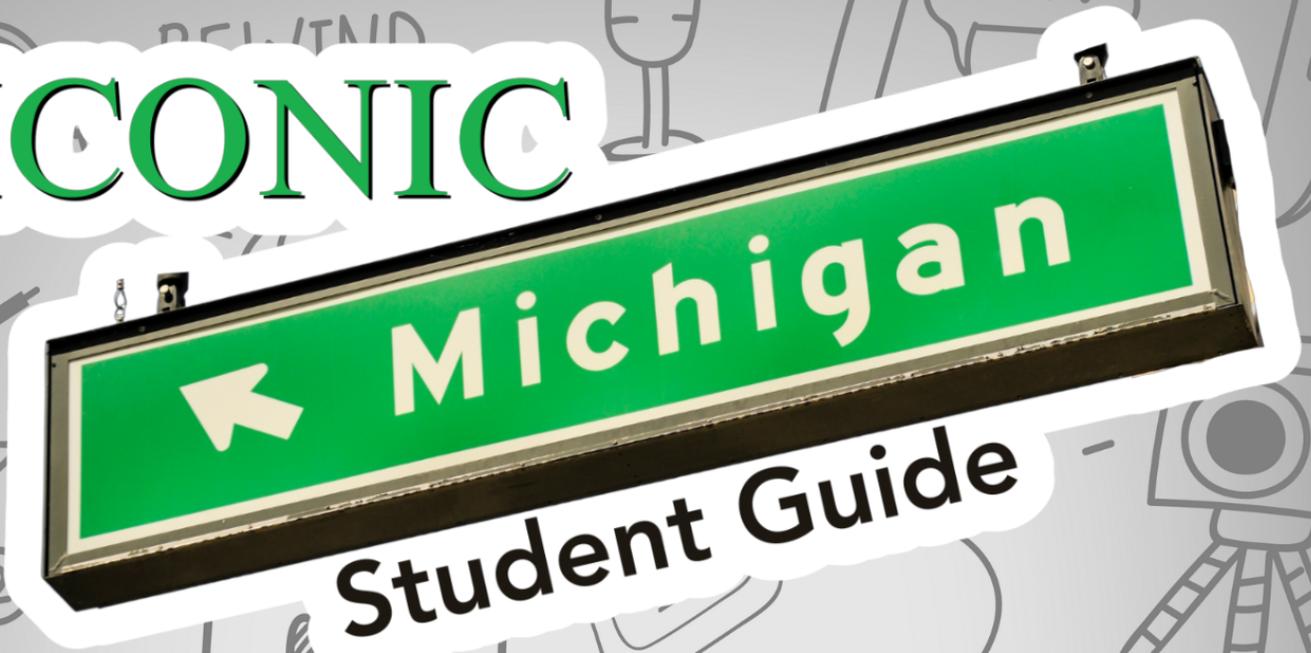


ICONIC



Your notebook for planning, designing, and producing your very own Iconic Michigan media project

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Michigan Learning Channel
A Public Media Partnership

Thank you for participating in the Michigan Learning Channel *Iconic Michigan* Project! This book will be your guide as you - and many other young people throughout our state - discover, document, and share important and diverse stories from all around Michigan.

This book is split into four sections:

- I. Introduction**
You will learn about Iconic America and the context for the project, and what we're asking you to do.
- II. Research**
You'll use the inquiry process to uncover some local stories and identify the icon you want to feature in your own work.
- III. Production**
You'll own the process of collecting footage, editing, and creating content that meets your goals.
- IV. Sharing**
You will share your work locally and with us so that it can be added to our statewide collection.

This book is designed for you to work through it on your own, but if you are participating in this project with a class or a group, make sure you are on the same page as you go.

Make sure you are following @michlearning on all social platforms to keep in touch with us and receive project updates!

A note on using this guide:

This guide works best if you make a copy of the Google Doc to use on your own device. You should be able to add your notes to any of the blank spaces throughout the doc, and spacing and sizing will auto-adjust as you go. There are also some links throughout that you want to be able to click and engage with.

If you receive a printed version of this guide, you may need additional paper to take notes and respond to prompts. You can also use the QR Code below to access a custom version for your project.





