

REWIND

ICONIC



Michigan

Teacher Guide

Lesson plans and resources for leading students through producing Iconic Michigan media projects

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Michigan Learning Channel
A Public Media Partnership

Welcome to Iconic Michigan!

In spring 2023, PBS released *Iconic America*, an exciting television series that showcases iconic places and ideas that contribute to American identity. Each episode in the series explores a different “icon” through personal stories, historical research, interviews, and first-person investigation with the host, David Rubenstein. The show models quality historical research by evaluating multiple, diverse perspectives about popular places and ideas, and intentionally does more to ignite discussion and provoke critical thinking than it does to dictate learning or shape understanding.

The show has numerous classroom applications, as a historical documentary series, a model for human-centered storytelling, and an invitation to critical thinking and discourse, among others.

The Iconic Michigan project is born from the observation that any specifically Michigan icons or locations are absent from the first season of the series. We believe that Michigan is one of the most culturally diverse, ecologically interesting, and historically significant states in the nation and should be recognized as such!

Iconic Michigan invites teachers from all subject areas to empower their students to create multimedia projects that tell the story of our Michigan communities. The prompt is simple: what is iconic about your Michigan community? It is up to the teacher to blend this project with content-area learning standards, although the project may also be offered as a standalone student-led or extracurricular one as well. This project guide explores a few content applications for the project, and then offers a suite of lesson plans and resources that any educator can use to support student research, storytelling, and content creation.

We are excited to offer this project to Michigan educators and we cannot wait to see what kinds of stories our students share. As always, our team of educators is available at any time for support, coaching, and partnership at michiganlearning.org/contact-us.

We also encourage you to help your students submit their final products to our site: michiganlearning.org/iconic. We would love to showcase the diverse stories that our iconic students share about our state!

Sincerely,
Matt Hamilton
Program Director, Michigan Learning Channel

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Project Overview

The Iconic Michigan project has two main goals:

1. To engage students in digital storytelling and video production learning experiences
2. To create a space for public media and education partners to share diverse and exciting stories about Michigan communities

Given these broad goals, the Iconic Michigan project can be implemented in a variety of ways across a variety of platforms and community education spaces, including but not limited to the following:

- Project-based learning classroom experiences
- Out-of-school time youth programming
- Family and youth-led community projects

This toolkit includes general and specific guidelines for implementation in classrooms and community spaces according to the following main learning goals and opportunities:

1. Community Research
2. Youth-led Collaboration and Project Planning
3. Production
4. Celebration

Iconic Michigan Student Guide



The resources in this toolkit are intended to be used by an educator or community leader who will facilitate youth learning and production in alignment with the Iconic Michigan project goals.

Throughout the lessons, there will be references to worksheets and guidance materials available in the Student Guide. We recommend using the two resources alongside one another.

Additionally, there may be students who want to work through the project on their own, or with less hands-on guidance from a mentor. Educators may have opportunities to offer the student guide in a context where students are pursuing learning in addition to the standard curriculum or as part of an extracurricular club or out-of-school experience.

The youth-facing handbook can be used by a young person to approach the project on their own, or as a series of handouts that support the lessons in the teacher guide.

[Click here to make a copy of the student guide to be shared digitally with students.](#)

Gold Standard PBL

For teachers practicing project-based learning in their classrooms, “Gold Standard PBL” is recognizable as a commonly accepted and research-based framework for creating and implementing PBL across content areas and grade levels. For more information, visit PBLworks.org.

The Iconic Michigan Documentary Project can be implemented through the lens of the Gold Standard PBL seven essential project design elements in the following ways:

1. *Challenging problem or question:* The project asks students to identify and research an iconic Michigan place, person, or event and create a mini-documentary about it. This is a challenging task that requires students to use critical thinking skills, research skills, and creative skills. The question of “what is iconic” is also open ended and debatable. Different students will draw varied conclusions about what is iconic in their community.
2. *Sustained inquiry:* The project is designed to be a sustained inquiry that takes place over several weeks or months. This allows students to have time to explore their topic in depth and to develop their documentary in a thoughtful and reflective way.
3. *Authenticity:* The project is authentic in that it asks students to create a product that is meaningful and relevant to their lives. The media that they produce can be shared with the school community, the local community, or even the world.
4. *Student voice and choice:* Students have a lot of voice and choice in this project. They choose their own topic, they research it in their own way, and they create their own documentary. This allows them to be creative and to express themselves in a meaningful way.
5. *Reflection:* The project is designed to promote reflection. Students reflect on their topic, their research, their creative process, and their final product. This reflection helps them to learn and grow as learners and is made visible through the use of the student guide.
6. *Critique and revision:* There are multiple opportunities for students to receive feedback and revise their work throughout the project. Students consistently critique their own work and the work of their peers.
7. *Public product:* The project culminates in a public product in the form of a video narrative. This public product allows students to share their learning with others and to have an impact in their communities.
8. *Key knowledge, understanding, and success skills:* While not one of the seven project elements, PBS works advocate for the inclusion of specific, intentional, skills-based instruction at each of the phases of the project. This guide incorporates space for content-area knowledge and standards-aligned lessons in addition to the elements of media literacy, research, and technological aptitude that are evident across all project applications.

Iconic Michigan Content Area Applications: Social Studies

Iconic Michigan and The C3 Framework

The College, Career, and Civic life framework for inquiry-driven learning in Social Studies classrooms encourages educators to teach in ways that help students make connections between history, geography, civics, and economics and the real world that they observe and can impact as citizens. The Iconic Michigan project was developed and piloted in a Michigan U.S. History classroom in order to align with academic standards and inquiry-driven instruction that supports the goals of the C3 framework.

Dimension 1 of the C3 Framework begins with developing questions and planning investigations. Teachers can begin this project by posing the question, “What makes something iconic?” or “What is iconic to your community?” These questions are open ended, challenging, and even controversial when students are allowed to answer openly and honestly. These discussions, when guided by instructors and led by students may naturally lead to debate on the meaning of “iconic” and what ought to be considered iconic in diverse communities or from differing perspectives based on histories, values, and other social dynamics.

The C3 Framework's Dimension 2 requires teachers and students to consider the unique tools, skills, and concepts of social studies disciplines. The Iconic Michigan project was originally created with high school U.S. History in mind, but its goal of connecting students to local history, culture, and place can be guided by a civics/government, geographic, economic, or historical lens. The examples below can help inform how Michigan educators might fit this project in with existing standards, or how they may frame the project to suit their goals within the different social studies:

- Use this project to teach students about the importance of **civic engagement** through the lens of biography or feature storytelling.
- Use this project to teach students about the **history** of Michigan by exploring local monuments and landmarks.
- Use this project to teach students about the different **cultures and religions** in Michigan by highlighting important community centers and places of worship.
- Use this project to teach students about the **economy** of Michigan and how agricultural land, urban infrastructure, or state parks impact the lives of citizens.
- Use this project to teach students about the **government** of Michigan and how it works through the lens of municipal, state, and federal buildings.

These are just a few examples of how this project can be used to teach social studies. Educators are encouraged to be creative and find ways to use this project that best meet the needs of their students.

Dimension 3 and 4

The Iconic Michigan Project is a research project at its core. Beginning with relevant inquiry, students must then set out to answer their questions using varied and credible sources. In the process of researching within their community they will have to confront how historians evaluate and interpret different kinds of sources. For example, students may use oral histories from members of their communities as well as historical artifacts, such as newspapers, family photos, and letters, to learn about the past. These sources can provide valuable insights into the experiences and perspectives of people who lived during a particular time period or who interacted with an iconic person or place throughout history. Regardless of the specific content application or goals of the classroom project, teachers will help students evaluate their sources for credibility.

