



# MINING PERSONAL HISTORIES

An Educurious Project Based Learning Unit

**educurious**  
learning that connects

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Educurious™ Units begin with a challenge for students to solve that is relevant to their lives and has a real impact on the world.

The people around us carry with them incredible histories of change generated by social and cultural forces. Many of these personal histories remain undiscovered, as do their implications for students.

In this Educurious unit students begin with the challenge *How do social and cultural influences shape our lives?*

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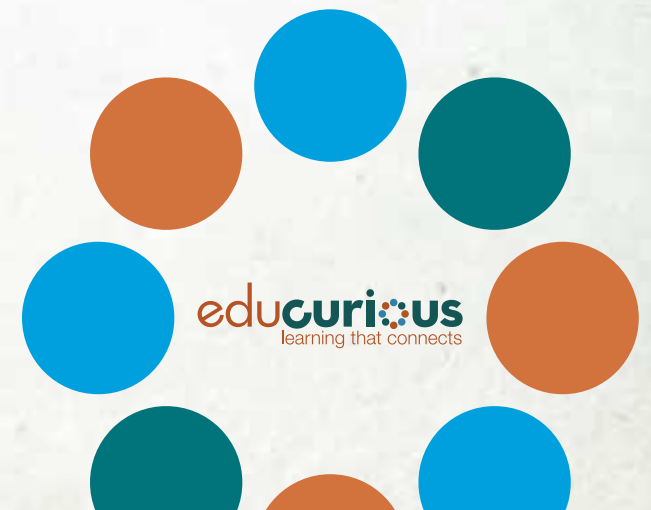
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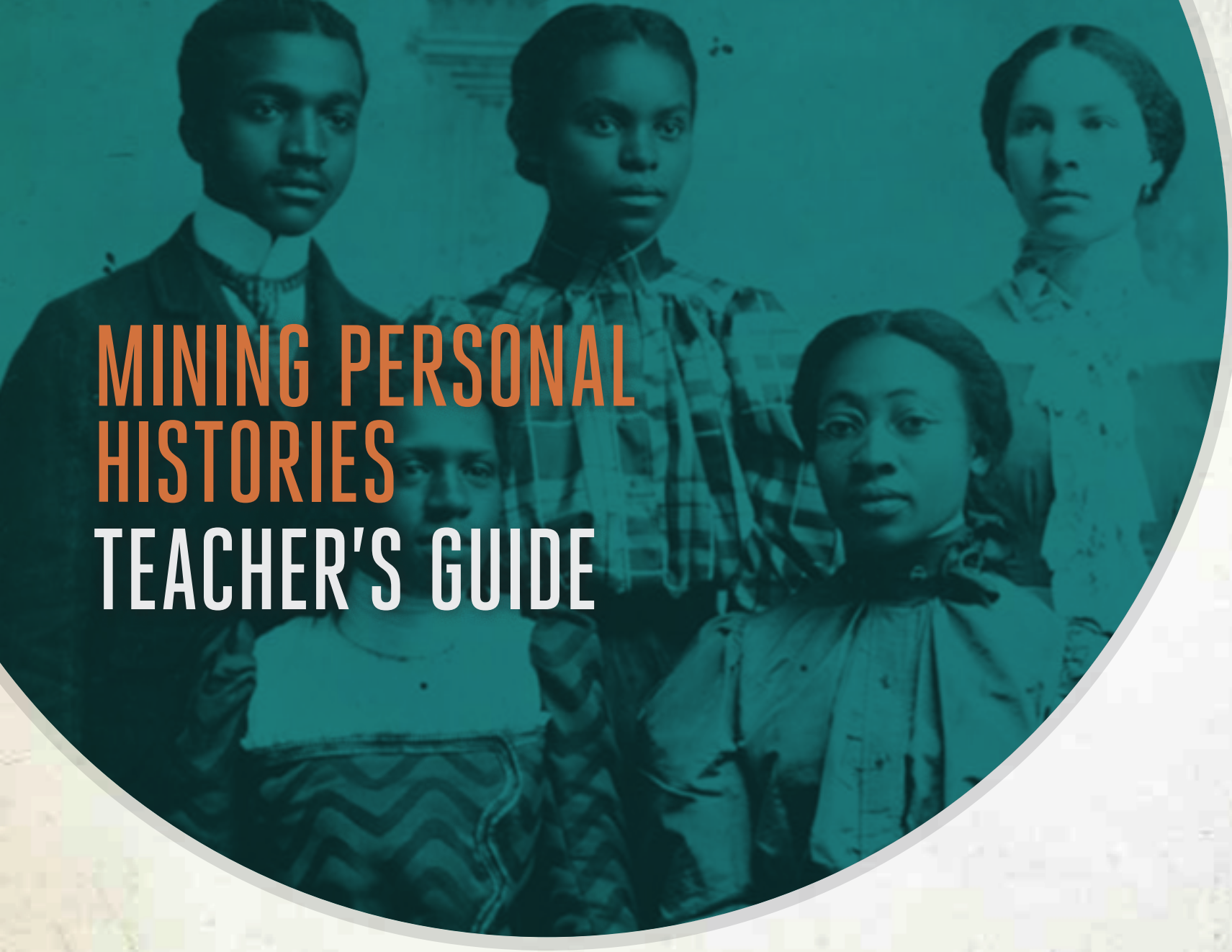
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# MINING PERSONAL HISTORIES

## TEACHER'S GUIDE

# Unit Overview

Writers and producers of nonfiction draw us in with information, scenes, stories, and reflections that can help us understand our world better. People pay attention to powerful nonfiction and to those who write, film, speak or present nonfiction in new ways. Nonfiction personal history has the power to make us laugh, cry, and change our lives.

In this free unit, set up like a studio environment, students will read, analyze, discuss, and write nonfiction; they will research and craft nonfiction stories of people in their community; and they will present those stories to the world.

As students read and analyze nonfiction and move towards publishing their own nonfiction documentary, a key driving question will help guide their thinking:

## How do social and cultural influences shape our lives?

Students' culminating project, completed with significant input from classmates, the teacher, and local experts, will be a written documentary proposal and a video documentary presenting the nonfiction story of a community member they have interviewed and researched.

During the unit, students keep a digital journal, called "producer's notes," related to their learning about nonfiction. They are eligible to earn three Educurious badges: Expert Networker, Investigator and Visual Designer. They publish their video documentary online to inform others.

### About Educurious

Educurious is a 501(c)3 organization on a mission to fundamentally transform the K–12 education experience. Our vision is an effective education system in which young people learn in meaningful and inspiring ways and classrooms are a place they want to be. To achieve our vision, we bring together teachers, students and professionals to work on project-based courses through an online platform that opens the classroom to the world. [Click here](#) to learn more about us.

### Experts

The Educurious model features professionals who serve as mentors to our students. Our virtual experts share their knowledge, creativity, real-world insights, and a passion for their work in order to inspire students. [Click here](#) to learn more about The Educurious Expert Network (TEEN).™

### Badges

Badges are emerging as a new way to both encourage and demonstrate the acquisition of knowledge and skills of all kinds—in both formal and informal settings. Learn more about the [Educurious Badges for this unit](#).

### About Our Approach

Educurious combines project-based learning, technology, and connections with real-world experts to capture the imagination and interest of today's students. Together, these ingredients create a meaningful learning experience that cultivates curious, motivated young people who are ready for college and tomorrow's careers. [Get more information on our units and year-long courses.](#)



### Module Summaries

#### Module 1: Who's Been Changed and How?

Educurious courses are often launched by a video of an Educurious Expert. In this video, Norm Rice, the first African American mayor of Seattle, Washington, tells his story. Students view and analyze a video about a decision he makes, review a list of the elements of nonfiction personal history, and read the unit overview. Students then choose a nonfiction text to read and write producer's notes about possible interview subjects.

#### Module 2: What Influences People?

Students read and analyze informative articles, focusing on elements of nonfiction personal history. They write and share a short descriptive nonfiction text; continue reading the nonfiction text they have chosen; and prepare qualifying questions for possible interview subjects, then ask them the questions.

#### Module 3: Viewing and Documenting Change

Students create a photo documentary plan, review the use of photos in the Norm Rice video, and read a nonfiction text as a group (and continue reading the nonfiction text they have chosen). Students also generate questions, find images related to change, and review short documentaries' use of elements of nonfiction personal history. Finally, students receive feedback on their photo documentary plan, then create and post the photo documentary.

#### Module 4: Planning and Interviewing

Students discuss whether the driving questions should be revised. Then they analyze how a nonfiction article's theme is conveyed and discuss the value of interviews. They record interviews of one another and prepare for future interviews. Students continue reading the nonfiction text they have chosen.

#### Module 5: Crafting a Documentary Proposal

Students use reciprocal reading and question-generating to understand an informative article about addressing a societal problem. They review professional proposal guidelines and start drafting a documentary proposal. Students record an initial interview and revise the proposal as needed. They receive feedback from peers and a local expert on their proposal, and they finalize and submit their proposal. Students continue reading the nonfiction text they have chosen.

#### Module 6: Creating a Documentary

Students decide whether to update their video documentary proposals based on feedback (and whether to continue individually or as part of a small team). They focus their guiding question, decide on and practice with tools, gather raw material, continue interviewing, and assemble the elements in a tool. With a draft complete, students seek expert and peer feedback, and they decide whether to use the feedback to revise their documentary. Students conclude the reading of their nonfiction text.

#### Module 7: Publishing Your Documentary

Students share their documentary with a broader community using a SchoolTube (or other Internet) video channel, and they request comments / film reviews. They review at least one documentary, take part in a gallery walk, offer feedback to other video creators, and reflect on the experience of learning how to analyze and create informative nonfiction.

# Unit Standards

## Reading Standards for Informational Text

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RI.9.3** Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RI.9.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).

## Writing Standards

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy. W.9.6** Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy. W.9.7** Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

## Speaking and Listening Standards

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9.1** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

- a. Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
- b. Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.
- c. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

**Educurious Learning Design Principles:** This unit exemplifies the Learning Design Principle "Provide Extended Learning Opportunities to Engage in Project- or Problem-Based learning" by having students engage in a multi-week production studio environment.

**Blended Learning:** In a learning management system, such as Edmodo, Moodle, or Canvas, student-facing directions for the activities in this unit would each occupy a page.

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- d. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

### National Educational Technology Standards (NETS\*S)

**2. Communication and Collaboration.** Students use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively, including at a distance, to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others.

- a. Interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts, or others employing a variety of digital environments and media.

### 21st Century Skills

Educurious units and courses help students practice and master a range of 21st Century Skills, including the “4 C’s” as defined by the [Partnership for 21st Century Skills](#). (The “4 C’s” are Creativity and Innovation, Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, and Communication and Collaboration.) This unit encourages students to practice thinking creatively about how to research and present personal histories, to work creatively with others throughout, and to implement innovations in the products they create. Thinking critically and working collaboratively, along with implementing creative innovations, are features of the [Partnership’s framework](#).

### Personal Relevance

In this course, students read and experience a wide variety of informative nonfiction texts, both written and video-based. For the final project, they choose an interview subject from among people they know, increasing the relevance of the project to their lives.

### Educurious Badges

Educurious courses integrate badges as a component of our assessment system. Each badge demonstrates specific skills and competencies and is awarded by teachers, experts and, in some cases, a student’s peers. Badges are emerging as a new way to both encourage and demonstrate the acquisition of knowledge and skills of all kinds-in both formal and informal settings.

For more on badging, see <http://gettingsmart.com/cms/blog/2012/11/why-a-badge-is-better-than-an-a/>

For an overview of badging, review <http://classroom-aid.com/2012/11/15/what-you-should-know-about-badges/>

Here are additional badge resources:

- Mozilla BackPack - [Open Badges](http://openbadges.org) - <http://openbadges.org> (uses Persona for login)
- For All Badges - <http://forallbadges.com> - offers a way to create badges
  - Using ForAllBadges in a class: <http://remediatingassessment.blogspot.com/2012/10/incorporating-open-badges-into-hybrid.html>
- Class Badges - <http://classbadges.com> - offers a tool to create and award badges
- Credibility and visibility for digital badges - <http://carlacasilli.wordpress.com/2012/05/21/badge-system-design-what-we-talk-about-when-we-talk-about-validity/>

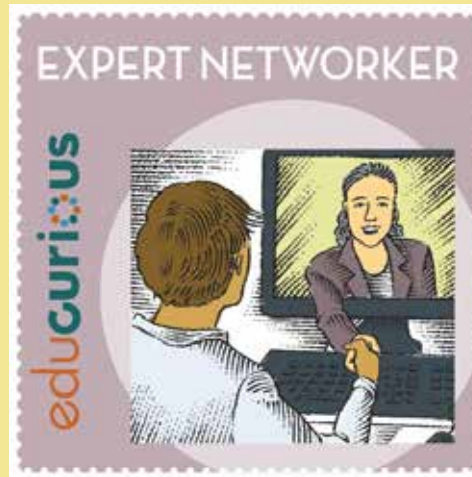
### Mining Personal Histories: Badges Available

In this unit, three badges are available for students to earn. Each badge is explained on the following pages:

- [The Expert Networker Badge](#)
- [The Investigator Badge](#)
- [The Visual Designer Badge](#)

# The Expert Networker Badge

To earn the Expert Networker badge, students demonstrate skill in both communicating with an Expert outside the classroom and effectively using the feedback provided by an Expert to revise and improve the student's work.



[Download](#)

The Expert Networker badge:

- Demonstrates that a learner has demonstrated how to effectively communicate with Experts from a variety of fields and is able to use relevant aspects of those communications to further project work.
- Demonstrates that a learner is able to communicate with Experts to discuss and learn about the disciplines and careers beyond project work and focus.

To earn this badge the learner must:

- Respond to and/or use Expert feedback in multiple instances in a unit to advance project work.
- Pose meaningful questions to Experts that provide a meaningful resource for other learners as rated by their peers.
- Document engagement with Experts on topics and ideas outside of project work.

**NOTE**

The Expert Networker badge may be given to learners by Experts, teachers, and peers.



# The Investigator Badge

To earn the Investigator badge, students demonstrate skill in setting up and conducting research, then communicating results to a real audience.



[Download](#)

The Investigator badge:

- Demonstrates that a student has demonstrated how to explore and frame a research problem, conduct relevant research and inquiry, and communicate the knowledge the student has created to an authentic audience in a relevant form..

To earn this badge the learner must:

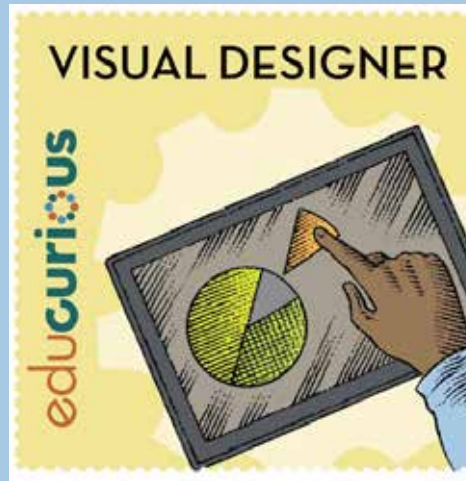
- Create a meaningful guiding question with social, cultural, and/or personal impact. Research the guiding question using a variety of approaches and collaborations.
- Organize the results of the research into a compelling format.
- Share the results of the research with an audience beyond the classroom.

