Module 1: Film and Production Terminology

Rationale: Understanding film terminology gives you a common language to communicate observations, points of view, and ideas about documentary filmmaking. Additionally, it helps you understand the WHY behind the artistic choices filmmakers make both in production, as well as post-production.

Standards Alignment | Grades 5–12

Michigan English Language Arts

- **SL.5.2–SL.8.2; SL.9-10.2; SL.11-12.2**: Interpret information presented through visual, oral, and multimedia formats.
- **SL.5.5–SL.8.5; SL.9-10.5; SL.11-12.5:** Use multimedia to communicate information effectively.

Michigan Social Studies

- **P1.2 (Grades 6–8):** Interpret primary and secondary sources, considering point of view, context, and bias.

ISTE Standards for Students

- **1.3.b – Knowledge Constructor:** Evaluate the accuracy, credibility, bias, and relevance of digital content.
- **1.6.c – Creative Communicator:** Use digital tools to communicate complex ideas visually.

Connection to Iconic Michigan: When you learn about the documentary film process, it is helpful to watch a variety of video exemplars for structure and style. You will find examples of many of the terms used in documentary filmmaking and how they are applied to achieve a specific mood or style.

Media Literacy Connection: *What techniques are used to attract my attention?*
What do you notice? This is one of the most important media literacy questions to ask. In order to help you and your students build an internal checklist they can use when viewing media like a documentary film, you'll want to be able to build a media vocabulary you can apply to *any type of media at any time.*

🎬 Media-Making Skill Boost

- *How to Analyze the Purpose of a Film* - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ufZPl-lJnvI&t=1s
- *How to Set the Mood in Film* - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=frNKUDMG9Dg&t=3s

As you watch, think about:

- How could the skills mentioned in these two Read, Write Roar! videos support your own exemplar?

- How might you teach these concepts to students?
- What challenges might students face with these skills?

View the Production Terminology link - https://tinyurl.com/mst2da3z - with many common film and video production terms and definitions. You can use this to practice learning various vocabulary terms while watching the video in this lesson or any video you choose to watch. When you teach this information to students, consider having them write a paragraph using 3-5 vocabulary words from the list below as they analyze videos.

Watch the short Documentary From Iconic America - *The Statue of Liberty: Their Immigration Story Becomes the Story of Their Life*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m7o8FEEHUCg&t=2s

Additional Resources to support your learning from Student Reporting Lab
1. What Makes a Good Video Story? — https://tinyurl.com/22kc4b5b - Introduces story formats and the elements of effective video journalism, including visuals and natural sound.
2. 10-Shot Camera Challenge — https://tinyurl.com/3uy9ej7n - A 45-minute composition lesson with a quick filming exercise.

Level Up video POP - Principles of Photography — https://tinyurl.com/375m49ff - Level Up video exploring camera composition. Identify and practice the framing choices used in an *Iconic America Statue of Liberty* excerpt from above.

Reflection:
1. How does watching the Iconic America The Statue of Liberty And the Immigrants' Story help you learn some of the film terminology necessary for documentary film production?

- Possible Answer: Watching this film teaches terminology such as voice-over narration, archival footage, interviews, and B-roll. These elements are critical in documentary storytelling and illustrate how filmmakers combine visuals, audio, and historical context to convey a powerful narrative.

2. In what ways does learning film terminology translate into your own conversations and application of film vocabulary when discussing documentary films?

- Possible Answer: I've learned to analyze and describe elements like narrative structure, cinematography, editing techniques, and sound design, leading to a deeper understanding of the film and more informed conversations.