
MAKE YOUR OWN "HERITAGE MINUTE"

TO THE TEACHER:

This project is based on the "Heritage Minutes" as seen on TV put out by the **CRB Foundation**. The steps listed for this activity come from teachers Laurie Collins and Suzanne Louttit at the St. Augustine Community School in Regina, Saskatchewan. They produced their own "Heritage Minutes" as part of a research project combining Drama, Social Studies, and Language Arts.

In this example, the teachers decided to do their Heritage Minutes based on Canadian Heroes. However, any theme may be chosen such as significant community events, people, or places. Keep in mind the theme you choose should be simple, something that can easily be represented in 1-2 minutes.

To prepare for the project, the teachers showed the "Heritage Minutes" video to the class. This allowed the students to become familiar with what they were going to do and generate enthusiasm for the project (for ordering information visit the CRB Heritage Project website at <http://www2.excite.sfu.ca/default.html>).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- discover why heritage and history are important
- awareness of local/national history
- develop communication and presentation skills
- understand the power of media
- learn how to work in a team environment

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- video equipment (see "Filming Process")
- costumes, props, images, etc.
- CRB Foundation "Heritage Minutes" video to watch beforehand

ACTIVITY:

(grades 4-7) Step 1
Choosing a Hero

A. Research & Script Process

The class was divided into groups of 3 or 4 and asked to choose a hero from a list of approximately twenty. The following are some examples of Canadian heroes that were used:

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. | Norman Bethune: | surgeon |
| 2. | Martha Louise Black: | pioneer during the Gold Rush |
| 3. | Roberta Bondar: | first Canadian woman in space |
| 4. | Marguerite Bourgeoys: | helped early Canadian settlers |
| 5. | Chief Peguis: | Saulteaux chief |
| 6. | Sir Wilfred Grenfell: | doctor in Newfoundland area |
| 7. | James McKay: | Metis leader |
| 8. | Egerton Ryerson: | fought for free education for all |

These heroes were chosen based on certain criteria that the class discussed beforehand-“what makes a hero?”. They decided that a hero was someone who had faced adversity in their life, but overcame it to become one of the country’s most important and influential people.

Step 2
Research Students researched their hero by reading all available information. They then made twenty jot notes of the most interesting facts they learned about the hero. The teachers also provided info. packets, including a biography and background information, for each group (more advanced groups can do their own research in the public or school library).

NOTE: *if the class is doing a theme based on local history, there are other sources of information that may be useful, including: local archives (a great place for historical photos, letters, diaries and newspapers); museums; and historical societies.*

Each group met to compare their jot notes and compile a master list of information, which they organized chronologically or according to topic. They identified which facts would be best dramatized and which should be told in narration.

Step 3
Script writing &
storyboarding Each group wrote scripts for 2 or 3 scenes which depicted significant events from their hero’s life. Students were taught techniques and vocabulary relating to video production, and incorporated these terms into their scripts. Group members wrote the narration using the remaining information to complete the vignette.

After the students had written the scripts and reviewed them, they decided on what locations would best suit each dramatic scene. Be sure to pick locations that will provide a realistic backdrop for the video.

Next, a storyboard was used to plan or organize the visuals and text of each vignette (see sample storyboard included in this kit). With a storyboard, students draw and write a detailed version of their video on paper allowing them to see their video’s visuals, hear its sounds and feel its impact all before they begin the actual filming.

NOTE: *at this point it may be handy to talk to your local cable company and introduce them to your project. Invite them to share with your class the proper video terms, equipment and skills used while writing scripts, making storyboards and picking locations.*

Narrative scenes were illustrated using historic pictures of the hero or the event they were involved with and maps.



B. Filming Process:

Step 1 Rehearsals These were done during the time allotted for Drama each week. The groups met and decided amongst themselves who would play each role, and who would read the narrations. Students practised speaking at a slower pace, so they would be understood on the tape. Once comfortable speaking in front of each other, each group took turns rehearsing their vignettes in front of the class.

Step 2 Costumes & props There are many options when it comes to costumes. In this case the students used their own closets to find appropriate clothing. Other choices include: the local theatre group; raiding parents or grandparents closets; asking for parental assistance in making costumes; checking with the community college or high school drama departments; and the museum (for historical costumes-they may have old-fashioned clothing for use in their school programs and may be willing to lend them out).

If possible, find photos of the person or persons involved in the story and look at the clothing they wore. This will help give your vignette a stronger sense of realism. The best place to look for photos are in books about the hero or from the same era, in the case of a community event, the local archives.

- Step 3 Equipment
1. basic camcorder
 2. batteries for the camcorder (2 or 3 if possible)
 3. videotapes for recording
 4. tripod (a must for stability)
 5. microphone with cable and transformer

Step 4 Filming on location Each group took turns going "on location" with their teacher during lunch hour and after school to videotape their scenes. Filming in this instance was done by the teachers; however, an older group of students would be able to do their own.