The main and final portion of the project invites students to communicate their conclusions by creating a mini-documentary about what makes their community "iconic." They will do this by conducting research, interviewing community members, and collecting footage of their community. These documentaries will be the culmination of their research and will be a demonstration of their knowledge and understanding of local history and how their community has been shaped by regional and global factors.

Alignment with Michigan Social Studies Content Standards

Civics

Civics as a discipline is not just about the study of politics and government structure. Civic study is also about participation in society on a large and small scale: from classrooms, schools, neighborhoods, and community organizations. The study of civics allows students the opportunity to learn how to participate in and impact public discourse and action.

Michigan teachers may tailor the Iconic Michigan project to focus more directly on political issues or symbols of civics engagement that are unique to their community or school. Here are some examples of ways teachers can use the Iconic Michigan project to target this theme:

Civics Standards	Iconic Michigan Guiding Question
C – 6.4.1 Explain and evaluate how people,	What are some democratic values that seem to

individually or collectively, seek to bring the United States closer to its Democratic Values.	be “iconic” in our community? (example: Freedom, opportunity, representation, equality) How and where are these values represented?
C – 6.4.2 Identify, discuss, and analyze methods individuals and/or groups have chosen to attempt social and legal change. Assess the effects of civil disobedience, social movements, demonstrations, protests on society and law.	Who are some iconic individuals or groups in our community who have sought to make change?
C – 6.4.3 Identify and describe a local, state, national, or international public policy issue; research and evaluate multiple solutions; analyze the consequences of each solution and propose, defend, and take relevant action to address or resolve the issue.	What are some problems or issues that are iconic and unique to our community? What is being done to address these issues? What can be done?

Economics

The study of economics helps students to understand and interpret the interaction of buyers and sellers in markets. From there students are able to examine and explain the mechanisms of the national and and global economies. Through this knowledge students are able to analyze and understand the consequences of their own economic decisions as well as those of governing bodies.

In Michigan, economics is organized into four main content areas: the Market Economy; the National Economy; the International Economy; and Personal Finance. Traditionally, these concepts are often taught on a hypothetical or imagined scale. However, the concepts can be brought to life with the Iconic Michigan project.

Economic Standards	Iconic Michigan Guiding Question
1.1 Individual, Business, and Government Decision Making Individually and collaboratively - students will engage in planned inquiries to explain and demonstrate how individuals confront scarcity, and how market forces influence how they organize, produce, use, and allocate resources in its presence.	<p>What iconic businesses address problems of scarcity in my community?</p> <p>Who is an iconic entrepreneur in my community and what choices did they make to grow their business?</p>

<p>1.1.1 Scarcity, Choice, Opportunity Costs, Incentives – using examples, explain how scarcity, choice, opportunity costs, and incentives affect decisions made by households, businesses, and governments.</p> <p>1.1.2 Entrepreneurship – analyze the risks and rewards of entrepreneurship and associate the functions of entrepreneurs with alleviating problems associated with scarcity. 1.1.3 Marginal Analysis – weigh marginal benefits and marginal costs in decision making.</p>	
<p>3.2 Economic Interdependence, Trade Individually and collaboratively - students will engage in planned inquiries to describe how trade generates economic development and interdependence, and analyze the benefits and costs for individuals, producers, and governments.</p> <p>3.2.1 Absolute and Comparative Advantage – use the concepts of absolute and comparative advantages to explain why goods and services are produced in one nation or locale versus another.</p>	<p>What is a good or service that is iconic to my community? (example: automotive industry in Michigan, cherries in Traverse City, etc)</p> <p>Why is my community known for producing certain iconic goods or services?</p>

Geography and History

Geographic reasoning is the ability to think critically about the spatial relationships between people, places, and environments. In an interconnected world students must have geographic skills to navigate and understand their place and within it and relationship to others. Geography in many ways is the bridge between the social sciences and natural sciences. It is through the study of geography that students begin to understand how human interaction is shaped by natural forces and vice versa.

In the state of Michigan geographic standards are interwoven into historical standards. This is done with the understanding that geographic skills can be used to understand historical events and processes in a more meaningful way. In the case of the Iconic Michigan Project, students must begin with the question, “What is iconic to my community?” which may naturally lead to further

inquiry, such as, “How did this iconic part of my community come to be?”. Students and teachers will find that these are naturally historical and geographic questions.

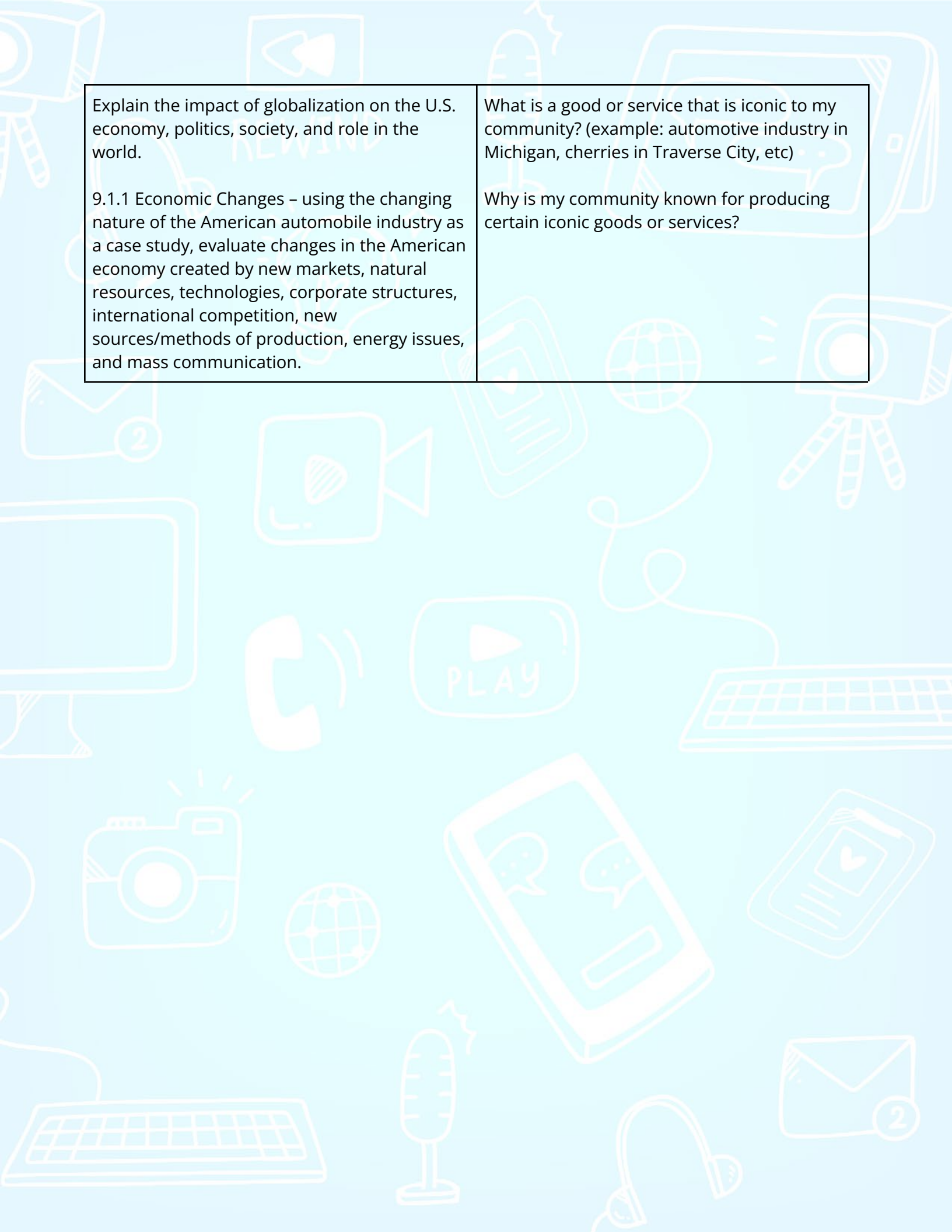
High School U.S. Standard	Iconic Michigan Guiding Question
<p>7.2.3 Impact of World War II on American Life – analyze the changes in American life brought about by U.S. participation in World War II, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the mobilization of economic, military, and social resources. • the role of women, African Americans, and ethnic minority groups in the war effort, including the work of A. Philip Randolph and the integration of U.S. military forces. • the role of the home front in supporting the war effort. 	<p>WWII was an iconic war that defined American life during and after the war. In what ways did your community participate in the war effort? (examples: volunteer groups, factories, enlisting)</p>
<p>Investigate demographic changes, domestic policies, conflicts, and tensions in post World War II America.</p> <p>8.2.1 Demographic Changes – use population data to produce and analyze maps that show the major changes in population distribution and spatial patterns and density, including the Baby Boom, new immigration, suburbanization, reverse migration of African Americans to the South, the Indian Relocation Act of 1956, and the flow of population to the Sunbelt.</p>	<p>In what ways was your community shaped by WWII?</p>
<p>Examine and analyze the Civil Rights Movement using key events, people, and organizations.</p> <p>8.3.1 Civil Rights Movement – analyze key events, ideals, documents, and organizations in the struggle for African American civil rights including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the impact of World War II and the Cold War. • Responses to Supreme Court decisions and governmental actions. • the Civil Rights Act (1964). • protest movements. • rights. • organizations. • civil actions. 	<p>What are some iconic civil rights events in your community?</p> <p>Who are some iconic civil rights figures in your community? What are their stories?</p>

