

# What We See and What We Hear

When making history documentaries you can use multiple techniques to involve and engage the audience in the history you're trying to tell. These techniques include sound and music design, image and footage choices, effects and editing, and pacing and narrative quality. Use this exercise to experiment with using these techniques.

1. Choose one of the following well known stories from American history:

- Boston Tea Party
- Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad
- Vietnam War Protests

2. Research this story well enough to tell it to a friend in your own words. You will not become an expert on this topic, but make sure to read at least 3 sources so you have enough details and facts to tell the story in your own words.

3. Write out your version of the story. This would be your narration if you were making this your documentary.

4. Find at least 5 images online you'd pair with this story. This can be primary source images OR artistic representations that you'd use if you were making a documentary.

5. Find one song to pair with your story and the images. Ideally this has no or minimal lyrics. Think of the score to some of your favorite movies. Think about the kind of mood you want to set--is it uplifting? Somber? Do you want to generate tension or suspense? Or peace and joy? Try a few out before you settle on your favorite.

6. Now pair up with a classmate who has chosen the same historical story as you. Perform your pieces for each other, including your photos and music. What was different about the story when told with different narration, images, and music? What stayed the same?

BONUS: What would you do to make this same historical story feel like a romance? A thriller? A horror? A comedy? Try it out!

**When you make your documentaries, keep this in mind! The way you tell your story matters!**