In *Iconic America*, David Rubenstein examines the history of America through some of its most iconic symbols, objects and places, on location and in conversation with historical thinkers, community members and other experts. Together, they dive deep into each symbol's history and how its meaning has changed over time, using them as a gateway to understanding America's past and present.

Iconic America includes eight episodes:

"Fenway Park"

Baseball is America's pastime and obsession, and no ballpark is more iconic than Fenway Park, home of the Boston Red Sox. The story of a city's loyalty to its team and love for its ballpark through thick and thin.

"The Hollywood Sign"

The story of how a real estate advertisement erected in 1923 became an international symbol of fame, fortune and the American dream.

"The Gadsden Flag"

The "Don't Tread on Me" flag is such a potent symbol of independence that it has been co-opted by a wide variety of Americans over its long history.

"The Cowboy"

The cowboy is the quintessential American — fiercely independent, brave and laconic. The episode examines the myths and realities of this archetype, which remains as potent as ever in the 21st century.

"The Statue of Liberty"

The evolving meaning of this symbol for a "nation of immigrants," and how it embodies our values and our conflicts, from abolition to women's suffrage to the treatment of refugees.

"The American Bald Eagle"

The story of how the American Bald Eagle soared to its vaunted perch in American iconography, a symbol not only of patriotism but also of environmental activism and Native American traditions.

"Stone Mountain"

As Confederate statues are torn down across the country and the nation wrestles with its past, there are heated arguments about the fate of the Monument at Stone Mountain, Georgia, the Confederate Mount Rushmore.

"The Golden Gate Bridge"

The Golden Gate bridge is an engineering marvel that symbolizes America's can-do spirit. Can America continue to execute bold and ambitious infrastructure projects in the 21st century?

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**SECTION 1:
INTRODUCTION**

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Welcome to your ICONIC MICHIGAN project handbook!

The Iconic Michigan Project invites you to document the stories that are iconic throughout Michigan. You will explore the *Iconic America* series and evaluate how the filmmakers used documentary techniques, interviews, local footage, and archival footage to craft engaging stories about popular historic sites. Then, you will use your observations to plan and produce your own segment about an iconic place in your community.

What comes to mind when you hear the word ICONIC?

What makes something ICONIC in a historical context? How do iconic people, places, and things contribute to what we know or think about a place or a people?

What are some things about your community that are ICONIC? If you need help brainstorming, talk to a friend or family member to generate some ideas.

Activity #1: Learning From *Iconic America*

Identify some clips or episodes from *Iconic America* that are interesting to you. Watch them with friends or family. Use the chart below to help practice *critical viewing* for different purposes. The next page has a blank chart that you can use to take notes.

Watching to learn about the role of icons in history	Watching to learn about video production
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What important historical events or themes are addressed in the episode? ● What is the common or most popular perception of the icon in the episode? ● How does the episode complicate the common or traditional story of the icon? ● What different perspectives or stories does the episode showcase? ● What perspectives or stories are missing from the episode? ● How does the episode address stereotypes, misconceptions, myths, and falsities around the icon being explored? ● After viewing the episode, what other questions do you have about the icon? ● How does the episode invite you to think about history differently? ● How does the episode challenge you to investigate icons and imagery differently? ● How could the episode impact historic and future understandings of the icon and what it represents? ● What other content areas or topics (science, environment, engineering and design, etc) are explored in the episode, and how are these fields impacted by the icon? ● What do you think are the main purposes of the episode? Do you think the producers accomplished this purpose? ● What was the overall story that was being told in the episode? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What kind of chronology was used to tell the story? Was there a clear timeline? ● How were interviews woven in throughout the episode? ● How were the interviews shot? Was there one person or two people? Was the camera close or farther away? ● How was b-roll or additional footage used? ● How was voiceover used? ● What video footage was the most impactful? ● Which camera angles were the most engaging and memorable? ● Where did lighting impact the video footage? ● What music and sounds were most impactful? What did sound lend to the story being told? ● How were still photographs or other visuals used to contribute to the story? ● What kinds of transitions were used in between segments? ● How long were the segments? ● Which segments were more informative? Most engaging or entertaining? ● What was the overall mood of the episode? Did the mood change at all during the episode? How was it made clear when the mood changed? ● What other visual aspects were noticeable, unique, or impactful? ● What other audio aspects were noticeable, unique, or impactful?