Explain the impact of globalization on the U.S. economy, politics, society, and role in the world.

9.1.1 Economic Changes – using the changing nature of the American automobile industry as a case study, evaluate changes in the American economy created by new markets, natural resources, technologies, corporate structures, international competition, new sources/methods of production, energy issues, and mass communication.

What is a good or service that is iconic to my community? (example: automotive industry in Michigan, cherries in Traverse City, etc)

Why is my community known for producing certain iconic goods or services?



Iconic Michigan Content Area Applications: English Language Arts

The Iconic Michigan project, at its core, is a storytelling project. Students learn multimedia storytelling techniques and have opportunities to incorporate varying levels of research, criticality, and literacy in order to transfer knowledge in creative ways. Because the Common Core State Standards are aligned across skills-driven anchor standards, it can be fairly straightforward for a Language Arts teacher to identify places where the lessons invite students to apply an analytical lens, express an argument or a creative purpose through writing, and use technology to research and produce digital media. Below are some explanations and examples of how CCSS ELA standards might be leveraged alongside the learning targets in this project.

Critical Analysis and Close Reading (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL/RI.6-12)

Iconic Michigan effectively supports students in developing their ability to critically analyze and closely read diverse forms of media. Teachers can determine the extent to which students are tasked with evaluating the Iconic America show clips as history and cultural content, and students will inevitably need to analyze the show as a model to help them understand what goes into creating an impactful piece of documentary media. Because the show includes perspectives from many different contributors, students will be immediately interested in interpreting purpose, rhetoric, and impact. Teachers may also choose to build additional literacy lessons around the show clips by providing other related content (informational texts, poetry, or fiction excerpts) that helps students to understand the cultural significance of some of the iconic landmarks. Finally, students will have opportunities to critically analyze documents, interviews, and other artifacts related to the histories that they are studying for their productions (this connects to the “research skills” strand below as well).

Effective Communication and Writing Proficiency (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6-12)

Through the creation of their own multimedia documentaries, students enhance their writing and communication skills, fulfilling the standards related to effective communication. Specifically, students are challenged to write scripts that incorporate multiple points of view, transitions, and opportunities for rhetorical and figurative language elements that help to engage viewers and listeners. Throughout the production process, students will need to be thinking about the story that they want to tell and how they will arrange their content to reflect a logical beginning, middle, and end that has an impact on their intended viewer.

Research Skills and Source Evaluation (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-12)

The project encourages students to delve into research, teaching them how to gather and evaluate information from diverse sources while fulfilling standards related to research skills. Students will need to begin the project by researching their community and identifying pathways into learning more about specific “icons”. Once they identify topics for their documentary segments, they will need to conduct additional research, including secondary research which relies on public records and journalism as well as primary source research like interviews, observations, and case studies. Teachers may modify the research process by requiring that students engage with certain kinds of informational or narrative texts and artifacts, and that students evaluate authorship and credibility in ways that align with curricula.

Collaborative Discussions and Effective Presentations (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6-12)**

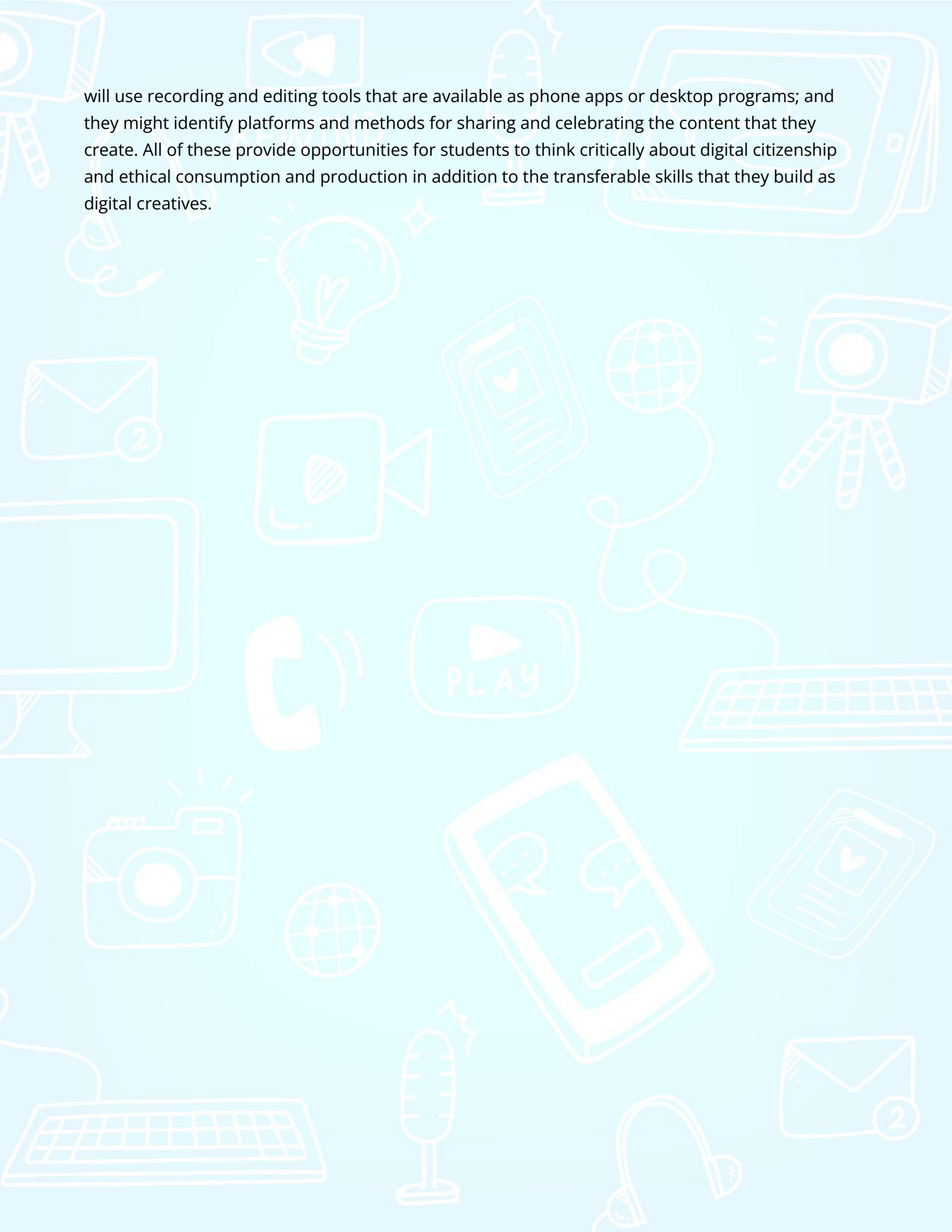
The collaborative nature of the project encourages students to participate in discussions and deliver presentations that build their speaking and listening skills. The customizable nature of the project ensures that educators can invite students to participate in individual, small group, and large group brainstorming sessions, production meetings, presentations, and assessments. Below are examples of activities where students will practice speaking and listening skills:

Activity	Assessment idea
Students will collaborate in a small group to develop production ideas, including a central topic, narrative arc, and segment goals for their production.	Students can self-assess their collaboration and communication according to a rubric; the teacher could observe the small group meeting and evaluate participation.
Students will communicate with and interview community members to support segment production.	Teachers can assess notes that students take during the interview or directly assess the segment that is produced.
Students will present their final mini-documentary to their class or to a larger community during a film festival event.	Teachers can assess collaborative presentation skills separately from the documentary production.

Technological Proficiency and Digital Literacy (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6-12.6)

In an increasingly digital world, technological proficiency is vital. Iconic Michigan hinges on the use of technology to research, collaborate, and tell effective stories. Students have the opportunity to think critically about how we can preserve community stories and how digital technologies can best capture the personality and history of icons in their communities. Again, teachers can develop a version of this project which fits alongside their goals for student learning because while the output of the project is a multimedia video, the technological tools and apps which students can learn and use to get to that end goal are nearly limitless. Students will necessarily engage with digital collaboration and communication tools to work together on planning and production; they

will use recording and editing tools that are available as phone apps or desktop programs; and they might identify platforms and methods for sharing and celebrating the content that they create. All of these provide opportunities for students to think critically about digital citizenship and ethical consumption and production in addition to the transferable skills that they build as digital creatives.



Lesson Plans and Teaching Resources from PBS

PBS LearningMedia offers media content, lesson plans, and professional development modules to help instructors integrate content-specific instruction into a project-based learning experience depending on the learning goals specific to the classroom. Teachers can access resources to support vocabulary learning, skills development, informational text analysis, research and media literacy learning, argumentative writing, and so much other disciplinary content that helps to build knowledge in support of the Iconic Michigan project. Find the Iconic America collection of resources at pbslearningmedia.com/collection/iconicamerica and browse the other resources that can support content-area instruction, including the award-winning [U.S. History collection](#) and the [MediaWise collection](#) to support media literacy instruction.

The screenshot shows the PBS LearningMedia website interface. At the top, there are navigation elements including the PBS LearningMedia logo, a 'FOR TEACHERS' badge, and a search bar. Below this is a blue navigation bar with 'Subjects', 'Grades', and 'Student site' options. The main content area features a large banner for 'ICONIC AMERICA: OUR SYMBOLS AND STORIES WITH DAVID RUBENSTEIN'. Below the banner, there is a breadcrumb trail 'Collections > Iconic America: Our Symbols and Stories' and a note 'In This Collection: Video (13) for Grades 6-8, 9-12'. The page is divided into two columns. The left column lists items in the collection: Fenway Park, The Hollywood Sign, The Gadsden Flag, The Cowboy, The Statue of Liberty, and The American Bald Eagle. The right column has a heading 'Iconic America: Our Symbols and Stories' with social sharing icons for Google Classroom, Social Share, and Favorite. Below this is a descriptive paragraph about the collection's focus on the history of America through its symbols, and a concluding sentence about the significance of these symbols.

PBS LearningMedia also includes an expansive library of learning materials that connect students with a variety of additional documentary film content. While this project leverages the “symbols and stories” vision of *Iconic America*, a number of other PBS films and series may be added to your instruction to help students see other documentary formats and projects that showcase community stories and untold histories. If you are searching for other, diverse programs to include, we recommend:

[Ken Burns in the Classroom Collection](#)

[Making Black America Collection](#)

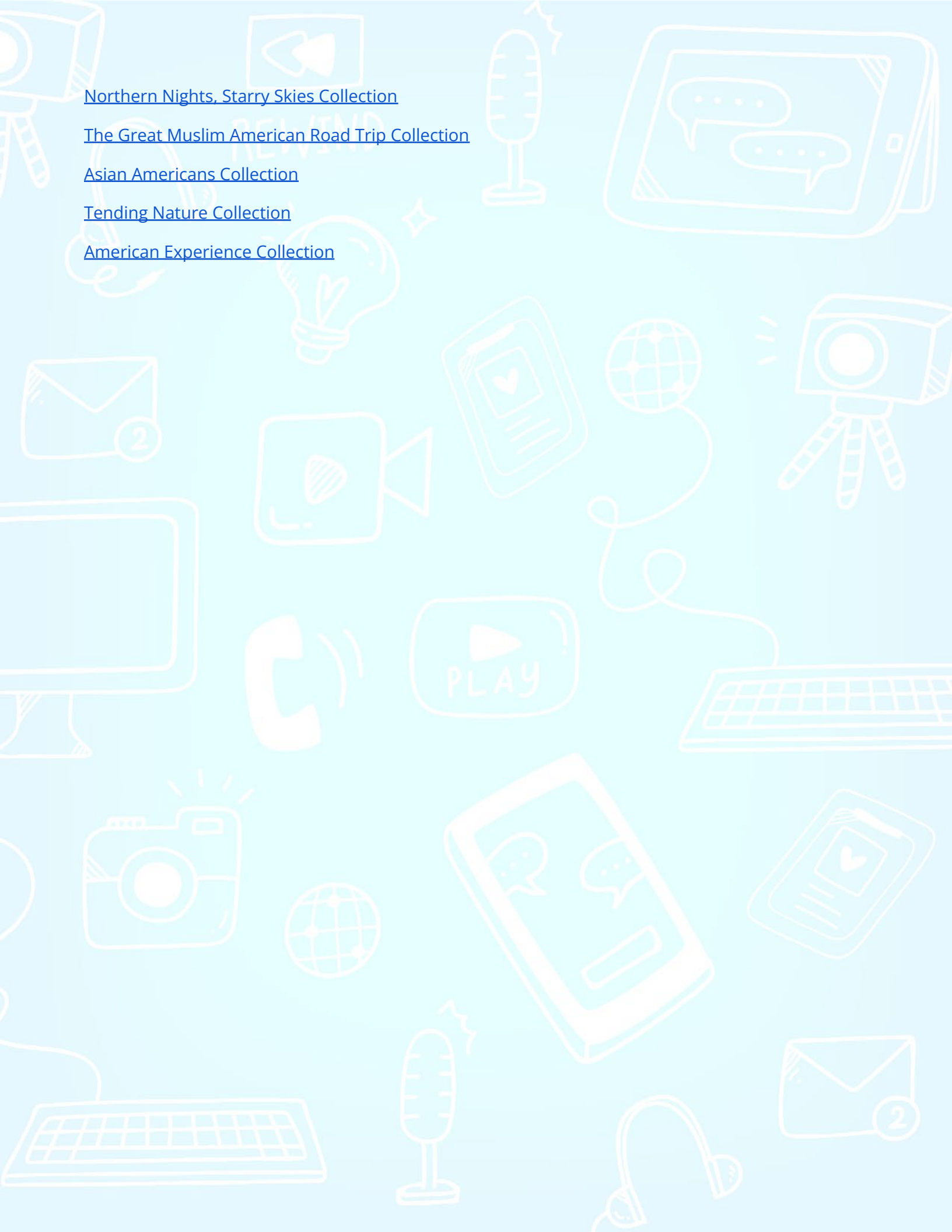
[Northern Nights, Starry Skies Collection](#)

[The Great Muslim American Road Trip Collection](#)

[Asian Americans Collection](#)

[Tending Nature Collection](#)

[American Experience Collection](#)



Sample Calendar and Pacing Suggestions

Below is a suggested unit plan for incorporating the Iconic Michigan project as a standalone project-based learning experience or summative assessment. Note that this version of the project would be largely student-led and does not include space for content-area direct instruction; rather, any specific content would be shared with students prior to beginning the project.

