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“The Foot Soldier of Birmingham” Listening Guide

*** pairs well with Design a Monument activity*

Content Area	ELA, Social Studies, Art
Grade Band	7-12
Objectives	We are learning to...analyze different interpretations of a story. Students will be able to...listen to a podcast to analyze the different versions of a story presented through a photograph and a statue from the Civil Rights Movement.
Length	1 - 2 50-minute class periods
Standards	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.7: Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment.
Creator	Rose Peterson

PROCEDURE:

1. Podcast (38 minutes)
 - a. Listen to “The Foot Soldier of Birmingham,” Episode 4, Season 2 of the podcast Revisionist History by Malcolm Gladwell
 - i. Can be assigned as homework the night before
 - b. *While listening*, keep track of the details of “Neat & Tidy Story” and the details of the “Real Story” in the chart linked below.
2. Reflection/Discussion
 - a. After reading, discuss the discrepancies in the interpretation of the event in question between the photograph and the statue commemorating the event using the discussion questions linked below.
 - i. Facilitation Options:
 1. Instruct students to choose one question and write a one-page reflection answering that question.
 2. Invite students to participate in a whole-class discussion using these questions as a jumping-off point.
 3. Ask students to choose the question they have the most thoughts about; then, move to the table that is labeled with that number to meet other students who chose that same question for a small-group discussion.
 4. Provide the questions in handout form where students can answer each with a few sentences.
 - ii. Differentiation for more advanced students:
 1. Invite students to follow along and annotate a paper copy of the transcript while listening to the podcast, writing their own questions in the margin as they arise. Use these student-generated questions as the foundation for a class discussion in any of the ways listed above.

Revisionist History: The Foot Soldier of Birmingham (Season 2, Episode 4)

Listening Guide

[Podcast](#) | [Transcript](#)



The "Neat and Tidy Story"	The "Real Story"

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How closely to “the truth” should artists be required to stick?
2. Is it ethical for artists to tweak reality/the truth in their artwork?
3. Does it matter if artists present their own interpretation of events if it leads the audience to react in a productive or desired way?
4. If artists want to include a living person in a piece of their artwork, should they be required to have that person’s permission? What, if anything, should the protocol be if that person is dead?
5. Does it matter if this particular photo was misinterpreted in Ronald McDowell’s statue if it represents something that really did happen in the South? If it represents a larger truth, is it okay?
6. Toward the end of this podcast, Malcolm Gladwell says, “That’s what history is. Each side writes their own story and the winner’s story is the one we call the truth. You don’t think White people told their share of whoppers over the years in the south? You don’t think that there’s a statue in a southern town somewhere of a champion of the Confederacy that makes a hero of someone who was actually a villain? White people got to do that in the south for centuries. *Foot Soldier* is just what happens when the people on the bottom finally get the power to tell the story their way. It was a long time coming.” Do you agree or disagree? Why?