The American Revolution Youth Media Challenge "First Person" Project Teacher Toolkit

Project Overview

When participating in the *The American Revolution* Youth Media Challenge, educators have the option to participate in either the First Person project or the Show What You Know project. To view the toolkit for the Show What You Know project, [please view here](#).

The American Revolution Youth Media Challenge First Person project is a personal narrative media project that invites students to respond to one of the following questions in audio, video or photo essay format.

★ What does freedom mean to you?

★ What does democracy mean to you?

★ What does being an American mean to you?

Project details

This project is open to middle and high school students nationwide. We ask that university and elementary students not submit to the showcase.

All student work is published as it is submitted. *The American Revolution* Youth Media Challenge "First Person" project is *not* a contest. If KQED or your local public media station wants to broadcast a student piece, we will reach out for more extensive permissions.

You decide the deadline: The "First Person" project is open for submissions throughout the school year.

Time commitment: Most "First Person" projects take between 1-3 weeks to complete.

[Quick Start Guide](#)	[Project Curriculum](#)

QUICK START GUIDE: *The essential requirements only*

1. Submission requirements | [Step-by-step instructions](#)

Short film projects	• Video file (mp4 recommended) • File formats: YouTube open to "public or unlisted" or Google Drive link open to "everyone with the link can view" • Thumbnail image (2MB or less) • Title, brief project description, and short producer's statement
Audio essay projects	• Audio file (mp3 recommended) • File formats: Soundcloud link open to "public" or Google Drive link open to "everyone with the link can view" • Thumbnail image (2MB or less) • Title, brief project description, and short producer's statement
Photo essay projects	• Image(s) (10MB or less) • File formats: jpg, png, pdf • Thumbnail image to display on showcase (2MB or less) • Title, brief project description, and short producer's statement

2. Publish on KQED's Youth Media Showcase!

1	**Teachers create an account on *[The American Revolution](#) [Youth Media Challenge site](#)* and get a submission code.** Students do not create accounts. Your code allows students to submit their work (recommended), or you can submit on behalf of students.
2	**Students should complete [audio](#) | [video](#) | [graphics](#) submission form template before submitting, so they have everything ready to go**. The submission code is a key part of the submission template. Pre-fill your teacher code for students. ([Citation guidelines](#)) STUDENTS SUBMIT ON [THE PROJECT SUBMISSION PAGE](#)
3	**Make sure sharing permissions are open.** If using a Google Drive link, go over how to open permissions to "everyone can view." If submitting using YouTube or Soundcloud, submissions should be "public" or "unlisted," not private. ***Student work will not be visible on the showcase if permissions are not opened.***
4	**Celebrate and share widely!** Each student submission will have a unique URL, which students can then share with family, school, and the wider community.

First Person: Project Curriculum

1. [Introduce the Project](#)
2. [Analyze Examples](#)
3. [Brainstorm](#)
4. [Create a Draft](#)
5. [Revise and Edit](#)
6. [Make It](#)
7. [Publish and Celebrate!](#)

*optional, but recommended	**Make your own "First Person" project as a model.** Going through the steps from start to finish is invaluable for guiding students. Peer models are also key, but there you only have the finished product. You'll be able to model the brainstorm, drafting and production process, and use your own model to practice our peer feedback protocol (or any protocol you use).

Project Documents & Resources

All links are Google docs. You are invited to copy and edit as needed.

Student Project Checklists	Rubrics	Other Support
(includes links to all curriculum docs) ● [Audio essay](#) ● [Short film](#) ● [Photo essay](#)	● [Audio essay rubric](#) ● [Short film rubric](#) ● [Photo essay rubric](#)	● [*The American Revolution* submission page](#) ● [COPPA form](#) (for middle school students under the age of 13) ● [Sample letter to share the project with families](#) ● [KQED's list of media-making tools](#), including no-cost access to some web-based tools

1. Introduce the Project

Lesson materials to support this step
Slides: [Audio essay and short film project roadmap](#) Slides: [Photo essay project roadmap](#)

Why this project? Before giving students the project checklist, share your "First Person" model and/or talk about why this project is a good fit for your class. These reasons may include:
- Empowering students with the writing and media-creation skills to share their voice or speak their truth to an audience beyond the classroom
- Giving space to explore creativity and self-expression through media production
- Encouraging them to publish their work, perhaps for the first time, to build a positive digital footprint, and/or add to a portfolio of work
- Reinforcing class content and skills
- Building on other projects you've done or plan to do

When you assign the project, it's a best practice to also share the rubric, so students know what success looks like.

2. Analyze Examples

Related student materials	Lesson materials to support this step
• [Analyzing audio essay examples](#) • [Analyzing short film examples](#) • [Analyzing photo essays examples](#)	• Slides: [What is a photo essay?](#)

Analyze peer-created "First Person" projects to show students what they'll be creating and help them practice media analysis and listening skills. Don't skip this step!

Approach the analysis phase the same way you usually do when asking students to read and understand course material. The graphic organizers above are simply guides for this process. Students should use the analysis method they are most familiar with.

After analyzing mentor texts, students will ideally be ready to brainstorm and choose their topics.

3. Brainstorm

Related student materials	Lesson materials to support this step
- Audio essay or short film brainstorming graphic organizer - Photo essay brainstorming graphic organizer	- Slide: Quicklist activity for brainstorming topics for any "First Person" project - Article with a list of photo essay topic ideas

After analyzing mentor texts, students will be ready to brainstorm and choose their topic.