Week 1: Introduction to project, thematic brainstorm, small group topic identification, research (mini-lessons around research, credibility, and note-taking)

Week 2: Pre-production, planning for segments, interviews, and site visits, communication with experts, site visits, technology orientation and practice

Week 3: Production, capturing interviews, b-roll, and audio voiceover, photography

Week 4: Post-production, video editing, graphics creation, feedback and review

Week 5: Flexible additional time for in-class assessment, mini-film festival, and community event

Alternatively, the project may be incorporated into an existing course or unit plan and used to supplement and engage specific content-area learning. Below is an example of a sample calendar that was used by an instructor who piloted this project in her class. For this instructor, The Iconic Michigan project was used as an end of year project in a 9th grade U.S. History and Geography class. This project can be used as an end of unit assessment for ERA 8 or 9 for U.S. History and Geography, as is demonstrated by the calendar below. This instructor blocked off 1-2 days per week for students to meet and work collaboratively on their projects. On the “project work days” students could conference with their instructor to discuss progress and receive feedback. Instructors may take a different approach and decide to condense their project work days so that students are completing the project over a shorter period of time. In all, it is suggested that students have 14 dedicated work days to complete this project as they will also need time outside of class to film and possibly edit.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
- Pearl Harbor: Terrorist attack or military defense?	Japanese Internment Research - Is internment the right word?	Radio Broadcast: WWII	Flipgrid Recording Due	View Iconic America Introduce project

Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10
<p>Iconic Michigan Day</p> <p>Finish Iconic America + Identify list of Iconic Michigan symbols/places</p> <p>Place/ Symbol/Theme</p> <p>Identify themes</p>	<p>WWII stations</p>	<p>Hiroshima: Were the bombs justified?</p>	<p>Iconic Michigan Day</p> <p>What do you need to make a documentary?</p>	<p>Iconic Michigan Day</p> <p>Delegating roles and responsibilities</p> <p>Decide Big Topic</p>
Day 11	Day 12	Day 13	Day 14	Day 15
<p>Production Teams: Planning/Writing and contacting potential interviews/locations</p>	<p>Cold War Notes</p>	<p>Containment Policy Investigation</p>	<p>McCarthyism: What was life like during McCarthyism?</p>	<p>Iconic Michigan: Filming/Writing</p>
Day 16	Day 17	Day 18	Day 19	Day 20
<p>Iconic Michigan Day: Filming</p>	<p>Cuban Missile Crisis Simulation</p>	<p>Redlining</p>	<p>Era of Social Activism Stations</p>	<p>Iconic Michigan Day: Filming</p>
Day 21	Day 22	Day 23	Day 24	Day 25
<p>Iconic Michigan Day: Editing</p>	<p>Detroit Uprising 1967</p>	<p>Era of Assassination</p>	<p>The United States and Middle East</p>	<p>Iconic Michigan Day: Editing</p>
<p>Day 26</p>	<p>Day 27</p>	<p>Day 28</p>	<p>Day 29</p>	<p>Day 30</p>
<p>Iconic Michigan Day</p>	<p>continued</p>	<p>Watergate</p>	<p>Iranian Hostage Crisis</p>	<p>Iconic Michigan Day</p>
<p>Day 31</p>	<p>Day 32</p>	<p>Day 33</p>	<p>Day 34</p>	<p>Day 35</p>
<p>NO SCHOOL</p>	<p>Reaganomics and "The War on Drugs"</p>	<p>What brought an end to the Cold War?</p>	<p>Is the Cold War really over?</p>	<p>Iconic Michigan Day</p>
Day 36	Day 37	Day 38	Day 39	Day 40
<p>Iconic Michigan Day</p>	<p>Iconic Michigan Day: Conference and Revisions</p>	<p>Iconic Michigan Work Time</p>	<p>Reflection and Self Grading</p>	<p>What is iconic in this era?</p>
Day 41	Day 42	Day 43	Day 44	Day 45
<p>Iconic Michigan Day</p>	<p>Iconic Michigan Day</p>	<p>Iconic Michigan Day: Viewing Party</p>	<p>Reflection and Self Grading</p>	<p>What is iconic in this era?</p>

Options For Assessment

There are a variety of ways that instructors may choose to assess students' work for the Iconic Michigan Project. For Michigan social studies teachers who are leveraging the Iconic Michigan project as a learning experience that is aligned with history, geography, civics, or economic standards, it is going to be important to assess the content of students' documentaries and perhaps a self-assessment or reflection that students produce to showcase their learning or match content from their project to learning targets.

If students are completing the Iconic Michigan project as a standalone project, instructors may choose to evaluate - or have students self-assess - the final product or the production process. Assessment may invite students to reflect on things like their storytelling and communication and production value, in addition to their collaboration skills, time management, creativity, and research and planning.

Ultimately, the best way to assess students' work is to use a variety of methods and criteria, including a mix of teacher feedback and student reflection. The unique community engagement aspect of Iconic Michigan also means it is possible to invite external feedback from community members that can support student learning and reflection.

Example Rubric for Documentary Final Product

Criteria	0-2pts	3-4 pts	5 pts
Historical accuracy	The video contains factual errors or does not accurately depict historical events or figures.	The video is mostly accurate in its depiction of historical events and figures, but there are some minor errors.	The video is accurate in its depiction of historical events and figures.
Effective storytelling	The video is difficult to follow or does not tell a clear story.	The video tells a clear story, but it is not engaging.	The video tells a clear and engaging story.

Use of music	The music in the video is not appropriate or does not enhance the story.	The music in the video is appropriate and enhances the story, but it is not used effectively.	The music in the video is appropriate, enhances the story, and is used effectively.
Inclusion of historical artifacts/interviews	The video does not include any historical artifacts or interviews.	The video includes some historical artifacts or interviews, but they do not add much to the story.	The video includes historical artifacts or interviews that add to the story.
Editing	The video is poorly edited and does not flow smoothly.	The video is somewhat well-edited and flows fairly smoothly.	The video is well-edited and flows smoothly.
Total	0-8 pts	9-12 pts	13-15 pts

Parent and School Administration Letter

Dear Parents and School Administration,

We are excited to announce the launch of the Iconic Michigan Project, a new project that will engage students in learning about Michigan history and culture through the lens of film.

The project will culminate in a student-produced documentary that will be shown at the school and online. Students will be responsible for choosing a local Michigan icon to research, film, and edit into a short, entertaining and educational documentary.

We believe that this project will provide students with a unique opportunity to learn about Michigan history and culture in a hands-on way. It will also give them the chance to develop their video editings and writing skills and to showcase their work to the community.

