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The New Resistance: Protest through Performance

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Introduction

My calling as an educator comes from my family. It is rooted in the belief that education is the ultimate tool for self-advocacy and liberation. My brothers and I were required to do chores on the weekends, and I remember my parents playing music on the record player. We constantly listened to timeless music that I really didn't get to appreciate until I got older. I'm especially inspired by the lyrics from the legendary band Earth, Wind & Fire's song, "That's the Way of the World"[1] :

> *That's the way (that's the way)*
>
> *Of the world (of the world)*
>
> *Plant your flower (gonna plant your flower)*
>
> *And you grow a pearl*
>
> *Child is born with a heart of gold*
>
> *Way of the world (gonna plant your flower)*
>
> *Makes his heart so cold*

My parents didn't have much in the financial sense; we grew up poor, but they gave my brothers and me plenty of things that we still use today as adults. My father instilled a love for knowledge, reading, and history, while my mother instilled an indomitable spirit and the power of advocacy. Besides pedagogy, I try to instill these qualities in my scholars too. I recognize that society actively shapes our youth, and we ultimately reap what we sow; as I explain to my scholars, "You get out what you put in." In a world with systemic structures that are not built for every scholar to succeed, my father taught me to view literacy and critical thinking not merely as academic subjects, but as a "real revolution," which is further expounded upon in the article *Literacy as Liberation: Black Reading Traditions Then & Now.*[2] Central to this revolution is the intentional integration and celebration of African-American history and context, which is extremely important because

that's the primary demographic of my student population.[3] By exploring this history, my scholars learn to critically analyze how and why modern societal structures came to be. This also explains why things are the way they are today. My mission is to equip them with the sharp intellect and literacy skills necessary to navigate, challenge, and dismantle these barriers, transforming education into a pathway out of challenging circumstances.

In my classroom, learning is a collaboration, and as I tell my students constantly, ***"failure is not an option" (FINAO)***. I reject the conventional belief that the teacher is the sole keeper of knowledge; instead, my scholars and I operate as cooperative shareholders in learning. I learn a lot from them too! My goal is to serve as their guide, fostering independence while remaining a steady resource. A successful day in my room is dynamic and varied. Classes can range from rigorous debates and collaborative hands-on projects to quiet, focused solo writing. By challenging scholars on *how* they came to a conclusion and *why* they think a certain way, I instill a culture of metacognition and intellectual curiosity.[4]

To ensure that every scholar is seen, valued, and supported, I practice proactive, culturally responsive advocacy. I intentionally try to curate a curriculum that mirrors the diverse identities of my classroom, anchoring our studies in rich historical truths and providing Spanish-language materials to honor and support scholars migrating from Mexico and Central America.[5] Equity in my classroom means meeting scholars where they are through frequent individual conferencing to gauge mastery and providing tailored support as much as possible. I strive to be the dependable adult in my scholars' corners: one who fiercely counsels them, passionately advocates for them, and holds them to the high standards of accountability they deserve.

When my scholars walk out of my doors at the end of the year, I want them to leave as self-actualized advocates, critical thinkers, and avid readers and writers. By pouring into them a curriculum of inquiry, history, and self-worth, I strive to preserve the "heart of gold" they were born with, ensuring they possess both the armor and the intellect to thrive in the world.

Youth Protests: A History of Resistance and the Generational Divide

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"Youth is the spark that ignites the flame of progress; their energy drives societal advancement." — *Richard Branson*

Throughout history, young people have consistently stood at the forefront of social change and political protest. Propelled by a refusal to accept the status quo and a relentless drive to right systemic wrongs, youth activists have repeatedly paved the way for transformative movements. Our history is rich with young leaders who challenged injustice before adulthood:

- Claudette Colvin: At just fifteen years old, she refused to relinquish her seat on a segregated Montgomery bus months before Rosa Parks.
- John Lewis: As a teenager and college student, he organized sit-ins, joined Freedom Rides, and emerged as a vital pillar of the Civil Rights Movement.
- Malala Yousafzai: As a young girl, she defied Taliban restrictions to advocate fiercely for girls' right to education.

