Democracy in Action

A Digital Storytelling Guide for Educators

A collaboration between Civic Life Project and National Council for the Social Studies

Deecember 2024

Democracy in Action

Civic Life Project's turnkey high school civics and digital storytelling curriculum.

Democracy is not a given. It depends on robust civic engagement. We need citizens who are both civically minded and citizens who are civically active.

Developed in collaboration with the National Council for the Social Studies, Democracy in Action empowers students to create short documentaries on issues they care about, showcase their films to their communities, and ignite dialogue and civic action!

Curriculum Features

Designed with teachers in mind, the semester-long three-unit curriculum is easily integrated into any existing civics or social studies class, delivered in two weekly lessons. To prepare and support educators, we offer top-notch remote professional development workshops and ongoing technical support.

- ★ Alignment to College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards.
- ★ Engaging student-centered activities to deepen civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions.
- ★ Focus on participatory action research that leads to informed action on a local, regional or national issue.
- ★ Civil discourse and courageous conversations as students explore a variety of viewpoints and perspectives.
- ★ Lessons and activities that promote the development of research, reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills as part of the inquiry cycle.
- ★ Develop storytelling and creative digital media skills such as editing; digitizing; categorizing interviews, and selecting visuals and music.

Democracy in Action
Unit 1: Informed Storytelling

Created by the Civic Life Project in collaboration with the National Council for the Social Studies

Unit Overview

Over the course of the five 50-minute lesson plans, students will identify a social issue they are interested in researching, analyze primary sources, engage in civil discourse with their peers, and conduct research to better understand the diverse perspectives on their selected issue. Students will apply critical thinking skills, research skills and continue building community with their peers.

Compelling questions guide this five-lesson unit on developing an informed perspective using youth participatory action research (YPAR). YPAR is a cyclical process of learning and action – research is done not just for the sake of it but to inform solutions to problems that young people care about. Each lesson plan uses the workshop model, an instructional practice that consists of three parts: a mini-lesson, a workshop, and a reflection or debrief. This model positions the teacher as a guide for students and fosters a student-centered, Democratic classroom culture. By leveraging the workshop model, educators can teach with student independence as an input to educational equity and student autonomy.

Unit Learning Objectives

As a result of teaching this unit, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate critical thinking skills in their classroom by evaluating and critiquing primary sources.
- Analyze diverse perspectives on social issues by exploring compelling questions, evaluating primary sources, and discussing issues with their peers.
- Determine possible ways to take informed action and address community issues.
- Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.
- Apply civic virtues and democratic principles while working with their peers.
- Analyze contemporary and emerging means of changing societies, promoting the common good, and protecting rights.

Lesson 1: Prepare Your Pitch

This lesson serves as an introduction to the semester-long filmmaking process. Students will begin by analyzing a student-produced documentary with a lens towards the emotions expressed by the interviewees and channel those emotions toward taking informed action via a documentary. The class will distinguish between a feature film and a documentary's key elements and then identify a local issue they would like to focus on for the semester. With a small group, students will conduct brief research and prepare a compelling pitch to persuade others to select their social issue during the following lesson.

Lesson 2: Select a local issue

During this lesson, the small groups created during the previous lesson will present their issue pitches to their peers. As groups present their pitches, their peers will jot down compelling key information to support the group in deciding the top 5 issues of interest to produce a documentary. Students should consider the various factors when deciding which issues they are interested in producing a documentary about, including the issue's relevance to their own lives, the issue's potential to impact others, and the issue's potential to be made into a compelling documentary.

Lesson 3: Research Jam! Day 1

In this lesson, students will begin by reflecting on their collaboration experiences and skills. They will use these experiences to collaboratively create a list of group norms in the form of a living document, which they will return to as they see fit throughout the semester. Once placed into their Production Groups based on their responses to the previous lesson's wrap-up, they will engage in Participatory Action Research to deepen or develop their foundational knowledge of their Production Group's issue.

Lesson 4: Research Jam! Day 2

In this lesson, students will enhance their research skills by utilizing the SMART Check strategy to distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources. They will evaluate the **S**ource, the author's **M**otive, and **A**uthority, **R**eview the text for questionable information, and **T**wo-Source Test by comparing the information provided in another source. Finally, students will reflect on and compare

their current position to that of their position prior to their research. They will also begin identifying concrete ways to take informed action on their issue.

Lesson 5: Develop Your Story

In this lesson, students will begin analyzing and synthesizing their research and using their findings to develop their Documentary Treatment. The Documentary Treatment is a written description of their documentary that will help them brainstorm potential themes and story angles as a filmmaker. It will also allow their Production Group to become and remain aligned on the vision for their film.

Filmmaking Guides

Guide 1: Interview Request

Guide 2: Interview Subject Bio

Guide 3: Options for Shooting the Interview

Guide 4: Conduct the Interview

Guide 5: Demo Rundown

Guide 6: Film Editing Skills

Guide 7: Filmmaking Tutorials

Guide 8: Film Screening

C3 Framework Dimensions

***Download* the complete College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards.**

Dimension 1: Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries

Individually and with others, students construct compelling questions and …

D1.2.9-12. Explain points of agreement and disagreement experts have about interpretations and applications of disciplinary concepts and ideas associated with a compelling question.

Dimension 3: Gathering and Evaluating Sources

Individually and with others, students…

D3.2.9-12. Evaluate the credibility of a source by examining how experts value the source.

D3.3.9-12. Identify evidence that draws information directly and substantively from multiple sources to detect inconsistencies in evidence in order to revise or strengthen claims.

Dimension 4: Communicating Conclusions

Individually and with others, students use writing, visualizing, and speaking to…

D4.1.9-12. Construct arguments using precise and knowledgeable claims, with evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging counterclaims and evidentiary weaknesses.

D4.4.9-12. Critique the use of claims and evidence in arguments for credibility.

Lesson 1: Prepare Your Pitch

Lesson Compelling Question:
What information is needed to develop your position on a local issue?

Consider proactively reviewing all Filmmaking Guides to prepare for the technical components of this project.

Lesson Overview
This lesson serves as an introduction to the semester-long filmmaking process. Students will begin by analyzing a student-produced documentary with a lens towards the emotions expressed by the interviewees and channel those emotions toward taking informed action via a documentary. The class will distinguish between a feature film and a documentary's key elements and then identify a local issue they would like to focus on for the semester. With a small group, students will conduct brief research and prepare a compelling pitch to persuade others to select their social issue during the following lesson.

Lesson Objectives:
By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:
- Develop a brief 45-60 second compelling overview, or pitch, of a local social issue.
- Integrate at least two pieces of data from preliminary research on a local social issue.
- Analyze the emotional aspect of a local social issue.

Language Objectives:
By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:
- Interpret arguments by analyzing relevant information to support and/or revise claims with reliable and valid evidence from multiple sources.

Lesson Agenda	**50 mins**
Do Now: Democracy in Action	7 mins
Mini-Lesson: Documentaries as Civic Action & Taking Informed Action	15 mins
Workshop: Preparing Your Pitch	25 mins
Wrap-Up: Reflection	3 mins

Materials and Preparation
- **Student Handouts**
  - Unit 1: Lesson 1 Student handouts in Google Docs This link requires you to make a copy of the handout. Feel free to save and make copies for your students.

- **Pitches/Research**
  - Students will be in groups of 2-3 students and select a local issue as a group. Groups can select the same local issue.
  - Each group will make a 45-60-second pitch on their selected local issue.
  - After the pitches, each person will vote for their top 5 local issues at the end of the next class.
  - When reviewing each student's top 5, if possible, assign them one of their top 3 local issues. This will increase the likelihood of engagement and overall interest in the long-term project.
  - Discussing real-world social and local issues may be triggering for some students. Consider contacting the school social worker and/or other mental health support specialists servicing your school community.

- **Video**
  - Feeding Our Future **Watch the entire video. Total time: 6:34 minutes.*

PLAN OF INSTRUCTION

Do Now: Democracy in Action

1) Direct students to the Do Now page of the student handout (either paper-based or on Google Docs).
2) Ask students to answer the questions while watching the documentary clip.
3) Consider displaying the following instructions on the board or slide deck:

Suggested Do Now Instructions
Hello, Class! As we watch an excerpt from a student-produced documentary and answer the following questions: 1. What local issue did the filmmakers explore? 2. What emotions do the interviewees express? 3. What emotions come up for you?

Mini-Lesson: Part 1: Documentaries as Civic Action

1) Before asking for volunteers to share their responses to the Do Now questions, consider reminding the class of the classroom norms. Be mindful that question 3 asks students to share their own feelings regarding a topic that might be triggering for some. We also encourage you to share your own response and model a culture of caring.
2) Review the lesson objectives with the class.