Use the chart below to take notes as you watch episodes of *Iconic America*.

Watching to learn about the role of icons in history	Watching to learn about video production



PRODUCTION CHALLENGE: INTERVIEW COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Talk to your family, your friends, or anyone else in your community and ask them about the ICONIC people, places, and things where you live. Try to get many diverse perspectives.

***Record what they say. Do you agree?
What is interesting about the ideas others come up with?***

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SECTION 2: RESEARCH

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You're going to tell a story about an icon in your community. Start by figuring out what stories there are to tell.

Make a list of five things (people, places, ideas) that come to mind when you see this question:

What is ICONIC about your community?

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Now, start asking questions. Thinking about your list, what do you want to know more about? Where are there stories you haven't been told? Do you think there are any gaps (intentional or unintentional) in what you have been told? How is your perspective different from someone who isn't from your community?

Use the space below and on the following page to create some *research questions* that will help you learn more about each of your brainstormed icons - which will eventually help you decide what you want to learn more about for your project.

	Iconic Idea	Research Questions
1.		
2.		
3.		

4.

5.

Let's answer some of your questions! Use this page to take notes as you read, watch, and learn more about each of your potential topics. Don't stress about getting *everything at this point* - remember that the goal of this step is to help you narrow down your topics.

	Iconic Idea	Research Notes
1.		
2.		
3.		

4.		
5.		

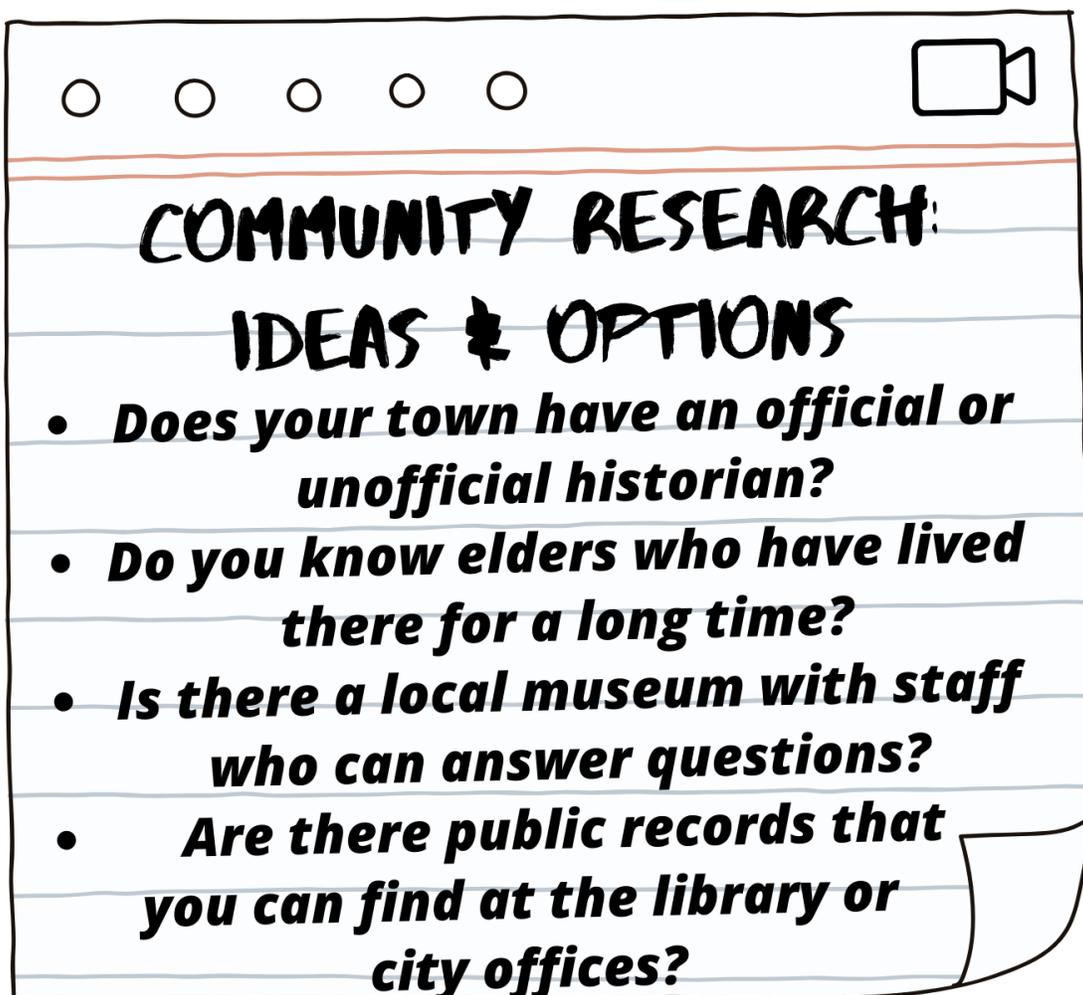
Take a look at your notes and decide which icon you are most excited to learn more about. Which one has the best story? Which one had the most information available? Are there gaps in the story that you're excited to uncover? Is the icon something you'd be proud to produce a documentary about?