**NOTE**

The Investigator badge may be given to learners by Experts, teachers, and peers.

# The Visual Designer Badge

To earn the Visual Designer badge, students demonstrate skill in understanding and producing explicit and implicit visual meaning.



[Download](#)

The Visual Designer badge:

- Indicates that a learner can comprehend, infer, and purposefully produce explicit or implicit meanings of graphs, illustrations, videos, or cartoons, as well as other forms of visual communication.

To earn this badge the learner must:

- Explain how textual and visual elements work to convey meaning, alone and together.
- Produce visuals that represent and communicate ideas and concepts with an understanding of audience, aesthetics, and media formats.

## NOTE

The Visual Designer badge may be given to learners by Experts, teachers, and peers.

### Learning Design Principles

This unit was designed utilizing the following Educurious Learning Design Principles:

- 1. Youth are Positioned as Developing Experts.** Educurious is committed to positioning youth in ways that empower them with respect to their own learning. Through instruction and work with experts, the students are socially positioned to develop disciplinary expertise in nonfiction personal history and documentary production.
- 2. Provide Extended Learning Opportunities to Engage in Project Based Learning.** This unit's driving question is "How do social and cultural influences shape our lives?" As students analyze nonfiction text and video-based personal histories, create a photo documentary, interview a peer, then create a documentary proposal and finally a documentary, they will be engaged in a meaningful project.
- 3. Youth Progress along Competency-Based Learning Pathways.** Instead of limited or one-time engagements with important ideas or practices, youth are given multiple opportunities to develop ideas and practice skills with increased sophistication. Students initially respond to preset questions, and then progress to using a question-generating approach. Students move from analyzing nonfiction personal histories to creating one in the form of a video documentary.
- 4. Provide Continuous Performance Feedback and Metacognitive Facilitation.** Students need feedback and time to reflect on their growth as they journey along their learning pathway. In this unit students offer feedback to peers, and they seek and use feedback from teachers, peers, and local experts. Students are asked to reflect on their work, building metacognitive capacity.
- 5. Experts Provide Multi-Faceted Learning Supports.** In this unit, students will study the accounts of a variety of experts, including a former mayor of Seattle, and a variety of youth and adults with compelling personal histories to relate. Locally-identified experts will provide feedback on student work, including on the final video documentary.
- 6. Youth Learn Contemporary Knowledge, Skills and Practices.** All learning experiences in the unit are aligned to the Common Core while also connected to types of skills, practices, and products they will need in college and the workplace. The unit is styled as a "studio environment" in which students adopt several different roles--planner, team member, interviewer, documentary producer--all with analogs in the world of work.
- 7. Build upon Prior Interests and Identities of Youth to Promote Seamless Learning.** Research has highlighted that it is important to connect the curriculum to students' lives. In the *Mining Personal Histories* unit students are asked to think and write about what they (and others) can learn from people's stories. Students interview people they know, leveraging their interests and family / community life.
- 8. Promote Personally Relevant Participation in Authentic Pursuits.** Learning is meaningful when learning opportunities and experiences are personally relevant. Consequently, the unit enables students to choose the format and subject matter of their photo documentary, descriptive writing, interview, and video documentary. Students also have a substantial voice in how well the unit is progressing in the studio environment. A recurring activity encourages students to discuss possible improvements to the learning.
- 9. Cultivate Thriving Social Learning Networks.** Learning is social. Throughout the unit, students interview others, peers, and experts, sometimes in person or at a distance; they share work via the platform and in class. We try to expand students' networks through the use of experts and suggested cross-class collaboration. Students work in pairs and small groups in the classroom. They use a discussion board or other online learning management system if available.

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**10. Leverage Video, Disciplinary Tools and Digital Literacies.** To engage youth in contemporary disciplinary practices, the use of technology is essential. Students analyze video, create photo and video documentaries, and maintain producer's notes in the form of a digital journal.

**11. Support Multiple Means of Expression.** As students experience multiple means of expression, they gain confidence in their knowledge and ways of expression. This unit balances students' experience with text and other forms of expression. Discussion guidelines are explicit for face-to-face and online discussion (if a learning management system or other online discussion tool is used). In every module of this unit, students create, revise, offer feedback to others, and share their own text and video creations. Examples include the photo documentary, peer interview, and the capstone video documentary.

### Major Reading and Writing Task (LDC)

Each Educurious unit contains one or more built-in Literacy Design Collaborative tasks. This ensures that Educurious units are aligned with Common Core State Standards. For more information on the Literacy Design Collaborative, please see the following website: <http://www.literacydesigncollaborative.org/>

### Major Assignment: Craft a Documentary Proposal (Based on LDC Task 14, Informational/Explanatory)

How do social and cultural influences shape our lives? After reading and viewing texts related to people's stories and the influences on their lives, and after researching, interviewing and gathering artifacts from one community member, write a documentary proposal for creating a video documentary that addresses the question. The proposal should focus on why the documentary should be made and the value of what your interviewee is saying to or about cultural, societal and personal influences. Support your proposal with evidence from your research, the interview, and artifacts.



Elderly African American couple posed outside of building, near Hampton Institute, Hampton, Va. Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.



### Expert Involvement

#### Experts in Educurious Units

Experts are involved in every Educurious unit in a variety of ways. Check out [how Educurious units leverage experts](#).

#### Summary of How Experts Are Involved in the *Mining Personal Histories* Unit

In *Mining Personal Histories*, the teacher will organize local experts. (If you need help getting started email us at [experts@educurious.org](mailto:experts@educurious.org) for access to our recruitment kit, which has templates for email, social media, and flyers.)

Experts offer feedback on photo documentary plans (Module 3), and on the finished photo documentary (Module 3). Experts also offer feedback on the video documentary proposal (Module 5), on the video documentary draft (Module 6), and on the final documentary posted online (Module 7).

Additionally, the teacher might team with a school or public librarian, who might show database research tools (e.g., *Opposing Viewpoints*, NexisLexis, Google Scholar, procon.org, 24/7 Librarian Chat) and searching practices (e.g., Boolean logic, keywords) that help surface quality sources for students. The librarian might come to class or Skype in.

(In the creation of this free unit, Scott Macklin lent his expertise in helping to articulate and shape ideas.)

### Preferred Expert Background

Writers, interviewers, historians, educators, moviemakers—anyone who has experience creating informative nonfiction is a potential expert.

### Acceptable Expert Background

Expert feedback in this unit will generally address higher-level writing and video-producing skills, including quality and organization of content. Professionals with a solid knowledge of nonfiction / journalistic technique, and grant or proposal writers or reviewers would make excellent local experts for this unit. Teachers, composition, rhetoric and communications majors might also be used. If necessary, other professionals with good writing skills can give thoughtful feedback on assignments such as the video documentary proposal.

#### Numbers of Experts & Rough Expectations for Involvement

One locally-identified expert should be able to serve as a feedback expert for up to 6-7 students. Experts should be sent an email by the teacher explaining the scope of the work and lesson objectives, and including the rubric if possible. We encourage teachers and experts to keep lines of communication open. They are part of the classroom community, not just a mere tool for review.

### Prerequisites

The Educurious team recommends that students participating in this unit have already engaged the following ideas. (If students have not engaged with one or more of these learning approaches, it may be useful to allot extra time within the unit to introduce and practice these ideas.):

1. writing process
2. close reading
3. offering and receiving peer feedback
4. thoughtful discussion of ideas

In addition, it is preferable that students have a working familiarity with the following practices:

1. paired and group conversation

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2. basic tech know-how: copy/paste, Internet searches, Word, URLs
3. basic ideas relating to nonfiction reading and writing
4. writing process, from initial brainstorming through revised and finalized document

### Academic Vocabulary

Students learn vocabulary within the context of the various tasks and other project work in the unit. "Key Vocabulary" is an important component of the elements of nonfiction personal history, a resource used by students throughout the unit. Students record vocabulary that illuminates theme/purpose and helps describe the subject of the nonfiction piece. We also assume that teachers will reinforce key vocabulary in the ways that work best for them and their students. The following terms are key to the unit (though not listed in any particular order):

- Nonfiction
- Theme/Purpose
- Writing in scenes
- Visual language
- Guiding question

### Technology, Media & Resource Requirements

The following list outlines the technology and media requirements for the unit:

#### Hardware

- 1 laptop per student is recommended
- Computers need sound card and need to be capable of recording audio
- Headphones, mic

#### Internet Browser

- Firefox 3.6+
- Chrome 4+

- Safari 4+
- Internet Explorer 9

#### Software

- MS Office (Word, PowerPoint, Excel)
- iMovie + camera (or similar video setup)
- Audacity or GarageBand
- Publisher or other publishing software
- Skype or iChat (for connecting with experts)
- Flash Player
- Video Player
  - Capable of playing WMV and MOV files (usually comes with the computer – Media Player on Windows/Quicktime on Mac)
  - Alternative: VLC Player is a free download that would be able to play most video formats

#### Email access

- Many schools are wary of having working emails, but collaborative writing tools like Google Drive may be an important part of the unit and require working email accounts for verification

#### Internet Connection

- Fast and reliable internet connection

Videos will be internal to the platform.

### Prior to Unit: Instructional Planning

We recommend several steps of instructional planning in advance of the unit. There are additional, module-specific instructional planning tasks following this list.

#### Consider Supplementary Readings

In terms of reading, the unit includes a number of relatively short, nonfiction readings of a variety of types. For some classes, this may be the right type and amount of reading. For other audiences, you the teacher may want to supplement the readings, either with an existing nonfiction text you have available in your school or classroom, or with one or more of the texts (or excerpts from texts) on our [supplementary reading list](#).

#### Whole Unit Review

First, review the whole unit. While we believe it will work well as written with a variety of Grade 8-10 audiences, you may find that the expectations and tasks require additional scaffolding for your students to be successful. In addition, if you have time constraints that will not allow your students to complete all of the tasks, we recommend removing the photo documentary mini-project, Module 3.

#### Cross-Class Collaboration

This unit is ideally situated for cross-class collaboration -- either two classes within the same school or district, or at a significant geographic distance. Students in the two classes can provide feedback on written and video-based products using the [feedback guidelines](#). When students produce work for audiences beyond their teacher and classmates, that work can feel, to the students, more personally relevant and important.

#### Collaboration Preparation

If you will be using Moodle, Canvas, ePals, Edmodo or another content management system to deliver this unit, you will want to create pages and activities for each of the activities listed in the Modules. It is also valuable to consider collaboration with another teacher, and another set of students, as your class works on this unit.

#### Ways to Locally Adapt the Unit

If there are influences particular to your region, or to your students' experiences, you may want to focus on those influences. Examples could include immigration, cultural integration, mass exodus from farm country, dwindling of a local industry (or industrial base); influences that stem from legal or political processes; and family, cultural, or religious influences.

#### Create Products Yourself

Next, we recommend that you create each of the products you will be asking students to create. Doing so will give you a feel for what to expect from students, and for challenges they may face. It may also provide you with samples you can show to students.

#### SchoolTube Publishing

For the final product (a video documentary), the unit anticipates the creation of a SchoolTube.com channel, either by you or someone associated with your school. Students upload their video documentaries to the channel, and request comments and film reviews.

#### Reading Instruction

Students are expected to undertake close reading for evidence of nonfiction elements. Strategies such as [reciprocal reading](#) (also known as reciprocal teaching) and question-generation are employed in the unit. Consider supplementing these with reading-instruction strategies that have worked for your students.

#### Discussion Guidelines

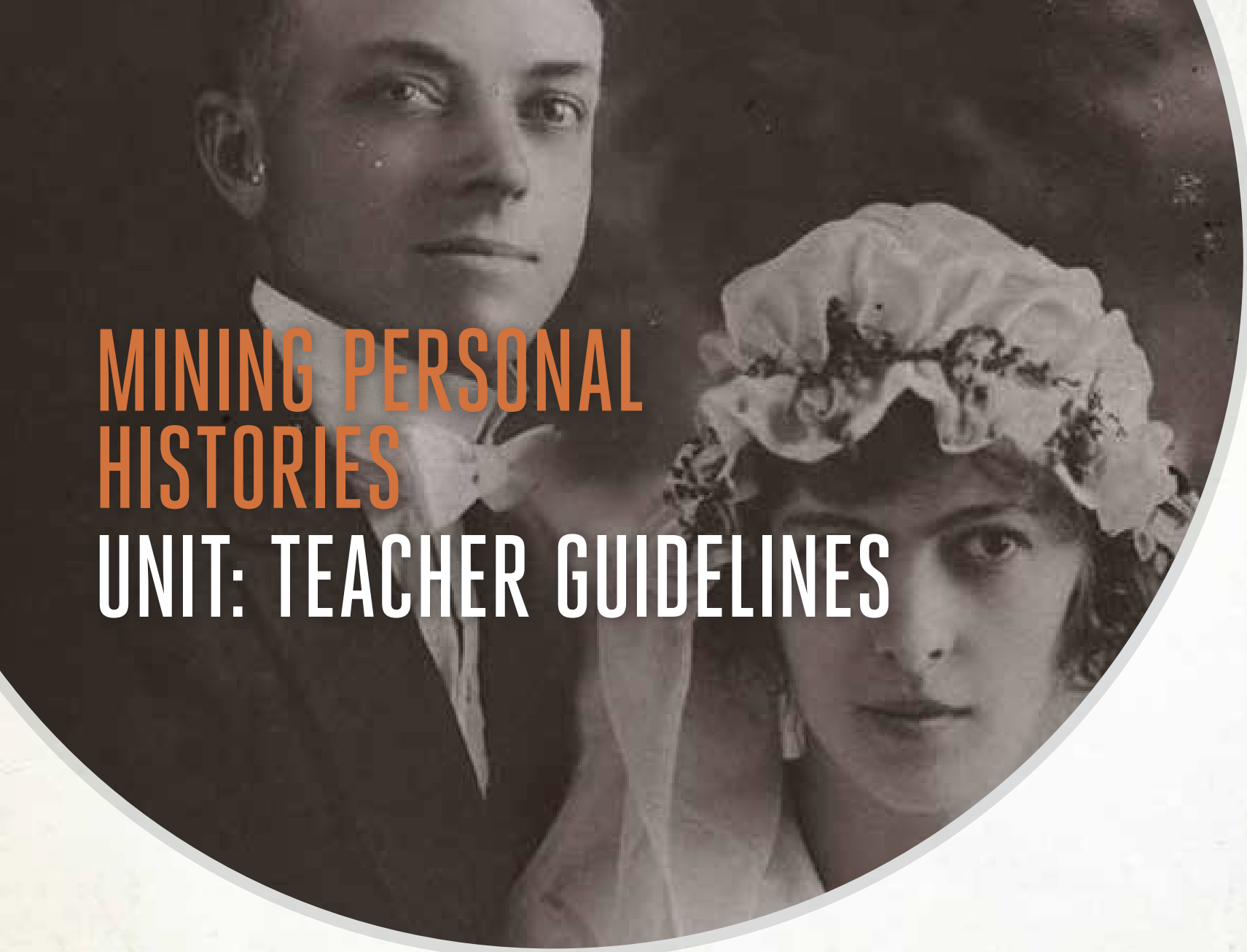
Discussion is a focus of this unit. We recommend you review and consider revising the [discussion guidelines](#). We also encourage you to use these guidelines for in-class and any online discussions.

