Module 2: Scriptwriting & Planning

Rationale: Scriptwriting is a crucial component of the pre-production process because it serves as the blueprint for the entire project. It outlines the narrative structure, character development, dialogue, and visual elements, providing a clear roadmap for the production team to follow. A well-written script ensures coherence, consistency, and alignment with the project's goals, ultimately laying the foundation for a successful and effective final product.

Standards Alignment | Grades 5–12

Michigan English Language Arts

- **W.5.2–W.8.2; W.9-10.2; W.11-12.2:** Develop informative or explanatory writing that communicates ideas clearly.
- **W.5.5–W.8.5; W.9-10.5; W.11-12.5:** Strengthen writing through planning, revision, and editing.
- **W.5.7–W.8.7; W.9-10.7; W.11-12.7:** Conduct research to investigate questions and develop understanding.

Michigan Social Studies

- **P2.1 (Grades 6–8):** Develop compelling and supporting questions to investigate social studies topics.

ISTE Standards for Students

- **1.3.a – Knowledge Constructor:** Use effective research strategies to locate information that supports learning and creative projects.
- **1.6.d – Creative Communicator:** Develop and present messages appropriate to an intended audience.

Connection to Iconic Michigan: You will write a short script to use as an example script for your own Iconic Michigan project which you will use as an example to show your students later in the year. We will help you weave together interview soundbites you choose to use and a voice-over you write. The script will provide a framework for organizing your narrative, capturing key themes, and communicating your vision to viewers. By honing your scriptwriting abilities, you will develop a compelling storyline and ensure your documentary effectively conveys the richness and significance of Michigan's iconic landmarks and culture.

Media Literacy Connection: *Why is this message being sent?*
What is the purpose of your message and who is your audience? Media messages are usually designed to inform, to persuade or to entertain and each message is usually designed with a specific audience in mind. What is the purpose of your message and who is your primary audience?

🎬 Media-Making Skill Boost

- *How to Understand Different Perspectives* - https://tinyurl.com/zn65xh8s
- *How to Identify Reliable Sources* - https://tinyurl.com/3b934nrc

As you watch, think about:

- How could these skills support your own exemplar?
- How might you teach these concepts to students?
- What challenges might students face with these skills?

Here is an example of a completed voice-over script - https://tinyurl.com/mt757mep
and a completed two-column script - https://tinyurl.com/4b6cb9he

Watch the short documentary from *Iconic America - The Great Bambino* - https://tinyurl.com/yc2y29cm
For this activity, start playing the video at 33 seconds. End the video at 2:00.

Using the two-column script guide https://tinyurl.com/bdd8dftb, watch the video and fill in the columns to create a script as you watch a portion of this film. To guide you, the first few rows have been filled out.

Pre-Production Planning
Just to remind you, one of the steps in the fellowship is to have you produce a video that you will use as an exemplar to show your students. We will help you with that process. As part of the pre-planning process for that video project, you might want to start thinking about the following Pre-Writing and Pre-Production Steps.

Pre-Writing
To start thinking more deeply about your topic, write complete sentences to answer each of these questions.

- What is considered Iconic about my/in my city/town?
- What do you think makes this place/thing iconic?
- Why do you think others believe this place/thing is iconic?
- Who are some people in your city/town that know something about the iconic place/thing?

Pre-Production
Before you write your Iconic Michigan practice script, there are a few things you will want to think about.

- Where will you do your recording? Will you go to an iconic place in your town or city?
- Will you use photos or historic images? Will you need to get permission to use those?
- Who will you interview as an expert on your iconic place? Which who, what, where, when, why, and how questions will you prepare ahead of time to ask your expert(s)?
- Will you need to get permission to do recording at that location?
- Will there be other people around when you're recording? If so, you'll need to get release forms for them to appear on camera. Will their background sound matter? Or, do you need it quiet?

Teacher Resource

Click on this link https://story-maker.org/library/scriptwriting/#overview to access the multi-day lesson series on scriptwriting from Storymaker, a resource from PBS Newshour's Student Reporting Labs.

SAVE THE NOTES FROM THE SECTION ABOVE. YOU WILL NEED THEM IN A FUTURE MODULE.

Additional Resources from Student Reporting Labs

1. What Is Newsworthy? — https://tinyurl.com/y6kk5tk3 - Evaluate potential story ideas for relevance, impact and audience interest.
2. Building Two-Column Scripts for Science Stories — https://tinyurl.com/yc8zteur - Structured scriptwriting exercise that can be adapted to history and community documentaries.

Reflection: Reflect on the lessons and the scriptwriting process.
1. How does the process of writing a documentary script differ from other forms of writing typically undertaken in your classroom?

- Possible Answer: Writing a documentary script differs from other classroom writing because it focuses on visual storytelling, requires concise dialogue or narration, and is built around real-life events or facts, often involving research and interviews.

2. What unique challenges and opportunities does documentary scriptwriting present for conveying information and engaging audiences?

- Possible Answer: Documentary scriptwriting presents the challenge of balancing factual accuracy with engaging storytelling. We can connect with the audience while delivering information in a compelling and concise way.

3. How does analyzing documentary techniques in scriptwriting contribute to helping students learn how to blend factual elements with storytelling for impactful narratives?

- Possible Answer: Documentaries allow us to use visuals and interviews to support facts and build emotion, which makes our stories more impactful.