



**Title:** Write, Camera, Action: Storytelling Through Your Lens

**Length of Course:** 2 semesters

**Subject Area and Discipline:** College Preparatory-Elective ("g") - Design Media

**CTE Sector:** Arts, Media, and Entertainment

**CTE Pathway:** Design, Visual, and Media Arts/Production and Managerial Arts

**Grade Level(s):** 9

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### [Course Overview](#)

**Write, Camera, Action** is an English elective course integrated with the Design, Visual and Media Arts and Production and Managerial Arts pathways of the Arts, Media and Entertainment CTE sector and is designed to enrich the freshman English course for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) whose basic skill level is below grade-level peers. In this project-based-learning course, students research and analyze a variety of visual media and written texts (including literature, film, advertising, and social media) to understand the components of a well written or well produced visual story. The reading, writing, and media-based assignments throughout the course prepare students to complete their capstone project in which they work collaboratively as a media production team, to produce a short film and host a screening event. The stories featured in the final production will be developed from student's own stories and reflections on their communities.

### **Course Content:**

#### [Unit 1: Story Components](#)

In this foundational unit, students learn the basics of effective story structure; such as exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. Students will analyze how visual stories are told in shorter formats (like commercials) and longer formats (a full-length feature film) and what visual storytelling elements; such as, protagonists, antagonist, setting and conflict are shared by stories of varying lengths. This information will be used throughout the course to help students tell stories. Students will write a summary that includes identifying the elements of the story. Students will conclude this unit by writing a narrative story.

## Unit 1: Key Assignments

### 1: Summary Writing

Students view one commercial, one TV show or short film, and a movie as literature to identify narrative structure and to transition from consumers of media to analysts. Students use various forms of graphic organizers to record the story structure (i.e., exposition, rising action, climax, and falling action, and resolution,) and the story elements (i.e., setting, protagonist and antagonist). For each type of video they watch, students will write a summary in the form of a basic paragraph, which includes a topic and concluding sentences as well as identifies story structure and elements, and cites evidence from the media. This will help give students common language to use in order to talk about and begin developing stories.

### 2: Paragraph Writing

Now that students have explored story structure and elements in media, students focus on the similarities between the story elements in literature which will give them ideas on how to tell stories. Students now apply their analytical skills to literature by reading 2-3 short stories such as “The Sniper”, “The Most Dangerous Game”, “A Sound of Thunder”, or “The Tell-Tale Heart” to identify and analyze story structure and elements such as setting and characters. Students will write a summary of each short story in the form of a basic paragraph, which includes a topic and concluding sentences as well as identifies story structure and elements, and cites evidence from the literature.

Finally, students will compare and contrast story-building told through written word versus visual media. They do this by creating a Venn diagram which compares and contrasts story structure and elements in movies vs. story structure and elements in literature.

### 3: Narrative

Students will use the knowledge that they have learned so far in this unit to create their own story. Students will start by using this unit’s previous graphic organizers as a springboard to brainstorm ideas and details to write a story of their choice. Students use a new graphic organizer of story elements and structure to write a narrative story. Students will then exchange narratives and use a similar graphic organizer to identify and critique the story elements in their partner’s story.

## [Unit 2: Visual representation and Symbolism](#)

In this unit, students build on their knowledge of story structure to explore how symbolism is used in print and film to help enhance the storytelling experience. They continue to build skills and understanding to ultimately produce a collaborative short film. Specifically, students focus on identifying and understanding figurative language in literature and identifying and analyzing visual symbols in filmed stories, including shorter and longer works. Students start with learning to recognize uses of symbolism in various media sources. Students then integrate symbolism into storyboarding in preparation of writing a personal story. Finally, students write a multiparagraph personal story about a

major life event, employing at least one symbol to effectively tell their story.

## **Unit 2: Key Assignments**

### **1: Analysis of Symbolism Through A Powerpoint:**

Students will create a slideshow presentation of up to 10 slides of images taken from various media sources (e.g. magazine advertisements, comic book panels, famous works of art) that evoke specific emotions or concepts with a different emotion assigned to each student. Each slide will include 2-3 sentences of student analysis deciphering the symbolism in each image to improve their understanding of the importance of symbolism. Students demonstrate knowledge and connect symbolism to their personal lives by including a slide of an object that is personally symbolic to them.