We understand that some students may need special accommodations in order to complete this project. For example, students who do not have access to a digital camera or computer may be able to borrow one from the school.

Extenuating Expectations:

- Students may need the use of a digital camera, computer, or smartphone.
- Students may ask to meet with peers at historical locations or to edit film.
- Students may also ask family members to record video or audio interviews.

We understand that some students may not have access to these resources or may have difficulty completing the project for other reasons. We will work with each student to make sure that they are able to participate in the project in a way that is meaningful to them.

We encourage all students to participate in this project. We believe that it will be a valuable learning experience for all involved.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

The Iconic Michigan Project Team

Lesson Plans

What follows are lesson plans that are designed for educators to implement the Iconic Michigan project in their classrooms. Educators should keep in mind that as a project-based learning experience and one that spans content areas and academic standards, these lessons are presented as a springboard for additional and deeper application in alignment with additional classroom learning targets. Each lesson plan is a “phase” which means it can likely be done in one class period but can also be expanded for deeper learning across multiple meetings, and most plans also include additional resources which teachers may choose to build in depending on their goals for student learning.

Note: Iconic America on PBS LearningMedia

Viewing guides and content-area specific lesson plans are available for educators on PBS LearningMedia. Note that this project assumes that educators will either only briefly screen either a series of short clips or one episode of Iconic America before moving students into project design and production. If there is a desire to spend more time with the episodes from a disciplinary perspective, or simply because there is time and the episodes are interesting investigations into American culture, identity, and history, instructors should use either the PBS LearningMedia resources or the episode discussion guides from PBS to dig deeper.

Phase One: Introducing Iconic America

Objectives:

- Students will be able to identify and describe the key elements of a documentary film.
- Students will be able to analyze the historical and social context of the events depicted in the film.
- Students will be able to discuss the meaning of "iconic" and how it is applied to the film.
- Students will be able to identify and discuss what is "iconic" about Michigan and their community.

Materials:

- Method of viewing (smart board, digital tv, computers)
- Method of recording student responses (whiteboard, digital doc, large sticky note-pads, post-its)
- Iconic America show (DVD or digital link)
- Viewing guide (see below)

Procedure:

1. Introduction

- Introduce the lesson by asking students what they think of when they hear the word "iconic." Discuss how icons can be people, places, things, or events.
 - This opening question can be posed multiple different ways; as a bell ringer, chalk talk/gallery walk, or group discussion.
 - It is important that student's responses are recorded as it will be necessary to reference when determining potential topics for the project.

2. Viewing

- Show students Iconic America (can be shown in clips or view the entire episode). As students watch, they should take notes in the two-column notetaker from their student handbook.
- Note: The lesson plans within PBS LearningMedia invite students to view and analyze the episodes from a variety of additional perspectives. These lessons are a great way to introduce the content and build more standards-aligned learning into this project. You may choose to leverage these lessons or simply engage the episodes as models and prompts for this project.

3. Discussion

- After viewing the episodes, lead a discussion with students about the following questions:

- What kind of “shots” or footage did filmmakers capture to help tell the “story” of their topic?
- What events in the film remind you of something we have learned in class or in other history classes?
- What is something that you learned from this film that stood out to you or surprised you?
- Why do you think the filmmakers chose this topic?
- What is "iconic" about Michigan and your community?
- Do you think this documentary would be interesting to teenagers? What might you do to make it MORE interesting for a teenage audience?

4. Conclusion

- Students submit their viewing guides, and complete a “Rotten Tomatoes” review of the documentary on whether they’d recommend it to other social studies students.

Phase Two: Intro to Project and Topic Selection

Lesson Plan

Objectives:

- Students will be able to identify what makes something iconic.
- Students will be able to brainstorm topics for their Iconic Michigan documentary.
- Students will be able to work collaboratively to create a documentary.

Materials:

- Whiteboard or smartboard
- Markers or google doc/slides
- Large sticky notepad paper (optional)
- Post its (optional)
- Google Forms

Procedure:

1. Introduction

- Begin by reviewing the previous day's discussion on what is iconic OR share out on what students discovered in their family interviews.
- Ask students to share their responses to the question of what they felt was iconic in their community.
- [Introduce the Iconic Michigan project and the requirements for the project.](#)

2. Discussion

- Lead a discussion about concerns about the project, what students will need to be successful, what they are excited about, what ideas they already may have, and most importantly question they have about the project.
 - Student concerns should be documented and instructors should consider altering aspects of the project that students have concerns with (timing, pacing, expectations regarding topic)
- Student responses may come in the form of a gallery walk, or chalk talk, or collected via [Google Form](#).

3. Brainstorming

- Break students into groups and have them brainstorm topics for their Iconic Michigan documentary using section 2 of their student handbook.
- The teacher may decide or the students may choose to do different topics within each of the groups or the entire class may decide to focus on one topic together.

- To get discussion started you should reference student responses to the question that was posed the previous day about what they felt was iconic in their community. Student responses from the previous day can either be displayed via smartboard or poster or on the whiteboard

4. Conclusion

- Review any questions or concerns that students may have about the project
- Exit ticket: students submit via post it note or google form the topic that interests them most and that they would like to do their documentary on.

Teacher Notes: After class, instructors may need to collect student responses to document which topics were of most interest to the students. Alternatively, teachers may select from student generated responses what they feel is most appropriate for the purposes of the project.

Notes on Student Choice: Different teachers may choose to organize student documentary groups based on a variety of criteria. However, it is important to consider the authenticity of student choice as much as possible. One option is to allow the class as a whole to create the groups, allowing students to choose group leaders who then form their groups based on similar interests, access to resources, or even style of work. It is highly recommended that this project happen within the context of a class where students have some knowledge and experience with their peers and instructor.

Phase Three: Research

Lesson Plan: Introduction to Research and Evaluating Credibility

Objectives:

- Apply the CRAAP test to conduct thorough and accurate research for your documentary.

Materials:

- Projector/smart board
- Google forms
- Student devices (either one-to-one or one per student group)

Procedure:

1. Introduction

- Students will be given 5 minutes to be put into groups. These groups (note previous lesson) are either self selected groups or teacher chosen groups. Make sure each group knows their assigned topic for their group's documentary.

2. Discussion

- [Pose the question](#) to your students (or post the question on the board): "You're trying to figure out where the best place to get lunch in town is. Who do you think is your most credible or reliable source for finding out where that is?"
- Allow students to share their responses
- Follow up by asking WHY they think those sources are most reliable or credible.

3. Viewing

- Introduce the topic of credible research and the CRAAP test. Students will watch a 3 minute video that outlines the CRAAP test. As students watch they will complete the [guided notes](#).
- After watching the video answer any questions and allow students time to finish up notes if they need

4. Research

- Student groups begin researching their topic. They will have 10 minutes to use their devices to find sources that they believe will be useful to their research and pass the CRAAP test
 - i. Using university online libraries, Google Scholar, Library of Congress
 - ii. Student groups identify at least one source (no more than 2) they think are useful for understanding their topic

- As a group, evaluate if it passes the CRAAP test
- In the [google form](#), students submit the links to their sources

5. Discuss

- Using the results of the google form, display sources that were submitted by students on the smartboard/projector.
- Using the CRAAP test notes, students will evaluate whether or not the source passes the CRAAP test.
- **Recommendation:** use a random name selector or rotate groups to make sure the majority of the class has an opportunity to determine why they believe the source meets or does not meet the criteria of the CRAAP test.

Lesson Plan: Sustained Research and Notetaking

Objectives:

- To practice sustained research and collect information that will inform students' Iconic Michigan segments

Materials:

- Personal devices
- Research notetaker (in student handbook)

Procedure:

1. Introduction

- Remind students about the CRAAP test and how they should be looking for credible and reliable sources to inform their work.

