

The Story of Silence Lesson Plan

Create your own story and Oral History.

Brainstorm some ideas if you are stuck in choosing a topic for your project:

Write down the first 3 things that come to your mind when thinking of this project. Examine those 3 things. Can you see one of them expanded into a project such as this? Which of these 3 have the most personal meaning for you? Why? Can you use it?

Think of a person or persons that have impacted you the most. How can you involve them into this project? Was it a story they told? Was there an experience they went through that impacted you in some way? Can you involve them into this project?

Think of a community or an event that inspired you. Can you expand it and use it as a topic for this project?

Whatever you choose as a topic, choose something that is meaningful to you that has impacted and made an impression in your life, or has inspired you in some way. Choose something that you love otherwise the process will not be enjoyable and what you learn will not be as evident.

1. Choose the topic

Once you make a decision, let the teacher know. The topic does not have to be definitive in that it may change slightly as the process is in action. There may be slight changes to where you thought you were going with the topic and that is perfectly fine and most likely to be expected. Those shifts, transitions and changes will allow for learning experiences and opportunities for reflection. Write as you embark on this project. Keep a journal of sorts and use it for your final Reflection requirement. You will be asked to write a reflection entry on a daily, weekly or monthly basis—we will discuss this later.

Once you make a decision, fill out the following questions—about two or three paragraphs each. Answering these questions will allow you more focus and an opportunity to think in more detail about your topic, the process and the overall project.

1. *What is your primary motive in choosing your topic for this project?*
2. *What are the activities in which you plan to participate and the goals of each activity?*

3. *How will this project be of benefit to you, your peers, to this class, the school and/or community?*
4. *How do you intend to share the information gained from your project?*
5. *Any random thoughts about this project? Are you truly interested in doing something like this? Why or why not? What are the learning benefits, if any? How will this help you personally with the subject of this class, if at all?*

Notes for the teacher:

The Story of Silence Site could be used as an example of an Oral History Project in order to generate ideas on how the student will present the finished project. There are also a number of resources on the Resources Page that can help with other possible examples in regards to the project's presentation.

After the student has chosen a topic and answered the questions, read through their answers. Is the chosen topic something you see being developed into an Oral History project? Can the topic be used and expanded into the time frame given for the project? Ask yourself questions in regards to the overall concept—is it acceptable, does it have a research component, can it be adapted into the subject of the course/class, is it a topic that was thought-through and thoughtful, a topic the student sincerely would like to embark upon, expand, and share? If so, give it the ok and move onto the next steps.

Requirements:

After the topic is chosen and approved, begin writing an outline, or notes in regards to how you will begin. Are you interviewing a family member? A community member or a figure you will need to reach out to and get official permission to interview? Will you be researching a topic in which you will need access to a particular place, location, etc.?

Think about all these factors, since you will be needing to set up appointments, preparing questions in advance, or thinking about how you will be conducting these interviews or beginning the research overall. Will you use only audio or video or a mixture of both? Begin organizing yourself, and putting yourself in the mind-set of the project—be respectful of other people's time, their story, their reactions, etc.

Explain to those you will be interviewing and or using for research, what exactly your intent will be, about your project and what you will be sharing in regards to content. Tell those you will be interviewing, if their story, words, etc. will be used in a public forum, a website, a podcast, etc. Not everyone will be open to having his or her picture or words in an open and public format. Make sure you inform them and get their permission in writing or on tape.

As you begin the research, interviewing, the project, keep in mind, the how—how will you be presenting the overall project—video, audio, art, performance, etc. The project is a process and as you are in the midst of it, it may change. That is perfectly fine. Keep the teacher informed of this, as she or he may be able to help with some guidance, ideas, structure, etc. This project is yours and should not be dictated yet the teacher may be of help in its focus.

Make sure whatever equipment you are using-iPhone, recorder, etc. is in working order and the device itself does not distract—no phone ringing or text message tone go off in the middle of your interview. Be aware of your surroundings. Are you meeting/conducting the interview in a quiet area or noisy. Will you have to adjust sound due to traffic noise or loud people in the background? Will we be able to hear the words clearly of the interviewee?

Also, inform whomever you will be interviewing that you may not respond in an ordinary way to what they are saying—you want as little background noise in the recording. For example, in a normal conversation, you may say something in response to whomever you are speaking with, such as saying, ‘oh, yeah, I remember that too.’ Or “wow, really, that’s interesting.” Whatever it may be...this leads to a more complicated job when you go to edit the recording since you may have to cut yourself out. If however, you want all your interjections in the overall project then disregard what you just read.

Most of the project will be conducted outside of the classroom. Class time may be given as in lab time, organizational time, and or peer help/review. Sharing with peers may be of use along the process. Also, depending on the time given to this project (a semester, a year, etc.), there will be check-in times along the way. Time will be given, to check on the process and progress of each student, and discussions will be conducted as well. Time will be given in class for help on language, translation, fact checks, collecting or reading the required reflections, and overall help with the topic and project.

Reflections will also be required on a weekly or monthly basis depending on what the teacher/class requires. The reflections should be your thoughts on the overall process, personal experiences during the project you had that you wanted to write down and share, how the project is progressing and how it’s affecting you as a person, student, or the subject you are studying in class. Reflections should just be your thoughts along the way.

More Notes for the teacher:

Depending on the subject matter, class time, etc. the teacher can create a schedule on when to conduct check-ins, when to allot for class-time for project purposes, when the project will be due, and how it will be presented to the class—will it be a Final exam, a mid-term, or will time be allotted in class where each student can present? Will there be a Q&A session, discussion, and peer evaluation—the ideas and options are endless...

It is up to each individual teacher/class on how they would like to fully structure the project—will sources need to be cited, will a written permission form be created and used by the student for interview purposes, will there be a time limit on the final presentation, etc.

Overall Basic Outline:

- *Student thinks of a meaningful yet subject appropriate topic
- *Teacher approves and a due-date is set
- *Some class-time for check-in on progress, collecting/reading the reflections, or conducting discussion, etc.
- *Presentations given

If there are specific questions about the lesson, don't hesitate to write me and I'll do my best to answer quickly. Good luck-In bocca al lupo!

***If interested and with a subscription, there will be lessons periodically added for each video/interview on the Story of Silence site that could be used in a number of different classroom subjects or topics. There will also be added resources, general information, and teaching guides for specific subject matter. New interviews of a general nature will eventually be uploaded as well.