### **2: Understanding Storyboarding**

Students will research the elements of storyboarding using online resources such as , youtube, creative skillset, or other audio visual resources. Students will read a short story such as, "The Scarlet Ibis", "The Necklace," or "Thank you M'am." Students will then create a storyboard of their short story using a storyboarding website or a graphic organizer in order to continue developing awareness that images can represent events and emotions within a story.

### **3: Personal Narrative Storyboard**

Using the knowledge gained from assignment #2, students will create a new storyboard using a storyboarding website or a graphic organizer to depict a personal major life event. Students should incorporate story structure and key story elements. This will help students draft an outline for their story in a format that is not written, make use of symbols as a way of storytelling, and practice the skill of filmmaking by developing a story as a filmmaker would.

### **4: Personal Narrative Essay**

Using the storyboard from assignment 3 as a springboard, students translate their visual representation to written expression (literature) by writing a multi-paragraph personal essay about a major life event. Students should make sure that they include the story structure and elements that were covered in unit one.

## **Unit 3: Telling Stories**

In unit 3, students explore how other people's personal stories are portrayed and altered when moving from historical fact to film. They will begin to make connections on how to bring their own story to film. They trace the evolution of a personal story that has roots in a social issue to its portrayal in a movie (e.g., Nelson Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom, Milk, Erin Brockovich, Concussion) in order to compare and contrast different information sources. Re: the same topic and why specific details of a story are adapted for . Students follow the story by conducting research, and annotating and summarizing sources about one of these people. Students enhance their knowledge of the issue by creating a digital slide show and writing a multi-paragraph essay where

they state a claim based on the social issue faced and cite supporting evidence from print and visual sources. This unit demonstrates the breadth of how literature, fact, and media are used to bring a story to the masses.

### **Unit 3: Key Assignments**

#### **1: Annotation of Expository Text:**

Students read articles and research on a social issue, such as concussions in the NFL, discrimination or poverty (The Freedom Writers), or other socially current topics appropriate to audience. Students demonstrate critical reading skills and reading for purpose by annotating an expository text at their independent reading level. This writing assignment creates a framework for students to bring a social issue to film.

#### **2: Digital Slide Show:**

Students will further their understanding of the social issue being explored in this unit by viewing a video news story related to the articles from assignment #1. Students demonstrate watching a video for purpose by noting and organizing information that reveals the facts of the story as they were at the time of the reporting. Students compare and contrast the printed news article with the video presentation in a digital slideshow in preparation for making the connection between story writing and film production in unit six.

#### **3: Multi-paragraph Essay:**

Students view critically a dramatized version of story/topic portrayed in the article and video news story from assignments 1 and 2 to identify story elements, symbolism, and to discern narrative differences between the three. Students choose one visual symbol from the dramatization that differs from the article and video news story in order to determine its effect on the dramatization. Students demonstrate their understanding of story elements and differing symbols by writing a multi-paragraph document, citing textual evidence to support claims.

### **Unit 4: Community Photo project: From media consumer to media creator**

Through students exploration of community, this unit marks the transition between students examining media and students creating their own story, resulting in students creating a short video about their community. Students prepare to produce their project by watching videos and reading examples from *Human of New York*. In the process, students also define what “community” means to them. Once “community” is defined, students identify several communities they are a part of and explain why. Next, students explore the challenges and sources of pride within their community. Building upon this understanding, students then identify symbols within their community and capture these images, forming the basis for their media presentation. Students prepare a production plan for their video, which is pitched for peer review. Lastly, students will create a human interest video that includes personal interviews, photos, symbols and voice-over narrative. At the culmination of the media presentations, students write a reflection on how telling a story about their community as filmmaker/observer has

impacted their perspective of their community.