Write your topic choice below.

DEEP DIVE TIME.

Now that you've selected your topic, you need to go beyond quick notes - you need to find and uncover the truth about your icon. You want to understand the whole story so that you can plan your production, identify subjects for your interviews, and create your overall look and feel that helps you to center your project on a theme or purpose.

Begin with deeper internet, library, and database research. Keep track of your sources and take notes around the information that will help you craft your story. More notes is better - you can always leave stuff out in your final production, but it's annoying to have to go back and find more detail when you find that you need it.



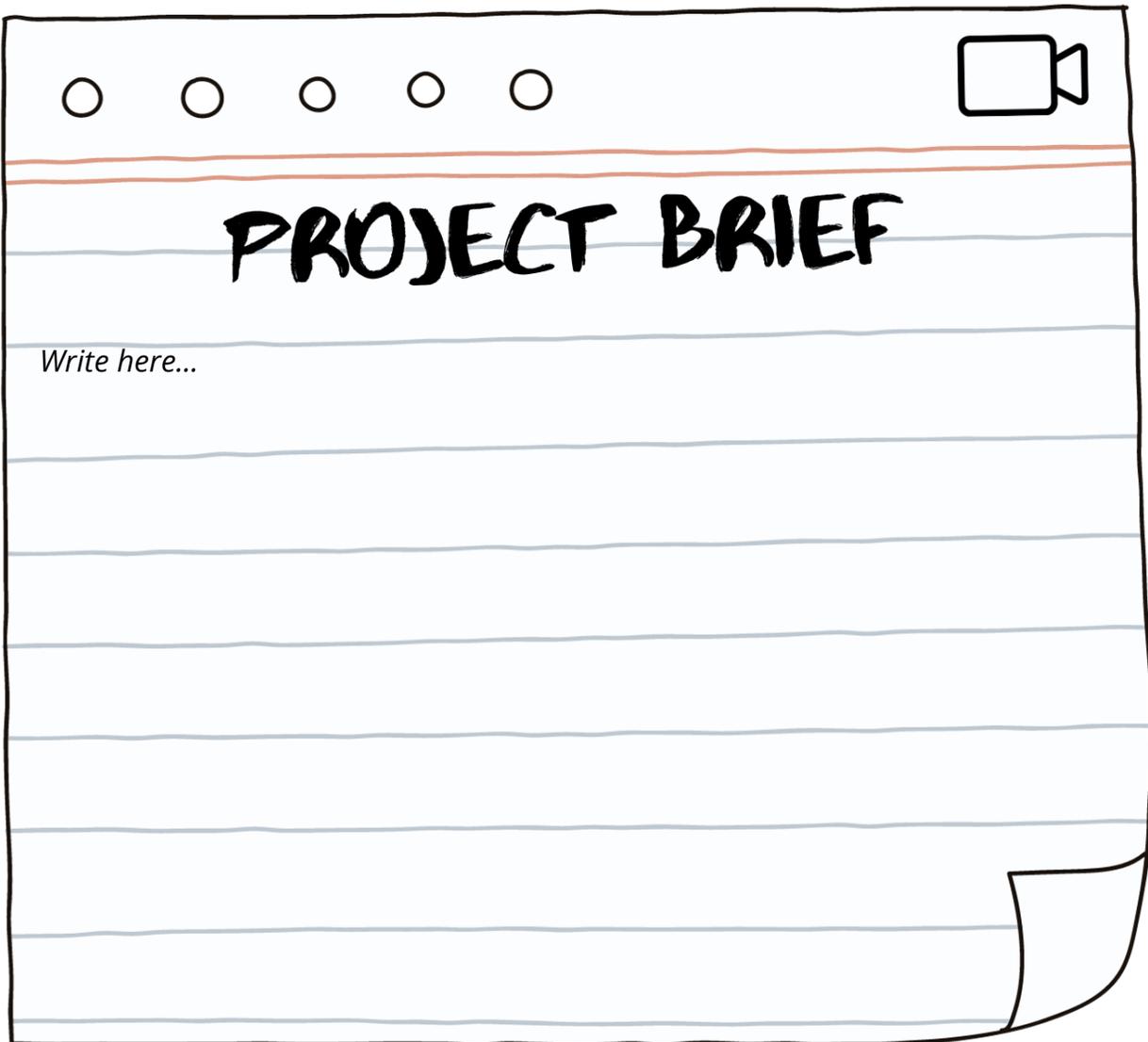
Research Question	What did you learn?	Source