While the ingenuity, tenacity, and courage of young activists are undeniable, their movements have frequently been marked by a distinct generational rift. In *SNCC: The New Abolitionists*, Howard Zinn illustrates how younger organizers championed bold, unconventional tactics that deliberately challenged the more cautious, institutional approaches of older civil rights leaders.[6]

This tension is starkly depicted in *Mighty Times: The Children's March*, where Birmingham students organized covertly—using code words over local radio broadcasts—to bypass their parents' resistance.[7] Adult leaders, including Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., alongside concerned parents, initially opposed youth involvement due to justifiable fears of physical violence, mass arrests, and severe economic retaliation against families. Where adults saw high stakes and potential devastation, young people saw an immediate moral imperative that could not wait.

This difficulty in bridging generational perspectives remains just as relevant today. Whether advocating against climate change, opposing gun violence, or challenging contemporary media narratives, young people continue to utilize innovative tactics and digital platforms that disrupt traditional norms. Understanding this historical precedent reminds us that youth protest is not a modern anomaly but an enduring tradition of young people redefining the boundary of what is possible.

In the United States specifically, young adults have continuously confronted societal problems with a simple objective: they want to make the world a better place. However, that's easier said than done. Over the last century, youth activists have targeted issues ranging from something as simple as the right to free speech to eliminating gun violence due to hundreds of school shootings, or pressing contemporary crises like climate change and school safety. Throughout these struggles, young people have consistently rejected the slower, more conservative tactics of established institutions in favor of direct action. Founded by college activists, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) rejected the slow, conservative tactics of established civil rights groups in favor of direct action—including sit-ins, Freedom Rides, and voter registration drives—to actively dismantle Jim Crow segregation.[8] A decade later, youth activism reshaped constitutional law in ***Tinker v. Des Moines***, where siblings Mary Beth and John Tinker protested the Vietnam War by wearing black armbands to school—a stand that secured landmark U.S. Supreme Court protections for student free speech. Their subsequent legal victory in the U.S. Supreme Court established fundamental free speech protections for students in public schools.[9]

That trajectory of youth-led reform continues into the digital age. Building on this legacy of youth activism, Anna Lee Rain Yellowhammer initiated a petition in 2016 to halt the Dakota Access Pipeline. Citing the severe threat a pipeline breach would pose to the Missouri River, her campaign mobilized widespread national attention and high-profile support. [10] Shortly after, following the 2018 Parkland shooting, student survivors launched ***March for Our Lives***, organizing one of the largest youth demonstrations in American history to demand federal legislation against gun violence. Across every era, these young activists have demonstrated that youth is not a barrier to civic leadership but a primary catalyst for systemic change.

Participating in this summer's seminar, *The Kids Are Not the Threat*, provided a deep dive into the history of American youth activism. Two key lessons emerged: first, age is not a prerequisite for creating meaningful change; second, youth-led movements have consistently faced intense resistance.[11] Media coverage often frames young activists as naive, disorderly, or dangerous specifically to undermine their message. When young people are denied a seat at the table, they refuse to be silenced. Instead, they leverage their own platforms to speak directly to their communities, confronting injustices that harm society and actively working to build a better world. I hope that this curriculum unit will allow my scholars to do the same thing.

Rationale

My proposed curriculum unit is a direct culmination of Dr. Roderick Ferguson's seminar, *The Kids Are Not the Threat*. This unit serves as a bridge between the seminar's focus on the suppression of youth movements in the 1960s and 1970s and the core literacy and historical thinking concepts my scholars need to master. By exploring the rich legacy of protest in America, scholars will examine how historic social movements were primarily planned, organized, and driven by young people.

Furthermore, by exploring how youth today use social media and art to create protest messages, scholars will develop critical-thinking skills that directly align with state standards. Specifically, this unit will require scholars to analyze primary and secondary sources, determine central ideas, and cite textual evidence. Connecting these rigorous academic expectations to a powerful seminar theme provides the high-interest hook necessary to hold my middle schoolers' interest.

I imagine this curriculum unit as an immersive, project-based learning experience titled "*The New Resistance: Protest through Performance*" that spans approximately 4 to 6 weeks.