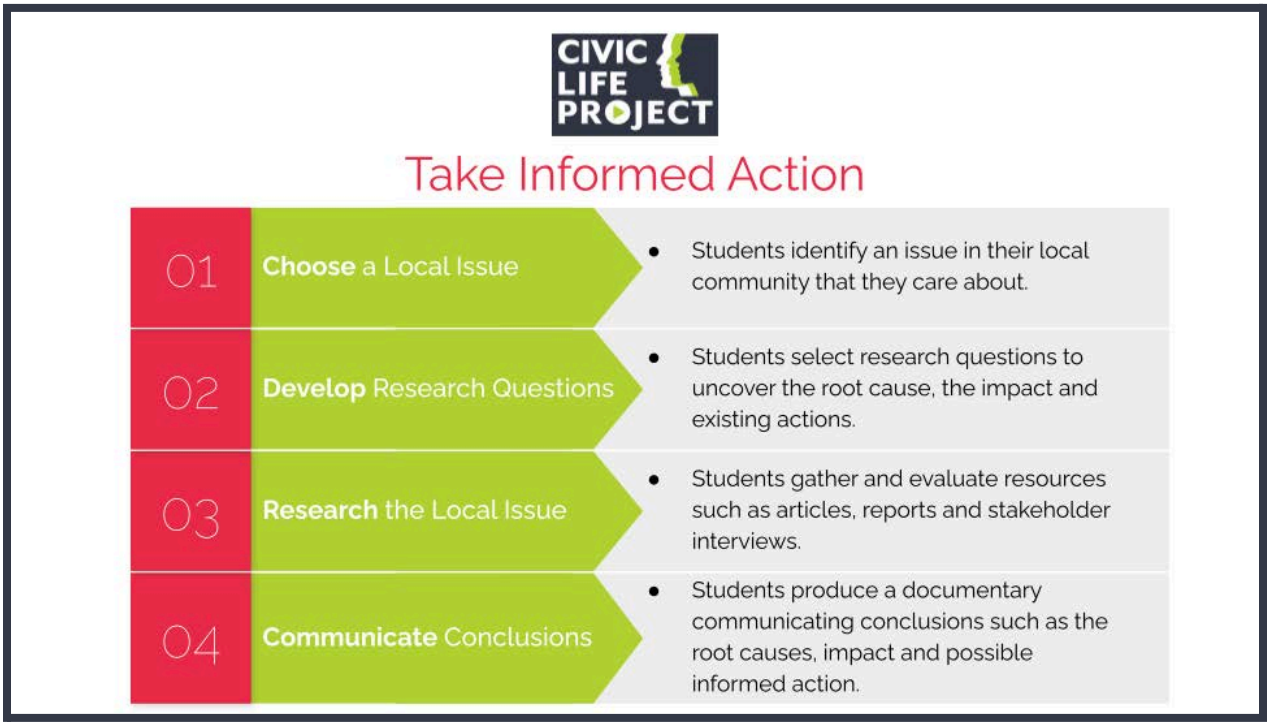
3) Explain that they will produce a documentary like the one they just watched over the course of this semester. Using the overview in the student handouts, discuss the difference between a feature film and a documentary.

Excerpt from Student Handout	
Documentary	**Feature Film**
An accurate representation of **real events, people, and situations**	A film that tells a **fictional** story, event, or narrative
Aims to **educate, inform, instruct,** and **inspire** the audience	Aims to **entertain** the audience
Deals with **reality**	Deals with **fiction**
Usually have a low budget	Usually have a higher budget than documentaries
May have recorded **interviews**	Always have **scripted** dialogue
May use real people and real locations	May use actors and set

4) The goal of the documentaries students will create is to **educate and inform the viewers about a community issue and inspire them to take their own informed action**. In small groups, they will deepen their knowledge about a local issue, develop questions in preparation for the interviews, interview people working on and impacted by the local issue, and develop their position which they will illustrate via a compelling story via the documentary.
5) As noted in the Do Now, unjust or unfair situations in our school and local communities cause emotions like anger and frustration. One way to positively channel those emotions is by advocating for a cause. Explain that they will research real-world issues that people like us are taking action on. **Regardless of what side of the local issue they are on, advocating for or against change is considered civic action.**
6) Ask students: What informed action or civic engagement have you taken or would suggest taking place?
    a) This is an opportunity to share how you have taken informed action on a local issue. Some examples are:
        i) Speaking at a school board committee meeting
        ii) Volunteering at a polling place on election day
        iii) Writing a letter to your city council representative
        iv) Participation in a fundraising run/walk/ride.
        v) Run for political office
        vi) Organizing a community meeting to view a documentary
7) Explain that research is one of the most important steps regardless of the type of civic action you take, and storytelling can strongly influence others to take action.

Mini-Lesson: Part 2: Taking Informed Action

1) This semester, students will take informed action via a documentary film. They will experience the process that Alia-Mae, Ashley, Yulani, Mira, Lauryn, Angela, and Dalton underwent.
2) Share the process for taking informed action on a local issue:.



3) Explain that as part of the first step (choose a local issue), they'll do preliminary research, either independently or with a partner, that they'll use to persuade their peers to select their issue.
4) Their goal is to select one issue they'd be interested in learning more about. As they research, they are trying to answer the following:
    a) Why do you care about this issue? Why should others care about this issue?
    b) Who does this issue impact? How does it impact them?
    c) What are some of the reasons this issue exists?
    d) Why do you feel this is an important issue to work on?
5) Overall Process:
    a) Explain that each group of 2- 3 students will make a 1- 2 minute pitch during the next lesson. After hearing all pitches at the end of the next class, each person will vote for their top 5 issues at the end of the next class. We will try our best to assign you to your top picks.
6) As a class, read the Sample Pitch and discuss:
    a) Is this a compelling argument to work on the issue? If so, what makes it compelling? If not, what is it lacking?

Workshop: Preparing Your Pitch

1) Ask students to move into small groups of no more than 2-3 students.
2) As a group, students will review the list of issues provided to help them identify a local issue they want to advocate for. Once they have identified a local issue of interest, they will begin their preliminary research by searching for Google News.
    a) Example keyword searches:
        i) Issue + location (youth homelessness in Rhode Island)
        ii) Issue + district name (school lunches in Providence Schools)
3) Using their preliminary research, each group will prepare a 45-60-second pitch to present during the next class.

Excerpt from Student Handout	
Education ☐ Academic Achievement ☐ Bullying and Cyberbullying ☐ College Affordability/Access ☐ Censorship ☐ Public School Funding ☐ School Lunch ☐ School Policy/Resources/Curricula **Environment** ☐ Litter and Pollution ☐ Sustainability ☐ Water Conservation **Housing** ☐ Affordable Housing ☐ Gentrification ☐ Homelessness ☐ Parks and Neighborhood Beautification **Identity Equality** ☐ Gender Discrimination ☐ Trans Rights ☐ LGBTQIA+ Rights	**Immigration** ☐ Immigration ☐ Citizenship ☐ Driver's Licenses ☐ Border Patrol ☐ Schools as a safe haven **Public Health** ☐ Social Media ☐ On-Screen Violence ☐ Drug and Alcohol Abuse ☐ Teen Pregnancy ☐ Mental Health ☐ Eating Disorders **Public Safety** ☐ Child Abuse ☐ Gun Violence ☐ Police and Community Relations ☐ Sex Trafficking ☐ Sexual Assault and Harassment **Transportation** ☐ Public transportation ☐ Crosswalks ☐ Crossing guards ☐ Speed monitors

Excerpt from Student Handout
To Pitch is to share thoughts that will persuade others to select your idea. For example, a writer will "pitch" an idea to film producers such as Universal Pictures, Sony, or Disney, hoping their screenplay will be selected and filmed. Today, your task is to select a local issue you care about and try to persuade your classmates to choose that issue for the documentary topic. Here's the tricky part - all issues are important and worthy of selection, and we can only select a handful of issues this semester. Other groups may be pitching the same issue, and that's totally okay! Each person has a unique perspective to share. After all of the pitches are heard, each student will vote for their top 5 issues and be placed in a Production Group.
Sample Pitch **Local Issue:** Gun violence ● **Why do you care about this issue?** ○ *I care about this issue because even though Philadelphia's gun violence declined in 2023. It still remains at levels well above the recent past. I want to feel safe walking in my city, but right now, I don't. And neither do most of you.* ● **Why should others care about this issue?** ○ *Everyone should care about this issue because our neighbors are being shot on the street. This also means someone can get hurt even if they're not the intended victim. According to 6ABC news, "People in the city say they are fed up with the gun violence."* ● **Who does this issue impact? How does it impact them?** ○ *6ABC News also reported that the top two districts with homicides so far this year are the 22nd District, which includes Strawberry Mansion, with 46 homicides. The other is the 25th District, which includes Kensington, with 41 homicides. Some of my research questions include: Who lives in these districts? How has this impacted school life? Do they feel safe at their local park?* ● **What are some of the reasons this issue exists?** ○ *Gun violence has been an epidemic in Philadelphia for many years. Increased access to guns, poverty, lack of mental health support, and lack of community resources are some of the reasons this issue exists. I also read that there was an increase in gun violence during 2020 and 2021 because of the COVID pandemic, where people were locked up at home and had nothing to do.*

- **Why do you feel this is an important issue to work on?**
  - *I think this is an important issue to work on because although several programs are working on it, I haven't seen many that include young people's voices. We are the ones who this issue will most impact because we're being raised in a very traumatic environment.*

Your Task

Deliver a 45-to-60-second pitch to persuade your classmates to select your issue as a top 5 by **preparing answers to the following questions** using the **personal experience of each member of your group and a quick Google News search.**

1) Why do you care about this issue?
2) Why should others care about this issue?
3) Who does this issue impact? How does it impact them?
4) What are some of the reasons this issue exists?
5) Why do you feel this is an important issue to work on?

Google News Search

1) Go to Google News.
2) At the top, click Search Search.
3) Enter the issue and your location. (Example below school lunch Rhode Island)

Wrap-Up: Reflection

1) With approximately 3 minutes remaining, ask students to answer the questions in the Wrap-Up section of their handout.
2) If time allows, ask volunteers to share their responses.

Excerpt from Student Handout
One question I have about this project is…

Lesson 2: Select a Local Issue

Lesson Compelling Question: Why do you feel this issue is important to work on?

Consider proactively reviewing all Filmmaking Guides to prepare for the technical components of this project.

Lesson Overview

During this lesson, the small groups created during the previous lesson will present their issue pitches to their peers. As groups present their pitches, their peers will jot down key compelling information to support them in deciding the top 5 issues they would be interested in producing a documentary. Students should consider the various factors when deciding which issues they are interested in producing a documentary about, including the issue's relevance to their own lives, the issue's potential to impact others, and the issue's potential to be made into a compelling documentary.

Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Present a compelling pitch about a social issue they are passionate about.
- Identify key information regarding a social issue based on the issues pitches presented.
- Prioritize a list of 5 issues they would be interested in creating a compelling documentary.

Language Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Interpret arguments by analyzing relevant information to support and/or revise claims with reliable and valid evidence from multiple sources.

Lesson Agenda	**50 mins**
Do Now: Pitch Prep	5 mins
Mini-Lesson: Setting the Stage	10 mins
Workshop: Lights, Camera, Action!	30 mins
Wrap-Up: Reflection	2 mins

Materials and Preparation

- **Student Handouts**
  - Completed Lesson 1 student handouts.
  - Unit 1: Lesson 2 student handouts in Google Docs This link requires you to make a copy of the handout. Feel free to save and make copies for your students.
- **Pitch**

- Each group will present its pitch during the workshop segment of this lesson. We have allotted 30 minutes for the pitches. However, you must adjust this timing based on the number of groups presenting their 45-to-60-second pitches. Also, incorporate about a 30-45-second transition time between groups.
- Discussing real-world social issues may be triggering for some students. Consider contacting the school social worker and/or other mental health support specialists servicing your school community.
- Be sure to collect all research and pitch presentation materials to share with the Production Groups during the next lesson.

PLAN OF INSTRUCTION

Do Now: My Interview Experience

1) Ask students to take 5 minutes to meet with their respective groups to finalize their pitch.

Suggested Do Now Instructions
Hello, Class! Groups will present their 45-60 second pitch in the following order: 1. Group members - Issue 2. Group members - Issue 3. *Etcetera* Please quietly review your pitch and make any final changes.

Mini-Lesson: Setting the Stage

1) Review the lesson objectives with the class. Ask a volunteer to remind the class what they did during the previous class period.
2) Remind students that the goal is to select a class issue they would be interested in learning more about and providing potential solutions for. Each group was tasked with answering the following:
    a) Who does this issue impact, and how does it impact them?
    b) What are some of the reasons this issue exists?
    c) Why do you feel this is an important issue to work on?
3) As each group presents their pitch, the rest of the class should jot down notes on their student handout.
4) Answer any final questions before pitch presentations.

Excerpt from Student Handout	
Group's Issue	**Interesting points made**

Workshop: Lights, Camera, Action!

1) Each group will present its 45 to 60-second pitch. Incorporate about a 45 to 60-second transition time between groups. We have allotted 30 minutes for the pitches. However, you must adjust this timing based on the number of groups presenting their 45-to-60-second pitches.
2) Discussing real-world social issues may be triggering for some students. Consider contacting the school social worker and/or other mental health support specialists servicing your school community.
3) Be sure to collect all research materials and pitch presentation materials to share with the Production Groups during the next lesson.

Wrap-Up: Reflection

1) Ask students to take a moment to reflect on the presentations they just heard. Direct them to mark the top 5 issues they would like to work on for the remainder of the semester in their student handbook and add a number from 1 to 5 beside each issue.
    a) Note that you will try to place them in their preferred groups, but each group is limited to 4-5 students therefore, there's a small chance they will not get placed in their top pick.
    b) Student group makeup: whenever possible, place students in their top choices. From our experience, students from very different backgrounds and/or ability levels found common ground in exploring issues they were interested in. However, you know your students best!

Lesson 3: Research Jam! Day 1

Lesson Compelling Question: What information is needed to deepen your understanding of a local issue?

Consider proactively reviewing all Filmmaking Guides to prepare for the technical components of this project.

We have scheduled two lesson periods for research. However, if you can, consider dedicating additional time to this critical stage of the project.

Lesson Overview
In this lesson, students will begin by reflecting on their collaboration experiences and skills. They will use these experiences to collaboratively create a list of group collaboration norms in the form of a living document, which they will return to as they see fit throughout the semester. Once placed into their Production Groups based on their responses to the previous lesson's wrap-up, they will engage in Participatory Action Research to deepen or develop their foundational knowledge of their Production Group's issue.

Lesson Objectives:
By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:
- Collaborate with their Production Group.
- Conduct and organize research to deepen or develop their foundational knowledge of their selected issue.

Language Objectives:
By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:
- Interpret informational texts by identifying responses to their research questions.

Lesson Agenda	**50 mins**
Do Now: Norm Setting	5 mins
Mini-Lesson: Participatory Action Research	10 mins
Workshop: Research Jam! Day 1	30 mins
Wrap-Up: Reflection	5 mins

Materials and Preparation
- **Student Handouts**
    - Unit 1: Lesson 3 Student handouts in Google Docs This link requires you to make a

copy of the handout. Feel free to save and make copies for your students.

- **Research**
  - Each group will need internet access to at least two computers.
  - Consider viewing either of these Confirmation Bias videos with the class before reading the articles.
    - What Is Confirmation Bias? | Psychological Explanation & Examples
    - Confirmation Bias | Ethics Defined
  - Determine how students will save their research. If they can access Google Workspace, consider having students create a shared Google Doc and link their research.
  - If you have time, consider having students spend time creating a list of about 10 research questions before conducting their research.

PLAN OF INSTRUCTION

Do Now: Norm Setting

1) Ask students to respond to the group work reflection questions.

Suggested Do Now Instructions
Hello, Class! Today, we'll begin working in our Production Groups to continue researching issues we care about. Before we move into our groups, please read and respond to the following questions: 1. Think about a time you worked with others, which went well. Why do you think it was a positive experience? 2. Thinking about this project, what are two things you need to collaborate on successfully in a small group?

Mini-Lesson: Participatory Action Research

1) Review the lesson objectives with the class. Ask for a volunteer to remind the class what they did during the previous class period.
2) Explain that research is a critical part of creating a documentary. They will engage in Participatory Action Research, a type of research in which **young people are trained to conduct systematic research to improve their lives, their communities, and the institutions intended to serve them.**
3) Remind students they will work in their small "Production Group" for the rest of the semester to produce a documentary film. As with any group work, we are practicing our collaboration skills. Having norms or expectations is helpful and necessary when working closely with others. Ask students to share their responses to the second Do Now question and have a student jot them down on chart paper. Once you've collected a list of norms, hang the chart paper in the class. Explain that this is a "living document" that can and will be updated as often as they see fit and necessary.

4) Remind students of the process for taking informed action on a local issue and ask them where they are in the process:
5) Reveal the Production Groups! Create a table like the one below and display it for students to review. Remind students that you tried to give them their top choice and appreciate their flexibility and understanding if they did not get their top pick. If they have a problem with the issue they are working on, encourage them to share their concern in writing with you or see you after class to discuss further. While they practice their collaboration skills, we also know that real-world issues may be triggering. If possible, attempt to accommodate their request to switch groups now rather than halfway through the semester. Also, consider contacting the school social worker and/or other mental health support specialists servicing your school community.

Issue	Production Group Members

Workshop: Research Jam! Day 1

1) Before students move into their Production Groups, explain their tasks today:
    a) Share one norm they will actively work on during their work time.
    b) Review the preliminary research, pitch presentation, and their own notes from the presentations.
    c) Review the suggested research questions and identify any other questions they have.
    d) Begin research!
2) As students work in their groups, encourage them to identify at least one person they would be interested in interviewing to avoid scheduling delays.

Excerpt from Student Handout
Step 1: Share one norm you will actively work on during today's work time.
Step 2: Review the preliminary research, pitch presentation, and your own notes from the presentations. Jot down anything that stands out to you.
Step 3: Review the suggested research questions below and jot down any other questions your group would like to research.

1. Who does this issue impact, and how does it impact them? 2. What are some of the reasons this issue exists? 3. What actions have already been taken to fix the issue? 4. Who might you interview in relation to this interview? 5. What other actions are folks proposing? 6. Why do you feel this is an important issue to work on?
Step 4: Begin Research! Use the Participatory Action Research Guide for tips on keyword searches for informative articles and potential interviewees.

Wrap-Up: Reflection

1) Congratulate students on their first research day in their Production Groups!
2) Direct students to the reflection student handout.

Excerpt from Student Handout
What did you do to support your group today?
What could you have done differently during today's work time?
How else can your group support you in creating a positive collaborative environment?

Lesson 4: Research Jam! Day 2

Lesson Compelling Question: What do I need to consider about my sources?

Consider proactively reviewing all Filmmaking Guides to prepare for the technical components of this project.

We have scheduled two lesson periods for research. However, if you can, consider dedicating additional time to this critical stage of the project. As students work in their groups, encourage them to identify at least one person they would be interested in interviewing to avoid scheduling delays.

Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students will enhance their research skills by utilizing the SMART Check strategy to distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources. They will evaluate the Source, the author's Motives, and Authority, Review the text for questionable information, and perform a Two-Source Test by comparing the information provided in another source. Finally, students will reflect on and compare their current position to their position prior to their research. They will also begin identifying concrete ways to take informed action on their issue.

Lesson Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources.
- Conduct and organize research to deepen or develop foundational knowledge of their selected issue.
- Reflect on their individual position on the issue they have researched.

Language Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Interpret arguments by analyzing relevant information to support and/or revise claims with reliable and valid evidence from multiple sources.

Lesson Agenda	**50 mins**
Do Now: Reliable or Not?	5 mins
Mini-Lesson: Identifying Reliable Sources	10 mins
Workshop: Research Jam! Day 2	30 mins
Wrap-Up: Reflection	5 mins

Materials and Preparation

- **Student Handouts**
  - Completed Lesson 1 and Lesson 2 student handouts.
  - Unit 1: Lesson 4 Student handouts in Google Docs This link requires you to make a copy of the handout. Feel free to save and make copies for your students.
- Ensure that all groups have access to at least one article from their research during the previous lesson's Research Jam! time. If not every group has research, consider identifying an article for them or asking a group to share an article. Even though each Production Group is working on distinct issues, it is beneficial to understand what other issues exist.