## **Unit 4: Key Assignments**

### **1: Gathering information on community**

In order to develop awareness of how our communities help define us and inform our identities, students begin by defining what community is to them, using examples from their own lives. Students can document or discuss their definitions in a medium/format of the teacher's choice. Then, to gain a deeper understanding of how community can be portrayed in images and words, students watch videos from Humans of New York and read its corresponding text. Students discuss pride and challenges as they pertain to their own community. Then, using their previous knowledge of symbolism, students identify what symbols might represent a community's pride and challenges. Students create a poster that depicts the pride and challenges they see in the community of their choice. (electronic poster creator such as [glogster.com](http://glogster.com))

### **2: Production Plan**

With their understanding of the sources of pride and challenges in their community, students prepare a production plan in slideshow format and pitch to the class a community video project. Students gain a further understanding of the production process through pitching to improve their speaking skills. The slideshow and pitch should address the following:

- What questions will you ask community members regarding your pride and challenges?
- Who are you going to interview?
- What are the days are you going to take pictures of community?
- What are the symbols representing pride and challenges of your community?
- When will you record and edit videos?
- When will you complete the narrative and voiceovers?

Student panels give feedback of the strengths and challenges of each students' pitch with teacher input.

### **3: Humans of your Community Video: Production and Post-Production**

Using their production plan, students set out to produce a video which weaves together interviews, photos, video, music, and voice-over personal reflection to paint a portrait of their community. Completed projects are screened for the class, allowing students to get feedback and experience having their work seen in a public forum.

### **4: Reflection**

After the screening and feedback, students write a reflection on the process of creating a video about their community and how the process of being an observer/artist affected their understanding of community.

## Unit 5: Initial Production Collaboration

This unit moves students toward film production by exposing them to the variety of career opportunities in the arts, media and entertainment industry. Students will develop their knowledge of industry jobs available to them in this sector by researching job descriptions, requirements, and qualifications (executive producer, producer, director, director of photography, camera person, script writer, actor, editor). To start, students will create a slideshow presentation on a production-related job in the film industry in order to increase their understanding of the various duties. Then, students will read, evaluate and annotate resumes and cover letters of film industry careers to eventually create a resume and apply for a production position as part of the course capstone project.

### Unit 5: Key Assignments

#### **1: Create and present a Powerpoint on a career in the film industry**

Students choose (through voting) three movies and start by reviewing the final credits of the movie in order to generate a list of production related careers involved in the making of a film. In thinking about the responsibility they might want to take on during the filmmaking process, each student chooses a career to research. Students use the Bureau of Labor Statistics web site to gather information on a career connected to movie production. Students will choose a production-related career to create and present a powerpoint that includes the following information:

- What they do
- Work environment
- Required education and training
- Pay
- Job outlook
- Similar occupations
- Where to get more information on the career
- Whether or not they are still interested in the job and why.

#### **2: Resumes and cover letter analysis**

In preparation for applying for a class production job students will critique industry resumes. Students will conduct an online search of sample resumes and cover letters of workers in their preferred film production role to become familiar with the form and function of resumes particular to this industry. Students will annotate and evaluate the resumes and cover letters on the content, format and writing style. The student will use their evaluation to decide which applicant they would hire. Students will write a one page letter to the chosen applicant which explains why they were chosen.

#### **3: Field Trip or virtual Tour (Optional Assignment)**

Students will go on a tour or virtual tour of a local news or TV facility to observe several production jobs in action. In preparation for the tour students will produce 3-5 questions to have answered during the field trip. After the tour students will write a short reflection on the tour and what they learned about their preferred film production job.

## [Unit 6: Short Film Production](#)

In this unit, students connect the writing components of a narrative to a film production by producing a short 3-5 minute film in a small group setting. This work builds skills and prepares students to complete the final film production project in unit seven. To start, each student writes a multi-page story that includes all the story elements learned in the course. Students then pitch their stories to their group and vote on a single story to turn into a short film. Each film group develops a production plan that incorporates appropriate industry vocabulary. The plan must identify roles and responsibilities, include a production timeline and a storyboard that incorporates symbolism and strong visuals. Students produce and edit the short film as a team.

### Unit 6: Key Assignments

#### **1: Story and group formation**

Each student will write a story that contains story elements covered in earlier units. In groups of 3 to 5, students will share their stories and pick one to be produced into short film. Each group will select a director, cameraperson, and editor (actors can participate in multiple projects if necessary.)

#### **2: Pre-Production**

Each group develops a detailed timeline that includes a written script outline (this is the big idea of each scene rather than line by line of what actors say) and a storyboard of the action, and completes a production plan template (day by day detail of who, what, where and how of the filming).