Research Question	What did you learn?	Source

Research Question	What did you learn?	Source

WRITE YOUR BRIEF

Now that you've learned more about your community icon, write a *project brief*. This will be a quick capture of what story you want to tell, how you want to tell it, and what sort of impact you want to have on your audience. Try to capture your plan in just a few sentences - you'll have opportunities later to more fully flesh it out.



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PROJECT BRIEF

Write here...

PREPARE YOUR PITCH

Part of any production is a successful “pitch,” which can generate buy-in from others who may be impacted by or needed for a part of your project. Your pitch can also be a great time to gather feedback and clarify your direction for your segment. Use the prompts below to prepare a pitch based on your project brief, and then share with your team and/or project mentor before you begin production.

What is your segment about? What is your goal?

What is the story you are trying to tell? What is the beginning, middle, and end? How will you take viewers on this narrative journey?

What visual elements will be central to your segment? Think about b-roll (background video that you can capture), still photographs, and any video footage you want (interviews, narrative scenes, tours, explainers, etc).

What audio elements will be central to your segment? Think about voiceover, narration, music, and sounds.

Who will be central to your segment? What voices or personalities do you want to feature in interviews or other segments? What will each person contribute to the story?

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SECTION 3: PRODUCTION

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You have done your initial research, you have landed on your topic and your vision for your story, and you have settled on your pitch. Now it's time to get started.

You can make your Iconic Michigan segment with whatever equipment you have available, but this project guide assumes you are producing with simple mobile gear and a mobile phone or other handheld device. Filming will be easier if you can get a tripod and a wireless clip-on (lavalier) microphone. Your content will look more modern and flashy if you have access to a handheld gimbal and light kit. If you're using this handbook as part of the Iconic Michigan toolkit provided by the Michigan Learning Channel, you should already have all of this equipment. If not, [check out this video tutorial](#) that demonstrates how to make a phone stand/stabilizer out of common materials.

PLAY

You should start by playing with your equipment! Take some time and go take photos, shoot some video, get used to your equipment and environment. Use the following prompts to play a little as you get comfortable:

- Go outside and shoot some video in natural light. Move your camera around and notice how the light changes, what happens to the video in the shade, and how you can play with brightness and shadow. What do you like? What do you not like?
- Shoot some footage of an object. How can you capture different perspectives as you move the camera around the object? How is the video that you capture different from what you see with your human eye?
- Record your voice in a quiet room and then in a noisy space. How does the microphone pick you up? What adjustments can you make that have different effects?
- Set up your camera and interview a friend about a random topic. Try moving the camera around while they respond. Notice how you feel about different angles and framing.
- Scroll through Tiktok, Instagram, or YouTube and identify some video techniques that you think look cool or engaging. Try copying those techniques. What effects can you create? Why do you like those effects?