PLAN OF INSTRUCTION

Do Now: Reliable or Not?

1) Direct students to the Do Now page of the student handout (either paper-based or on Google Docs).

Suggested Do Now Instructions
Hello! Before continuing our Research Jam!, we should discuss identifying reliable sources. 1. Read or re-read one of the articles you found through your research. 2. Is this source reliable or not? How do you know?

Mini-Lesson: Identifying Reliable Sources

1) Review the lesson objectives with the class. Ask for a volunteer to remind the class what they did during the previous class period.
2) Remind the class that research is a critical part of creating a documentary. They will engage in Participatory Action Research, a type of research in which **young people are trained to conduct systematic research to improve their lives, their communities, and the institutions intended to serve them.**
3) Ask students what criteria they used to determine whether the article was reliable or not.
4) After 2-3 students share, explain that today they will learn about a useful strategy for identifying reliable sources called "SMART Check." This method requires thinking critically about each of your sources by answering five questions to determine if the source is credible/reliable. The acceptable answers to these questions will vary depending on your needs. The questions are:
   a) **S**ource: Who or what is the source?
   b) **M**otive: Why do they say what they do?

c) **A**uthority: Who wrote the story?
d) **R**eview: Is there anything included that jumps out as potentially untrue?
e) **T**wo-Source Test: How does it compare to another source?

5) Select one of the articles a student shared. Guide the class through a SMART Check of the article.

Workshop: Research Jam! Day 2

1) Direct students to move into their Production Groups and continue their research using the SMART Check strategy.

Excerpt from Student Handout
Source: Who or what is the source? **M**otive: Why do they say what they do? **A**uthority: Who wrote the story? **R**eview: Is there anything included that jumps out as potentially untrue? **T**wo-Source Test: How does it compare to another source?

Wrap-Up: Reflection

1) Allow students approximately 5-7 minutes to complete the final reflection question in their student handout:

Excerpt from Student Handout
Reassessing Your Position: Consider how you felt about the issue before starting your research. Based on your research, has your thinking changed? If so, how? List two to three ways. If your thoughts have not changed, list two to three ways your better understanding of the "other side of the issue" now helps you better argue your position. **Taking Informed Action:** Based on your research, what type of informed action would you recommend to address this issue?

Lesson 5: Develop Your Story

Lesson Compelling Question: Why should others care about your issue?

Consider proactively reviewing all Filmmaking Guides to prepare for the technical components of this project.

Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students will analyze and synthesize their research and use their findings to begin developing their Documentary Treatment. The Documentary Treatment is a written description of their documentary that will help them brainstorm potential themes and story angles as filmmakers. It will also allow their Production Group to become and remain aligned on the vision for their film.

Lesson Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Analyze and synthesize research.
- Identify potential themes and story angles.
- Develop their Documentary Treatment.

Language Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Interpret arguments by analyzing relevant information to support and/or revise claims with reliable and valid evidence from multiple sources.

Lesson Agenda	**50 mins**
Do Now: Reflecting on the Research	5 mins
Mini-Lesson: Developing a Treatment	10 mins
Workshop: Synthesizing Research	30 mins
Wrap-Up: Reflection	5 mins

Materials and Preparation

- **Student Handouts**
  - All completed student handouts.
  - Unit 1: Lesson 5 Student handouts in Google Docs This link requires you to make a copy of the handout. Feel free to save and make copies for your students.
- **Treatment**
  - Students will begin drafting their Treatment and will revisit it in Unit 2.

- **Interviews**
    - As students draft their Treatments, consider having them contact possible interviewees using the Guide: Interview Request. This process might take some time.

PLAN OF INSTRUCTION

Do Now: Reflecting on the Research

2) Direct students to the Do Now page of the student handout (either paper-based or on Google Docs).

Suggested Do Now Instructions
Hello! Take about 5 minutes to review your research notes and wrap up reflections from the last class. **Based on your research, what are this issue's two main sides or pros and cons?**

Mini-Lesson: Developing a Treatment

6) Review the lesson objectives with the class. Ask for a volunteer to remind the class what they did during the previous class period.
7) Remind the class that research is a critical part of creating a documentary. After researching, they will pause and reflect on the story they plan to tell before starting the film "Treatment."
8) A Treatment is a document that presents the story idea of your film before writing the entire script. Treatments are written in narrative-like prose and highlight the most important information about your film, including the title, story summary, and interviewees' roles and perspectives.
9) They will begin drafting and revising the Treatment as they continue researching and interviewing stakeholders.
10) Ask students to read the Elements of a Treatment and focus on Part 1: Issue Background.
11) As a class, read Part 1 of the sample Treatment.

Workshop: Synthesizing Research

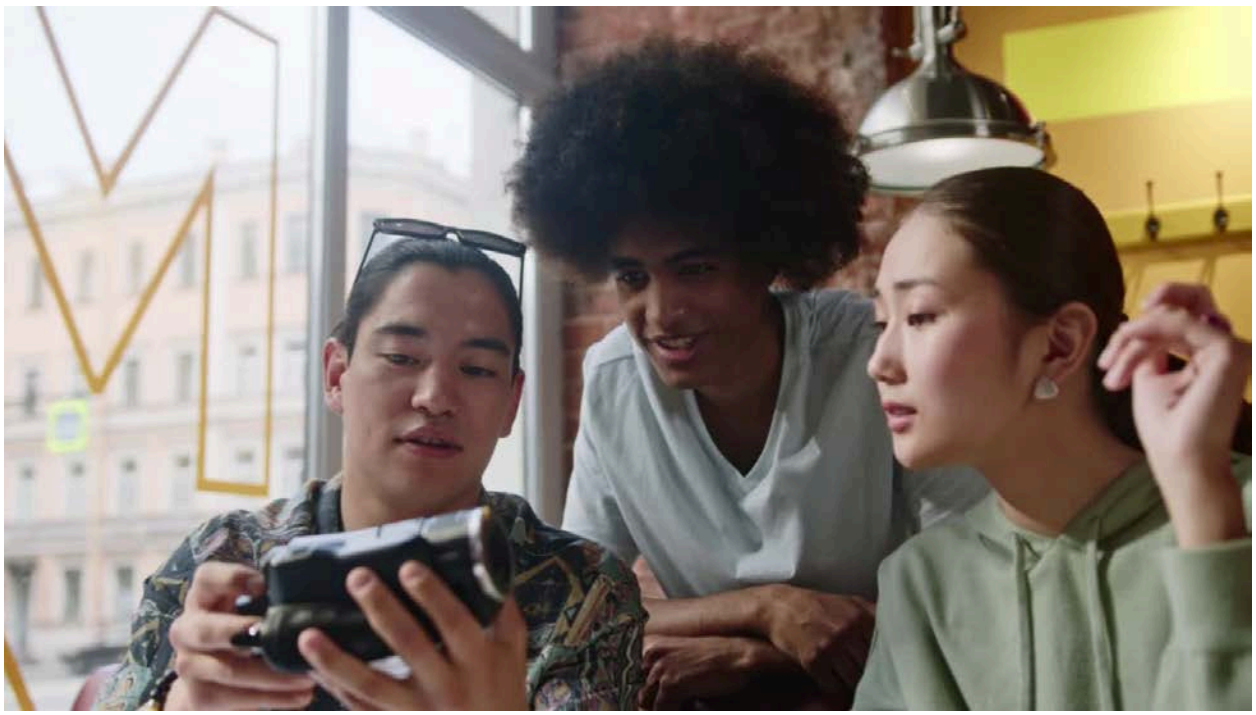
2) Direct students to move into their Production Groups and draft the highlighted sections in their Treatment based on their research. Remind them that they will have opportunities to continue working on the treatment.
3) As you support students, remember that your role as the project manager is to ensure students have explored all options and have the tools/resources to complete their projects. Remind students that they are the final decision-makers in this project. The film is their production.

Excerpt from Student Handout
Part 1: Issue Background I. What is the main topic of your documentary? II. What are the questions you will be exploring? III. Why is it an important subject? IV. What are the two different points of view of your story?

Wrap-Up: Reflection

1) Allow students approximately 5 minutes to complete the final reflection question in their student handout.

Excerpt from Student Handout
Based on your activities today, what other information should your group research to understand this issue better?



Democracy in Action
Unit 2: Compelling Interviews

Created by the Civic Life Project in collaboration with the National Council for the Social Studies

Unit Overview

Over the course of the five 50-minute lesson plans, students will continue their Participatory Action Research by interviewing key stakeholders to deepen their understanding of the diverse perspectives on their selected issue. Students will apply critical thinking, interview, and film-making skills and continue building community with their peers.

Compelling questions guide this four-lesson unit on developing an informed perspective using youth participatory action research (YPAR). YPAR is a cyclical process of learning and action – research is done not just for the sake of it but to inform solutions to problems that young people care about. Each lesson builds on the skills and elements necessary to produce a powerful documentary.

Unit Learning Objectives

As a result of teaching this unit, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate critical thinking skills in their classroom by evaluating and critiquing primary sources.
- Analyze diverse perspectives on social issues by exploring compelling questions, evaluating primary sources, and discussing issues with their peers.
- Determine possible ways to take informed action and address community issues.
- Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.
- Apply civic virtues and democratic principles while working with their peers.
- Analyze contemporary and emerging means of changing societies, promoting the common good, and protecting rights.

Lesson 1: Select Interviewees

As Production Groups prepare to identify potential interviewees, the class will view a Civic Life Project student-produced documentary and analyze the interviewees selected. They will then review their research and develop a list of interviewees who will provide a range of perspectives on the issue. Each Production Group will finalize its interviewee list via consensus building.

