

Teacher Project Pack

Digital Stories of Our Heroes

Overview

Students are often more engaged in learning that engages them in real-world activities. This project allows students to learn and use interview and digital presentation skills to discover, elicit, and relate the stories of local veterans and others who have contributed significantly to the American memory.

To complete this project, students will . . .

- visit the Library of Congress website and other websites to familiarize themselves with the events surrounding the story of a local hero.
- gain an understanding and appreciation of oral histories.
- learn and practice techniques for conducting successful interviews.
- synthesize learning in a project product.

Objectives

Upon completing this project, students will be able to . . .

- identify different types of primary resources found in the American Memory section at the Library of Congress website.
- describe the features and functions of oral histories.
- relate an important event in our country's history and the first-hand experience of an individual who participated in the event.
- prepare for and conduct an effective interview.
- create a project product that synthesizes learnings.

Standards (elementary)

This project meets the following Illinois learning standards and goals for elementary students in Language Arts and Social Science.

1.C.2b Make and support inferences and form interpretations about main themes and topics.

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1.C.2f Connect information presented in tables, maps and charts to printed or electronic text.

2.B.2a Respond to literary material by making inferences, drawing conclusions and comparing it to their own experience, prior knowledge and other texts.

3.A.2 Write paragraphs that include a variety of sentence types; appropriate use of the eight parts of speech; and accurate spelling, capitalization and punctuation.

3.B.2b Establish central idea, organization, elaboration and unity in relation to purpose and audience.

3.B.2c Expand ideas by using modifiers, subordination and standard paragraph organization.

3.B.2d Edit documents for clarity, subjectivity, pronoun-antecedent agreement, adverb and adjective agreement and verb tense; proofread for spelling, capitalization and punctuation; and ensure that documents are formatted in final form for submission and/or publication.

3.C.2b Produce and format compositions for specified audiences using available technology.

4.A.2a Demonstrate understanding of the listening process (e.g., sender, receiver, message) by summarizing and paraphrasing spoken messages orally and in writing in formal and informal situations.

4.A.2b Ask and respond to questions related to oral presentations and messages in small and large group settings.

4.B.2b Use speaking skills and procedures to participate in group discussions.

5.A.2a Formulate questions and construct a basic research plan.

5.A.2b Organize and integrate information from a variety of sources (e.g., books, interviews, library reference materials, websites, CD-ROMs).

5.B.2a Determine the accuracy, currency and reliability of materials from various sources.

15.B.2b Cite sources used.

16.A.2c Ask questions and seek answers by collecting and analyzing data from historic documents, images and other literary and non-literary sources.

17.A.2b Use maps and other geographic representations and instruments to gather information about people, places and environments. (This relates to the additional project outputs-SS focus).

Standards (junior high)

This project meets the following Illinois learning standards and goals for junior-high students in Language Arts and Social Science.

1.C.3a Use information to form, explain and support questions and predictions.

1.C.3f Interpret tables that display textual information and data in visual formats.

2.B.3a Respond to literary material from personal, creative and critical points of view.

3.A.3 Write compositions that contain complete sentences and effective paragraphs using English conventions.

3.B.3a Produce documents that convey a clear understanding and interpretation of ideas and information and display focus, organization, elaboration and coherence.

3.B.3b Edit and revise for word choice, organization, consistent point of view and transitions among paragraphs using contemporary technology and formats suitable for submission and/or publication.

3.C.3b Using available technology, produce compositions and multimedia works for specified audiences.

4.A.3a Demonstrate ways (e.g., ask probing questions, provide feedback to a speaker, summarize and paraphrase complex spoken messages) that listening attentively can improve comprehension.

4.A.3d Demonstrate the ability to identify and manage barriers to listening (e.g., noise, speaker credibility, environmental distractions).

4.B.3b Design and produce reports and multi-media compositions that represent group projects.

5.A.3a Identify appropriate resources to solve problems or answer questions through research.

5.A.3b Design a project related to contemporary issues (e.g., real-world math, career development, community service) using multiple sources.

5.B.3a Choose and analyze information sources for individual, academic and functional purposes.

5.B.3b Identify, evaluate and cite primary sources.

16.A.3b Make inferences about historical events and eras using historical maps and other historical sources.

Guidelines

Review background information: Students will need basic understanding of primary sources; oral histories; and interview skills and strategies to complete this project.

Prepare for implementation: You will need access to computers and the Internet, videotaping equipment, video transfer and editing software, presentation software. You should also review the guidelines to [Capturing an Oral History](#).

Be flexible with implementation: If you do not plan to submit class interview(s) to the LOC's Veterans History Project, interviewees need not be veterans; if access to videotaping equipment and software is not available, consider making an audio tape of the interview instead; if technology access is limited and/or technology skills are low, consider enlisting older siblings, parents, or community members to assist with video copying and video editing tasks, as well as creation of the interview transcription. Remember, too, that you may choose to complete only those portions of the project best suited to your students.