PRODUCTION CHALLENGE: CAPTURE B-ROLL

Visit a popular public site in your community. Use your phone and gimbal to shoot video that captures the site from different perspectives and angles. Try static shots and moving shots. How can you capture video content that will help viewers feel like they're there with you?

LEARN

Hopefully, after playing a bit with your equipment, you are more comfortable and excited about being a video producer! In addition to shooting content that you enjoy making, you also want to make sure you have some basic knowledge about the “rules” of video production so what you make will be purposeful and impactful for your audience.

Below are key resources that can help support your learning *before* you begin interviewing or collecting footage for your project. All of these links direct to a PBS website called [StoryMaker](#), where there are also additional resources that may be helpful for you. You can also search for helpful tips or tutorials on YouTube, where there is a lot of video content to support mobile video production and digital storytelling.

The next few pages of this handbook also include additional organizers that can help you plan your shoot days, interviews, and other elements that may require additional thought beyond showing up with a camera. Being over-prepared is always the best move!

Start Here:

[A Quick Guide to Video Production](#)

Pre-production:

[Scriptwriting tutorial](#)

[The art of the interview](#)

[Pre-interviewing](#)

Production:

[Principles of photography - make your shot “POP”](#)

[Been There, Lit That - Lighting Tutorial](#)

[Get That B-Roll - Planning and capturing b-roll tutorial](#)

[How to record b-roll on your phone](#)

[Audio: dos and don'ts](#)

Post-production:

[In-camera edit tutorial](#)

Communication Template For Scheduling Interviews

Use this script when you need to make a phone call or write an email to schedule an interview with someone.

Hello _____,

My name is _____. I am working on a mini-documentary project for my _____ class and I am going to be producing a segment about _____. I am excited to learn more about _____ because *[explain why you are interested/passionate and what impact you think your project can have on the community]*.

_____ recommended I contact you about my project. I am interested in hearing your perspective because you are *[an expert, a historian, a longtime resident, etc.]*. Would you be willing to be interviewed on camera so that I can include your story as a part of the project? If so, I'd like to schedule a brief time to talk on the phone and learn more about what you'd share, and then a follow up time when we can record an interview.

Please let me know if you are interested in being a part of the project, and I'll follow up with some more details and some times when we can schedule our first phone call.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Shot List For Planning and B-Roll

Use this chart to plan different shots that you want to collect when you take your camera to collect content. You may use this chart to plan your shots in order to tell a story, or just to collect ideas for content that you'll later edit together. Either way, it helps to have a plan! Note: make as many copies of this page as you need so that you can use it every time you plan a shoot.

Shot	Description/Goal
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	

Shot	Description/Goal
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	
14	
15	
16	
17	
18	
19	

Shot List For Planning Edits

Use this worksheet to *review* footage that you shoot and plan for editing. This step is different from your previous shot list because you may end up with different footage than you planned, or your shots may look different from what you expected. But it's important to keep track of what you have along the way so that you can be flexible and purposeful with your final edits. You can continue to add to this worksheet or plan to make multiple copies and use it for any different shoots or segments that you work on for your project.

As you determine what edits are needed to your shots, you want to consider shortening a clip or focusing on a specific moment or response from the interview, or consider adding some b-roll or voiceover to add context. This can also be the space where you plan to add graphics, lower thirds, sounds and music, and other elements that will contribute to your final segment.

Shot	Description	Purpose/value	Edits needed
1			
2			
3			

Shot	Description	Purpose/value	Edits needed
4			
5			
6			

Two-Column Script For Finishing Your Video

The final step in your edit process is to bring your best clips together in a way that tells the story you want to tell with the visual impact you want to have. This work will happen within your preferred edit platform, either in-app on your device or within a web or desktop program, but it is helpful to have a plan that brings together your original vision for your project and your notes from your previous edit worksheet. Producers will create a two-column script either before or after capturing footage (or both) to plan out their final segments. The two-column script format allows you to identify the video/visual aspect of each segment alongside the audio/sound/voiceover elements.

When you identify the visual elements for a segment, you'll want to include setting, camera framing (close up, medium shot, wide shot, and camera movement (pan, tilt, etc) as well as any action that is taking place. This is also the place where you want to indicate any graphics or animations, including locations or lower thirds (where you identify who a speaker is). You can use OST to refer to on-screen text.