Lesson 2: Prepare to Interview

During this lesson, students will review interviewing skills by watching The Civic Life interview module and offer additional tips. Students will then review the suggested interview questions as a team and revise their individual questions based on the areas they're curious to learn from their peers.

Lesson 3: Conduct the (Peer) Interview

In this lesson, students will apply and practice interview skills by interviewing their peers regarding their research on local issues. Teachers will determine whether students will film the practice interviews based on time and access to technology. This lesson provides technical and logistical recommendations for recording high-quality videos. Ultimately, the teacher will determine the best approach based on access to technology and space to conduct the interviews.

If time allows, consider analyzing the peer interviews from Lesson 3 using Lesson 4 as practice or while you schedule the guest interviews.

Review and share the Filmmaking Guide 4: Conduct the Interview when interviewing subjects.

While groups wait to interview guests, consider continuing research, developing the Treatment, and/or reviewing the technical components of the filmmaking process.

Lesson 4: Analyze Interviews

In this lesson, Production Groups will analyze the interview transcripts with their Production Groups to identify key themes and compelling stories to include in their documentary. Depending on access to technology and in response to different learning needs, groups will either code hard copies of transcripts or do so on Descript.

Lesson 5: Finalize the Treatment

In this lesson, students will continue to analyze and synthesize their research and interviews to continue developing their Documentary Treatment. The Documentary Treatment is a written description of their documentary that will help them brainstorm potential themes and story angles as a filmmaker. It will also allow their Production Group to become and remain aligned on the vision for their film.

Filmmaking Guides

Guide 1: Interview Request

Guide 2: Interview Subject Bio

Guide 3: Options for Shooting the Interview

Guide 4: Conduct the Interview

Guide 5: Demo Rundown

Guide 6: Film Editing Skills

Guide 7: Filmmaking Tutorials

Guide 8: Film Screening

C3 Framework Dimensions

***Download* the complete College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards.**

Dimension 1: Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries

Individually and with others, students construct compelling questions and …

D1.2.9-12. Explain experts' points of agreement and disagreement about interpretations and applications of disciplinary concepts and ideas associated with a compelling question.

Dimension 2: Civic and Political Institutions

Individually and with others, students…

D2.Civ.13.9-12. Evaluate public policies in terms of intended and unintended outcomes, and related consequences.

Dimension 3: Gathering and Evaluating Sources

Individually and with others, students…

D3.2.9-12. Evaluate the credibility of a source by examining how experts value the source.

D3.3.9-12. Identify evidence that draws information directly and substantively from multiple sources to detect inconsistencies in evidence to revise or strengthen claims.

Dimension 4: Communicating Conclusions

Individually and with others, students use writing, visualizing, and speaking to…

D4.1.9-12. Construct arguments using precise and knowledgeable claims, with evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging counterclaims and evidentiary weaknesses.

D4.4.9-12. Critique the use of claims and evidence in arguments for credibility.

Lesson 1: Select Interviewees

Lesson Compelling Question: What information is needed to develop your position on an issue?

Consider proactively reviewing all Filmmaking Guides to prepare for the technical components of this project.

Lesson Overview

As Production Groups prepare to identify potential interviewees, the class will view a Civic Life Project student-produced documentary and analyze the interviewees selected. They will then review their research and develop a list of interviewees who will provide a range of perspectives on the issue. Each Production Group will finalize its interviewee list via consensus building.

Lesson Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Generate a list of interviewees with a range of perspectives on their issue.
- Practice civil discourse and consensus building when narrowing the interviewee list with their Production Group.

Language Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Interpret arguments by analyzing relevant information to support and/or revise claims with reliable and valid evidence from multiple sources.

Lesson Agenda	**50 mins**
Do Now: Democracy in Action	7 mins
Mini-Lesson: The Interviewees	15 mins
Workshop: Selecting Interviewees	20 mins
Wrap-Up: Reflection	2 mins

Materials and Preparation

- **Student Handouts**
  - Unit 2: Lesson 1 Student handouts in Google Docs This link requires you to make a copy of the handout. Feel free to save and make copies for your students.
  - Guide: Interview Request: Use these templates to invite interview subjects to your school. Remember that you can also conduct interviews virtually using Descript, Zoom, or other platforms.

- **Video**
    - The End of Internet Privacy **Play from beginning to min 6:11.*
    - Create a table with three columns and four rows on the board. Label the columns: Interviewee Name, Role, "Why are they a stakeholder in this issue?". (See mini-lesson for an example.) Leave the table blank and complete it as students share their Do Now responses.

PLAN OF INSTRUCTION

Do Now: Democracy in Action

1) Direct students to the Do Now page of the student handout (either paper-based or on Google Docs).
2) Ask students to answer the questions while watching the documentary excerpt.
3) Consider displaying the following instructions on the board or slide deck:

Suggested Do Now Instructions
Hello, Class! We're starting the next unit in Democracy in Action! We will watch an excerpt from another student-produced documentary and answer the following questions: 1. Which interviewee did you find most compelling? 2. Was their perspective useful in explaining the issue of internet safety? If so, how? If not, why not? 3. Who else do you think they should have interviewed? 4. What other questions would you have asked the interviewees?

Mini-Lesson: The Interviewees

1) Review the lesson objectives with the class.
2) Explain that each person interviewed is considered a "stakeholder" or person who is working on, expert on, or impacted by their issue. Sometimes, a stakeholder can do all three. For example, a state senator is lobbying for stricter domestic violence laws and is a victim of domestic abuse.
3) Ask for volunteers to share their responses to the Do Now questions. As students share the interview subjects, make a list on the board.

Interviewee Name	Role	Why are they a stakeholder in this issue?
Mike Ellington	Head of IT at school	Probably played a role in deciding how to monitor student internet use

Andrea Downs	Chairperson, Board of Education	Board of Education creates policies
Ian Strever	Assistant Principal	Enforces policies
Dan Barrett	Legal Director at ACLU	Reviews policies to determine whether they are constitutional
Jon Miller	High school senior	Impacted by policy

4) Explain that these interviews were all about 20-30 minutes long. Before the interviews, students drafted questions, reviewed interview tips, and decided on other logistics. Students acted as interviewers, producers, and camera operators during the interviews. After the interview, they read, analyzed, and synthesized the transcript to identify themes and points to highlight in their film. Today, the class will identify their interview subjects, contact them, and continue their research.

Workshop: Selecting Interviewees

1) Before students move into their production groups, explain that they will review their research notes and make a list of stakeholders. Their goal is to identify 2-3 interviewees with differing perspectives on the issue. After making a list individually, their group will discuss which 2-3 stakeholders they want to interview.
2) Students should review the sentence stems below before discussing a list of potential interviewees with differing perspectives to determine their top 2-3 interviewees.
3) Once each group finalizes their interviewee list, they should ask the teacher to review it and complete the Request for Interview Template.

Excerpt from Student Handout		
Stakeholder Name	**Role**	**Why are they a stakeholder in this issue?**

Excerpt from Student Handout
If you have a similar idea… ● My idea builds on _____'s idea. I _____. ● I thought about that also, and I'm wondering why_____. ● I agree with (name) because_____. If you disagree… ● I disagree with (name) because…… ● That's a valid point, but does it apply to_____.

If you do not understand…

- (Name), could you please repeat your idea?
- I don't understand what you mean by_____.
- When you say_____, it seems like you're implying _____. Is that what you mean?

Wrap-Up: Reflection

1) With approximately 2 minutes remaining, ask students to jot down a question or curiosity they still have about their issue in the Wrap-Up section of their handout.
2) Ask 2-3 volunteers to share their responses if time allows.

Excerpt from Student Handout
A question I still have about this issue is:
One potential action someone can take to address this issue is:

Lesson 2: Prepare to Interview

Lesson Compelling Question: What skills do you need to conduct an effective interview?

Consider proactively reviewing all Filmmaking Guides to prepare for the technical components of this project.

Review and share the Guide: Conduct the Interview when interviewing subjects.

Lesson Overview

During this lesson, students will review interviewing skills by watching The Civic Life interview module and offer additional tips. Students will then review the suggested interview questions as a team and revise their individual questions based on the areas they're curious to learn from their peers.

Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Analyze interview strategy suggestions.
- Develop a list of five interview questions based on the interview strategies and the issue they have researched.
- Reflect on their individual position on the issue they have researched.

Language Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Interpret arguments by analyzing relevant information to support and/or revise claims with reliable and valid evidence from multiple sources.

Lesson Agenda	**50 mins**
Do Now: My Interview Experience	7 mins
Mini-Lesson: Interview Tips	15 mins
Workshop: Developing Interview Questions	25 mins
Wrap-Up: Reflection	7 mins

Materials and Preparation

- **Student Handouts**
  - Completed Lesson 1 student handouts.
  - Unit 2: Lesson 2 Student handouts in Google Docs This link requires you to make a copy of the handout. Feel free to save and make copies for your

students.
    - Printed copies of student handouts. Student handout pages are at the end of this lesson plan.
- **Research**
    - Resources students gathered and evaluated during the previous lesson.
- **Video**
    - Civic Life Project Interview Tips Video **Start playing at min 2:43.*

PLAN OF INSTRUCTION

Do Now: My Interview Experience

1) Ask students to take 3 minutes to answer the questions about their feelings during an interview.

Suggested Do Now Instructions
Hello, Class! We're continuing our unit on research and interview skills! Think about a time when you were interviewed, interviewed someone else, or watched an interview. Please quietly complete the Do Now: My Interview Experience section in your handout.

Excerpt from Student Handout					
What's an emotion you felt during that interview? Mark all that apply and add any others that are not listed.					
Interested	Mad	Happy	Sad	Calm	Nervous
Bored	Proud	Annoyed	Excited	Frustrated	Curious
Why did you feel that way? Was it the types of questions, the situation, the environment, or something else?					

