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

Name of Educator: Amy Hamilton

Educator's Teaching Plan Number & Title: Project 28, "Lessons May 4th"

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

Subject Area for Educator's Teaching Plan: English

Educator's State: Missouri

Description of Educator's Teaching Plan: May 4 Teaching Manual might well be the title for this plan that features 4 complete, themed lessons to use in succession (in the author's case, as prelude to *The Things They Carried*) or individually. Each contains a range of sources, assignments, and tools (e.g., *No, Low, and More tech* options for particular activities). Lesson topics are: 1) Civil Rights Movement & Vietnam War; 2) dissent at Kent State '60s-'70s; 3) Kent State as representative of protest at US colleges; 4) Kent State, May 1-4, 1970, "*They had it coming.*" Counterpoint: Nixon's own appointees determined that the shootings were "*unnecessary, unwarranted, and inexcusable.*"

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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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Introduction: Our sophomore team has committed to making Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried* a core text for the 2021-22 school year (and beyond). Other units of study include the Bible as literature, *The Catcher in the Rye*, *Black Boy*, , a graphic novel unit that includes *Persepolis, 1984* and a Shakespearean tragedy. I am creating this series of lessons to be used by all teachers as a precursor to the book study of *The Things They Carried*. (Sadly, I am not teaching with the 10th grade team this year; therefore, I am trying to create this unit to empower teachers who may not yet have had the rich experience learning about May 4 and the long sixties to confidently engage with their students.) Last note: we will be teaching on a 90 minute block this year.

10th grade Essential Skills

Recognize the empowering nature of reading and writing.

Draw conclusions, infer and analyze by citing relevant and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events, or manipulate time impact the reader.

Evaluate how effectively two or more texts develop similar ideas/topics.

Follow a writing process to produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, style, and voice are appropriate to the task, purpose and audience; self-select and blend (when appropriate) previously learned narrative, expository, and argumentative writing techniques.

Review, revise, and edit writing with consideration for the task, purpose, and audience.

Conduct research to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; gather multiple relevant, credible sources, print and digital; integrate information using a standard citation system

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives including those presented in diverse media, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, resolve contradictions when possible, and determine what additional information or research is needed.

Plan and deliver appropriate presentations concisely and logically based on the task, audience, and purpose making strategic use of multimedia in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

10th grade Essential Questions

- 1) What is home? What roles do homes play in our lives?
- 2) How do people respond to a world beyond their control?
- 3) How do individuals and communities use storytelling?
- 4) What is truth? Is it fixed or relative? Who controls truth?
- 5) What are the social functions of alienation, conformity, dissent, and rebellion?
- 6) How does shame function?
- 7) How do people experience power? To what lengths will people go to obtain and retain power?
- 8) What is freedom? To what extent do people want to be free?
- 9) What is the role of faith in our lives?

Lesson One: Context Building - 1950-1970. Law & Order, Dissent, Vulnerability, Strength.

Opening Question: What makes someone vulnerable? What makes someone strong?

- No tech: have them discuss this in their table pods.
- Low tech: Write the two questions on boards or giant post-its and have students write their response as they get ready for class
- More tech: use Pear Deck or Jamboard. If you want to get creative, have them only respond with images and not words.

Activity.

Prep Work Before Class:

- Set up 5-10 stations (depending on size of class and number of students you want in each group or the focus you want to pursue). Low tech: At each section have the two “texts” and a giant post-it, markers, glue or tape, scissors. More tech: You can set this activity up using Jamboard or Google Docs or Google Slides. Mixed tech: you could allow students to choose their level of tech. If they use Jamboard or some other tech, just ask them to create a QR code when they are done which you can print and post on their poster for the Gallery Walk.

Stations

[Note: I have chosen the links so that you can find the images/videos which you can isolate. However, I would recommend supplying students with the links to the websites because more extensive information in the linked sources provides a space for differentiation; individuals and groups can read and explore as much or as little as they like; they can pursue their own lines of inquiry.]