### Producer's Notes

The unit positions students as writers and video producers; they keep track of important ideas, learnings, and questions in a “producer’s notes” file. We assume this to be an electronic file, such as a journal, blog, or private discussion space on a learning management system or online system such as Edmodo. If your students keep a digital journal already, use that throughout this unit for “producer’s notes.” If you have access to an LMS or Web site (such as Edmodo) with a blog, journal, or discussion function, you might use that tool for students’ digital journals. Pencil / pen and notebook will work if you don’t have digital options available for students.

We encourage you to journal about your experiences in the class and consider writing a public blog about the experience as well. Doing so can help students’ motivation if you share that you too are journaling / blogging, and it can lead to insights that will improve the unit.





# MINING PERSONAL HISTORIES

## UNIT: TEACHER GUIDELINES

# Teacher Planning, Module 1

Prior to starting the unit's first module, review (and if needed, organize) the following:

## Materials

1. Educurious Video: Norm Rice, "The Mayor Makes Up His Mind"
2. Internet access
3. Computers
4. Printed materials as needed OR materials in a learning management system
5. Small-group or classroom sets of any [supplementary texts](#) you plan to use
6. Producer's notes in the form of a digital journal, where students record insights and questions

## Nonfiction Choice: Supplementary Readings for this Module

In terms of whole-class reading, the unit includes a number of relatively short, nonfiction readings of a variety of types. In addition, in the first module students are asked to select a nonfiction text they will read on their own and discuss with peers in a reading workshop format throughout the unit. We recommend a number of nonfiction texts for students to consider in our [supplementary reading list](#).

For some classes, this may be the right type and amount of reading. If more reading is needed, you may want to supplement (or replace) the whole-class readings, either with an existing nonfiction text you have available in your school or classroom, or with one or more of the texts (or excerpts from texts) on our [supplementary reading list](#).

## Assessment Strategy

Conduct formative, informal assessment of students' understanding of the term "nonfiction" as they read the Unit Overview. Consider assessing whether students, in pairs, are able to identify at least 3 of the elements of nonfiction personal history in the Norm Rice video. You may also assess students' analysis of 2-3 possible interview candidates (part of their homework).

## Engagement, Possible Challenges & Strategies

If possible, offer students choice in texts they read. If students have a wide range of reading abilities, small groups for reading may be best. If you have the opportunity to find, or create, audio recordings of some or all of the readings, such a resource can help scaffold the activities for students.

## Use of Experts

Experts are not a feature of Module 1. Local experts who can be ready to respond to students will be needed starting in Module 3.

## Elective Learning Activities

Students may start reading a work of nonfiction on their own, and they may write producer's notes about powerful nonfiction stories they notice in everyday life.

### Instructional Sequence

**Learning Goals:** After completing this module, students will be able to explain the purpose of the unit, use a list of nonfiction elements to analyze a video, and explain what makes a classroom discussion valuable.

**Time:** 50 minutes

- 1. Unit Overview (5 minutes).** Introduce the unit by reading or paraphrasing the [Unit Overview](#). Or have students read it if it is posted on a learning platform. Make connections to their prior learning. Answer questions.
- 2. What Are the Moments of Pivotal Change? (10 minutes).** Have students read the profile of Norm Rice. Then [play the Norm Rice video](#). After the Norm Rice video, engage the students in a discussion of moments of key or pivotal change they can identify in the video. (Those moments might include dropping out of college, acting in the play *A Raisin in the Sun*, the assassination of Martin Luther King, the decision by Norm Rice to take action rather than just dream, the decision to move to Seattle, and the decision to run for mayor.) Probe for how those moments of pivotal change were presented—in video, in pictures, and/or in words spoken by Norm Rice.  
  
Put the students in small groups and have them generate questions they'd still like to ask Norm Rice. Have each group post their questions to the Discussion Board. Then have students read the Norm Rice interview and talk about whether it answers any of their questions (or raises others).
- 3. Elements of Nonfiction Personal History (15 minutes).** Review the elements with them, answering questions. Then circulate as they review the Norm Rice video on their own and attempt to identify elements in the video.
- 4. Standards, Project Overview and Driving Question (10 minutes).** Guide the discussion of the project and associated rubric. If you are comfortable doing so, be willing to modify the project if students come up with good additions or changes to it.
- 5. What Makes a Discussion Work? (10 minutes).** Let students know discussion will be a key part of this unit. Brainstorm discussion guidelines for in-class and online discussion. Use or modify these [Discussion Guidelines](#) with students.
- 6. Who Would be Great to Interview? (homework—15–20 minutes).** Tell students it's time to help them start thinking about people in the community they know whose identity has been shaped by powerful forces. They might hear about things like immigration, war, employment, or more personal influences. Have students write producer's notes: 2-3 names of people they know who might be good candidates for being interviewed. For each person they should include why they think they might have an interesting story about change, any influences that might have shaped the change, and if they are the kind of person who likes to talk and tell stories.
- 7. Nonfiction Reading: Your Choice (homework - 20-30 minutes).** Provide the list of supplementary texts to students. If you have a school or classroom library (or librarian), make those resources available to help students choose a good book for them. You might consider cultivating a relationship with a local public library, and/or direct students to online resources such as <http://www.biography.com/> OR <http://www.teenink.com/nonfiction/interviews/>.

# Teacher Planning, Module 2

Prior to starting Module 2, review (and if needed, organize) the following:

## Materials

1. Internet access to *Kids Helping Kids is Run by Kids—And For Kids and Climbers*
2. Computers
3. Printed materials as needed OR materials in a learning management system
4. Small-group or classroom sets of any *supplementary texts* you plan to use
5. Producer's notes in the form of a digital journal, where students record insights and questions

## Assessment Strategy

Assess students' ability to identify the elements of nonfiction personal history in the "Kids Helping Kids" article. Consider having them write, and assessing their writing, on the different ways that the Norm Rice video and the Kids Helping Kids article use the elements of nonfiction personal history to convey meaning. Consider assessing students' ability to use several of the elements of nonfiction personal history in their factual writing. You may want to assess the range and quality of the students' qualifying questions for potential interviewees, which they are to place in their producer's notes.

## Engagement, Possible Challenges & Strategies

If possible, offer students choice in texts they read. If students have a wide range of reading abilities, small groups for reading may be best.

## Use of Experts

Experts are not a feature of Module 2. Be sure you have organized them to help in Module 3, however.

## Elective Learning Activities

Students may start or continue reading a work of nonfiction on their own, and may write producer's notes about powerful nonfiction stories they notice in everyday life.



### Instructional Sequence

**Learning Goals:** After completing this module, students will be able to analyze nonfiction text using elements of nonfiction, write a descriptive paragraph based on nonfiction elements, and explain possible interview subjects' responses to qualifying questions.

**Time:** 130 minutes

#### 1. How Can Challenges Lead to Change? (25 minutes).

Make sure students understand the language in the article and the activity as well. Then guide the discussion of the elements of nonfiction personal history, probing the students' responses and striving to gain as much participation as possible. Focus on the elements of pictures / visual language, writing in scenes, and theme/purpose. Be sure to focus on words or phrases students do not know (both meaning and connotation), and any figurative language.

#### 2. How Do People Change? (30 minutes).

Possible extension / enrichment: If you have excellent readers throughout the class, you may want to assign more of the article, or perhaps the entire article, to groups. It is an involved, nuanced, long article; be sure to preview any section(s) yourself before students read it. During the module, make sure students understand the language in the paragraphs, and the reciprocal reading approach as well. Be sure to focus on words or phrases students do not know the meaning or connotation of, and any figurative language. Focus also on the elements of pictures / visual language, writing in scenes, and theme/purpose.

#### 3. Just the Facts, Please (20 minutes).

During the module, circulate as students write, and again as they are offering feedback, to ensure they are on task. Focus students on the use of nonfiction elements: theme/purpose, writing in scenes, and use of visual language. Guide the discussion, probing students to go beyond pat answers such as "It was hard" or "I didn't like writing that way." What did they find difficult about the writing? Or, if they enjoyed it, what specifically did they find enjoyable about it?

#### 4. Reading Nonfiction (45 minutes).

Prior to the module, review the second section of "Climbers" and make the comparisons you will ask students to make. Note the presence of quoted material in the second excerpt of "Climbers." What sorts of questions elicited those quotes?

If your students know how to do think - pair - share, remind them how it works. If not, ask for a volunteer and do a "fishbowl" think-pair-share with the student. Use the nonfiction texts you are reading to model for students how you want them to talk in their reading groups. Then group students in four-person groups to enable two pairs in each group for think - pair - share.

#### 5. Beginning to Plan Interviews (10 minutes).

Circulate as students write producer's notes; then guide the discussion, perhaps listing the criteria students have used for determining why someone might be a good interview subject.

#### 6. Have a Conversation (homework—15 minutes).

#### 7. Continue Reading Your Nonfiction Book (homework—nightly).

# Teacher Planning, Module 3

Prior to starting Module 3, review (and if needed, organize) the following:

## Materials

1. Access to the Norm Rice video “The Mayor Makes Up His Mind”
2. Computers with access to <http://images.google.com>, *Creative Narrations: Digital Story Collection* (click on any video and then the start button), *History.com - This Day in History*, *History.com - Civil Rights Movement*, *Using PhotoStory*, *Using iMovie* (video tutorials), and *Using Movie Maker*
3. Printed materials as needed OR materials in a learning management system
4. Small-group or classroom sets of any *supplementary texts* you plan to use
5. Producer’s notes in the form of a digital journal, where students record insights and questions

## Assessment Strategy

Assess students’ ability to write a plan for a photo documentary and represent change visually in a photo documentary by comparing their work to the plan + photo documentary rubric.

You may also want to assess students’ ability to offer effective feedback to others by comparing their feedback to the feedback guidelines.

Assess, from this module forward, students’ progress in the unit using the progress check activity.

Finally, assess students’ ability to generate both factual and open-ended questions, and one question that mentions an element of nonfiction personal history.

## Engagement, Possible Challenges & Strategies

Students choose from several documentary sites, and among several photo documentary tools, increasing engagement. If students have a wide range of reading abilities, small groups for reading may be best.

## Use of Experts

Be sure to have organized local experts who can be ready to respond to students starting in Module 3. Experts offer feedback on photo documentary plans (Module 3), and on the finished photo documentary (Module 3). Have students write to their experts early in Module 3 to introduce themselves and let the expert know they will be posting their photo documentary plans and then the finished photo documentary, and they’d like feedback on both. Then send experts the assignments and a rubric for each.

## Elective Learning Activities

Students may start or continue reading a work of nonfiction on their own, and may write producer’s notes about powerful nonfiction stories they notice in everyday life.

## MINING PERSONAL HISTORIES: UNIT: TEACHER GUIDELINES

**Learning Goals:** After completing this module, students will be able to write a plan for a photo documentary, represent change visually in a photo documentary, and offer effective feedback to others.

**Time:** 290 minutes

### 1. What's a Photo Documentary? (15 minutes).

Prior to module, preview the assignment and rubric. During the module, guide the discussion to ensure that students understand the purpose and steps of the activity.

### 2. How do pictures tell a story? (15 minutes).

Prior to the module, review the Norm Rice video to discern how pictures are used. Note they appear primarily in one section of the video. During the module, guide the discussion of how the pictures are used. You might ask which picture the students find most effective and why.

### 3. Nonfiction Text and Progress Check (15 minutes).

Review and, as needed, revise these Progress Check questions. This is a recurring activity designed to increase students' sense of ownership of the learning in the unit \*and\* to give you a sense of students' engagement and progress towards the instructional goals.

### 4. Learning From Questions (35 minutes).

Prior to the module, review the Suzanne Collins Q&A for potentially challenging context (knowledge of her series) and vocabulary. Decide how to introduce and present the reading. During the module, guide the discussion and ensure students understand factual vs. open-ended questions (as well as follow-up questions). Also guide the discussion around the impact of words and phrases used in the Q&A. Be sure to help students with meaning, both denotative and connotative, and any figurative language in the piece.

### 5. If the group is ready for it, consider asking them to imagine that Suzanne Collins is coming to visit. Have students vote on the 10 or 20 best questions from among those generated (20 minutes).

This is an early warm up for their interviewing work, which will start later in this module. What does change look like?

Prior to module, you may want to modify the list of example subjects related to change, to better match your students' interests. During the module, ensure that all students are able to access and use Google images, or another, similar site, to find examples of change-images. If it is better to have students work in pairs or small groups for this activity, they can still accomplish this task if one person posts at least a single link for each group member.

### 6. Short Documentary Examples (30 minutes).

Prior to the module, preview the photo documentary plan template, altering as needed. We recommend you create a sample 1-minute photo documentary using your phone, and then show it to students as a model. During the module, guide students to draft their photo documentary plan. One key piece will be tools. Suggest that students who have phones use them to take their pictures. You may need to allow them to take photos as homework, or over a weekend. A phone is also a great tool for recording audio narration. If students want to work in pairs to create a single photo documentary, have them each play a distinct role: one person takes the pictures, the other records the voice narration. Have the students record their roles in the plan.

If students will be accessing archives or interview collections, and if they will need instruction on how to get "B-roll" (non-interview) materials, be ready to provide them with support.

## MINING PERSONAL HISTORIES: UNIT: TEACHER GUIDELINES

### 7. **Photo Documentary Plan Feedback: Studio Days – Local EXPERT Involvement (30 minutes).**

Prior to the module, organize local experts who can provide feedback on the students' photo documentary plans. Experts with multimedia / film experience, writers and editors, even older students who have experienced the same or a similar project can provide excellent feedback. During the module, help students connect with experts. Ensure that experts respond to all students in a timely fashion. When students receive feedback, help them understand it and decide which parts of it they want to use to update their plan.

### 8. **Create Photo Documentary (100 minutes + homework).**

Prior to the module, decide on the tools students will use to combine photos and narration (and music, if they wish). PhotoStory, iMovie, or Movie Maker are common choices. We have provided links to using these tools. If one or more of your students is multimedia-savvy, you may want to make them in-class experts for assisting other students with combining photos and narration, and editing the result. During the module, assist students with transferring their photos and narration into the software, adding other effects if they choose, and saving their work. If there are in-class experts with the use of multimedia, you may want to have them circulate and help other groups as needed.