The overall goal of the unit is to empower scholars to see history not as a static list of dates but as an active narrative they can engage with and respond to. By grounding historical struggles and achievements in a format that mirrors scholars' lives, the unit aims to build historical empathy, boost reading comprehension across diverse ability levels, and foster a sense of civic agency. By the end of the unit, scholars will be able to evaluate multiple perspectives within a historical text, synthesize information from diverse media formats, and express a complex historical argument through a creative medium. Scholars will master the core historical content surrounding the Black Lives Matter movement, understanding the cause-and-effect relationships that shape communities like their own.

To demonstrate their mastery of this content, my scholars will select a contemporary cause they are passionate about and organize a public advocacy showcase. Here are a few areas of protest they can choose from to research:

- Civil Rights
- Police Brutality
- Immigration Reform
- Gang Violence
- Environmental Justice (pollution/AI use/food disparities)
- Guns/gun control
- LGBTQIA+ Rights

The goal is for the teacher to pick ONE topic for the protest showcase (or have the scholars vote on selecting a topic). The interests/needs of each class may vary. It's totally acceptable if the teacher sees the need to select a topic that's not included on the list.

Mirroring the historic youth movements they studied, scholars will express their "protest" through creative media, including song, photography, drama, and visual art.[12] The summative assessment will be a showcase where scholars choose a medium that aligns with their personal talents to defend a historical thesis. Scholars may choose to produce a spoken-word poetry performance, a historical photograph look-book with written

captions, a dramatic monologue acting from a historical figure's perspective, or a visual art piece (painting/sculpture) accompanied by an artist's statement. I want my scholars to realize that their youth does not limit their agency and that their voices have the power to enact change. By inviting community members to this summative showcase, I hope to create vital, cross-generational dialogue between Auburn-Gresham adults and our scholar-activists.

Background Knowledge & Content

Clara Barton Elementary School is a small school with an ambitious mindset, serving approximately 356 Pre-K through 8th-grade scholars in Chicago's historic, working-class Auburn-Gresham neighborhood.[13] Historically, Barton is predominantly African-American, but there has been an influx of Latinx immigrants (predominantly from Mexico, Colombia, and Venezuela) over the past two years. Approximately 30% of my scholars receive IEP services, and 77% are considered at an economic disadvantage.[14]

This fall will mark my fourth year at Clara Barton Elementary School as the 7th and 8th-grade Literacy and Social Studies teacher, working with a diverse, dynamic, and driven group of young people. I am excited to teach them because they have varied interests, and they work extremely hard. My scholars are athletes, musicians, scholar-activists, poets, and artists who love to showcase their creativity through poetry, drama, drumline, and visual media like photography and sculpture. While they are enthusiastic and eager to learn, our school community consistently faces academic challenges in reading and mathematics—specifically, for my scholars, in vocabulary development and the comprehension of informational texts. My classroom includes students reading anywhere from a kindergarten to a high school level, with the majority struggling with reading comprehension. Additionally, behavioral interruptions frequently impact instructional time. Because I firmly believe that vocabulary acquisition and text comprehension are deeply connected, I am working to bridge this gap by studying Greek and Latin roots and teaching scholars to use context clues to determine word meanings.[15]

Driven by our scholars' ambitious spirit, we are slowly but surely making progress. To gain full student buy-in, I needed to combine high-interest content with strong scaffolding, providing activities tailored to how my students learn best.[16] Recognizing that my students thrive in sports, the arts, and performance—participating in everything from Drumline, Drama Club, and Majorettes to creative writing, photography, and painting—I designed a project-based unit that leverages these talents. By allowing students to demonstrate mastery through media they genuinely enjoy, this unit levels the playing field, boosts engagement, and empowers every child to create something meaningful.

Teaching Strategies

Many strategies can be incorporated so that scholars can get a deeper understanding of the lessons in this unit.