Allow for sufficient time to implement: working collaboratively and independently both online and offline, students will need five 40-minute class sessions and 180-220 minutes outside of class to prepare for the project; 60-180 minutes for the interview and associated tasks; and time in class or outside of class to contribute to creation of a digital story presentation.

Directions

Possible Project Roles

In completing this project, each student should fulfill the role of researcher; other roles may be fulfilled by individual students or student groups or by adults when necessary.

- **Researcher:** researches historical topic and creates interview questions
- **Project Manager:** oversees entire project and makes sure each component is completed
- **Secretary:** prepares and completes all forms and correspondence.
- **Event Coordinator:** prepares for and oversees interview
- **Video Technician:** prepares and tests video equipment and videotapes interview
- **Interviewer:** asks prepared and follow-up questions during the interview
- **Video Editor:** converts videotape to digital file and selects content for inclusion in digital story presentation
- **Digital Storyteller:** creates or helps to create a digital story presentation

Pre-Interview Tasks (in class)

1. Provide students with a basic introduction to primary sources, if necessary (see [primary sources online learning module](#)). Time required: 20 minutes.
2. Introduce students to print and oral histories available on the American Memory section at the Library of Congress (LOC) website and other sites (see [oral history links](#)). Time required: 40 minutes.
3. Introduce students to the historical topic about which the interviewee will be speaking (see [WW II/Japanese American Internment resource guide](#)). Time required: 40 minutes.
4. Teach interview skills and strategies (see [interview lesson](#)). Time required: 40 minutes.
5. Revise interview questions (see [tips for a successful interview](#)) as a group. Time required: 40 minutes.

6. Review [taping tips](#) and the [LOC guidelines](#) for conducting interviews that will be submitted to the Veterans History Project. Time required: 20 minutes.

Pre-Interview Tasks (outside of class)

1. Review digital stories of veterans from the [Veterans History Project](#) or the [Studs Terkel Archives](#). Time required: 40 minutes.
2. Direct students to conduct background research on the historical topic about which the interviewee will be speaking (see [World War II links](#) if appropriate). Time required: 60-120 minutes.
3. Direct students to create 10 interview questions (see [sample questions](#)). Time required: 40 minutes.
4. Send interviewee interview preparation letter (see [sample](#)), [background information form](#), and the [LOC forms](#) for the Veterans History Project if appropriate. Time required: 20 minutes.

Interview Tasks

1. Prepare and complete district media release forms for all interviewers.
2. Prepare and test videotaping equipment.
3. Conduct interview.

Post-Interview Tasks

1. Make at least one copy of the videotape; convert videotape to digital file for editing on computer; and send master tape, with completed Veterans History Project forms, to the LOC if appropriate.
2. Create video log and complete transcription, if possible.
3. Review the digital file again to select content (may be video clips or simply photos and transcriptions) for inclusion in digital story presentation.
4. Create a digital story presentation.

5. Submit the digital story presentation for possible inclusion on the BEF American Memory Initiative website.
6. Send a thank-you note and/or gift (e.g., a copy of the videotape, a copy of the video log or transcript, pictures, a printout or file of the digital story presentation, a chapbook containing student reflections of the interview) to interviewee.

Assessment

Review the [peer assessment form](#).

Extension Activities

Timeline: The Hero's Experience

Students will create a timeline of the interviewee's experiences, placing these experiences in the broader context of the event of focus. [Rubric](#)

Map: The Hero's Journey

Students will create a map that shows the locations (countries, cities, and major geographic features) where the interviewee has lived and where s/he journeyed to during the event of focus. [Rubric](#)

Reflective Essay: The Hero's Effect

Students will write an essay that reflects on the project process, relating how the knowledge gained through research and the interview has affected them. [Rubric](#)

Compare & Contrast Essay: The Hero and Me

Students will write an essay that compares and contrast the interviewee's experiences during the event of focus with the experiences (real or imagined) of the student. [Rubric](#)

News Article: Local Hero Describes Journey

Students will write a newspaper news article that relates the facts of the event of focus and uses the interviewee as a source. The article should be accompanied by a photo (or sketch) with caption. Articles from the whole class or school could be used to create a heroes' newspaper. [Rubric](#)

Feature Article: A Hero in Our Midst

Students will write a magazine feature article about the life of the interviewee, emphasizing the event of focus. The article should be accompanied by a photo (or sketch) of the interviewee with caption, and may also include additional photos and graphics such as timelines and maps.

[Rubric](#)

Press Release: Local Hero Tells All

Students will write a press release about the interview, recounting highlights presented by the interviewee. The release should inform and entice the reader to find out more. [Rubric](#)