### 9. **Share Photo Documentary: Studio Days – Local EXPERT Involvement (20 minutes).**

Prior to the module, alert the experts that student work, in the form of a completed 1-minute photo documentary, will be posted on the discussion board. Send the experts the photo documentary rubric and ask them to send students feedback, based on the rubric. During the module, assist students with finishing their 1-minute photo documentaries and posting them to the Discussion Board. If you have time, schedule an in-class viewing of all of the documentaries; and/or a way to extend the audience and show other students, parents, or family members the documentaries.

### 10. **Photo Documentary Reflection. (10 minutes).**

Answer student questions about the prompts; encourage them to reflect thoroughly on their experience in creating the plan and documentary.

### 11. **Continue Reading Your Nonfiction Book (homework nightly)**

# Teacher Planning, Module 4

Prior to starting Module 4, review (and if needed, organize) the following:

## Materials

1. Computers with Internet access to “Carolyn McKinstry Talks About 16th Street Bombing, 50th Anniversary of Civil Rights Movement,” Interviews With Immigrants to the US (select a country / region, then “Show me!” to see links to interviews), What did you do in the War, Grandma? (scroll down to “The Interviews and select one), The Center for Digital Storytelling: Videos (scroll to a video that seems interesting and watch it), Creative Narrations: Digital Story Collection (click on any video and then the start button)
2. Printed materials as needed OR materials in a learning management system
3. Enough phones, cameras, or digital recorders to enable every student to record a short interview with a classmate.
4. Small-group or classroom sets of any supplementary texts you plan to use
5. Producer’s notes in the form of a digital journal, where students record insights and questions

## Assessment Strategy

After they read the Carolyn McKinstry piece, assess students’ ability to explain which nonfiction elements helped to convey a theme / purpose of the piece.

You may want to assess students’ ability to create a list of usable interview questions, conduct a peer interview, and critically reflect on that interview. You could use the list of interviewing tips and/or the discussion guidelines as an assessment tool.

Assess students’ progress in the unit using the progress check activity.

## Engagement, Possible Challenges & Strategies

Students choose from several documentary sites, increasing engagement. They also interview one another and record an interview. If students have a wide range of reading abilities, small groups for reading may be best.

## Use of Experts

Experts are not used in Module 4. Be sure to have experts organized to help in Modules 5, 6 and 7.

## Elective Learning Activities

Students may start or continue reading a work of nonfiction on their own, and may write producer’s notes about powerful nonfiction stories they notice in everyday life.



## MINING PERSONAL HISTORIES: UNIT: TEACHER GUIDELINES

**Learning Goals:** After completing this module, students will be able to list nonfiction elements that convey a theme, generate a list of usable interview questions, conduct a peer interview, and critically reflect on that interview.

**Time:** 210 minutes

### 1. Nonfiction Text and Progress Check (15 minutes).

Review and, as needed, revise these Progress Check questions. This is a recurring activity designed to increase students' sense of ownership of the learning in the unit \*and\* to give you a sense of students' engagement and progress towards the instructional goals. Decide if you are willing to have students work with you to modify the driving question for the unit. Doing so offers them a tremendous level of voice, choice and control over their learning.

### 2. How Do People Change Themselves? (30 minutes).

*Prior to the module*, review the passage and student-questions and be ready to probe student responses. You may want to list (or have students collectively create a list of) responses to the questions for future reference.

### 3. Learn about Interviewing (45 minutes).

Prior to the module, preview the questions and be ready to probe students' answers. Also review the interviewing tips. During the module, ensure that students are thinking about and discussing whom they will interview and how.

### 4. Watch and Analyze Interviews (30 minutes).

**Prior to the module:** Preview the text and video sites for particularly interesting interviews you can recommend to students. **During the module:** Support the students as they choose text and video interviews to read, view, and analyze. As needed, stop the students from reading and viewing to have a discussion of what they are learning and recording in their notes. Probe their understanding of the questions that were asked to elicit the interviews; and, for the videos, what they are noticing about the lighting, the camera positions, the audio (and any other nonfiction personal history elements).

### 5. Practice Interviewing One Another: Studio Days (30 minutes).

**Prior to module**, decide if your students would benefit from seeing a "fishbowl" interview with a group of 3-4 students modeling how to interview one another. The key is to pick students to enact the "fishbowl" who are confident enough to interview one another in front of the class. **During the module**, circulate to ensure students are all getting a chance to interview. If necessary, you may need to limit each interview to 1–2 minutes.

### 6. Practice Recording Interview: Studio Days (30 minutes).

**Prior to module:** Consider recording an interview of another teacher, a family member, or a student on your phone or the tool most of the students will be using so they can hear a model of a recorded interview. **During module:** You may need to have students go to different corners of the room, or areas near but outside the classroom, to find a place where it can be quiet enough to record an interview. If students complain about the background noise, remind them that this is practice AND that when they record someone for their video documentary, they want to minimize background noise as much as possible.

### 7. Share and Discuss Interviews (30 minutes).

**Prior to module:** Review the [interviewing tips](#) to be ready to prompt students as they prepare to interview documentary subjects. **During module:** Add students' responses to the Discussion Board post, and point out to students that post can become a resource for them as they prepare to interview.

### 8. Continue Reading Your Nonfiction Book (homework – nightly).

# Teacher Planning, Module 5

Prior to starting Module 5, review (and if needed, organize) the following:

## Materials

Computers with Internet access to *Estela de Carlotto hunts for Argentina's grandchildren 'stolen' decades ago*, the Sundance Film Festival's Documentary Proposal Checklist, tips to lighting, setting up, and recording video interviews.

1. Printed materials as needed OR materials in a learning management system
2. Small-group or classroom sets of any supplementary texts you plan to use
3. Producer's notes in the form of a digital journal, where students record insights and questions

## Assessment Strategy

Assess students' ability to produce an effective documentary proposal, using a template and incorporating expert and peer feedback that explains why the documentary should be made and what it can teach about self, society and culture.

(You are encouraged to have students exchange and assess their rough drafts, and also assess the quality of the feedback they offer classmates. Then you, alone or in conjunction with the students, could assess their final proposal using the video documentary proposal rubric.)

Assess students' progress in the unit using the progress check activity.

## Engagement, Possible Challenges & Strategies

Students use a question-generating approach to reading comprehension, which should increase engagement. If students have a wide range of reading abilities, small groups for reading may be best. Writing the video documentary proposal may challenge some students. You might consider having a workshop-style approach and highlighting a different section of the proposal template each day, asking who has ideas on how to address the question(s) in that section.

## Use of Experts

Experts offer feedback on the video documentary proposal (Module 5). Have students write experts early in Module 5 to re-connect and explain they will be posting their video documentary proposal drafts online and requesting their feedback. Send the experts the assignment and rubric. Follow up to ensure students reach out to experts, post work and let experts know, and experts return feedback to students.

## Elective Learning Activities

Students may start or continue reading a work of nonfiction on their own, and may write producer's notes about powerful nonfiction stories they notice in everyday life.

## MINING PERSONAL HISTORIES: UNIT: TEACHER GUIDELINES

**Learning Goals:** After completing this module, students will be able to produce an effective documentary proposal, using a template and incorporating expert and peer feedback that explains why the documentary should be made and what it can teach about how social and cultural influences shape our lives.

**Time:** 245 minutes

### 1. Nonfiction Text and Progress Check (15 minutes).

Review and, as needed, revise these Progress Check questions. This is a recurring activity designed to increase students' sense of ownership of the learning in the unit \*and\* to give you a sense of students' engagement and progress towards the instructional goals. Decide if you are willing to have students work with you to modify the driving question for the unit. Doing so offers them a tremendous level of voice, choice and control over their learning.

### 2. The Power of External Influence (30 minutes).

**Warning:** This article presents potentially disturbing context for some students and perhaps teachers -- the murder of parents in Argentina during the late 20th century. If you have any qualms about the context and subject matter, swap in another nonfiction text. **Prior to the Module:** Review the article and accompanying video. Create or point to any needed scaffolds so that students understand at least the basics of the Argentinian political culture in the late 20th century. **During the Module:** Guide the discussion, particularly as students imagine how they would prepare to create a documentary about Estela de Carlotto and her mission in life. Such thinking-through prepares them to write their own documentary proposal later in this module.

### 3. What's a Documentary Proposal? (15 minutes).

Preview the documentary proposal assignment and rubric. During the module, check students' understanding of both the assignment and the rubric.

### 4. Begin Drafting the Documentary Proposal (50 minutes).

**Prior to module:** Review the Sundance Checklist and compare it to the elements of nonfiction personal history students have been working with and using to take notes. Note some connections between the two resources: Sundance's asks how characters change, and the central question the film will answer; the elements of nonfiction personal history resource talks about a theme/purpose, and awareness of change / influences on change. **During module:** It is best if each student prepares her/his documentary proposal. This is the key piece of written, informative nonfiction in the unit. While each student prepares a documentary proposal, partners or small groups may provide assistance.

### 5. Time to Interview! (75 minutes).

**Prior to module:** Review the interviewing tips and the lighting, setting up and recording video interview tips. Distribute any equipment to students. **During module:** Be available for students to ask questions.

### 6. Revise Proposal (30 minutes).

### 7. Share Your Revised Video Documentary Proposal, then Finalize: Studio Days – Local EXPERT Involvement (30 minutes).

**Prior to module:** Alert the experts that student work, in the form of a completed video documentary proposal, will be posted on the discussion board. Send the experts the documentary proposal rubric and ask them to send students feedback, based on the rubric. **During module:** Assist students with finishing their video documentary proposals and posting them to the Discussion Board.

### 8. Continue Reading Your Nonfiction Book (homework - nightly).

# Teacher Planning, Module 6

Prior to starting Module 6, review (and if needed, organize) the following:

## Materials

1. Computers with Internet access
2. Printed materials as needed OR materials in a learning management system
3. Small-group or classroom sets of any **supplementary texts** you plan to use
4. Producer's notes in the form of a digital journal, where students record insights and questions

## Assessment Strategy

Assess students' ability to produce an effective video documentary that combines interview questions, audio, video (A roll and B roll), pictures, narration and music — and that conveys new understanding about self, society and culture.

(You are encouraged to have students exchange and assess their rough draft documentaries, and also assess the quality of the feedback they offer classmates. Then you, alone or in conjunction with the students, could assess their final documentary using the video documentary rubric.)

Assess students' progress in the unit using the progress check activity.

## Engagement, Possible Challenges & Strategies

Students spend nearly the entire module with hands-on documentary creation. You might consider having a workshop-style approach and highlighting a different section, or a different element, of the film-creation process. You would then ask for who has ideas on how to address the question(s) in that section.

## Use of Experts

Experts offer feedback on the video documentary draft (Module 6). Have students write experts early in Module 6 to re-connect and explain they will be posting their video documentary draft online and requesting their feedback. Send the experts the assignment and rubric. Follow up to ensure students reach out to experts, post work and let experts know, and experts return feedback to students.

## Elective Learning Activities

Students may start or continue reading a work of nonfiction on their own, and may write producer's notes about powerful nonfiction stories they notice in everyday life.

## MINING PERSONAL HISTORIES: UNIT: TEACHER GUIDELINES

**Learning Goals:** After completing this module, students will be able to produce an effective video documentary that combines interview questions, audio, video (A roll and B roll), pictures, narration and music—and that conveys new understanding about self, society and culture.

**Time:** 380 minutes

### 1. Nonfiction Text and Progress Check (15 minutes).

Review and, as needed, revise these Progress Check questions. This is a recurring activity designed to increase students' sense of ownership of the learning in the unit \*and\* to give you a sense of students' engagement and progress towards the instructional goals. You may want to remind them that this module represents the final opportunity to earn the three badges.

### 2. Review Documentary Assignment (15 minutes).

**Prior to the module,** preview the video documentary assignment and rubric; make any final adjustments. **During the module,** guide the students through the assignment and rubric, answering their questions. We recommend that you offer students the option of completing documentaries either as part of a small group or individually.

### 3. Review & Decide on Feedback (30 minutes).

**During the module,** help students decide whether to use specific elements of the feedback they received to update either their proposal or to change the direction of their video documentary.

### 4. Build Documentary (200 minutes).

Prior to module, decide how you want to organize studio days for assembling the video documentary: will students work in pairs, small groups, or individually but "floating" to help one another as the need arises? During the module, organize students in a way that works best for your class and their needs. You may want to consider having "stations" for working with interview questions, video, B roll, guiding questions / theme / purpose, and putting it all together.

### 5. Post Your Documentary Draft & Ask for Feedback (30 minutes).

Prior to module, alert the experts that student work, in the form of a revised video documentary, will be posted on the discussion board. Send the experts the video documentary rubric and ask them to send students feedback, based on the rubric. During the module, assist students with posting their documentary drafts and offering feedback.

### 6. Review, Revise, Finalize (90 minutes).

Assist students with understanding feedback and deciding how to revise documentaries.

### 7. Finish Reading Your Nonfiction Book (homework - nightly).



# Teacher Planning, Module 7

Prior to starting Module 7, review (and if needed, organize) the following:

## Materials

1. Computers with Internet access
2. Printed materials as needed OR materials in a learning management system
3. Small-group or classroom sets of any **supplementary texts** you plan to use
4. Producer's notes in the form of a digital journal, where students record insights and questions

## Assessment Strategy

Assess students' ability to write a film review; use the film review guidelines.

Also assess students ability to reflect thoughtfully on what they have learned from creating nonfiction personal histories. You are encouraged to have students create the criteria for what will be an effective reflection.

Assess students' progress in the unit using the progress check activity.

## Engagement, Possible Challenges & Strategies

Students spend nearly the entire module with hands-on documentary publishing, feedback, and a gallery walk.

## Use of Experts

Experts offer feedback on the final documentary posted online (Module 7). Have students write experts early in Module 7 to re-connect and explain they will be posting their video documentary online and requesting their feedback. Send the experts the assignment and rubric. Follow up to ensure students reach out to experts, post work and let experts know, and experts return feedback to students.

## Elective Learning Activities

Students may start or continue reading a work of nonfiction on their own, and may write producer's notes about powerful nonfiction stories they notice in everyday life.

## MINING PERSONAL HISTORIES: UNIT: TEACHER GUIDELINES

**Learning Goals:** After completing this module, students will be able to publish their video to a broad audience, offer film-review style feedback to peers, and reflect thoughtfully on what they have learned from creating nonfiction personal histories of people they know.