K-W-L Chart

Utilizing a **K-W-L chart** (Know, Want to Know, Learned) serves as a foundational tool to guide, organize, and track scholar inquiry across all three phases of this six-week unit.[17]

- Unit Launch — What We *KNOW* (K): During the initial phase, scholars document their existing ideas and assumptions regarding how media portrays youth and the origins of community stereotypes. Activating prior knowledge in this first column uncovers baseline beliefs and highlights implicit biases before research begins.
- Research Phase — What We *WANT* to Know (W): As scholars transition into active research, the middle column becomes a living query board. Scholars record driving questions, investigate media sources, and continuously revisit this column to refine hypotheses and correct initial misconceptions.
- The Showcase — What We *LEARNED* (L): In the final phase, scholars complete the third column by synthesizing their findings. This synthesizes how their perspectives evolved from their starting assumptions to evidence-based insights.

Displayed prominently as a visual anchor chart in the classroom and maintained individually in scholar research logs, the chart visually maps collective growth over six weeks. For scholars, it fosters metacognition and agency by making their learning process visible. For the educator, it acts as an ongoing formative assessment tool, surfacing student interest trends and revealing areas where targeted mini-lessons are needed before the final debrief and reflection.

Explicit Modeling and the Gradual Release Framework

A foundational instructional strategy in this unit is **explicit modeling**, which is critical when teaching scholars how to conduct independent research effectively. Researching media representations and community stereotypes can be complex and overwhelming; direct, step-by-step guidance ensures scholars do not simply collect information, but actively analyze it.

To demonstrate this process, the teacher utilizes **think-alouds** to make invisible cognitive steps visible. By projecting a search query in real-time, the educator verbally models every decision: how to refine search terms, evaluate source credibility, detect media bias, and handle dead-end search results. Watching an expert navigate these friction points demystifies the research process for scholars.[18] This strategy is anchored in the **Gradual Release of Responsibility** framework (*I Do, We Do, You Do*):

- Direct Modeling (*I Do*): The teacher demonstrates specific research moves and critical analysis techniques out loud while scholars observe and take notes on the process.
- Collaborative Practice (*We Do*): Scholars work in pairs or small groups with teacher scaffolding to evaluate a shared media article, co-formulate questions, and practice cross-referencing information together.
- Independent Application (*You Do*): Scholars independently navigate their own research pathways with heightened confidence and self-efficacy.

Structured in this manner, explicit modeling prevents digital fatigue and cognitive overload, sharpens scholars' critical literacy skills, and equips them with the tools needed to manage self-directed inquiries.

Discussion Protocols: Six Thinking Hats

To foster structured discourse and maintain scholar focus during high-stakes discussions, this unit incorporates Edward de Bono's **Six Thinking Hats** protocol. Developed as a framework for parallel thinking, this strategy divides complex discussions into six distinct modes, represented by colored "hats":[19]

- **White Hat (Information):** Focuses strictly on objective facts, data, and verifiable evidence.
- **Red Hat (Emotions):** Invites scholars to express gut feelings, intuition, and personal emotional responses without needing justification.
- **Yellow Hat (Optimism):** Explores positive outcomes, benefits, and constructiveness.
- **Black Hat (Critical Judgment):** Examines risks, flaws, potential biases, and logical inconsistencies.
- **Green Hat (Creativity):** Encourages innovative solutions, fresh perspectives, and alternative narratives.
- **Blue Hat (Process & Control):** Manages the discussion flow, enforces timing, and synthesizes key takeaways.

By directing all participants to adopt the same "hat" or analytical lens simultaneously, the protocol eliminates off-topic tangents and extra commentary, ensuring that discussions remain productive and equitable. In the context of examining youth media representations and historical narratives, this method allows scholars to separate raw emotional responses (Red Hat) from evidence-based analysis (White Hat) and critical evaluation of media bias (Black Hat).

First introduced and demonstrated in our professional seminar by Dr. Ferguson, the protocol proved highly effective at keeping discussions rigorous, streamlined, and laser-focused on core texts. However, successful implementation in a middle school classroom requires explicit modeling and scaffolding. Teachers must visually introduce each hat, provide targeted sentence stems for every perspective, and conduct live fishbowl demonstrations prior to small-group discussions to ensure conversations run smoothly and purposefully.