As with all steps of this process, these graphic organizers offer one option to use. Approach brainstorming the way you usually do when asking students to generate topic ideas. Other ideas include having students make a biographical timeline or a low-stress discussion format like concentric circles.

4. Create a Draft

Option 1:

Audio & Video

For audio essay or short film projects, any writing process methods you already use will help students draft their scripts.

Audio essay or short film scripts should…
- Use vivid language and careful word choice to keep sentences concise and memorable.
- Be authentic and reflect a personal truth. No need to exaggerate or add drama. Let your life speak.
- Focus on your story, not anyone else's. If other people play a major role in your narrative, ask permission to include them, or change the story enough so that they aren't identifiable.

Related student materials	Lesson materials to support this step
- Audio essay script graphic organizer - Components of an audio essay handout - Short film script graphic organizer - Short film storyboarding template	Slide: Written Stories vs. Audio Stories graphic

Option 2:

Photo essay

The "First Person" project focuses on the personal. Photos should be sequenced in a way that tells a story or communicates something about the creator. These projects can depict an event, personal story, memory, journey, value, or interest/hobby. Because of this, the featured photos ideally will be taken by the student. This also eliminates the need to worry about copyright or usage rights to a photo. In some cases, though, students may need to use a photo taken by someone else. Be sure this photo is copyright cleared and credited.

Related student materials	Lesson materials to support this step
● Photo essay draft storyboard	● Slides: Communicating with photography basics (includes short activity)

5. Revise and Edit

Related student materials	Lesson materials to support this step
● Audio or film peer feedback form ● Photo essay peer feedback form	N/A

Feedback is a key part of the creation process for students, as well as professional filmmakers, podcasters and photographers. If giving peer feedback is already part of your classroom routine, use whatever format students are used to. KQED's feedback protocol helps students support each other and reflect on the feedback once they receive it.

6. Make It

Related student materials	Lesson materials to support this step
● Audio Styles with Myles (video) ● Video Styles with Myles (video) ● Finding Copyright Free Images (video) ● Sample photo essay template ● Adobe Creative Express webpage template ○ Use for photo essays. However, to publish on the showcase, students must link from a PDF, **NOT** Adobe or other tool (see this example for how to do this)	● Slides: Soundtrap how-to basics ● Slides: WeVideo how-to basics ● Slides: Adobe Express how-to basics ● Slides: Canva how-to basics ● Slides: Voicing and recording tips ● KQED's tool help library

Media Making in a Classroom Setting

1	**Establish or reinforce classroom norms and routines for when students are making media in your classroom.** ● Make sure they know how to charge their device and access headphones or other equipment they need. ● Show them how to seek help from how-to videos or classmates before asking you. ● Discuss openly that creativity can feel risky and weird. It's awkward to speak into a mic or try an art form you're not familiar with. Involve students in coming up with norms for supporting each other as they create. This is another place where your experience making a model will come in handy.
2	**Get students signed on to the digital production tool,** if you're using one. Make sure they all have access and know how to log in. Do this whether you are all using the same tool or giving them a choice of tools. *This is a great time to practice your media workshop norms and routines!* Some tools like Soundtrap and WeVideo let you create class groups. We recommend each class period be its own group with its own class code.
3	**Walk students through the very basics of the tool:** ● How to start and save a new project ● How to download/turn in a finished project ● How to record a script into the tool, if relevant ● How to add music, images and sound effects by uploading them OR by using the built-in library, if relevant ● Reinforce what they can do if they run into tech issues (ex: how-to videos or ask a peer before asking you)
4	**For audio and video projects: decide where students will record.** One of the biggest challenges with audio and video production in a classroom is finding quiet spaces to record scripts. Perhaps an even bigger challenge is getting middle and high schoolers to record where their friends can see or hear them. Here are suggestions from educators who have solved this issue: Students leave the room individually or in pairs to record in the hallway or a nearby empty classroom. Others record at home. Reserve the library or theater space, if you have one, so students can spread out enough to record. Arrange for students who can't record at home to record during breaks, lunch or prep periods.
5	**Reinforce norms and routines every day you make media in class.**

A note for beginners

You don't need to be an expert media producer or artist to help students get started creating. There's an entire internet out there of how-to videos and articles on your

chosen tool. Your job is to set up students with the basics AND put a media workshop structure in place to help students stay on track.

Need more support making media? KQED has professional learning courses and workshops (always free and online!) to support educators. Find out more about [courses](#) and [events](#) on KQED Teach.

7. Publish and Celebrate!

Related student materials	Lesson materials to support this step
[Audio submission template](#) [Video submission template](#) [Photo essay submission template](#) [Tips for Creating a Producer Statement](#)	- Slides: [Submitting to the American Revolution Project Page](#) - Slide: [Share beyond the showcase](#)

We can't wait to see your students' work on The American Revolution Youth Media Challenge showcase! This is an exciting opportunity to help students share their voice about issues that matter.

Review the [submission requirements](#) above. Students should complete the submission form template so they (and you!) have everything they need to publish. Student work is published as it is submitted. That's why we recommend reserving most or all of a class period to publish and celebrate! Many teachers put the showcase site on a screen where students can see and appreciate each submission as it appears at the top of the feed!

Note: Student creators retain all rights, including copyright, to the media they publish on the Youth Media Showcase. A teacher, student or parent can request a piece be removed from the showcase at any time by emailing ymc@kqed.org.

But the showcase is only the first stop. Each student submission has a unique URL that can be shared with:
- Families and the school community
- Other publishing opportunities for young creators (youth film festivals, district events, other contests, or challenges)

- Portfolio of work for student-led conferences, applications for summer programs, internships, and other creative opportunities