#### **3: Short film**

With a script, storyboard and plan in place, students set out to rehearse and complete production on the video. After shooting is done, the editor(s) complete the assembly of the final product. Groups share film to the class. Students apply learning from this assignment to the final project which requires students as a whole class to collaborate on film as a film production team.

## [Unit 7: Final Production and Screening](#)

In this capstone unit, students take on specific jobs and tasks, and draw on all learning throughout the course to produce a single short film as a whole class. The film will reflect an understanding of the components of a story, demonstrate a basic command of the technical process of producing a digital movie with compelling visual images, provide an opportunity to work hands on as a team to conceive, write, plan, produce, edit and promote a public screening of their original work.

#### **1: What is the story and who does what?**

Choosing from the video shorts presented in unit 6 or a new idea, students form a team and pitch a final project idea that will involve the entire class. Pitches will mirror previous

presentations - clearly identifying the story elements, important visuals and a well considered production plan. Using a student panel with teacher direction, the class determines which one idea they will produce. Once the class chooses a project, students apply for specific jobs by submitting a resume, cover letter and participating in a brief interview. With the production team assembled students set out to produce their final project.

## **2: Pre-Production, Production and Post Production**

Working collaboratively the class takes on clearly defined jobs: scriptwriter, actor, producer, director, camera person, editor, storyboard artist, promoter etc. Within these roles students write the script, storyboard the action and develop a production plan. With a script, storyboard and plan in place students set out to rehearse and complete production on the video. After shooting is done, the editor(s) complete the assembly of the final product. Simultaneously students plan the public screening by creating flyers, inviting family and school community members to a public showing.

## **3: Screening and Final Reflection**

The final video is screened to an audience. As part of the screening, students discuss their process for creating this video short. After the screening, each student writes a personal reflection in which they discuss their individual contribution, what they learned about the creative process and what advice they have for next year's class.

## **Course Materials**

### **ELA RESOURCES**

#### **Universal Design for Learning**

<http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/whatisudl/3principles>

Holt Literature and Language Arts, third course (Common core Aligned Grade 9 ELA curriculum)

#### **Purdue Online Writing Lab**

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

#### **Citation Machine**

<http://www.citationmachine.net/>

#### **Common Core California State Standards ELA:**

<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/>

#### **7-12 Informational/Explanatory Rubrics (CCSS Writing standard #2)**

[http://blogs.egusd.net/ccss/files/2013/10/Info.Exp\\_rubric.-9th-10th-w.watermark-2bnif6c.pdf](http://blogs.egusd.net/ccss/files/2013/10/Info.Exp_rubric.-9th-10th-w.watermark-2bnif6c.pdf)

7-12 Narrative Rubrics (CCSS Writing standard #3)

[http://blogs.egusd.net/ccss/files/2013/10/9.10.narrative.rubric.for\\_-26dc43f.pdf](http://blogs.egusd.net/ccss/files/2013/10/9.10.narrative.rubric.for_-26dc43f.pdf)

**NewsELA**

Adjusts lexile levels of articles for varied reading <https://newsela.com/>

**Humans of New York**

Bureau of Labor Statistics <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/>

**Unit 1, Lesson 2**

<https://www.helpingwritersbecomeauthors.com/5-important-ways-storytelling-different-books-vs-movies/>

## CAREER RESOURCES

**The Official Source for College and Career Planning in California**

<https://secure.californiacolleges.edu/>

**CareerOneStop: Careers and Career Information**

<https://www.careeronestop.org/>

**Virtual Job Shadow: Interactive Career Exploration (Access to resource limited to students with IEPs)** [www.virtualjobshadow.com](http://www.virtualjobshadow.com)

**Choices 360 (Access to resource limited to students with IEPs)** [www.choices360.com](http://www.choices360.com)

## MEDIA RESOURCES

**Nat & Lo youtube channel showing behind the scene short clips at Google**

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCf4AljSwE-E2TggCPdm-z-A>

**Lynda.com – excellent resource for all teaching and learning related better understanding how to use technology.**

**Youtube.com – variety resources on all things teaching and learning related to digital media**

**In the Blink of an Eye, Walter Murch, ISBN-13: 978-1879505629**

**Digital Storytelling in the Classroom: New Media Pathways to Literacy, Learning, and Creativity 2nd Edition, ISBN-13: 978-1452268255**