Mini-Lesson: Interview Tips

1) Review the lesson objectives with the class. Ask a volunteer to remind the class what they did during the previous class period. Remind students that this is part of **Participatory Action Research, a type of research where young people are trained to conduct systematic research to improve their lives, their communities, and the institutions intended to serve them.**
2) Remind students that the interviews will be the core part of their documentaries. Each interview will be recorded and transcribed for groups to analyze and synthesize.

3) Explain that today, they will learn more about interview skills and prepare to conduct interviews with their stakeholders in small groups on the scheduled date.
4) Ask for a volunteer with a positive interview experience and another with a negative interview experience to share their response to questions 2 and 3.
5) Explain that many variables impact the feelings and outcome of an interview. However, as the interviewer, there are ways we can increase the likelihood of a positive experience.
6) Ask 3 or 4 volunteers to share what factors the interviewer has control over to ensure a positive interview experience. Responses might include:
    a) Introduce yourself and make the interviewee comfortable.
    b) Warm-up questions:
        i) Please tell us your name and how to spell it for the transcription.
        ii) Choose the most appropriate based on your interviewee:
            (1) Please tell me what your job is.
            (2) Please tell me what grade you're in.
    c) Explain why you are interviewing the subject and what you will do with the information gathered.
    d) Use open-ended questions to keep the conversation flowing because they require more than a yes or no answer.
        i) **Close-ended question**: Have you grown as a person throughout your high school experience?
        ii) **Open-ended question:** How have you grown as a person throughout high school based on something you had to do?
    e) Ask follow-up questions. (See the excerpt from the student handbook for tips.)
    f) Listen to what the interviewee says.
        i) Face the interviewee, make eye contact, nod, and let them speak.
    g) Limit distractions so you all stay focused.
7) Direct students' attention to the Interview Tips in their student handout. As they watch the interview video (starting at minute 2:43), ask them to check off the tips they hear during the video, adding any examples they feel might be helpful for their team.

Excerpt from Student Handout	
TIP	**WHAT SHOULD THIS LOOK LIKE?**
☐ Introduce yourself and ask the interviewees to introduce themselves	A comfortable interviewee sharing their name and where they're from.
☐ Prepare your questions and be prepared to ask follow-up questions.	
☐ Ask the interviewee to incorporate questions in their answer so we know what they are talking about and to speak	

slowly.	
☐ Begin with "warm-up" questions. Remember, the person you are interviewing might not have been interviewed before. Make them comfortable by asking them to speak about what is easy for them.	
☐ Listen attentively. If you don't understand the answer, ask them to clarify their statement.	
☐ Ask open-ended questions. Avoid questions that can be answered simply by a yes or a no.	
☐ Embrace pauses and silence, and allow interviewees time to think.	
☐ Find a quiet place to do the interview.	
☐ Thank the interviewee for their time	

8) After the video, ask students if anything stood out to them during the video. Responses might include:
    a) We did not hear the interview questions.
        i) This interview was edited for time and focused on the interviewee's experience rather than the interviewer's experience.
        ii) Ask the interviewee to restate or include the question in their answer.
    b) Ask open-ended questions.
        i) Walk me through a typical day in your life.
    c) The subject needs to repeat the question that you asked.
        i) This will help in editing.
    d) They did not mention a tip we shared earlier.
        i) Let's add it! These tips are great but are not comprehensive. As you can see, preparing for an interview requires lots of time and effort.

Workshop: Developing Interview Questions

1) In their production groups, students will review the research they have gathered thus far.
2) Each student will share their Wrap Up: Reflection response from Lesson 1.
    a) A question I still have about this issue is…

    b) One potential action someone can take to address this issue is…
3) The group will then review the suggested interview questions, moving and omitting questions as they see fit. They should also determine whether all interviewees will be asked the same questions or whether they need to individualize the interviews for each person.
4) Then, they will consider whether to include Lesson 1 Wrap-Up: Reflection responses or any other compelling questions.

Excerpt from Student Handout
Suggested Interview Questions *Mark the question you will include and add others below.
Suggested Questions for Experts (i.e., policymakers and community-based organizations) *Remember to ask the interviewee to include the question in their answer. For example, "I think this issue is important because…"* 1) Why do you think this issue is important? 2) Who does this issue impact directly and indirectly? 3) What actions have you or your organization taken on this issue? 4) What other actions should be taken on this issue? 5) How has this issue impacted you or someone you know? a) Can you share an example or tell us a story illustrating your point? b) Is there anything you have seen in the news about that issue? Talk about it. 6) What is your position on this issue? a) Why is that your position? 7) If you or someone you know would like to take action on this issue, what informed action would you take based on what you have learned? 8) Who else do you recommend we interview on this issue? 9) What other questions should I have asked you today?
Suggested Questions for Protagonists/Witnesses (i.e., folks directly impacted by the issue) *Remember to ask the interviewee to include the question in their answer. For example, "I think this issue is important because…"* 1) How has this issue impacted you or someone you know? a) Can you share an example or tell us a story illustrating your point? b) Is there anything you have seen in the news about that issue? Talk about it. c) Tell me about any conversations you have had on this issue with your family and/or friends.

2) How did this experience impact your view on that issue? Why is this your position?
3) If you or someone you know would like to take action on this issue, what informed action would you take based on what you have learned?
4) What other questions should I have asked you today?

Excerpt from Student Handout
Forming Follow-Up Questions
Ask for elaboration: You want them to provide further details on their initial idea. ➔ Tell me more about… ➔ What do you mean by… ➔ How do you know?
Ask in a different way: You want them to approach their idea from a different perspective. ➔ Use a synonym. ➔ Ask them to put themselves in someone else's shoes.

Wrap-Up: Reflection

1) Explain to the class that you understand this might be the first time they have ever interviewed someone about a real-world issue impacting their community. It's always important to take a moment and assess how we feel about discussing an issue with someone whose opinion might differ from ours and with folks who have personal experience with it.
2) Ask students to respond to at least one of the prompts in their student handbook.

Excerpt from Student Handout
One concern I have about the interviews is… **One thing I'm excited about for the interviews is…**

Lesson 3: Conduct the (Peer) Interview

Lesson Compelling Question: What are my strengths and growth areas in interview skills?

Consider proactively reviewing all Filmmaking Guides to prepare for the technical components of this project.

Review and share the Guide: Conduct the Interview when interviewing subjects.

Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students will apply and practice interview skills by interviewing their peers regarding their research on local issues. Teachers will determine whether students will film the practice interviews based on time and access to technology. This lesson provides technical and logistical recommendations for recording high-quality videos. Ultimately, the teacher will determine the best approach based on access to technology and space to conduct the interviews.

Lesson Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Practice interview skills as the interviewer.
- Demonstrate their understanding and perspective on a real-world issue based on their research and lived experiences.
- (Optional) Practice filmmaking skills by recording interviews.

Language Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Interpret arguments by arguing in favor of or against a position, presenting a balanced interpretation, and/or challenging perspective.
- Interpret arguments by evaluating credibility, accuracy, and source relevancy based on expert perspectives.

Lesson Agenda	**50 mins**
Do Now: Review Interview Questions	5 mins
Mini-Lesson: Prepare Interview Environment	10 mins
Workshop: Conduct Interviews	30 mins
Wrap-Up: Reflection	5 mins

Materials and Preparation

- **Student Handouts**
  - Completed Lesson 1 and Lesson 2 student handouts.
  - Lesson 3 Student handouts in Google Docs This link requires you to make a copy of the handout. Feel free to save and make copies for your students.
- **Research**
  - Resources students gathered and evaluated during the previous lessons.
- **Interview Preparation**
  - A space for students to film with limited distractions and noise.
  - Shooting an Interview on Your Phone.
  - Consider asking the interviewer and interviewee to wear earbuds (such as AirPods) connected to the same device to reduce background noise.

PLAN OF INSTRUCTION

Do Now: Review Interview Questions

1) Ask students to review their interview questions and make any final edits as needed. Consider posting the message below on your board or slide deck.

Suggested Do Now Instructions
Hello Class! Big day today! In 3 minutes we will prepare our filming sets. Please take the next few minutes to **review your interview questions quietly and make any final edits as needed.**

Mini-Lesson: Prepare the Interview Environment

1) Review the lesson objectives with the class.
2) Remind the class that they will each interview and be interviewed today.
3) Ask volunteers to help review the tips provided and created during the previous class. Responses should include the following:
   a) Introduce yourself and ask the interviewee to introduce themselves.
   b) Prepare your questions and be prepared to ask follow-up questions.
   c) Ask the interviewee to incorporate questions in their answer so we know what they are talking about.
   d) Begin with "warm-up" questions. Remember, the person you are interviewing might not have been interviewed before. Make them comfortable by asking them to speak about what is easy for them.
   e) Listen attentively. If you don't understand the answer, ask them to clarify their statement.
   f) Ask open-ended questions. Avoid questions that can be answered simply by a yes or a no.
   g) Embrace pauses and silence, and allow interviewees time to think.
   h) Find a quiet place to do the interview.
   i) Thank the interviewee for their time.

4) **If students are filming:** Share the logistical details for filming interviews based on your class' access to technology and space.
    a) Due to time constraints, each student will likely be interviewed once, and another student will likely be interviewed once.
    b) Students in a group of 3 will be able to practice their skills the:
    c) Filmmaker by recording and directing the film.
    d) Interviewer by conducting an interview.
    e) Interviewee by serving as the interview subject.

Workshop: Conduct Interviews

1) Direct students to follow your instructions when setting up their interviews.
2) Remind students to take a deep breath between interviews to reset and mentally prepare for each new role.
3) Breathing exercise: Relax your body. Put your hand on your stomach. Take a deep breath through your nose. Hold it for 3, 2, 1. Slowly breathe out through your mouth, 3, 2, 1.
4) After approximately 30 minutes, ask students to cut and complete the reflection activity.

