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## ***Making Meaning of May 4*** **K-12 Teaching Plan**

**Name of Educator: Melinda Paige Reay**

**Educator's Teaching Plan Number & Title: Project 41, "NEH Kent State Lesson Plan"**

**Level of Students for Educator's Teaching Plan: Grades 9-12**

**Subject Area for Educator's Teaching Plan: Social Studies or Language Arts**

**Educator's State: Utah**

**Description of Educator's Teaching Plan: Students gain understanding of May 4 based on multiple sources and perspectives incl. Vietnam War era music; primary sources; and a guard officer's oral history. Learning deepens through creating: lyrics on an issue in their world; a poetry slam with their own 2-voice poems; and a digital museum.**

This educational teaching plan was developed during Kent State University's Summer 2021 workshop titled Making Meaning of May 4: The 1970 Kent State Shootings in US History. The workshop was supported by Kent State and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant program titled *Landmarks of American History and Culture: Workshops for School Teachers*.

This teaching plan is shared to promote understanding of the Kent State shootings on May 4, 1970; enhance humanities education across the disciplines; and illustrate the meaning of May 4 for today.

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# NEH Kent State Lesson Plan

## High School Social Studies

*Lesson plan can easily be used in either a social studies or language arts classroom*

### ***Introduction/overview/unit rationale***

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Students will learn about the impact of Kent State and multiple perspectives by analyzing, comparing, and contrasting primary sources. Students will use these perspectives to create their own “primary” source. Students will also learn how museums tell a story, and end with creating their own museum.

### ***Unit goals***

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Curriculum Goals:

- Learn about the contextualization of the Long Sixties
- Understand how the Long Sixties contributed to an era of protest nationwide
- Connect these issues to Ohio and Kent State
- Analyze the impact of Nixon’s speech on April 30, 1970, and its immediate aftermath
- Understand the events of Kent State and their significance
- Learn the impact of Kent State in the short- and long-term

Skill Goals:

- Interpreting and analyzing primary sources
- Analyzing, comparing, and contrasting multiple viewpoints
- Use of archives and searching capabilities
- Understanding points of view from oral histories and primary sources
- Ability to create exhibits that tell a story

### ***Connection to state standards***

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#### **U.S. II Standard 7.3:**

Students will develop interpretations of the impact of the Cold War on American society and culture using evidence such as cultural artifacts from the Cold War era, oral histories, and primary sources.

### ***Detailed description of what will happen each day***

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### **Day 1:**

Students will delve deeper into multiple viewpoints on the war in Vietnam by completing a lyric analysis assignment (unit begins midway through Vietnam unit)

1. Students will begin the class by thinking of a song that they know that brings awareness to an issue. Students will find the lyrics and write a paragraph about how the song discusses or addresses the issue, using evidence from the lyrics themselves.
2. The teacher will then introduce students to the use of wartime songwriting, giving various examples for both war hawk and dove songs.
3. Students will then complete a [lyric analysis assignment](#) to further their learning.
4. Then, students will select an issue that is important to them in the current world and create a song that addresses or discusses the issue.

### **Day 2:**

Students will receive an overview from the teacher about the Kent State shootings. During the lesson, the teacher will focus on the lead-up and context of the event, the timeline of what happened that day, and the aftermath. The teacher will focus the lesson on primary source analysis, including first hand accounts of what happened. The teacher will also provide multiple viewpoints by including oral history excerpts from Captain Ron Snyder.

### **Day 3:**

Students will explore varying viewpoints of Kent State by exploring the archives and participating in a writing activity:

1. Archive exploration - Students will begin the day by exploring the archives. They will first be introduced to the archives, and practice navigating through the different resources:
  - [May 4th Collection Homepage](#)
  - [May 4th Collection Contents](#)
  - [May 4th Collection Index](#)
  - [Digital Collections](#)
2. In order to better understand the use of primary sources, as well as analyzing multiple viewpoints, students will complete a “two-voice poetry” writing activity:
  - First, students find two viewpoints from the Kent State shootings by using Oral Histories found in the May 4th Collection. It is suggested for students to first go to [the Digital Collections website](#), and select “oral histories.”
  - Then, students in pairs will use the search tools to find two different viewpoints of the Kent State shootings. It is suggested to use the “Narrator’s Roles” section of the collection for ease of search. Students should find two different viewpoints of the same event: whether those viewpoints are similar or vastly different is up to the student creating their project.
  - Students will then create a two-voice poem in order to show these various viewpoints. Instructions for how to create a two-voice poem can be found [here](#).