2. Discussion

- Walk students through the research section of their student handbook and open up discussion to talk about a few examples of good research questions and places to find information in your community. Create a physical or digital space where you can collect ideas as a class so that students have a place to begin when they start researching.

3. Research

- Give students a defined timeline to complete the research section of their handbook. Note that this section asks students to do some initial research in order to identify their topic; if they already have their topics in mind or they have been assigned, they may need to skip to the "deep dive" section of the research. Students should spend several class periods (and some out-of-class time depending on the availability of digital and print resources in your community) researching and uncovering more information about their topic.

4. Feedback/Assessment

- Check in with students periodically to ensure that they are conducting effective research and taking good notes that will inform the choices they make with their project. It may also be beneficial to check in as a large group and share research findings, techniques, and goals as they shift during this phase.

Phase Four: Production

Lesson Plan: Watching as a Producer

Objectives:

- Revisit episodes and clips from *Iconic America* through the lens of a producer
- Think critically about how content is made and what production moves are effective for various audiences
- Analyze storytelling devices and techniques

Materials:

- *Iconic America* episodes or clips (available on PBS.org or PBS LearningMedia - consider using the same clips from the introductory lessons)
- Student handbook

Procedure:

1. Introduction

- Begin by inviting students to open their handbooks to the introductory lesson where they recorded observations about *Iconic America* episodes. Lead a large group discussion where students recall their observations. Collect the most common observations and notes somewhere visible (on a physical or digital white board, for example).

2. Viewing

- Screen one or more episodes or clips from the series again. Tell students that they are watching the content this time as producers, and they should be looking for elements and techniques that they want to incorporate into their storytelling. The following questions may help to focus students' thinking as they watch:
 - How is the story that you want to tell similar or different from what we are seeing in *Iconic America*?
 - What perspectives or content pieces can you collect that would have a similar effect as *Iconic America* segments?
 - What do you like about how the series is produced, and how could you try to replicate those elements?
 - What sort of narrative progression - beginning, middle, and end - exists? How could you develop a similar story structure with what you've learned in your

research?

- What is the purpose of the *Iconic America* content? Will you have a similar purpose in your project? If not, how will it be different?
- What is surprising or unique about *Iconic America*? What do you want to include in your project that you hadn't thought of before?

3. Discussion

- Invite students to debrief their observations after viewing the content. You may choose to do this as a large group, or with students in their small production groups.

4. Work Time

- After students have discussed their observations, they should synthesize into a project brief using the prompt in their handbook. Help students understand that this brief is a very short opportunity to identify their goals and purpose for their project; this brief should guide the choices they will make for the rest of the project. Students can share their project briefs and get feedback and/or the instructor may choose to assess and provide feedback to help move students in a productive direction.

Lesson Plan: Developing a Pitch

*This lesson is adapted from story-maker.org

Objectives:

- To support students in planning their production and thinking critically about the elements needed to meet their goals
- To introduce essential production vocabulary

Materials:

- *Iconic Michigan* student handbook
- Access to story-maker.org

Procedure:

1. Introduction

- Discuss the concept of a “pitch” with students. Ask them if they have ever prepared a “pitch” - for a project or maybe for something in their personal life like going over to a friend’s house or asking a parent or guardian to buy something for them. Have students brainstorm what made the pitch effective and/or successful.
- Explain that part of production is bringing a pitch, or a story idea, to a team. Invite students to brainstorm what specific elements are necessary for a video pitch.

Answers should include:

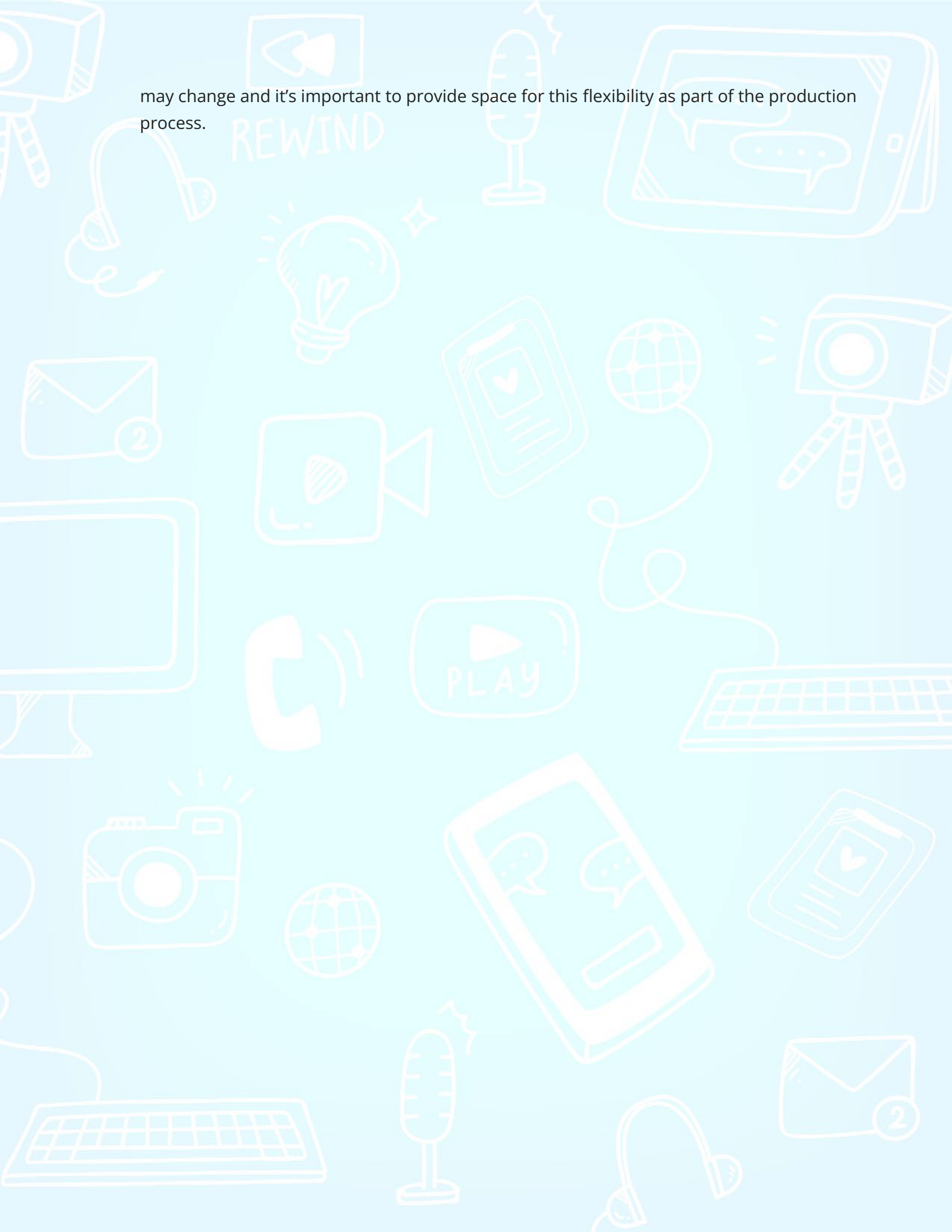
- What is the **STORY?** (beginning, middle, end, plus conflict and resolution)
- Who are the **CHARACTERS** and why are they ideal for the story?
- Why is the story **IMPORTANT** and interesting? (i.e. newsworthy)
- Is producing the story **DOABLE?**

2. Work Time

- Have students complete the pitch document in their handbooks, either individually or in their production groups. Depending on the goals for the final project, the instructor should determine how students actually share their pitches. For example, if each student or student group is producing individual video stories, it may not be necessary for them to pitch to their peers. However, if the goal is to produce segments that can be edited into a longer documentary or if there is a goal of having all stories align under a particular theme, it will be valuable to have students pitch to each other and offer feedback that can guide collaborative planning.