Wrap-Up: Reflection

1) Congratulate students for their hard work!
2) Direct students to the post-filming reflection student handout.

Excerpt from Student Handout
GLOW: What did you do well during today's interview process?
GROW: What could you have done better or differently during today's interview process?

Lesson 4: Interview Analysis

Lesson Compelling Question: Based on your research, what type of informed action would you recommend to address this issue?

Consider proactively reviewing all Filmmaking Guides to prepare for the technical components of this project.

Lesson Overview

In this lesson, Production Groups will analyze the interview transcripts with their Production Groups to identify key themes and compelling stories to include in their documentary. This step in the filmmaking process will help students identify and define the story they want to tell in their documentaries. They will also use the interviews to develop their Documentary Treatments and build their Rundowns. This analysis aims to 1) identify compelling stories to include in the documentary, 2) identify additional information to include in the documentary, and 3) Identify areas to research further.

Lesson Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Analyze the interview transcripts with their Production Groups to identify key themes and compelling stories to include in their documentary.
- Reflect on their individual position on the issue they have researched.

Language Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Interpret arguments by analyzing relevant information to support and/or revise claims with reliable and valid evidence from multiple sources.

Lesson Agenda	**50 mins**
Do Now: Identifying Stories	5 mins
Mini-Lesson: Interview Analysis	15 mins
Workshop: Silent Talk	30 mins
Wrap-Up: Reflection	2 mins

Materials and Preparation

- **Student Handouts**
    - Completed Lesson 1 and Lesson 2 student handouts.
    - Lesson 4 Student handouts in Google Docs This link requires you to make a

copy of the handout. Feel free to save and make copies for your students.
    - Printed copies of student handouts. Student handout pages are at the end of this lesson plan.
- **Silent Talk/Interview Analysis**
    - Hardcopy transcript of all interviews with timestamps. After students analyze the interview on paper, they will identify those video segments on Descript. The timestamps on the transcript hardcopy will make this process much easier.

PLAN OF INSTRUCTION

Do Now: Identifying Stories

1) Direct students to the Do Now page of the student handout (either paper-based or on Google Docs).
2) Ask students to complete the Interview analysis as they watch your interview video.

Suggested Do Now Instructions
Hello! Take a minute to reflect on all of the interviews. What story or interesting information did you hear that would be helpful to highlight in the documentary? Why?

Mini-Lesson: Silent Talk

1) Review the lesson objectives with the class.
1) Explain that each Production Group has interviewed their stakeholders and will move into analyzing the transcripts. The goals of the analysis are to:
    a) Identify compelling stories to include in the documentary.
    b) Identify additional information to include in the documentary.
    c) Identify areas to research further.
2) The class will silently practice transcription analysis and coding by analyzing one transcript per group via a Silent Talk.
3) Either assign a section of a transcript on Descript or hand out the pages of the pre-selected transcript to each group member.
4) Follow the instructions in the student handbook for a Silent Talk.
5) After the Silent Talk, ask volunteers to share:
    a) Was that sufficient time to review the transcript?
        i) Adjust the timing accordingly.
    b) What did you notice about your group member's coding versus yours?
6) Based on the activity reflection, adjust the Silent Talk instructions for the workshop portion.

Excerpt from Student Handout
Silent Talk **Round 1: 5 Minutes** ● Scan the transcript page. ● Take about 5 minutes to code the transcript: ○ **Circling** interesting ideas, data, and stories ○ **Drawing** a line connecting two interesting ideas/comments **Round 2: 5 Minutes** ● Exchange the interview analysis with another student in your group. ● Take about 5 minutes to read the original responses and the new comments. Add your comment on the original responses or the new comments by: ○ **Circling** interesting ideas, data, and stories ○ **Drawing** a line connecting two interesting ideas/comments ○ **Writing** questions about your group member's comments. **Round 3: 4 Minutes** ● Exchange the interview analysis with another student in your group. ● Take about 5 minutes to read the original responses and the new comments. Add your comment on the original responses or the new comments by: ○ **Circling** interesting ideas, data, and stories ○ **Drawing** a line connecting two interesting ideas/comments ○ **Writing** questions about your group member's comments. **Round 4: 3 minutes** ● Return each student their original interview analysis. ● Read all of the new comments to your original thoughts. **Round 5: 3-5 minutes** ● As a group, discuss the ideas, data, and stories you feel would be helpful to include in your documentary.

Workshop: Interview Analysis

1) Ask Production Groups to repeat the Silent Talk process with the remaining transcripts. As needed, continue this into the next class period.

Wrap-Up: Reflection

1) Allow students approximately 2 minutes to complete the final reflection question in their student handout:

Excerpt from Student Handout
Reassessing Your Position: Return to your reflection from Unit 1: Lesson 4: Research Jam! Day 2. Consider how you felt about the issue before starting your research and after that research jam.

Based on the interviews you've conducted, has your thinking changed? If so, how? List two to three ways. If your thoughts have not changed, list two to three ways your better understanding of the "other side of the issue" now helps you better argue your position.

Lesson 5: Finalize the Treatment

Lesson Compelling Question: Based on your research, what stories will your audience find compelling?

Consider proactively reviewing all Filmmaking Guides to prepare for the technical components of this project.

Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students will continue to analyze and synthesize their research and interviews to continue developing their Documentary Treatment. The Documentary Treatment is a written description of their documentary that will help them brainstorm potential themes and story angles as a filmmaker. It will also allow their Production Group to become and remain aligned on the vision for their film.

Lesson Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Develop their Documentary Treatment.

Language Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Interpret arguments by analyzing relevant information to support and/or revise claims with reliable and valid evidence from multiple sources.

Lesson Agenda	**50 mins**
Do Now: Revising the Treatment	5 mins
Mini-Lesson: Documentary Treatment Parts 2 and 3	15 mins
Workshop: Documentary Treatment	25 mins
Wrap-Up: Reflection	5 mins

Materials and Preparation

- **Student Handouts**
  - Determine if your class will utilize the Google Docs or printed version of the student-facing materials.
  - Lesson 4 Student handouts in Google Docs This link requires you to make a copy of the handout. Feel free to save and make copies for your students.
  - Printed copies of student handouts. Student handout pages are at the end of this lesson plan.
- **Documentary Treatment**

- Access to or a hardcopy of each Production Group's Documentary Treatment

PLAN OF INSTRUCTION

Do Now: Revising the Treatment

1) Direct students to the Documentary Treatment they began prior to their interviews.
2) Ask students to re-read the Overview, Elements, and the first section they already completed.

Suggested Do Now Instructions
Hello! Today, we will return to the Documentary Treatment we began drafting before our interviews. Take a moment to: 1. Re-read the overview and elements 2. Re-read the first section your group has already completed. 3. What would you add or change in that first section? Why?

Mini-Lesson: Documentary Treatment

1) Review the lesson objectives with the class. Ask a volunteer to explain the purpose of a Documentary Treatment in their own words.
    a) How will creating a Documentary Treatment be helpful to your group?
    b) Possible answer: A Treatment is a document that presents the story idea of your film before writing the entire script. Treatments are written in narrative-like prose and highlight the most important information about your film, including the title, story summary, and interviewees' roles and perspectives.
2) They will continue drafting the Treatment they began before the interviews.
3) As a class, read Parts 2 and 3 of the Documentary Treatment Guide and the sample treatment.
4) Open the floor for students to share any questions or concerns about completing the Treatment.
5) Consider having Production Groups split up and tackle different sections of the treatment, then regroup to discuss and complete. Alternatively, they can collaboratively complete the treatment as a group. This is a good opportunity to provide them with options for completing this task.

Workshop: Documentary Treatment

1.) Support groups with completing their Documentary Treatments.

Wrap-Up: Reflection

2) Allow students approximately 2-3 minutes to complete the final reflection question in their student handout:

Excerpt from Student Handout

What part of this documentary project are you most excited about and why?

Democracy in Action
Unit 3: Inquiry-Based Storytelling

Created by the Civic Life Project in collaboration with the National Council for the Social Studies

Unit Overview

This unit will guide students through the process of editing their documentary films. This is an opportunity for students to identify the filmmaking skills they are most interested in developing. Each Production Group will collaboratively draft its Rundown and tag the interview selects to ensure all students have weighed in on and are familiar with the film outline and stories highlighted in their documentary. Once the interview selects are tagged, Production Group members will continue collaborating, but each has different roles as they prepare to edit and edit their films.

Unit Learning Objectives

As a result of teaching this unit, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate critical thinking skills in their classroom by evaluating and critiquing primary sources.
- Analyze diverse perspectives on social issues by exploring compelling questions, evaluating primary sources, and discussing issues with their peers.
  Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

- Apply civic virtues and democratic principles while working with their peers.
- Analyze contemporary and emerging means of changing societies, promoting the common good, and protecting rights.

Lesson 1: The Rundown

During this lesson, Production Groups will collaboratively develop their Rundown, an item-by-item sequence of events that will happen within the film. The Rundown will outline the elements of each scene in the film.

Lesson 2: Tagging Interview Selects

During this lesson, students will practice using Descript to edit their films. The focus will be on tagging their interview selects on video using Descript. Each Production Group will work as a team to ensure they all weigh in and agree with the stories highlighted.

Lesson 3 - 7: Final Production Phase

During this multi-day lesson, students will collaborate to produce their films. The final filmmaking phase typically takes approximately 5-7 days, but it is ultimately at the teacher's discretion. This lesson-planning guide will help structure the final filmmaking period, supporting students' productivity, collaboration, and reflection. We also suggest using an interactive **Demo Rundown** (such as the Google Sheets or Docs version) or another tool to track all the different actions taking place and help students stay organized with their filmmaking process. With so many moving parts, this process phase is an opportunity for all learners to shine!

