sup> century skills to develop in students as they prepare for life after secondary school.

## Curricular Correlations

The *Sports Casting History* 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**

<i>The Standard</i>	<i>8<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>9<sup>th</sup> / 10<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>11<sup>th</sup> / 12<sup>th</sup></i>
<b>RI1</b>  <b>READING INFORMATIONAL TEXT</b>  <b>Key Ideas and Details</b>	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.
<b>W3</b>  <b>WRITING</b>  <b>Text Types and Purposes</b>	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive 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.	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
<b>W8</b>  <b>WRITING</b>  <b>Research to Build and Present Knowledge</b>	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	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

		plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.	plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.
<b>SL1</b> <b>SPEAKING AND LISTENING</b> <b>Comprehension and Collaboration</b>	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.
<b>SL5</b> <b>SPEAKING AND LISTENING</b> <b>Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas</b>	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.
<b>L3</b> <b>LANGUAGE</b> <b>Knowledge of Language</b>	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.	Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.	Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
<b>RH2</b> <b>HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES</b>	Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from	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

<b>Key Ideas and Details</b>	prior knowledge or opinions.	develop over the course of the text.	among the key details and ideas.
<b>RH3</b>  <b>HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES</b>  <b>Key Ideas and Details</b>	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.
<b>RH9</b>  <b>HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES</b>  <b>Integration of Knowledge and Ideas</b>	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

<b>Theme – Time, Continuity and Change</b>
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