When you identify the audio elements for a segment, you'll want to identify if the sound is part of the video or a voiceover (VO). You should write out all of what is said, whether it's in the video or part of a VO. You should include any music cues or additional sound effects you want as well.

Use the chart below to plan your segments. If you notice anything missing (a transition, a VO, or some b-roll), make sure you go and get it! When you feel like you have a plan for how you'll edit your clips into your segments, jump in and start editing! Whichever app or program you use will have tutorials available, and you should consult YouTube for extra help or additional techniques that you may want to include in your edits. Just take your time, be flexible and creative, and do your best! The goal is to produce a video that tells the story you want to tell, and if you're focused on that it'll be great no matter what.

SEGMENT	VIDEO <i>Include all visual cues for your segment here.</i>	AUDIO <i>Include all audio cues for your segment here.</i>
1		
2		

SEGMENT	VIDEO <i>Include all visual cues for your segment here.</i>	AUDIO <i>Include all audio cues for your segment here.</i>
3		
4		

SEGMENT	VIDEO <i>Include all visual cues for your segment here.</i>	AUDIO <i>Include all audio cues for your segment here.</i>
5		
6		

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SECTION 4: SHARING

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TAKE A DEEP BREATH! You've completed the longest stretch of work for this project. You did your research, connected with your community, and then produced and edited an original video segment. You should be proud!

But you're not quite done. You didn't make this video just to keep it saved on your phone somewhere! Let's talk about sharing your work with the world.

STEP 1: Sharing for feedback

The first step in sharing your project is identifying some people who you can trust to watch it and give you some real, honest feedback. This may be your teacher, if you're doing this project at school, an adult mentor, or some friends that you trust. You may also consider sharing your work with the people who you interviewed or who were otherwise involved in supporting you along the way. As you share your project, ask them specific questions that can help inform if you need to make additional edits or provide more context to help broader audiences understand your work.

The charts below can be helpful for taking notes as you collect feedback:

For collecting feedback on questions you have as the producer

My questions and things I want feedback on	Notes and advice from viewers	Edits and adjustments I will make

My questions and things I want feedback on	Notes and advice from viewers	Edits and adjustments I will make

For collecting general feedback

Reviewer	Note/advice/question	Action I will take (or nothing)

After collecting and acting on feedback from people you trust, it's time to share your project more broadly.

Consider the following options for sharing:

- **Post your video to a social media platform so that it can be shared widely.** Consider which platforms will be safe and appropriate for your content, and how you might utilize custom thumbnails, description and title, tagging and other social features to engage a wide audience. Posting to social media is best done in collaboration with a trusted adult or mentor unless you are only sharing with a private audience that you know and trust.
- **Host an in-person screening of your video.** You may choose to host a small gathering of family and friends to showcase your work, but you can also partner with a local organization (your local school, library, museum, or public media station, for example) and host a larger event that may be open to the public. Consider inviting friends or peers to screen their projects or other media that connects with yours, and prepare a brief speech to talk about your process and purpose as a producer. Collaborate with friends and mentors to advertise the event and coordinate refreshments and giveaways.
- **Host your own storytelling and media-making workshop for others in your community.** Now that you've produced an entire mini-documentary, you can share what you've learned with anyone in your community! You can partner with a teacher, librarian, or other community leader to host an event during which you screen your story as an example and then walk others through the brainstorming, research, and production steps for the project. There may be a local production agency or media organization who wants to support something like this, too!

However you choose to share, we want to hear about it! Make sure you upload your Iconic Michigan project to [our Flip site](#) where you can interact with other young producers around the state, and let us know if we can support a local event or other programming celebrating YOU.

Planning to Share

What assets can you create to highlight your project? Assets include graphics like your video thumbnail or a promotional image advertising your documentary. Do you want to create posters to share around your community? Stickers?

What text copy can you use to talk about your project on social media, in emails, and in communications with partners? What are the key words that highlight the impact of your project? How do you want partners to talk about your work as they help you share?

What kind of event(s) do you want to plan to engage your production? Who will you reach out to for partnership? What steps will you need to take to plan? What additional kinds of programming fit nicely with your project?

