



# YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

*to strengthen teaching in public schools®*

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
2010 Volume III: Creating Lives: An Introduction to Biography

---

## **Voices of Emery Secondary: An Oral History Project**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 10.03.04, published September 2010

by Mika Cade

This unit describes a high school community oral history project. Students first study the genre of biography and sub-genre of oral history through model texts. There is a heavy emphasis on literacy strategies that work well with ESL and special needs students. The second stage of the unit is to conduct an oral history of our high school. Students will interview different members of the school community both past and present, write their biographies, and create a final presentation. They will take on the active roles of researcher and biographer. By the end of the unit students will understand how oral history can both shape and tell a more complete story of our past and present. Specific skills addressed are narrative writing, questioning, interviewing, critical reading, and critical thinking. Although I've designed this curriculum for my 11th grade English class, it can easily be adapted for other grade levels and subject areas, particularly social studies.

(Developed for English, grade 11; recommended for English and Social Studies, grades 9-12)

---

<https://teachers.yale.edu>

©2023 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University, All Rights Reserved. Yale National Initiative®, Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute®, On Common Ground®, and League of Teachers Institutes® are registered trademarks of Yale University.

For terms of use visit [https://teachers.yale.edu/terms\\_of\\_use](https://teachers.yale.edu/terms_of_use)