NOTE: *while filming on location be wary of background noise, for it can ruin your scene (e.g. wind, people near by, lawn mowers, school buzzers) and with all the complications of arrangements to visit the site, parental permission, playground supervision, borrowing costumes and props, you often cannot go back and reshoot.*

Step 5 Selecting the best takes Each group then carefully reviewed their videotape and chose the best "take" for each scene. Sound effects and music were also selected at this time to add more realism to some of the scenes.



Detailed notes were made at this time for the editing process later on (e.g. noting which music goes with which segment, when narration appears, etc.)

Step 6
Filming the narrative scenes

The narrators for each group were taken to the school district's Media Centre so their Audio Visual technician could record their narrations on audio tape in his "studio". The technician then videotaped the pictures, maps, etc. which the students had chosen to enhance their narrations and put them together with the audiotaped narrations.

NOTE: *if your school district does not have such resources available, try contacting your local cable company or community college film department and see if they would be willing to assist you.*

Older students may want to videotape the photos and maps themselves. To do this, they would first time each recorded segment of narration to be accompanied by a "visual". Then they would mount the images on the wall (using tacks, chalkboard ledge, music stand or tape) and video them individually for the time allotted to each one. (Another storyboard would be handy at this point to help organize the photo order and amount of time each will be filmed).

Step 7
Editing

Editing for this project was done by the school district's AV technician at their Media Centre. He put the scenes together based on the notes provided by the teachers and students, added the sound effects and music, and removed the "bloopers". Again, if your school does not have such resources available, try contacting your local cable company or your community college film department-often students will be willing to work for free to gain the experience!

C. Production Suggestions & Tips:

1. Use a chalkboard to designate scenes and "takes"-it makes editing much easier. An extra student can hold and remove this for each "take" just like in the movies. You rarely shoot in sequence, and may have three different heroes on one tape, so this technique helps to find it all later (put title, scene and "take" number).
2. Try to avoid any anachronistic background objects (depending on when the hero lived this may include: lamp standards, computers, running shoes, and calendars).
3. Hide the microphone somewhere in the scene, either camouflaged by the props or hidden in the costume so it will pick up the student's voice. Try not to let the students handle the microphone as this decreases the sound quality.

-
-
4. Allow lots of "lead in" and "lead out" time for each "take". This helps editing without cutting the actual scene later. Don't try to rewind for retakes-just keep going. The tapes are lengthy, and your scene are probably only 30 seconds each! Just be sure to identify each "take" on the chalkboard, and film it for 5 seconds before each scene attempt.
 5. Make lots of lists! Lists of props and who's supplying them. Lists of what is required for each filming (tape, props, costumes, kids, mike, battery for camcorder, etc.). Lists of which pictures, photos and maps are used and which books they came from that each group wants to accompany their narration.
 6. Prior to editing, view each take and write down which ones you want of each scene. Make editing notes to guide the process and save time later.
 7. For editing, have a detailed plan outlining which music goes with the intro. and any other segments, when each scene appears, when narration appears, and which photos, maps, etc. go with each narration (tape narration in advance on audio cassette). Film still photos, etc., on a separate video cassette using a mounted camera (on a tripod), but be sure to film each long enough to match the narration. During editing, integrate your two video tapes, your audio cassette, and your music.
 8. Make titles and credits on computer, enlarge and film with mounted camcorder.

D. "World Premiere":

Celebrate the completion of the project with a "World Premier". In this instance, the local movie theatre was booked and the "Canadian Heroes" video was shown. This was a chance for the students to show off their work to their families, friends and local celebrities/dignitaries. The students dressed up (sunglasses, formal wear, etc.) and the front row seats were reserved for them (each seat had a star with their name on it). The next day, the video was shown to the rest of the school.

Another option is to contact your local cable company and ask them about airing the class video on their network.

"SAMPLE STORYBOARD"

There are many formats a storyboard can take, and they all work fine. The most important thing is to have the students breakdown their proposed film into individual shots. A good storyboard will make clear the vision of the students film. Drawing skills are not required and stick figures will be just as effective. However, neatness and bold lines are essential. After the figures are drawn in pencil, go over them in black felt or ink.

SCENE	SHOT	SKETCH	ACTION	SOUND	TIME	TOT. TIME
3	31	Drawing of action here	C.U. reaction shot of pedestrian showing surprise, looking to screen right	Instrumental continues Pedestrian comment	03	4:08
3	32	Drawing of action here	M.S. courier riding to screen left	Pedestrian comment continues	02	4:10
3	33 to 3 - 53	Drawing of action here	C.U.s of many different packages being delivered	Instrumental rhythm with emphasized drum, gets faster until peaks out	20	4:30
3	54	Drawing of action here=	M.S. slow motion shot of courier falling back into chair	Cut all sound-3 second	10	4:40