1. Brief text of Brown v. Board of Education (1954) **and** the video of the National Guard escorting the Little Rock 9 into school (1957). You can use [this link to History.com](#) in order to provide access to both. The first video talks about Brown, and the second video shows the Little Rock 9/National Guard.
2. Picture of [Ruby Bridges playing with her friends](#) (1960) **and** a picture of Ruby Bridges being [escorted into school](#) by federal marshalls (1960).
3. [Sit-in protest](#) at a Woolworths in Jackson, MI (1963) **and** [Freedom Summer](#) image (1964).
4. [Flowers & guns image](#) (1967) **and** Mary Ellen Mark photo “[Pro-Vietnam War](#) parade, New York City” (1968).
5. [Muhammad Ali as St. Sebastian](#) (1968) **and** [Tommie Smith and John Carlos](#) raising their fists (1968).
6. Black Panther Party Ten Point Program (1966) [suggestion: use image from Black Panther Party magazine] **and** COINTELPRO memo from J. Edgar Hoover (1968) regarding the Black Panther Party. Image taken from Walker and Anderson’s graphic history *The Black Panther Party*. [suggestion: have copy of the Graphic novel available for students to peruse].
7. Iconic “War is Hell” helmet photo (1965) **and** photo “[Reaching Out](#)” from photographer Larry Burrows (1966) [warning: the photo is one of many on this site. I would suggesting printing it and offering this sight to students with a “trigger warning”]
8. Edited version of “The Night Washington U. Became a Flashpoint in the Vietnam War Protests” (events from May 1970) [Edited to remove references to Kent State] **and** Image “Student Protest” (from May 1970).
9. Sadler and Moore’s “The Ballad of the Green Berets” (1966) Lyrics, Performance **and** Edwin Starr “War” (1970) Lyrics, Performance.

10. Smith and Wislon's "Battle Hymn of Lt. Calley" 1966) Lyrics, Performance and Jimi Hendrix "The Star Spangled Banner Live at Woodstock 1969" Performance.

Task for students [Note: The structure of this product is inspired by the display in the May 4 Visitors Center in the "context" section -- the inversion panels.]

Source One
Source Two

1. Attach your first source in the top section of your presentation.
 - o Observe: What do you notice **objectively**? Mark your observations on your source.
 - o Patterns & Outliers: Start making some inferences about the meaning as you notice what patterns exist and what things are standing outside. Note them.
 - o Meaning: Consider these four topics - **law and order, dissent, vulnerability, strength**. Based on the evidence you have noticed, what points can you infer the author is making about those topics in this text? Write your responses.
2. Attach your second source in the bottom section of your presentation and repeat the process.
3. In the middle section, you get to bring the two pieces together and give VOICE to your thoughts.
Consider doing one or more of the following:
 - Write about what you have learned about one or more of the topics: law and order, dissent, vulnerability, strength.
 - Describe why the pairing of the two images is not so simple. What makes the juxtaposition complicated?
 - Write the questions you have had while studying these images. They may be content related (What are the different ways people participated in dissent?) or thematic (How does dissent alter the course of history?) or anywhere in between.
 - Based on any of your research during the period, what are other images, songs, information you would like to add to this pairing?
 - Connect what you have learned to your lived experience. Do you see similarities between your focus and contemporary events or ideas? Do you perceive any changes over time? Did your author ask questions that have since been answered?

Closing: What makes someone vulnerable? What makes someone strong?

- o No tech: have them write on a post-it.
- o Low tech: Write in their class journal.
- o More tech: use Pear Deck or Jamboard. If you want to get creative, have them only respond with images and not words.

Next Step Options & Ideas for Assessment

This lesson could be a multiple day exercise depending on your particular interest/needs.

- Use the middle section differently. Have them find a poem that they feel connects the two images. Or write a poem that connects the two images.

- Have students look at the list of essential questions for the unit, select one, and create an “answer” to the question based on the sources they were supplied. They could write these or use flipgrid to record their response.
- You could make the poster into an assessed project. If so, I would extend the time so they have time to draft and create a final project. Tell them WHAT you are assessing. I would suggest choosing or having the group choose one of the essential skills (see rainbow graph above).
- Have students present their posters or do a gallery walk. This would be a great place to assess listening skills by having them pre-select an essential question or one of the four topics as a focus and create a sketch notes based on the information others present.
- If you want to assess writing, you could do a timed write after the presentations. Make sure and give them or have them choose a focus before you start the presentations. This could easily become a conferenced writing.
- Other options: write found poetry about one of the four topics based on the information on the posters, choose one photo or image to inspire a poem. You could use this as a jumping off point for a research paper based on one of their inquiry questions. It might be interesting to take one of their inquiry questions and research something contemporary instead of researching the past. Or create a graphic novel response of some sort. The options are endless; choose your own adventure.

No time, but you want to do something OR they aren't ready to be so independent yet...

Choose one of the pairings and lead your class through the analysis together.

- Observe: What do you notice **objectively**? Mark your observations on your source.
- Patterns & Outliers: Start making some inferences about the meaning as you notice what patterns exist and what things are standing outside. Note them.
- Meaning: Consider these four topics - **law and order, dissent, vulnerability, strength**. Based on the evidence you have noticed, what points can you infer the author is making about those topics in this text? Write your responses.

Finish by going around the room and having each student share one question that they have had over the period. **OR** create a Jamboard with the question: What does this have to do with me, us, now? Students have to respond with a headline or an image.