**Time:** 160 minutes

### 1. Progress Check (10 minutes).

Review and, as needed, revise these Progress Check questions. This is a recurring activity designed to increase students' sense of ownership of the learning in the unit \*and\* to give you a sense of students' engagement and progress towards the instructional goals. You may want to remind them that this module represents the final opportunity to earn the three badges

### 2. Share Your Documentary: Studio Days – EXPERT Involvement (75 minutes).

Decide whether and how to share the documentaries more widely. Perhaps you will share them with another classroom in the school or district, or in another city - state - country. Or consider hosting a documentary event in the school or a local library, or at an after-school or evening event.

### 3. Film Review (50 minutes).


Decide if you want to have students do a film review of one or more documentaries. Also decide if you will organize a Gallery Walk, where students view video documentaries and leave a comment on the Discussion Board. Guide Gallery Walk.

### 4. What Have We Learned & How Has My Thinking Changed? (25 minutes).

Prior to the module's start, create a discussion space / forum with reflection questions. During the module, if you wish to have an all-class discussion after students have reflected on the Discussion Board, do so. After module / unit ends: Be sure to save local copies (on thumb drives, perhaps) of any documentaries and other items that are located online / on the Discussion Board.



Civilian Conservation Corps, Third Corps Area: Yorktown, Virginia, Co.  
1351- vocational projects for "colored veterans". Photo courtesy of Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum.



# MINING PERSONAL HISTORIES

## UNIT: STUDENT GUIDELINES

# Student Guidelines, Module 1

## 1. Unit Overview (5 minutes).

Read the [Unit Overview](#) to understand what's expected.

## 2. What Are the Moments of Pivotal Change? (10 minutes).

True Story: In the late 1960s, an African-American college student named Norm Rice dropped out of school in Denver, Colorado. After dropping out he worked in a number of jobs. In April 1968, he was acting in the play *A Raisin in the Sun*. Across the country, Martin Luther King, Jr., a civil rights leader, was shot and killed on April 4. That night in Denver, the actors considered cancelling the play but chose to go on. During that night's performance of the play, Norm Rice made a pivotal decision.

- Watch the [Norm Rice video](#) and see how many moments of key or pivotal change you can identify. After the video discuss these moments of pivotal change. What were they, and how were those moments presented — in video, in pictures, in words spoken by Norm Rice?
- Then, in small groups, brainstorm things that you still want to know. Generate at least 3-4 questions you'd like to ask Norm Rice and post your group's questions to the Discussion Board.
- Finally, read this [short explanation of one of Norm Rice's pivotal moment during the play A Raisin in the Sun](#) and see if it answers any of the questions you have. (Just read through the paragraph "Rice's experience has echoes for all who have witnessed discrimination and for all who have resolved to change society to bring it into line with King's vision and dreams"—the remainder of the article does not focus on Norm Rice.)

## 3. Elements of Nonfiction Personal History (15 minutes).

In this unit, you will watch and read a variety of nonfiction personal histories. Many of those histories have parts, or elements, that are used as building blocks. (Later you will use some of these elements as you create personal histories.) Open the [Elements of Nonfiction Personal History](#) and review it to

make sure you understand it. Then work with a partner to see how many of the elements you can find in the Norm Rice video. Share your thinking about at least three of the elements on the Discussion Board. Then discuss as a class the following three elements: theme/purpose, writing in scenes, and pictures/visual language. Use the questions below to help guide your thinking and the discussion. Theme/ purpose: What is the theme or purpose of "The Mayor Makes Up His Mind"? Writing in scenes: What is the opening scene in the video? Can you identify 1 or 2 scenes in the middle of the video? What is the conclusion or final scene in the video? Pictures/visual language: How are pictures and visual language used in the video?

## 4. Standards, Project Overview and Driving Question (10 minutes).

Like Norm Rice, people you know make significant changes based on a variety of influences. Some of those influences or forces are internal. They are in our hearts and minds. Other influences, such as the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., or cultural or political forces, are external. In this unit, you and your classmates will read, view and discuss nonfiction stories of people who have been shaped by a variety of forces. You will research the stories of people in your community. You will ask people you know about how and why they have changed. And finally, you will share people's stories in a way that helps you work towards these [standards](#) and addresses the unit's driving questions: How do social and cultural influences shape our lives? Let's discuss this question and the final project now by reviewing and discussing the [final project outline](#) and the [final project rubric](#).

## 5. What Makes a Discussion Work? (10 minutes).

Before we dive into the project, let's talk about some guidelines for discussion. We'll be having a lot of discussions in this unit. What makes a good discussion, and how can we set up some simple guidelines for discussions? Review and revise the [Discussion Guidelines](#).

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### 6. Who Would be Great to Interview? (homework—15–20 minutes).

It's time to start thinking about people you know who have been influenced by powerful forces.

You might know people who have come from another country, fought in a war, been to college—or have been influenced strongly by family and community influences.

Write in your producer's notes the names of 2-3 people who might be good to interview.

For each person include why you think the person might have an interesting story about change, any influences that might have shaped the change, and if they are the kind of person who likes to talk and tell stories.

### 7. Nonfiction Reading: Your Choice (homework—20-30 minutes).

It's time to choose a nonfiction book you will read throughout this unit.

Look at the list of supplementary texts. We may have books in the classroom, or the local library, that will work for you.

You can also take a look at online resources such as <http://www.biography.com/> OR <http://www.teenink.com/nonfiction/interviews/> to see if the writers there have any suggested nonfiction books you might want to read.

Bring the title of the book you want to read to class.



# Student Guidelines, Module 2

## 1. How Can Challenges Lead to Change? (25 minutes).

Today we'll dive deeper into written nonfiction and keep revising our list of the elements of personal histories.

## 2. First, discuss with a partner the different ways of responding when bad things happen.

- Then share your ideas with the class. Read [Kids Helping Kids is Run by Kids — And For Kids](#), an article about a Connecticut nonprofit group.
- After you have read the passage, work with a partner to see if you can identify [the elements of nonfiction personal history](#) in the selection.
- Share your thinking with the class. Also discuss the meanings of any words or phrases that are not familiar to you.
- As a class, discuss differences between the Norm Rice video and how the video tells Rice's story, and the Kids Helping Kids story and how the article tells the story of the nonprofit organization and its founder. Refer to the elements of nonfiction personal history if that helps with the comparison.

## 3. How Do People Change? (30 minutes).

First, think about the importance of having goals. Share your ideas with a small group and then the class. In a small group (3-4 students), do some reciprocal reading of the first four paragraphs of the nonfiction story "[Climbers](#)," by Phillip Gourevitch. This article describes the changes a young man and his country have undergone and are still undergoing. The young man, Gasore, who is described in the first four paragraphs, is now a champion cyclist in Rwanda. Use these [reciprocal reading directions](#). Appoint one person to share the group's thinking with the class. Discuss: What is new or different about the "Climbers" piece and its use of the elements of nonfiction personal history, compared to the Norm Rice video and the "Kids Helping Kids" article?

## 4. Just the Facts, Please (20 minutes).

Let's see what it's like to try to write some descriptive nonfiction. Join a group of 3 or 4 classmates. You'll need something to write with. For 5-7 minutes, each person in the group should write a short, factual description of the room, one particular object in the room, or another person in the group: Then you will post your writing to the discussion board.

Here are some items to focus on as you write:

**Focus on several of the elements of nonfiction personal history: theme/purpose, key vocabulary, writing in scenes, and pictures/visual language.** Use the questions below as you write your description: **Theme/purpose:** can readers tell what you are trying to communicate? **Key Vocabulary:** What are some words that will convey your theme/purpose, or that will make the subject of your writing—whether it is a thing or person--come to life for the reader? **Writing in scenes:** Is there a start - middle - end to your short piece? Is each one clear and memorable? **Pictures/visual language:** Can readers "see" the room, object, or person you are describing?

Once you have posted your description, review your classmates' discussion board posts. Comment on details that stick out or "pop"—that are memorable, powerful, or somehow interesting. If there's a favorite sentence, quote it and say why. What did you learn from trying to write description using several of the elements of nonfiction?

## 5. Reading Nonfiction (45 minutes).

Write in your producer's notes a brief summary of the nonfiction text you have chosen to read. What seems to be the theme/ purpose of the nonfiction work? Are you enjoying it, and why or why not? Have you noticed any key vocabulary, visual language, or writing in scenes? Get into your reading group, do think - pair - share with one other person, and discuss your nonfiction text using one or more of these questions. Share your thinking with the larger group and then the class.

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Then as a class, read [another section of "Climbers."](#) In this section, the author connects Rwandan history and Gasore's journey as a rider. Use [the elements of nonfiction personal history](#) as a guide. In your producer's notes, take 5-10 minutes to write out which elements you see in the piece. Discuss with a partner which elements are present in the article. Is there a most-important element in this piece? Be sure to review the three key elements you have been discussing and using as a guide to writing: **Theme/purpose** - what is the purpose of the selection? **Writing in scenes** - what is the opening, where is the middle scene (or set of scenes), and what is the concluding scene? **What Pictures / visual language** make these scenes vivid or interesting? Then discuss your thinking with the class. **Make several comparisons:** How are the elements of nonfiction personal history used differently in this reading selection than they were in the first selection from "Climbers"? Which elements are used in the Kids Helping Kids reading, and in the Norm Rice video? Use [the elements of nonfiction personal history](#) to help make the comparison.

Discuss with your class the types of questions the author of "Climbers," Phillip Gourevitch, probably asked of Gasore (and other riders, relatives of riders, and their coaches).

### 6. **Beginning to Plan Interviews (10 minutes).**

Let's extend your thinking about the people you might interview for your documentary. In your producer's notes, write down 3-4 qualifying questions for each person. These questions will help you figure out if the person would be good to interview. Here are a couple of sample questions. You can use them, or come up with your own questions. Aim for 3-4 questions total: What are some important changes in your life? What has been the greatest influence on your life? With a partner, share your thinking on possible people to interview and why you think they might be good interview subjects. Then share your thinking with the class on the Discussion Board.

### 7. **Have a Conversation (homework - 15 minutes).**

For homework, reach out to one or more of the people whom you think you might be interested in interviewing. Ask them the qualifying questions you wrote and discussed in the prior activity. Record their answer in your producer's notes.

#### Note

Do not conduct a full interview as we haven't worked on how to do an interview yet!

(As a production team, we will be researching interview techniques soon. However, if you'd like to know more about interviewing, take a look at the resources at this site: [Interviewing Tips from Genealogy.com](#). To find additional resources related to interviewing, use your favorite Internet search engine and an interview-related search string such as "tips for good interviews.")

### 8. **Continue Reading Your Nonfiction Book (homework - nightly).**

Remember to read your nonfiction book regularly. Most good readers try to read every day or nearly every day, even if they are reading only a few pages when they do so. That way you won't forget what is happening in your book.

If you finish your nonfiction book before the unit ends, pick another nonfiction text and read it.

# Student Guidelines, Module 3

## 1. What's a Photo Documentary? (15 minutes).

Over the last couple of days, you've read several nonfiction passages and used a list of attributes that help make nonfiction effective. And you've begun thinking about whom you might interview for your video documentary. Today we will start working on a pair of tasks that will serve as a great warm up for the documentary proposal and the documentary itself. Review the [1-minute photo documentary + plan](#) assignment. Let's look at the [rubric](#) for these assignments and talk about questions you have.

## 2. How do pictures tell a story? (15 minutes).

Let's take another look at the [Norm Rice video](#). We want to analyze what kind of pictures are in the video and how they are used. Open [elements of nonfiction personal history](#) and use it to take notes on the pictures during and after [watching the video](#). Then discuss with the class how pictures were used in the video.

## 3. Nonfiction Text and Progress Check (15 minutes).

Write in your producer's notes a brief summary of the nonfiction text you have chosen to read. What seems to be the theme/ purpose of the nonfiction work? Are you enjoying it, and why or why not? Have you noticed any key vocabulary, visual language, or writing in scenes? Get into your reading group, do think - pair - share with one other person, and discuss your nonfiction text using one or more of these questions. Share your thinking with the larger group and then the class.

Then, as a class, do a progress check. Discuss how you're doing with a) nonfiction reading, b) the driving question--does it need revision? c) badge eligibility, d) ideas about working together more productively. Do you have any questions about what's expected of you?

## 4. Learning From Questions (35 minutes).

Let's read a short nonfiction "Q&A" (question and answer) as a way to get warmed up for creating interview questions. In pairs, use [reciprocal reading](#) strategies to read the [Q&A with Hunger Games author Suzanne Collins](#).

Now to [question-generating](#): with your partner, generate two types of questions:

- First, questions you might consider asking Suzanne Collins if you were going to re-interview her. Examples could be factual questions, such as "How long did it take you to write the first book?" Or they could be open-ended questions — questions without a factual or obvious answer — such as "Who is your favorite character and why?" They can also be follow-up questions to issues raised in the Q&A, such as "What is your opinion of war?" (In the Q&A, Collins talks about war.)
- Also generate questions you have about the language--the word choices--in the Q&A. Example: "What impact does the word \_\_\_\_\_ have on the reader?" Your questions can be about the language used in the interviewer's questions or Collins's answers.

At least one of your group's questions should mention an [element of nonfiction personal history](#).

Share your questions with the class, at least one factual and one open-ended question per group. Which type of question, factual or open-ended, seems most interesting to you? Why?

## 5. What does change look like? (20 minutes).

Let's find and analyze some pictures of change to prepare for creating a photo documentary. Go to <http://images.google.com>. In the search box, type in a subject related to change that interests you. Examples might include "graduating high school," "going to college," or "getting a job" OR "war" or "effects of pollution" OR "immigration causes" or "job change."



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From the images that appear, choose 3-5 that seem interesting or powerful. Jot down what sorts of change you think might have taken place before, during, or after these pictures were taken. Copy the link for each of the images into a Discussion Board entry. Use the [Discussion Guidelines](#) to comment on one another's images.

### 6. Short Documentary Examples. (30 minutes).

Let's look at some examples of short documentaries that use photos and voice narration. Watch a few of the videos at one or more of these sites, paying attention to how pictures and other "B roll" (everything other than interview footage) are used:

- [Creative Narrations: Digital Story Collection](#) (click on any video and then the start button):
- [History.com - This Day in History](#)
- [History.com - Civil Rights Movement](#)

Think about what you noticed in the videos. Discuss with a small group any [elements of nonfiction personal history](#) you observed, particularly pictures / visual language. Now let's start drafting a plan for your 1-minute photo-documentary. Use this [plan template](#). Discuss it as a class, asking any questions, then work with a partner. Each of you should create a plan for your own photo documentary.

### 7. Photo Documentary Plan Feedback: Studio Days – Local EXPERT Involvement (30 minutes).

Post your photo documentary plan to the Discussion Board, then ask peers and a local expert for specific types of feedback. Offer feedback to a peer. All reviewers will use these [feedback guidelines](#). Once you receive feedback on your photo documentary plan, decide which pieces of feedback you will use to update your plan.