- Note: To help guide teachers and students, [please see some sample two-voice poetry](#) that were created from oral histories found in the book [Voices of Freedom](#). Special note should be taken of the poem on Page 2 between James Farmer and John Patterson, as it would be a similar poem to what you may write between, for example, a National Guardsmen and protester or victim.
  - Additional ideas for comparison writing activities can be found [here](#) and scrolling down.
- 3. Students will then participate in a Beatnik poetry slam and present their two-voice poems to the class.

#### **Day 4:**

Students will expand their use of the archives as well as practicing their skills for the museum exhibit final project.

1. Students will be asked to think of museums that they have been to. Students will then brainstorm on the board some of the elements that make a “great” museum or exhibit in their opinion.
2. The teacher will then encourage a discussion on what some of the difficulties may be in creating an exhibition. Prodding questions could include:
  - What types of events are easiest for a museum curator to exhibit? Which are more difficult and why?
  - What issues can you foresee when creating an exhibit for a difficult or controversial event, such as the Kent State shootings?
3. Students will then explore two different digital exhibitions on Kent State University:
  - The first exhibit that students will explore is the [Armed With Our Voices Listening Wall Digital Exhibit](#).
    - During this exhibit exploration, students should make note of how the authors conveyed their points, how the exhibit flowed (i.e. chronologically, thematically), what elements made up a successful digital exhibit, and how the exhibit connected to the modern day.
  - Then, students will look at a different style of exhibit: [Remembering May 4](#) that commemorates the lives prior to the shooting of the four victims of May 4th.
    - During this exhibit exploration, students should make note of how the authors conveyed their points, how the exhibit flowed (i.e. chronologically, thematically), and what elements made up a successful digital exhibit. Of special note, students should consider why the authors chose to focus on the lives leading up to the events of May 4th, as well as how this exhibit differed from the *Armed With Our Voices*’ “The Four” exhibit section. Students should consider the positives and negatives with each of these styles of exhibits.
  - Students will then create two digital templates, one for each style of exhibit, that could be used to create an exhibit in the future. Templates should include spaces for elements that they found useful in the previous exhibits, such as use of media, primary sources, captions, etc. It may be useful to have students create four panels

for each template, showing a cohesive flow to the exhibit. Students can also use the Kent State shooting to create a brainstorming draft of possible exhibits to include.

### **Day 5-7:**

Students will then apply what they have learned to create their own digital museum based on the teacher's choice of topic (such as the Kent State shootings, an event in Vietnam, Vietnam itself, an event in the Long 60's, Nixon, etc.).

1. In groups, students will select a museum topic. Teachers may use the Kent State shootings if needed, but teachers are encouraged to expand beyond the scope of Kent State due to heavy exposure to already created digital exhibits on the topic.
2. Students will then work as a team to create a virtual museum. Museums may use templates previously created in Day 4, as well as other possible templates:
  - a. [Folder with original instructions unrelated to APUSH](#)
  - b. [Virtual Museum Template #1](#)
  - c. [Virtual Museum Template #2](#)
  - d. Note that students can also easily create digital museums in Weebly. Alternate options may include the use of Canva resources.
3. Students will then present their museum to other students. Additionally, if formatted correctly, students can explore other students' museums as well.

### ***Use of both informal and formal assessments***

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This unit plan includes both informal and formal assessments:

- Informal assessment: Takes place daily, group brainstorming activities, individual research opportunities, digital template drafts
- Formal assessment: Lyric analysis assignment, two-voice poem, virtual museum

### ***Technological needs***

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This lesson relies heavily on the use of technology. Students will need access to a computer and good internet connection.

### ***Materials needed to complete the unit***

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In addition to the materials listed above, students may also need paper (small or large butcher paper works best), as well as a whiteboard for the teacher.