Filmmaking Guides

Guide 1: Interview Request

Guide 2: Interview Subject Bio

Guide 3: Options for Shooting the Interview

Guide 4: Conduct the Interview

Guide 5: Demo Rundown

Guide 6: Film Editing Skills

Guide 7: Filmmaking Tutorials

Guide 8: Film Screening

C3 Framework Dimensions

***Download* the complete College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards**

Dimension 1: Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries

Individually and with others, students construct compelling questions and …

D1.2.9-12. Explain experts' points of agreement and disagreement about interpretations and applications of disciplinary concepts and ideas associated with a compelling question.

Dimension 2: Civic and Political Institutions

Individually and with others, students…
D2.Civ.13.9-12. Evaluate public policies in terms of intended and unintended outcomes, as well as related consequences.

Dimension 3: Gathering and Evaluating Sources
Individually and with others, students…
D3.2.9-12. Evaluate the credibility of a source by examining how experts value the source.
D3.3.9-12. Identify evidence that draws information directly and substantively from multiple sources to detect inconsistencies in evidence in order to revise or strengthen claims.

Dimension 4: Communicating Conclusions
Individually and with others, students use writing, visualizing, and speaking to…
D4.1.9-12. Construct arguments using precise and knowledgeable claims, with evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging counterclaims and evidentiary weaknesses.
D4.4.9-12. Critique the use of claims and evidence in arguments for credibility.

Lesson 1: The Rundown

Lesson Compelling Question: What elements of your research will lead to a powerful and evocative documentary?

Consider proactively reviewing all Filmmaking Guides to prepare for the technical components of this project.

Lesson Overview
During this lesson, Production Groups will collaboratively develop their Rundown, an item-by-item sequence of events that will happen within the film. The Rundown will outline the elements of each scene in the film.

Lesson Objectives:
By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:
- Develop a rundown (or scope and sequence) of their film.

Language Objectives:
By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:
- Interpret arguments by analyzing relevant information to support and/or revise claims with reliable and valid evidence from multiple sources.

Lesson Agenda	**50 mins**
Do Now: Planning	3 mins
Mini-Lesson: Getting Organized	10 mins
Workshop: Production Group	35 mins
Wrap-Up: Reflection	2 mins

Materials and Preparation
- **Student Handouts**
  - Demo Rundown:
    - Demo Rundown (GDoc): This link requires you to make a copy of the handout. Feel free to save and make copies for your students.
    - Demo Rundown (sheets)
  - Interview transcripts analyzed during the previous class.
  - Production Group Treatments

PLAN OF INSTRUCTION

Do Now: Brainstorm

1) Direct students to the Do Now page of the student handout (either paper-based or on Google Docs).
2) Ask students to take 3 minutes to read the list of previous Civic Life Project film titles and share at least 2 for their own documentary.

Suggested Do Now Instructions
Hello, Class! You're now in the final stage of producing your documentary films…congrats! Take a moment to reflect on the research and interviews. Read the list of films by other Civic Life Project Production Groups. Brainstorm: What do you think your documentary film title could be? *A film title often comes toward the very end of the filmmaking process. However, some filmmakers find it helpful to start with a working title they can "try on" but remain open-minded and flexible to changes as they continue the production.*

Mini-Lesson: The Rundown

1) Review the lesson objectives with the class.
2) Explain that a film title often comes toward the very end of the filmmaking process. However, some filmmakers find it helpful to start with a working title they can "try on" but remain open-minded and flexible to changes as they continue the production.
3) Ask the class what the steps are for writing an essay.
    a) Preparation: Decide your topic, research, and create an essay outline.
    b) Writing: Set out your argument in the introduction, develop it with evidence in the main body, and wrap it up with a conclusion.
    c) Revision: Check the content, organization, grammar, spelling, and formatting of your essay.
4) Explain that the filmmaking process is similar. They've prepared and are now ready to write their outline!
5) Ask for volunteers to read the Rundown aloud, stopping to answer questions and elaborate where needed.

Workshop: Develop the Rundown

1) Ask students to move into their Production Groups and begin developing their Rundown. They should refer to the Treatment and interview transcripts as they develop their Rundown.

Wrap-Up: Reflection

1) With approximately 3-5 minutes remaining, ask students to jot down a question or curiosity they still have about their issue in the Wrap-Up section of their handout.
2) If time allows, ask 2-3 volunteers to share their responses.

Excerpt from Student Handout
What role will I play in the final production stage?
What do I need to complete that role successfully?

Lesson 2: Tagging Interview Selects

Lesson Compelling Question: What is the story you want to tell?

Consider proactively reviewing all Filmmaking Guides to prepare for the technical components of this project.

Lesson Overview

During this lesson, students will practice using Descript to edit their films. The focus will be tagging their interview selects on video using Descript. Each Production Group will work as a team to ensure they are all weighing in and are in agreement with the stories highlighted.

Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Practice various filmmaking skills depending on their unique Production Group role and needs.

Lesson Agenda	**50 mins**
Do Now: Preparing	3 mins
Mini-Lesson: Descript	10 mins
Workshop: Production Time	35 mins
Wrap-Up: Reflection	2 mins

Materials and Preparation

- Student Handouts
    - Guide: Film Editing Skills
- Access to Descript with interviews uploaded.
- Production Group's Treatment and Rundown.
- Descript Video Editing Tutorial up to minute 1:43 as a class

PLAN OF INSTRUCTION

Do Now: Preparing

1) Ask students to take 3 minutes to respond to the questions about their feelings during an interview.

Suggested Do Now Instructions
Hello, Class! Please take a moment to reflect quietly on the interviews you conducted and analyzed. Which interview did you find most interesting? Why?

Mini-Lesson: Filmmaking Skills

1) Review the lesson objectives with the class.
2) Explain that Production Group members will have different roles and responsibilities moving forward. There are three major parts of the final film production phase:
    a) Preparing to edit your film
    b) Editing your film
    c) Screening your film
3) Groups will continue using their research notes, interview transcripts, Treatment, and Rundown. They will also learn and practice new filmmaking skills, such as using Descript, the video editing tool. Since all group members will use Descript, the class will watch a tutorial video to familiarize themselves. Explain that they can rewatch the tutorial and search for others throughout editing.
4) Please watch the Descript Video Editing Tutorial up to minute 1:43 as a class. This segment explains Descript and briefly tours its features. As students continue the editing process, they can refer to this video.
5) After watching the tutorial, ask each group to log onto Descript and peruse the features available.

Workshop: Identify Selects on Descript

1) Explain that today's task on Descript is identifying the interview selects (the parts they have selected to highlight). This step is a priority because the visuals, music, and narration must complement the interview selects. They will use their Treatment, Rundown, and transcript hardcopies for this part.

Wrap-Up: Reflection

1) Ask students to reflect on today's experience using Descript.

Excerpt from Student Handout
One concern I have about using Descript is... **One thing I'm excited about using Descript is...**

Lesson 3-7: Final Production Phase

Lesson Compelling Question: What skills do you need to produce a powerful and evocative documentary?

Consider proactively reviewing all Filmmaking Guides to prepare for the technical components of this project.

Multi-day Lesson with Filmmaking Skill Builders: This lesson plan includes a Do Now and Reflection that ensures students prepare for the next production steps. The Guides will build on their filmmaking skills and should be used as needed. All guides are student-facing and can be used independently by students with teacher support as necessary.

Lesson Overview

During this multi-day lesson, students will collaborate to produce their films. The final filmmaking phase typically takes approximately 5-7 days, but it is ultimately at the teacher's discretion. This lesson-planning guide will help structure the final filmmaking period, supporting students' productivity, collaboration, and reflection. We also suggest using an interactive **Demo Rundown** (such as the Google Sheets or Docs version) or another tool to track all the different actions taking place and help students stay organized with their filmmaking process. With so many moving parts, this process phase is an opportunity for all learners to shine!

Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Produce a documentary film on the researched issue.
- Practice various filmmaking skills depending on their unique Production Group role and needs.

Lesson Agenda	**50 mins**
Do Now: Preparing	3 mins
Mini-Lesson: Group Updates & New Skills	10 mins
Workshop: Production Time	35 mins
Wrap-Up: Reflection	2 mins

Materials and Preparation

- Student Handouts
    - Guide: Film Editing Skills and Guide: Film Screening
- Access to Descript with interviews uploaded.
- Production Group's Treatment and Rundown.

PLAN OF INSTRUCTION

Do Now: Preparing

1) Ask students to take 3 minutes to respond to the questions about their feelings during an interview.

Suggested Do Now Instructions
Hello, Class! Please take a moment to reflect quietly on the last class period. Answer at least one of the following questions: 1. What does my Production Group need to accomplish today? 2. What is my role in ensuring our success? 3. What support does my group need today?

Mini-Lesson: Filmmaking Skills

1) Review the lesson objectives with the class.
2) Explain that Production Group members will have different roles and responsibilities moving forward. The final film production phase has three major parts: Preparing to edit, Editing, and Film screening.
3) Groups will continue using their research notes, interview transcripts, Treatment, and Rundown.
4) Ask a volunteer from each Production Group to share one thing their Group needs to accomplish today. Depending on their progress, direct groups to the appropriate parts of the Film Editing Skills. Encourage Production Groups to check in with other groups for support on the various skills as you offer individual support.
5) Remind groups of the remaining class periods that they have to complete their film.

Workshop: Production Group Work Time

1) Production Groups meet to continue editing films.
2) Remind groups to update and refer to the Rundown for changes and track their individual tasks.

Wrap-Up: Reflection

1) Allow students approximately 2 minutes to complete the final reflection question in their student handout:

Excerpt from Student Handout
What are our next steps? **What did I contribute today?** **What do I need from my team and/or teacher?**