### 8. Create Photo Documentary (100 minutes + homework).

Create your 1-minute photo documentary, to include a guiding question and theme/purpose (what do you want viewers to understand?), photos and narration that help develop the ideas, and some music (optional) that matches the theme/purpose. You may include other [elements of nonfiction personal history](#). You will need to get photos and voice narration from your camera (or other tool) into a computer, then combine the raw materials using software such as PhotoStory, iMovie, or Movie Maker. Here are resources for [Using PhotoStory](#) | [Using iMovie \(video tutorials\)](#) | [Using Movie Maker](#)

### 9. Share Photo Documentary: Studio Days – Local EXPERT Involvement (20 minutes).

Share your 1-minute photo documentary with the class and a local expert. Post your work to the Discussion Board. Get some feedback on your 1-min documentary from peers and a local expert. Offer some feedback to a peer. All reviewers will use the [feedback guidelines](#).

### 10. Photo Documentary Reflection. (10 minutes).

In your producer's notes, reflect on your 1-minute documentary + plan — what went well? What would you do differently if you had it to do over again? If you feel your 1-minute documentary was a success, what evidence do you have for that?

### 11. Continue Reading Your Nonfiction Book (homework nightly).

Remember to read your nonfiction book regularly. Most good readers try to read every day, or nearly every day, even if they are reading only a few pages when they do so. That way you won't forget what is happening in your book.

If you finish your nonfiction book before the unit ends, pick another nonfiction text and read it.

# Student Guidelines, Module 4

## 1. Nonfiction Text and Progress Check (15 minutes).

Write in your producer's notes a brief summary of the nonfiction text you have chosen to read. What seems to be the theme/purpose of the nonfiction work? Are you enjoying it, and why or why not? Have you noticed any key vocabulary, visual language, or writing in scenes? Get into your reading group, do think - pair - share with one other person, and discuss your nonfiction text using one or more of these questions. Share your thinking with the larger group and then the class.

Then as a class, do a progress check. Discuss how you're doing with a) nonfiction reading, b) the driving question--does it need revision?, c) badge eligibility, d) ideas about working together more productively. Do you have any questions about what's expected of you?

## 2. How Do People Change? (30 minutes).

Let's read an article that includes historical references and answers to questions to see how the author uses nonfiction characteristics we've been studying--and also to see if it helps us think about interviewing.

- First, discuss with a partner, and then the whole class, what you know about the US Civil Rights Movement. Do you know how young people were involved in the Civil Rights Movement?
- Then read "[Carolyn McKinstry Talks About 16th Street Bombing, 50th Anniversary of Civil Rights Movement.](#)" With your partner, identify and look up any words that aren't familiar to you. Also write down questions that you have after reading the article

- Then, using your copy of the [elements of nonfiction personal history](#), create notes to share with the class about the following questions and ideas:

- One possible theme/purpose of this passage is to help others understand how one person's story can teach others about society and how it has changed. Which words, scenes, or other [nonfiction elements](#) in the passage refer to societal change?
- Why does the article discuss events from 50 years ago in the middle, and then conclude by talking about the future?
- If you were to interview Carolyn McKinstry, what are some basic questions that you might ask her? What are some follow-up questions about interesting or unclear statements?

## 3. Learn about Interviewing (45 minutes).

Let's see what it's like to learn about interviewing. Why do you think it's important to interview people for your documentary? What do you hope to gain from your interview(s)? When, how, and where does it make sense to interview the people you need to?

Join a group of 3 or 4 classmates to discuss these questions, then share with the whole class. If it helps you or your peers, you may want to describe the person to your group members and classmates.

For 15-20 minutes, review these [interviewing tips](#). Then, discuss what you learned from your research



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### 4. Watch and Analyze Interviews (30 minutes).

Read and watch several (at least 2-3 examples) of text-based and video recorded interviews. Jot notes as you watch using the [elements of nonfiction personal history](#), then discuss with a small group what you noticed about the questions; and, if you watched video, the lighting, where the camera pointed (and if it changed position), and the audio--did you hear one or several voices? Add to the list of the [elements of nonfiction personal history](#) you have been developing all along anything that you learned from watching and discussing these interviews.

**Text:** [Interviews With Immigrants to the US](#) (select a country / region, then "Show me!" to see links to interviews); [What did you do in the War, Grandma?](#) (scroll down to "The Interviews and select one)

**Video:** [The Center for Digital Storytelling: Videos](#) (scroll to a video that seems interesting and watch it); [Creative Narrations: Digital Story Collection](#) (click on any video and then the start button)

### 5. Practice Interviewing One Another: Studio Days (30 minutes).

Let's continue our study of nonfiction by interviewing one another. Start by getting into groups of 3-4. Write 3-5 interview questions and interview one another about a change in their life and what caused the change (refer to the [interviewing tips](#) in case you need a refresher).

Here are three additional interviewing tips:

- You want to avoid your interviewee giving a bunch of short answers that won't make sense by themselves. So, ask the person you are interviewing to incorporate your question into the response. Example: tell the person you are interviewing, "If I ask where you were born, you don't answer "Seattle" you answer, "I was born in Seattle."
- Use follow up questions when the person says something interesting or unclear. One of the best follow-up questions is a simple one: "Tell me more about [the thing the person just said]."

- To generate as much visual language as possible, ask questions that aim for a descriptive response. Example: "Could you describe what your house looked like or what process you went through when you milked the cows?"

After everyone has been interviewed once (and conducted at least one interview), debrief by talking about the interviews you just conducted: What was interesting? What worked well? If you could ask one follow up question now of the person you interviewed, what would it be?

### 6. Practice Recording Interview: Studio Days (30 minutes).

Now it's time to record an interview. Using your phone, a camera that records video, or another digital tool if available, record a brief interview with one of the people from your small group. You can ask the same questions as the first time you did the interview, or you can change the questions. Review the recording of the interview. How does recording an interview help it, challenge it, and make it different?

### 7. Share and Discuss Interviews (30 minutes).

Share as many of your recorded interviews with the class as possible. Have a discussion after every 2-3-4 interviews about the following, adding to a Discussion Board post responses to the following questions: What's important to know \*before\* going to an interview? What are some things to listen for and look for just before, during, and after an interview? Which of the [interviewing tips](#) are most important to keep in mind as you prepare to interview people for your video documentary? The Discussion Board post can serve as a reference for students as they think about interviewing others.

### 8. Continue Reading Your Nonfiction Book (homework - nightly).

Remember to read your nonfiction book regularly. Most good readers try to read every day, or nearly every day, even if they are reading only a few pages when they do so. That way you won't forget what is happening in your book.

If you finish your nonfiction book before the unit ends, pick another nonfiction text and read it.

# Student Guidelines, Module 5

## 1. Nonfiction Text and Progress Check (15 minutes).

Write in your producer's notes a brief summary of the nonfiction text you have chosen to read. What seems to be the theme/ purpose of the nonfiction work? Are you enjoying it, and why or why not? Have you noticed any key vocabulary, visual language, or writing in scenes? Get into your reading group, do think - pair - share with one other person, and discuss your nonfiction text using one or more of these questions. Share your thinking with the larger group and then the class.

Then, as a class, do a progress check. Discuss how you're doing with a) nonfiction reading, b) the driving question--does it need revision?, c) badge eligibility, d) ideas about working together more productively. Do you have any questions about what's expected of you?

## 2. The Power of External Influence (30 minutes).

While many of the nonfiction texts you have been reading are uplifting, often great difficulty or challenge has influenced people's lives. Let's read one such informative account of a woman who is seeking to address a decades-old problem in Argentina: children separated from parents at birth for political reasons. You'll use reciprocal reading and question-generating strategies to read this article in a group of 3-4. First, in your group, split up the article [Estela de Carlotto hunts for Argentina's grandchildren 'stolen' decades ago](#). Use [reciprocal reading](#) to read and understand the article. On to question-generating: with your group, generate questions the article raises (but doesn't answer directly or obviously). Remember to generate factual and open-ended questions. At least one of your group's questions should mention an [element of nonfiction personal history](#). Share your questions with the class at least one factual and one open-ended question per group.

First with a partner, do pair-share (each of you shares your thinking) on these questions: How would you create a documentary about Estela de Carlotto and what she is doing? Why would it be important to document her story? What sorts of questions would you ask her? What pictures, "B Roll" (video of things other than Estela de Carlotto talking) and other documentary elements would you want to capture?

Share your thinking with the class.

## 3. What's a Documentary Proposal? (15 minutes).

Now that you have some interviewing skills, it's time to start writing your documentary proposal. A documentary proposal is a written text that documentary filmmakers prepare when they hope to obtain financing or other support for their documentary film. But a documentary proposal also fulfills another important purpose: it serves as a plan for the documentary filmmaker, so they are better-prepared when it comes time to conduct interviews, record audio and video, select images, captions, titles, and put everything together. Let's review the [assignment](#) and the [rubric](#) for the documentary proposal, then get you started with writing the proposal document.

## 4. Begin Drafting the Documentary Proposal (50 minutes).

The Sundance Film Festival is one of the most-prestigious film festivals in the United States. Review [the Sundance Film Festival's Documentary Proposal Checklist](#); read the first three sections, "Brief Logline," "Summary of Topic" and "Narrative Synopsis." Also notice how many other sections of the checklist focus on funding. In a Discussion Board post, describe any connections between what Sundance is looking for and the [elements of nonfiction personal history](#) we have been developing. As you prepare to build your documentary, you will use a proposal template. It is based on two things: the elements of nonfiction personal history and also professional documentary proposal checklists, like Sundance's. Review the

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[Video Documentary Proposal template](#) now, and begin working with a small group to write your proposal.

### 5. Time to Interview! (75 minutes).

Schedule your interview(s) for the video documentary you are creating. Review the [interviewing tips](#) prior to the interview. Make sure you have a list of 10-15 questions, or more, prepared for each interview. Record video and audio in a single interview if possible. Check out these tips to [lighting, setting up, and recording video interviews](#).

### 6. Revise Proposal (30 minutes).

After your first interview(s), your planned documentary may go in a different direction than you anticipated. This can happen easily if an interview subject talks about something completely unexpected and interesting. Consider these questions to help you reflect on the interview and direction of the documentary. Do a pair-share with a partner on your responses:

- What went well in the interview? What was a challenge?
- Is there a compelling subject that came up during the interview that you want to explore further?
- Is your original idea about why it would be good to interview this person still solid, or does it need to be changed a little (or completely replaced)?

As needed, revise your documentary proposal using peer feedback, and based on your first interview(s). Reviewers use [feedback guidelines](#). During module: Check in with students, either individually or as a class, to see if their documentary proposals need to be revised slightly, substantially, or not at all based on their first interview(s).

### 7. Share Your Revised Video Documentary Proposal, then Finalize: Studio Days – Local EXPERT Involvement (30 minutes).

Share your revised video documentary proposal with a small group and a local expert. Post your work to the Discussion Board. Get feedback on your video documentary proposal from peers and a local expert. Offer some feedback to a peer. All reviewers will use the [feedback guidelines](#). Decide which of the feedback to use to revise your proposal. Strive to accept and act on 1-2 pieces of medium and hard feedback. Finalize and submit your proposal.

### 8. Continue Reading Your Nonfiction Book (homework - nightly).

Remember to read your nonfiction book regularly. Most good readers try to read every day, or nearly every day, even if they are reading only a few pages when they do so. That way you won't forget what is happening in your book.

If you finish your nonfiction book before the unit ends, pick another nonfiction text and read it.

# Student Guidelines, Module 6

## 1. Nonfiction Text and Progress Check (15 minutes).

Write in your producer's notes a brief summary of the nonfiction text you have chosen to read. What seems to be the theme/ purpose of the nonfiction work? Are you enjoying it, and why or why not? Have you noticed any key vocabulary, visual language, or writing in scenes? Get into your reading group, do think - pair - share with one other person, and discuss your nonfiction text using one or more of these questions. Share your thinking with the larger group and then the class.

Then, as a class, do a progress check. Discuss how you're doing with a) nonfiction reading, b) the driving question—does it need revision? c) badge eligibility, d) ideas about working together more productively. Do you have any questions about what's expected of you?

## 2. Review Documentary Assignment (15 minutes).

It's time to start assembling all of your learning about nonfiction into a video documentary. Let's review the [assignment](#) and the [rubric](#) for the documentary, then get you started with creating your documentary

## 3. Review & Decide on Feedback (30 minutes).

In a small group, review the feedback you received on your video documentary proposal from your teacher, peers and a local expert. Decide if you will use the feedback to update your video documentary proposal, and if it will change your video documentary.

**A key decision to make:** Will you join a small group and create a documentary together around one proposal (it might be yours, it might be another group member's proposal)? Or will you continue on your own and create a documentary yourself? The advantage of creating a documentary as part of a group is getting to play a specific role in that group and focusing on that role. Roles might include Producer (organizes all of the parts), Writer (creates the questions and writes the script, if there is one), Photographer / Videographer (takes photos and

shoots video), and Editor (chooses photos, audio, and video). An advantage of creating a documentary on your own is getting to try all of these roles yourself.

## 4. Build Documentary (200 minutes).

Review the elements of your documentary proposal and decide in which order you will do the following: focus your guiding question further (if needed), decide on and practice with tools, gather raw material (A roll = interview video / audio, B Roll = everything else), continue interviewing (or re-interviewing), assembling the elements in a tool. Here are some helpful resources: [interviewing tips](#) | [lighting, setting up, and recording video interviews](#). | [elements of nonfiction personal history](#). Also: [Using PhotoStory](#) | [Using iMovie \(video tutorials\)](#) | [Using Movie Maker](#)

## 5. Post Your Documentary Draft & Ask for Feedback (30 minutes).

Post your documentary draft to the Discussion Board and request peer and expert feedback. Offer feedback to a peer. Reviewers use [feedback guidelines](#).

## 6. Review, Revise, Finalize (90 minutes).

Review the feedback you receive. Decide which parts, if any, to act on. Challenge yourself to tackle at least 1-2 pieces of medium and hard feedback--examples are in the [feedback guidelines](#). Finish and submit your documentary.

## 7. Finish Reading Your Nonfiction Book (homework - nightly).

See if you can finish up your nonfiction book this week—next week will be super-busy with creating the photo documentary.



# Student Guidelines, Module 7

## 1. Progress Check (10 minutes).

Discuss how you're doing with a) nonfiction reading, b) the driving question—does it need revision? c) badge eligibility, d) ideas about working together more productively. Do you have any questions about what's expected of you?

## 2. Share Your Documentary: Studio Days – EXPERT Involvement (75 minutes).

Share your documentary with classmates, an expert (or panel of experts), and the community at large using a SchoolTube channel set up for your class, or other Internet video-posting site. Request comments on your video, and solicit film reviews from others.

## 3. Film Review (50 minutes).

Review at least one other documentary using these guidelines for a [film review](#). Take part in a Gallery Walk of documentaries, leaving feedback for each documentary.