Classroom Activities

Designed as a six-week instructional unit, this curriculum is structured with intentional flexibility, allowing educators to adapt pacing, dive deeper into specific inquiry phases, or adjust activities to match their students' unique needs. The unit's timeline is broadly organized across three core phases: foundational text analysis and media critique, collaborative research and creative development, and a final capstone showcase.

Localizing Content for Regional Relevance

While the foundational resources, historical case studies, and musical selections in this unit are rooted in Chicago's rich legacy of youth activism, cultural movement, and performance protest, the underlying pedagogical framework is universal. Educators implementing this unit outside of Chicago are strongly encouraged to substitute localized media, regional histories, and community-based primary sources.

- Local Music & Performance: Replace Chicago-centric genres and artists with music born from your region's youth movements or cultural history.
- Community Narratives & Media: Swap Chicago news archives with local press coverage to examine how

regional media portrays youth in your own city or state.
- Local History: Draw connections to regional civil rights milestones, local youth-led protests, or community-based grassroots organizations.

Grounding the unit in local culture ensures that scholars examine history and media representation through a lens directly connected to their lived experiences, making their research and performance projects both deeply personal and community-centered.

Phase:	Theme:	Activity Focus:
Week 1	The Mirror: How are we seen?	Analyzing media archives, history books, and threat narratives
Weeks 2-3	The Spark: Who resisted?	Case studies of youth activists
Weeks 4-5	The Megaphone: How do we speak?	Performance Labs: Workshops in songwriting, drama, and visual design
Week 6	The Showcase: The Showcase & Legacy	A public Performance Showcase where scholars perform their original works.

Below are the unit's essential questions followed by a weekly instructional breakdown:

Week 1: The Mirror: How are We Seen?

- Essential Questions:
  - Who owns the story of a community and what happens when that story is told by outsiders?
  - How can words and images be weaponized to make young people look like a threat instead of a resource?
  - In what ways do public narratives shape real-world laws, school rules, and community policies?
- Focus: Critical media literacy, decoding subtext, and tracing narrative to public policy.
- Standards: RI.7-8.1, RI.7-8.4, RH.7-8.1, RH.7-8.4
- Summary: Scholars begin by investigating the concept of "Public Narratives" and how media representations frame societal perceptions of youth. Using a *Glossary of Coded Terms*, scholars analyze historical media panics—such as the 1990s "Superpredator" coverage—and use red highlighters to isolate connotative and exclusionary language (*at-risk, delinquent, thug*). They then analyze visual media framing (camera angles, lighting, status) from archival photos of youth movements (e.g., the 1968 East L.A. Walkouts). The week concludes by mapping how these sensationalized "threat narratives" directly drove punitive policies, including school zero-tolerance rules, dress codes, and municipal curfews.
- Key Strategies: K-W-L Anchor Chart launch, *Iceberg Diagram* for headline analysis.
- Weekly Deliverable: Annotated media text with highlighted coded language and a "Narrative-to-Policy" graphic organizer.

Week 2: The Spark: Who Resisted?

- Essential Questions:
  - Who owns the story of a community and what happens when that story is told by outsiders?
  - How can words and images be weaponized to make young people look like a threat instead of a resource?
  - In what ways do public narratives shape real-world laws, school rules, and community policies?
- Focus: Navigating digital archives, corroborating sources, and establishing historical evidence.
- Standards: RI.7-8.1, RI.7-8.8, RH.7-8.1, RH.7-8.3
- Summary: Scholars act as historical investigators, using digital research portals (*Chronicling America*, *Zinn Education Project*, *StoryCorps*) to explore youth-led resistance movements like the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) or the Birmingham Children's Crusade. Guided by explicit teacher modeling, scholars convert modern research questions into historical search terms via a *Keyword Translation Chart*. They locate two contrasting sources: an official media report framing youth as a "threat" and an authentic youth-produced counter-voice (oral history, diary entry, or protest ephemera). Scholars evaluate the validity of these claims and cross-reference them to isolate undeniable textual facts.
- Key Strategies: Explicit teacher "Think-Aloud" modeling (*I Do, We Do, You Do*).
- Weekly Deliverable: A completed *Case Study Portfolio* containing primary sources and two verified historical facts disproving a media narrative.