Note: it can be helpful to have students return to their pitch document and even pitch again throughout the production process. As they collect stories and footage their goals

may change and it's important to provide space for this flexibility as part of the production process.



Lesson Plan: Production 101

Objectives:

- To introduce students to a variety of beginner-level elements in mobile video production, interviewing, and storytelling
- To offer students resources with which they can learn and play on their own as they begin working on their production

Materials:

- Mobile production toolkit, including mobile phone with high-quality camera or DSLR, tripod, lights, gimbal/stabilizer, wireless or wired microphones (DIY or provided by MLC)
- Access to story-maker.org
- [At-a-glance guide to story-maker resources](#)

Procedure:

*Note: There will likely be students in your classroom who know how to produce video content! This is a great opportunity to invite those student experts to teach and lead a lesson around editing, especially if you are not comfortable leading that lesson yourself. You can collaborate with them to develop the lesson plan and empower them to practice new planning and speaking skills. This may also be a great opportunity to invite a guest speaker into your classroom to support this phase of learning.

1. Introduction

- Display the story-maker [“Quick Guide to Video Production”](#) resource for the class to see. Read through the lesson together, stopping to discuss each tip. Invite student discussion and reflection as you learn together using the following prompts:
 - Have you ever shot a video where this information would have been helpful? What was your experience like?
 - Have you noticed this technique in videos that you have watched online or on TV?
 - How will this information be relevant as you produce your project?
- Introduce students to story-maker.org and do a quick site demo. Show them how to navigate to the “student” section so that they can see all of the lessons and tutorials that will help them make better video content. Tell them that they also have a resource page in their handbook that has direct links to the most relevant and helpful videos from this site. Give students time to explore and learn from these resources, either independently or in their small production groups.

2. Discussion

- After students have had some time to explore the resources, lead a discussion about the core elements of video production. The goals should be to ensure everyone has a working knowledge of basic production vocabulary, that everyone understands some of the most important “rules” of production, and that everyone has a sense of what’s possible with their equipment.
- Emphasize the following vocabulary to ensure students are thinking about the right kinds of techniques and production moves for their projects:
 - Interview
 - Script
 - B-roll
 - Lighting
 - Perspective
 - Framing
 - Focus
 - Voiceover

3. Orientation

- Show students the equipment that they will have access to for the project. Whether you have extensive professional equipment or students are using personal devices, it is important that you lead a conversation about how best to use the equipment to accomplish each student’s project goals. There are ways to leverage even inexpensive equipment to support the advice about framing, perspective, lighting etc from the story-maker resources. Encourage students to be creative and seek out support from each other and from YouTube, where there are lots of additional video tutorials meant to help creators produce with different kinds of equipment. Encourage students to consider their environment, too - lighting and microphone needs different depending on where they will be shooting, so depending on what equipment they have, they can leverage natural light or sound to support their vision.

4. Work Time (lots of it)

- Send them off to produce! At this point in the project, students will likely be following divergent timelines and project plans. Remind them that they have all of the resources they need in the project handbooks and that they should use the planning and production resources as they prepare for interviews, shooting b-roll, and recording voiceovers. Schedule some one-on-one, small group, and large group check-ins depending on the timeline for the project overall, and ensure that students are aware of their deadlines for the footage that they will be editing into their final segments.

Lesson Plan: Editing

Objectives:

- To introduce students to a variety of mobile and web-based editing tools and techniques
- To help students critically analyze their footage and make purposeful decisions about their final digital story

Materials:

- Devices with access to editing apps or web-based tools
- Interview, b-roll, and voiceover content
- Access to a free music and graphics library (optional, available with most editing apps)

Procedure:

*Note: There will likely be students in your classroom who know how to edit video content! This is a great opportunity to invite them to teach and lead a lesson around editing, especially if you are not comfortable leading that lesson yourself. You can collaborate with them to develop the lesson plan and empower them to practice new planning and speaking skills. This may also be a great opportunity to invite a guest speaker into your classroom to support this phase of learning.

1. Debrief/Discussion

- Begin with a discussion about the production process. You may invite students to check in regarding their progress, share stories of successes or moments of learning, or even share some of the footage that they captured.

2. Feedback/Reflection

- Put students in groups (if they have been working in production groups, try to mix them up). Tell them that each group member will need to share one clip from their production so far. When each person shares, they should begin by sharing their project brief and/or pitch so that their group understands the story they are trying to tell, their purpose, and their intended audience. As each group member shares, other members should offer thoughts and feedback that includes the following:
 - What is valuable and engaging about this footage?
 - How does the footage contribute to a story?
 - What is missing from this footage?
 - What would make this footage more engaging or impactful?

The goal of this activity is to help students think critically about the footage they have - as they begin editing their segments, it's not just about what they like, it's what will make a valuable addition to the story they are trying to tell.

3. Discussion

- After small group discussions conclude, bring all students back to the large group and discuss the edit process. Remind students that editing takes many steps and a lot of time and attention to detail. Direct them to the resources in their student handbooks which can support entry-level training for editing, and worksheets which will walk them through the process of making decisions to compose their edited segments.

4. Work Time

- Provide students with dedicated time to complete the Shot List and Storyboard documents independently or with their production group, and then provide them with several class periods to work on their edits.

Phase Five: Assessment, Reflection, Celebration

Traditional assessment options are discussed at the beginning of this guide and will vary depending on how this project is implemented, in what course, and at what grade level. Instructors should feel free to make decisions about how student projects will be evaluated.

Additionally, as students complete their media stories, it is a good idea to plan for ways to celebrate the time and effort that went into their real-world projects. Not only is authentic audience assessment a key objective of project-based learning, it is a well-researched goal for all 21st-century teaching and learning. This opportunity can look a number of ways, some of which are offered below:

- An in-class film festival event - invitations can go out to other school staff, administrators, and family members who may be free to attend; additionally, the teacher could initiate a livestream via Zoom or other digital platform to share with viewers who cannot make it to the school
- An afterschool film festival event can include the school community and members of the wider community and could be an additional level of collaboration and coordination that students could contribute to as hosts for the event
- A community event in partnership with a local library, theater, or other site
- A digital showcase for student media that can be promoted across school and personal social media accounts and linked on school websites
- A sponsored event with your local public media station

If you are hosting a community screening, please reach out to us so that we can add your event to our calendar and send you a toolkit with posters, customizable promotional graphics, and free swag to hand out to attendees!

Regardless of which pathway you choose to celebrate your students' projects, be sure to build in opportunities for feedback and reflection along the way. During an in-class showcase as well as any community screening, students should reflect on and invite feedback around the following:

- How well did the media engage viewers?
- What parts of the project were most impactful for viewers?
- What kind of response, discussion, and feedback were prompted by the media?
- How well did the project represent the community story?
- What improvements and/or additions would make the story more powerful?

Extension Opportunities

If you or your students are looking for additional opportunities to showcase your work or apply learning in other ways, the links below offer creative ways to do so.

1. Please share any student-made content directly with us at the [Michigan Learning Channel](#). We are eager to work with student producers who want to showcase their work on our platforms.
2. Invite students to upload their videos to our [statewide Flip site](#) and then engage with other stories from their peers around the state.
3. Participate in the national [Iconic America Photography Challenge](#) by uploading still photos from student projects (or additional photos that represent students' icons in a different medium)
4. Participate in the national ["America's Invitation"](#) prompt from the America 250 committee, inviting citizens from across the country to share stories about America's history and future.