## 4. What Have We Learned & How Has My Thinking Changed? (25 minutes).

Reflect on your, and your class, experience of learning how to analyze and create informative nonfiction. What did you learn about the people you interviewed? From creating the 1-minute photo documentary, from interviewing classmates, and from creating the longer documentary? How has your thinking changed about the influences that shape people's lives? In what ways has your writing about others' experiences improved--or not improved?

**Most important:** How do social and cultural influences shape our lives?

**Finally:** If you were to create another documentary, what would you keep the same and what would you do differently?







# MINING PERSONAL HISTORIES

## RESOURCES & MATERIALS

# Skills and Abilities Students Will Practice During This Unit

Ability to analyze nonfiction (texts, videos, and research archives) carefully and discern external and internal forces or influences on people, and the changes that result from those forces

Ability to analyze nonfiction strategies authors and producers use to convey meaning, including:

- Analysis of how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events (order in which points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and connections drawn between points)
- Analysis of word / phrase meaning (figurative, connotative, and technical meanings)
- Analysis of word choice on meaning and tone

Ability to use digital media and environments to communicate, interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts, or others using a variety of digital environments and media

Ability to initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborated discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher led)

Ability to vet, during planning phase, interviewees for ability to speak to impact of forces on changes in their life

Ability to draft and revise interview questions

Ability to prepare for and ask follow up questions during interview

Ability to write / dramatize the impact of forces on interviewee

Ability to create audio or video short effectively communicating impact of force on person

# Discussion Guidelines

Throughout the unit, you and your classmates will engage in a variety of discussions. Some of those discussions will happen on the Discussion Board. Others will be face-to-face with a partner, as part of a small group, or as a whole class. (It is possible you will also engage in discussions with experts and with another class of students as well.)

The following discussion guidelines will help make sure that everyone learns as much as possible from discussion.

1. Work with your classmates, teacher, and anyone else involved in the discussion to set rules for discussion.
2. Prepare for discussion by reading, watching videos, researching, or writing. Whenever possible, use what you have learned in the discussion.
3. Listen hard during the discussion. Build on others' ideas by referring to them respectfully in your comments. If you agree with someone's ideas, give reasons and evidence. If you disagree, same rule: give reasons and evidence.
4. Try to bring to the discussion relevant ideas from what you have read and created in the unit already (and before the unit).
5. Aim to make clear, persuasive comments. Keep them short but information-rich.
6. Ask thoughtful questions, particularly about big ideas. Don't ask a question to put someone down. Ask questions to try to understand someone else's point of view.
7. Work hard to become better at discussion. One challenge: if you make a lot of discussion comments, practice making fewer discussion comments and letting others take the lead. If you generally make no or very few discussion comments, practice making more discussion comments.

[Guidelines adapted from CCSS ELA SL9.1 **Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.**]

# Video Documentary and Proposal Project

**Unit Driving Question:** How do social and cultural influences shape our lives?

## Purpose of the Project

We want to answer the driving question as best we can, working together, researching, reading, writing, and producing products. But ultimately we want to make a difference and inform others about themselves, our society and culture by presenting to them the stories of people's lives.

## Process

In this unit, you and your classmates will read, view, discuss, write about and create powerful nonfiction stories. You will research the stories of people in your community, focusing on change, the forces that influence those changes, and the effects of change. And finally, working individually and then in small groups, you will share people's stories in written and video formats.

## Products

You will be responsible for two major products:

- A written video documentary proposal outlining your guiding question (related to our larger driving question); the person or people you will interview; the theme/purpose of your documentary (why do people need to see it?); how much funding you would need to make it professional-level; and how you plan to combine video, audio, pictures, and other "B" roll, plus writing in scenes, to make a memorable documentary. There is a [rubric for the video documentary proposal](#).
- A 3-5 minute video documentary film that focuses on a guiding question and informs the audience in a compelling, memorable way how social and cultural influences shape our lives. There is a rubric for the video documentary film.

- You will post your video documentary to a SchoolTube channel, or another online site for hosting video. And you will request commentary and film reviews of your documentary. (More details will be forthcoming on this.)

There will be formative or preparatory tasks leading up to these two major products, including analyzing a variety of nonfiction texts (written, audio and video); planning for and creating a photo-based documentary; and learning about and practicing interviewing.

## Badges

You are eligible to earn three different badges during the unit. Let's review the [badge descriptions, images, and criteria for earning them](#) now.

## Process

Module 5 focuses on creation of the video documentary proposal; a [video documentary proposal template](#) is included. Module 6 focuses on the creation of the video documentary film itself, and Module 7 on the publishing of the video documentary.

## Audience

Your two major products will be presented to classmates, experts, and perhaps family members. *What would be some ways we could expand our audience and let the world know about the powerful stories you are going to research and explain?*



# Elements of Nonfiction Personal History

Nonfiction personal history is often built from common elements. See which of the following elements you can identify in the nonfiction text or video you have just read or watched. During discussion, your class may add to the list of nonfiction personal history elements.

**Title.** Does the work have a title? What is it, and what is its meaning?

**Theme/Purpose.** If you could summarize the purpose of the personal history in a sentence or two, what would it be? (If it helps, imagine that you are the person who made the personal history text or video: what are you trying to communicate to those who read or watch your personal history?)

**Influences on change; effect of change.** If the personal history includes a significant change for the person, what were the influences leading to that change? What was the effect of that change?

**Audience.** Make an informed guess at the audience for this personal history.

**Questions.** Can you tell what questions the writer or video-producer asked the person who was interviewed? If so, what are some of those questions? (You may have to guess at some of these).

**Awareness of problem/solution.** If the person who is the subject of the personal history had a problem that could be solved, what was the problem and what was the solution?

**Pictures/Visual Language.** Were pictures or visual language used? If so, quote or describe them. Example of visual language: "He looked relaxed, with a smile on his face and his hands hanging loosely at his sides."

**Key Vocabulary.** Which words or phrases helped to tell you something about the theme / purpose, or about the person(s) at the center of the piece of nonfiction? Are there words you need to look up to understand? Record them here (and their definition).

**Narration.** Was there narration — speaking — by the subject of the personal history? If so, what is an example of a key piece of narration?

**Writing in Scenes.** Writers and documentary makers bring the events, changes, and surroundings of a personal history to life through "chunks" of content. For example, there could be a clear opening (sometimes called a "tease"), a set of middle scenes, and a conclusion. Scenes often use visual and sound-based language, and metaphor/simile, to make the personal history memorable. For a nonfiction article that discusses writing in scenes (and using visual language), see Lee Gutkind's, "The Yellow Test" at <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/08/27/the-yellow-test/>

**Video/Music.** Were there video or musical elements included? If so, describe them.



# Photo Plan + Documentary Project

## Purpose of the Project

This is a chance to plan a piece of multimedia, practice choosing raw materials, put them in an order, create a short documentary around a guiding question, and get some feedback.

The plan and photo documentary will give you focused practice towards creating the larger video documentary and its proposal.

In the Norm Rice Video and in the readings you have done, you have looked for elements of nonfiction. The video, and the readings, also were related to our driving question: *How do social and cultural influences shape our lives?*

## Elements

You will create a 1-minute photo documentary centered on an idea that you choose. It should be related to our driving question. For example, you might choose to identify a particular change in the world around you and build your documentary around that change. Or you could focus on the causes or effects of a change in the world around you. You will want to form a guiding question. For example, it could be “What are some economic changes I see around me?”

- Review the [photo documentary rubric](#) first.
- Review [the elements of nonfiction personal history](#) before you start. Try to include many of the elements. Of particular importance are theme/purpose, writing in scenes, and pictures/visual language. These are required in your plan and in your photo documentary.
- Write a short plan before starting. The plan will include your guiding question, which raw materials you will include, the tool(s) you will use to assemble the raw materials, the audience, and how you will know if your photo documentary is a success
- In your documentary, include 10-15 photos that you take. In your plan, talk about the types of photos you plan to include.

- In your documentary, include narration (voiceover) that you record, explaining how each photo connects to your key idea. In your plan, talk about how you will record the narration.
- In your documentary, if you wish, include a music track. If you plan to include music, talk about what type of music in your plan.

## Process & Product

Discuss the project with your class. Decide upon your guiding question and the theme/purpose (for example, if your guiding question is “What are some economic changes I see around me?” you might want your theme/purpose to be “I want people to understand the big economic changes happening in my neighborhood”). Use the [photo documentary plan template](#) to begin drafting your plan. Get peer feedback on your plan, revise, and submit it. Then start creating your photo documentary: take photos, record narration, build a music track (optional), and create a 1-minute photo documentary that you share with peers on the Discussion Board.

## Audience

These ‘practice’ products will have classmates as your audience. *We will talk about other audiences with whom we might want to share these.*

### Rubric: Photo Documentary + Plan

CRITERIA	RATINGS				POINTS
Complete Plan	The plan includes all required elements and addresses them thoughtfully. 20 pts	The plan includes all required elements and addresses most of them thoughtfully. 16 pts	The plan includes most of the required elements and addresses some of them thoughtfully. 12 pts	The plan includes some of the required elements but addresses few of them thoughtfully. 8 pts	20 pts
Informative and Focused on Driving Question and Theme/Purpose	The photo documentary is informative, and the focus remains clearly on the driving question and the theme/purpose. 20 pts	For most of the informative photo documentary, the focus remains on the driving question and/or theme/ purpose 16 pts	The document presents information, but the focus strays frequently from the driving question and theme/ purpose. 12 pts	There is some evidence of a driving question, but it is unclear if the elements of the photo documentary connect to that question. There is little sense of a theme/ purpose. 8 pts	20 pts
Compelling Ideas Presented in Scenes	There are consistently compelling opening, middle, and concluding scenes. 20 pts	There are opening, middle, and concluding scenes, which are frequently memorable. 16 pts	There are separate scenes, some of which are memorable. 12 pts	There is not a sense of separate scenes. 8 pts	20 pts
Pictures / Visual Language Develop the Ideas	Both pictures and visual language in the narration consistently make scenes memorable and help develop ideas. 20 pts	Pictures and visual language in narration frequently make the scenes memorable and help develop ideas. 16 pts	Pictures and visual language in narration are occasionally memorable and may contribute to developing ideas. 12 pts	Pictures and visual language in narration do not support a theme/purpose or help develop ideas. 8 pts	20 pts
Appropriate Music Contributes to Theme/Purpose (optional)	Music matches the theme/purpose compellingly. 5 pts	Music frequently supports theme/ purpose 4 pts	Music at times seems disconnected from the theme/purpose. 3 pts	The music is distracting or undercuts the theme/ purpose. 2 pts	5 pts

# Photo Documentary Plan Template

**Title of your photo documentary:** \_\_\_\_\_

**(Required) Driving Question.** Should be related to our larger driving question: "How do social and cultural influences shape our lives?" For example: "What are changes that have happened in our schools in the last few years?"

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**(Required) Theme/Purpose.** If you could summarize the purpose of your photo documentary in a sentence or two, what would it be? What are you trying to communicate to those who watch your photo documentary? For example: If your driving question is about changes in local schools, your theme/purpose could be "I want people to watch my photo documentary to understand 2-3 specific changes in our schools in the last few years." Note: this can be a little tricky, as you are being asked to show, using pictures and visual language, a change that has already happened. You may want to think about a change you think you can "show" not just "tell."

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**Influences on change; effect of change.** What caused the change(s); what are the effects of the change(s)?

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**Audience.** Who is your audience?

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# Photo Documentary Plan Template

**(Required) Pictures/Visual Language.** What type of pictures will you take and include? Be as specific as possible. What are some examples of visual language you will use in your narration? Note: it may be tricky to find pictures of the way things were before the change. Think about other sources for visual information or language. Could you interview people, research in libraries or online to find older pictures, or use visual language to describe the way you think (or remember) things were before they changed?

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**Narration.** How and when will you record your narration? As you are taking pictures, before taking them, or after taking them?

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**(Required) Writing in Scenes.** Writers and documentary makers bring the events, changes, and surroundings of a personal history to life through “chunks” of content. For example, there could be a clear opening (sometimes called a “tease”), a set of middle scenes, and a conclusion. Scenes often use visual and sound-based language, and metaphor/simile, to make the personal history memorable.

What will be your opening scene, and how will you make it memorable?

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What will be 1-2 middle scenes, and how will you make them memorable?

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# Photo Documentary Plan Template

What will be your concluding scene, and how will you make it memorable?

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**(Optional) Video/Music.** Were there video or musical elements included? If so, describe them.

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### Rubric: Video Documentary Proposal

CRITERIA	RATINGS				POINTS
Informative and Focused on Driving Question, Theme/ Purpose, and Effects of Change on Interviewees	The plan includes an explicit driving question that is explained thoughtfully and clearly pertains to changes undergone by the interviewee(s), who are described. The theme/purpose of the documentary is clearly explained. 25 pts	The plan includes an explicit driving question that is explained and pertains to the changes undergone by the interviewee(s), who are described. The theme/purpose of the documentary is explained. 20 pts	The plan includes a driving question that is explained though the connection to the changes undergone by the interviewee(s) is not always clear. The theme/purpose of the documentary may not be clear. 15 pts	The plan includes an idea that is reaching to be a driving question, but the connection to the changes undergone by the interviewee(s) is not clear. Nor is the theme/purpose of the documentary clear. 10 pts	25 pts
Compelling Ideas To Be Developed in Scenes	There are consistently compelling opening, middle, and concluding scenes. 25 pts	There are opening, middle, and concluding scenes, which are frequently memorable. 20 pts	There are separate scenes, some of which are memorable. 15 pts	There is not a sense of separate scenes. 10 pts	25 pts
Video, Music, Narration, Visual Language, and B Roll Examine and Convey Complex Ideas	Video, music, narration, visual language, and B roll make scenes memorable and help to examine and convey complex ideas 25 pts	Video, music, narration, visual language, and B roll frequently make the scenes memorable and help to examine and convey complex ideas 20 pts	Video, music, narration, visual language, and B roll are occasionally memorable and may help to examine and convey complex ideas. 15 pts	Video, music, narration, visual language, and B roll do not support a theme/purpose or help examine and convey ideas. 10 pts	25 pts

### Rubric: Video Documentary Proposal

CRITERIA	RATINGS				POINTS
<p>Potential Funding Details and Success Indicators Explained</p>	<p>Potential funding details and success indicators are clearly and thoughtfully outlined and go beyond superficial, as in “Lots of people will view my video” (how many? how many comments and discussions will result?)</p> <p>25 pts</p>	<p>Potential funding details and success indicators are outlined and go beyond superficial, as in “Lots of people will view my video” (how many? how many comments and discussions)</p> <p>20 pts</p>	<p>Potential funding details and success indicators are clearly and thoughtfully outlined but frequently remain superficial, as in “Lots of people will view my video” (how many? how many comments and discussions)</p> <p>15 pts</p>	<p>Potential funding details and success indicators are either not outlined or are consistently superficial, as in “Lots of people will view my video” (how many? how many comments and discussions)</p> <p>10 pts</p>	<p>25 pts</p>
<p>Conventions &amp; Mechanics</p>	<p>Plan is written in labeled sections and includes all of the following: full sentences, clear punctuation, and appropriate grammar, syntax, and sentence variety, with very few if any errors.</p> <p>25 pts</p>	<p>Plan is written in labeled sections and includes most of the following: full sentences, clear punctuation, and appropriate grammar, syntax, and sentence variety, with few errors</p> <p>20 pts</p>	<p>Plan includes several of the following characteristics: labeled sections, full sentences, clear punctuation, and appropriate grammar, syntax, and sentence variety, with few errors.</p> <p>15 pts</p>	<p>Plan includes one or two of the following characteristics but does not show evidence of care with conventions and mechanics: labeled sections, full sentences, clear punctuation, and appropriate grammar, syntax, and sentence variety, with few errors.</p> <p>10 pts</p>	<p>25 pts</p>

# Video Documentary Proposal Template

**Title of your documentary:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Driving Question.** Should be related to our larger driving question: "How do social and cultural influences shape our lives?" For example: "How did WWII change a war veteran and his family?"