Week 3: The Spark: Who Resisted?

- Essential Questions:
  - How do we decode “hidden” bias and coded language in media and historical documents?
  - Where do we find the voices of everyday people when the official historical record has silenced them?
  - How do we prove a public narrative is false using historical modern evidence?
- Focus: Experiencing artistic media as tools of narrative reclamation and selecting a final medium.
- Standards: SL.7-8.1.D, RI.7-8.7
- Summary: Scholars rotate through four hands-on creative labs, using a single historical source text to explore how different artistic media alter audience perception:
  - Poetry/Lyric Lab: Creating "Found/Blackout Poetry" from biased news text to isolate resistance hooks.
  - Visual Arts Lab: Sketching *Counter-Iconography* and symbols of *Radical Joy* directly onto archival photos using tracing/digital layers.
  - Drama Lab: Utilizing Augusto Boal’s *Image Theater* to sculpt physical "statues" of historical power dynamics and shift them into stances of agency.
  - Media Remix Lab: Scripting a live counter-voiceover or text-overlay on a 30-second news broadcast.
- Key Strategies: Rotational learning, medium-fit reflection logs.
- Weekly Deliverable: Four mini-workshop drafts and a formal *Project Proposal Form* committing to one

artistic medium.

Week 4: The Megaphone: How do we speak?

- Essential Questions:
    - How do we decode “hidden” bias and coded language in media and historical documents?
    - Where do we find the voices of everyday people when the official historical record has silenced them?
    - How do we prove a public narrative is false using historical modern evidence?
- Focus: Medium-specific skill building, drafting, and embedding research facts into creative work.
- Standards: SL.7-8.1.B, SL.7-8.5
- Summary: Scholars organize into medium-specific creative guilds (Lyricists, Visual Artists, Playwrights, Media Editors) and engage in technical masterclasses focused on craft (e.g., meter, color theory, dialogue formatting, audio leveling). Scholars map storyboards, scene outlines, or visual thumbnails before moving into heavy drafting. Mid-week, scholars execute a mandatory "Evidence Integration Pause," where they explicitly demonstrate where their two historical facts/quotes from Week 2 are physically woven into their script, artwork, or video edit.
- Key Strategies: Edward de Bono's *Six Thinking Hats* framework for group management.
- Weekly Deliverable: A functional rough draft (complete rough script, blocked canvas, or rough video cut) with embedded evidence tags.

Week 5: The Megaphone: How do we speak?

- Essential Questions
    - How do different creative media (poetry, art, drama, etc.) change how an audience feels about a historical truth?
    - How can art be used as a tool of resistance to “flip the script” on a negative stereotype?
    - What does it mean to speak truth to power, and how do we ensure our community actually hears our message?
- Focus: Structured peer critique, iterative revision, and student-led event planning.
- Standards: SL.7-8.1.B, SL.7-8.1.C, SL.7-8.1.D
- Summary: Scholars move through a two-tiered feedback cycle. First, an *Inner-Guild Critique* allows peers in the same medium to give technical feedback on rhythm, line work, or editing cuts. Next, a *Cross-Medium Exchange* pairs scholars across disciplines to test message clarity and emotional impact on a fresh audience. After applying revisions, the class transitions into student execution committees:
    - Curation Crew: Designing the "Archive Tunnel" spatial layout and exhibit labels.
    - Stage Crew: Planning the "Living Archive" performance circle and acoustic setup.
    - Press Corp: Writing press releases, designing program guides, and printing QR code hub stations.
- Key Strategies: "Hat Tokens" for peer critique, student-led committee roles.
- Weekly Deliverable: Polished final masterwork and completed event production specs.

Week 6: The Showcase: Final Legacy

- Essential Questions
    - How do different creative media (poetry, art, drama, etc.) change how an audience feels about a historical truth?
    - How can art be used as a tool of resistance to “flip the script” on a negative stereotype?
    - What does it mean to speak truth to power, and how do we ensure our community actually hears our message?
- Focus: Public intervention, community performance, reflection, and digital archiving.
- Standards: SL.7-8.5
- Summary: Scholars transform the school environment into an interactive public intervention. Following a dress rehearsal, they host The Youth Reclamation Festival for family, school staff, and community stakeholders. The event takes guests through a multi-sensory journey:
    - The Archive Tunnel: Walking through biased media history juxtaposed with student counter-art and media remixes.
    - The Living Archive Stage: Experiencing live spoken-word poetry, monologues, and music.
    - The Policy Panel: A student-led Q&A addressing the contemporary impact of youth narratives.
- The week concludes with a restorative debrief circle and the publishing of student work to a permanent digital QR-code portfolio for local libraries and community hubs.
- Key Strategies: Restorative reflection circle, public intervention presentation.
- Weekly Deliverable: Public performance/exhibit execution, reflective debrief essay, and digital portfolio link.
    - Digital Artists: Allow scholars using tablets to experiment with color contrast, digital brush textures, and opacity.

Appendix on Implementing District Standards

This three-part interdisciplinary unit blends reading, writing, and historical analysis into a scaffolded learning sequence. Rigor and student autonomy build intentionally from start to finish.

Section #1 - Research: These reading standards drive the research phase, in which scholars unpack the historical and modern media "threat narratives."

- Evidence and Central Ideas (RI.7-8.1, RH.7-8.1): Citing textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly and implicitly; Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
    - The Unit Connection: scholars must show proof. They can’t just claim that an old newspaper article is biased; they must explicitly cite the "coded language" or biased quotes from the research as their textual evidence.
- Analyzing Connections and Processes (RI.7-8.3, RH.7-8.3): Analyzing how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events.
    - The Unit Connection: Scholars use this to map the Policy Connection. They analyze how a negative media narrative (e.g., the 1990s "Superpredator" myth) directly connected to,

influenced, and caused real-world public policies (like school zero-tolerance rules or curfew laws).

- Word Choice and Coded Meanings (RI.7-8.4, RH.7-8.4): Determining the meaning of words and phrases, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.
    - The Unit Connection: Scholars will examine the connotative power of words like "thug," "at-risk," or "outside agitator" to see how media outlets subtly shape public perception without stating bias outright.
- Evaluating Arguments and Multi-Media (RI.7-8.7, RI.7-8.8): Evaluating the argument and specific claims in a text; integrating information presented in different media or formats.
    - The Unit Connection: Scholars will evaluate the validity of a news station's claims about youth, and they cross-reference print archives with video broadcasts or photos to see how different media construct the same "threat" narrative.

Section #2 - Collaboration: The Speaking & Listening standards act as the bridge when scholars shift into their medium groups to collaborate, give peer feedback, and prepare their final pitches.

- Collaborative Discussions (SL.7-8.1.B, SL.7-8.1.C): scholars must follow rules for participating in collegial discussions, tracking progress, posing questions, and ensuring all perspectives have a voice.
    - The Unit Connection: scholars will enter their "Peer Feedback Pods." They use these standards to run their "Critical Friends" workshop sessions—collaborating to refine scripts, lyrics, or mural designs while ensuring everyone's voice is heard.
    - Acknowledging Evidence and Modifying Views (SL.7-8.1.D): scholars will review the key ideas expressed and demonstrate an understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing.
        - The Unit Connection: This anchors the "Medium Fit" Discovery Log at the end of Week 1. After rotating through all four labs, scholars must reflect on how different creative perspectives altered their understanding of the historical evidence.

Section #3 - The Showcase: This standard is the actual execution of the community event.

- Strategic Use of Multimedia (SL.7-8.5): Integrating multimedia components (e.g., graphics, images, music, sound) and visual displays in presentations to clarify information and add interest.
    - The Unit Connection: This is the blueprint for the Youth Resistance Showcase. Scholars are strategically using multimedia to make their historical research irrefutable and impactful for the public showcase.

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The lyrics of this song exemplify how kids are shaped by outside influences; this song also

helped shape my educational philosophy.

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Notes

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