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**Interviewee(s).** Whom will you interview? What are 2-4 key topics or questions you plan to ask your interviewee(s)?

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**Theme/Purpose.** If you could summarize the purpose of your photo documentary in a sentence or two, what would it be? What are you trying to communicate to those who watch your photo documentary? For example: If your driving question is about changes in a war veteran, your theme/purpose could be "People need to understand the effects of war on people and society."

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**Influences on change; effect of change on characters.** What caused the change(s) your documentary will focus on; what are the effects of the change(s)?

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# Video Documentary Proposal Template

**Audience.** Who is your audience?

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**Pictures/Visual Language/B Roll.** “A” roll is video of the person you are interviewing. “B” roll is anything else that is video or picture-based that is included to add to the ideas and impact of the documentary. What type of “B” roll, including pictures, will you take and include? Be as specific as possible. What are some examples of visual language you will use in your narration?

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**Narration.** Will you record your own voice asking questions of the interviewee(s), or will the video be of them talking without our hearing your voice? Will you use a video camera to record both video and narration? If you need follow up audio or video, how will you get it?

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**Writing in Scenes.** Writers and documentary makers bring the events, changes, and surroundings of a personal history to life through “chunks” of content. For example, there could be a clear opening (sometimes called a “tease”), a set of middle scenes, and a conclusion. Scenes often use visual and sound-based language, and metaphor/simile, to make the personal history memorable.

What will be your opening scene, and how will you make it memorable?

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# Video Documentary Proposal Template

What will be 2-3 middle scenes, and how will you make them memorable?

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What will be your concluding scene, and how will you make it memorable?

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**Funding.** If you were to seek funding to make this documentary longer than 3-5 minutes, or to add effects and make the result a professional-looking documentary, how much money would you need, what would you spend it on, and why should funders consider giving the funds to you?

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**Success Indicators.** How will you know when your video documentary is successful? Be specific about numbers of viewers, types of reactions, and other indicators.

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**(Optional) Video/Music.** Were there video or musical elements included? If so, describe them.

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### Rubric: Video Documentary

CRITERIA	RATINGS				POINTS
Informative and Focused on Driving Question, Theme/Purpose, and Effects of Change on Interviewees	The documentary addresses an explicit driving question that is explained thoughtfully and clearly pertains to changes undergone by the interviewee(s), who are described. The theme/purpose of the documentary is clear. 75 pts	The documentary addresses an explicit driving question that is explained and pertains to the changes undergone by the interviewee(s), who are described. The theme/purpose of the documentary is clear. 60 pts	The documentary addresses a driving question that is explained though the connection to the changes undergone by the interviewee(s) is not always clear. The theme/purpose of the documentary may not be clear. 45 pts	The documentary addresses an idea that is reaching to be a driving question, but the connection to the changes undergone by the interviewee(s) is not clear. Nor is the theme/purpose of the documentary clear. 30 pts	75 pts
Compelling Ideas To Be Developed in Scenes	There are consistently compelling, idea-focused opening, middle, and concluding scenes. 75 pts	There are opening, middle, and concluding scenes, which are frequently memorable and idea-focused. 60 pts	There are separate scenes, some of which are memorable or idea-focused 45 pts	There is not a sense of separate scenes, nor is there a focus on ideas. 30 pts	75 pts
Video, Music, Narration, Visual Language, and B Roll Examine and Convey Complex Ideas	Video, music, narration, visual language, and B roll make scenes memorable and help to examine and convey complex ideas 75 pts	Video, music, narration, visual language, and B roll frequently make the scenes memorable and help to examine and convey complex ideas 60 pts	Video, music, narration, visual language, and B roll are occasionally memorable and may help to examine and convey complex ideas. 45 pts	Video, music, narration, visual language, and B roll do not support a theme/purpose or help examine and convey ideas. 30 pts	75 pts

# Supplementary / Additional Texts

The following nonfiction texts may be used in a classroom library in conjunction with this unit, as background or enrichment.

Additional ways to consider using these texts: Excerpts from one or more of these titles could be used in place of the 3-4 shorter readings that are in the unit. Or they could be used with students who want or need alternative / additional nonfiction reading in the course of the unit.

**A Hope in the Unseen: An American Odyssey from the Inner City to the Ivy League.** Ron Suskind. (1999). New York: Random House.  
Lexile 1080

**Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity.** Katherine Boo. (2012). New York: Random House.  
Lexile 1030

**Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: A Friendship That Changed the World.** Penny Colman. (2011). Henry Holt.  
Lexile 1180

**Fast Food Nation.** Eric Schlosser. (2001). New York: Houghton Mifflin.  
Lexile 1240

**Forgotten Ellis Island: The Extraordinary Story of America's Immigrant Hospital.** Lorie Conway and Chris Barnes (photographer). (2007). New York: HarperCollins Publishers.  
Lexile 1350

**Freedom Flyers: The Tuskegee Airmen of World War II.** J. Todd Moyer. (2010). New York: Oxford University Press.

**From Every End of This Earth: 13 Families and the New Lives They Made in America.** Steven V. Roberts. (2009). New York: HarperCollins.

**Hiroshima.** John Hersey. (1946). New York: Alfred A. Knopf  
Lexile 1190

**Iqbal.** Francisco D'Adamo. (2003). New York: Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division.  
Lexile 730

**Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave.** Frederick Douglass. (1845). Boston: The Anti-Slavery Office.  
Lexile 460

**Malcolm X: s graphic biography.** Andrew J. Helfer and Randy DuBurke. (2006). New York: Hill and Wang.

**Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln.** Doris Kearns Goodwin. (2005). New York: Simon & Schuster.  
Lexile 1420

**The Devil's Highway: A True Story.** Luis Alberto Urrea. (2004). New York: Little, Brown and Company.  
Lexile 1100

**The Grace of Silence: A Family Memoir.** Michele Norris. (2010). New York: Random House.

**The Latehomecomer: A Hmong Family Memoir.** Kao Kalia Yang. (2008). Canada: Coffee House Press.

**There Are No Children Here: The Story of Two Boys Growing Up in the Other America.** Alex Kotlowitz. (1991). New York: Anchor Books.  
Lexile 970

# Supplementary / Additional Texts


**History Link** - a free online encyclopedia of Washington State History. Specific biographies / personal histories below

- 1. Mejia-Giudici, Cynthia. "Bulosan, Carlos, Writer." History Link.**  
<[http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file\\_id=5202](http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=5202)>  
Writer, poet. Lexile 1220
- 2. Chesley, Frank. "Chow, Ruby." History Link.**  
<[http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file\\_id=8063](http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=8063)>  
Restaurateur, activist, civic leader. Lexile 1220
- 3. Chesley, Frank. "Goon Dip." History Link.**  
<[http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file\\_id=9026](http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=9026)>  
Entrepreneur, philanthropist. Lexile 900
- 4. Takami, David. "Hirabayashi, Gordon K." History Link.**  
<[http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file\\_id=2070](http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=2070)>  
Hirabayashi defied curfew and evacuation orders of Japanese. Lexile 1070
- 5. Ott, Jennifer. "Kurose, Aki." History Link.**  
<[http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file\\_id=9339](http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=9339)>  
Educator, pacifist. Lexile 1240
- 6. Kemezis, Kathleen. "Samoan Community (Seattle). History Link.**  
<[http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file\\_id=9646](http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=9646)>  
Samoan people moving, adapting their culture. Lexile 1450
- 7. Henry, Mary T. "Adams, Bishop John Hurst." History Link.**  
<[http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file\\_id=8098](http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=8098)>  
Civil Rights Lexile 1260
- 8. Kershner, Kate. "Kenney, Phyllis Gutierrez." History Link.**  
<[http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file\\_id=9868](http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=9868)>  
First Latina elected to Washington State House of Representatives. Lexile 1410
- 9. Hood, Michael. "Prentice, Margarita Lopez." History Link.**  
<[http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file\\_id=9502](http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=9502)>  
Politician, workers rights champion. Lexile 1240

# Plan, Proposal, and Documentary Feedback Guidelines

When offering feedback on a Photo Documentary Plan, Photo Documentary, Documentary Proposal, or Documentary, please use the following guidelines:

1. Review the assignment, template (if any), and rubric.
2. If the student asks for a specific type of feedback (or feedback on a specific part of the work), please try to meet this request.
3. **Tone of your response:** Remember that your primary job is to offer feedback so the writer / producer can improve the plan, proposal or documentary. You want to strike a positive, respectful and constructively critical tone. For some reviewers, this may mean identifying 1-3 elements of the plan, proposal or documentary that you liked, and saying why you liked them; then following with a list of suggestions or questions for revision purposes. Other reviewers may choose to start with suggested revisions. In either case, try hard to find something specific to praise with specificity. For example, instead of offering "Good job," make it specific and say "Good job on writing with scenes and making the opening of the documentary so memorable."
4. **Specific Elements** - Refer to the rubric for the particular piece of work you are reviewing. There is a single rubric for the Photo Plan + Documentary, a rubric for the Video Documentary Proposal, and a third rubric for the Video Documentary itself.
5. Consider offering a variety of what we'll call easy, medium and hard feedback. Here are some very rough guidelines / examples of each type:
  - **Easy feedback:** "Your content flows well until the very last sentence—I'd add a little more 'pop' or visual language to just that part." (We call this "easy" because there is one specific place to make one specific change that is narrow in scope.)
  - **Medium feedback:** "I get a little lost in the middle of your documentary. It's not clear to me how the middle section relates to your purpose." (We call this "medium" because it relates to a big piece of the documentary—and yet it offers some direction on how to fix the problem.)
  - **Hard feedback:** "The tone of your documentary does not seem to match your purpose, as I understand it." (This is "hard" feedback because the student author, after reading this feedback, probably needs to ask the reviewer what they believe to be the purpose, and what they believe the tone is. The student author then needs to determine if s/he agrees with these judgments, and if so, figure out a fix for aligning the tone and the purpose. This could lead to substantial changes in the documentary.)
6. Be aware that students are asked, within feedback-requiring assignments, to strive to tackle 1-2 pieces of medium and hard feedback for each reviewed assignment. So you want to give them at least 1-2 pieces of medium or hard feedback.



# MINING PERSONAL HISTORIES ABOUT EDUCURIQUS



# About Educurious

Educurious is on mission to fundamentally transform the K–12 education experience. Our vision is an effective education system in which young people learn in meaningful and inspiring ways and classrooms are a place they want to be. To achieve our vision, we bring together teachers, students and professionals to work on project-based courses through an online platform that opens the classroom to the world. Educurious units, modules and lessons are built to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Framework for K–12 Science Education, with multimedia elements, gaming, badges, and technology-rich assessments to support trajectories toward mastery and personalized learning pathways. Key features of Educurious include:

- **Breaking down the barriers** between the classroom and the real world.
- **Increasing students' engagement, motivation and self-confidence** as they solve real problems and see the results of their work.
- **Equipping students with the communication and technology skills** they need to succeed in a global economy.
- **Shifting the role of learners** from passive consumers of information to active collaborators, problem solvers and contributors to curriculum.
- **Incorporating the technologies that teens use every day** outside the classroom to improve their work in the classroom through our blended learning model.
- **Repositioning teachers as guides and facilitators** with materials, tools and support to transform their classrooms into learning communities.
- **Expanding students' career possibilities** by connecting them to renowned experts from a wide range of careers and professions through The Educurious Expert Network (TEEN).



# The Power of Mentorship

Most of us can name at least one inspirational adult who made a difference in the trajectory of our lives, but not every young person has access to such role models. We want to make sure that every student benefits from this kind of connection in school. The Educurious Expert Network (TEEN) provides a way for people from all fields to share their expertise and form online mentoring relationships that inspire students to stay in school, do their best work, and offer after-school and extended-day programs a way to engage students in authentic work. Through the TEEN curriculum and national service models, we attract all types of working and retired professionals— from Nobel Laureates to Newbery Award-winning authors—to join us and be part of the change we all want to see in education.

## Goals of The Educurious Expert Network

- Students: to deepen students' engagement, support their desire to do important work, show them a wide array of career paths and possibilities, and help develop their college and career-ready skills.
- Professionals, corporations, and associations: to provide a scalable way to participate in the education system and help develop the college and career skills of our next generation.

In addition to noteworthy experts who appear in videos embedded in the units, *all Educurious courses have an expert as part of the solution*. Through expert online mentorships, students can explore an expanding universe of career paths and possibilities they may not have previously considered, while developing skills, competencies, and knowledge in their coursework through the benefit of direct feedback on their work and deep insights from experts.

TEEN's curriculum model connects educators, students, and expert mentors on a feature-rich and secure online learning environment through one of three options:

- One-to-one or one-to-many/group (asynchronous)
- Previously recorded messages and inspirational stories for students (asynchronous)
- Beam into the classroom (synchronous)

This exchange between the student and the expert adds an important dimension to the course and student outcomes.

If you need help getting started email us at [experts@educurious.org](mailto:experts@educurious.org) for access to our recruitment kit that has templates for email, social media, and flyers.

## MINING PERSONAL HISTORIES: ABOUT EDUCURIUS

### Learn More About Our Curriculum

If you and your students enjoyed *Mining Personal Histories*, you may want to consider using our other units. Some schools may decide they want a complete year-long course while others may supplement their current curricula with one or two units. For more information, contact us at: [info@educurious.org](mailto:info@educurious.org)

### English Language Arts Courses

Approaching Amazing Art  
Charting Great Controversies  
Imagining New Worlds  
Investigating Science through Story  
Picking Up the Clues

### Biology Courses

Contemporary Approaches to Genetics  
Diversity of Life: Past, Present and Future  
Environmental and Human Health  
Predicting & Preventing Infectious Disease  
The Ecological Impacts of Climate Change

### Your Feedback is Essential

Educurious is committed to transforming the experience and outcomes of secondary school, and to that end we welcome your comments and suggestions: [info@educurious.org](mailto:info@educurious.org)