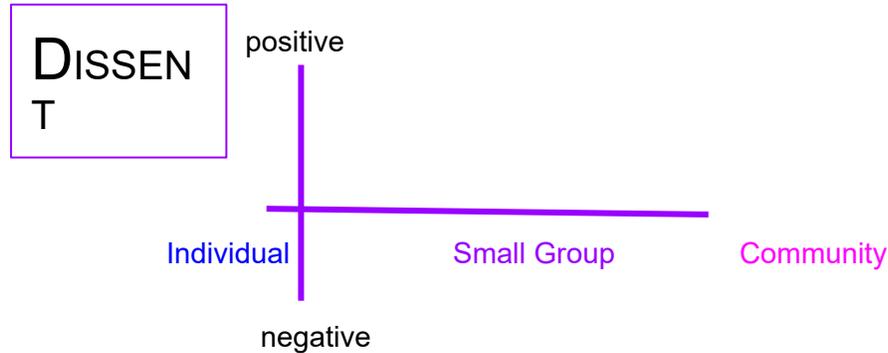
Lesson Two: Dissent at Kent State 1960s-1970.

The intersection of civil rights activism, student activism, and anti-war activism.

Opening Activity: Engage students in the contemplation of the abstract concept of dissent.

There are two options. 1) focus on denotation and connotation by having students start with the umbrella concept of “**dissent: conscious acts of resistance.**” Then, on the x/y graph use other, similar words to show the

emotional association with the idea of consent. Example, you could write “objection” for something in the individual/neutral area. 2) Have students write examples of dissenting actions within the x/y graph. Example, you could write “insefection” for community/negative.



- No tech: do this in small groups/pods on a piece of paper.
- Low tech: Create a slidedeck with the above graphic on the slide. Make one slide per group. Then, have the students complete their work on their slide.
- Let's Move Instead: (especially if you have a big group) Get outside and create the x/y with chalk on the ground. Instead of having kids choose the words, write different words or scenarios on note cards. Give each kid (or pair of kids to encourage discussion) a word and have them place themselves physically on the graph.

Processing:

- As the teacher, make observations about patterns and outliers and ask kids/groups to justify their decisions. Challenge them to supply examples. Be open to making changes and tracking inquiry questions that emerge.
- Have a student(s) do the above.
- You could supply contemporary examples with them and have them place the example within the x/y graph they have created.
- **SUGGESTED transition questions for discussion: What is the purpose of dissent? Why would dissent be met with violence? Are there occasions where dissent should be met with violence? What are the costs of dissent? What are the rewards of dissent?** These questions can serve as the focus for the “direct teaching” section.

Direct Instruction

Information for this section taken from National Landmark Nomination & *Kent State: Death and Dissent in the Long Sixties*.

GOAL: Identify divides: youth/age, law & order/dissent, left/right, etc.

Identify the multiple threads of activism happening concurrently: civil rights, student rights, and anti-war movements - focusing on the role of the **youth**.

Identify change. Lots of political change and change in leadership.

Based on your comfort level with the material, and your understanding of student needs, you could deliver this new knowledge in a number of ways:

- **Low tech:** lecture (use a powerpoint/slide deck - give them some visuals and use visuals from lesson one). Have students practice a method of note taking. Suggestion: sketch notes.
- **More tech:** Use a powerpoint/a slide deck and supply individual work time for students to explore the information. Again, give them a goal for note taking or a written/spoken response.
Differentiation, For “slower processors or disinterested learners” focus on one event or a few events. For “curiosity addicts”, add links for exploration. Have your “expert seekers” create a web that shows the intersections between x number of events.
- **They need to move!** Set this up as a walking timeline tour (outside or through the halls). Consider giving them a “passport” with spaces for each stop. They could write a key word or image in each space as they go. Deploy them as small groups at staggered times.

[I will come back and build this PPT for my team]

What is the purpose of dissent? Why would dissent be met with violence? Are there occasions where dissent should be met with violence? What are the costs of dissent? What are the rewards of dissent?

- **1954 U.S. begins involvement in the Vietnam War**
- **1960 SNCC Woolworth’s sit-in**
- **1960 Boynton v. Virginia**
- **1961 Freedom Riders**
- **1962 SDS “participatory democracy” direct action**
 - Fight racial and economic inequality
 - End nuclear arms
 - End military-industrial complex
 - End apathetic university system
- **1962 James Meredith, University of Mississippi.**
- **1963 March on Washington**
- **1963 President John F. Kennedy was assassinated.**
- **1964 SNCC & CORE Freedom Summer in Mississippi.**
- **1964 Civil Rights Act (technically dismantle Jim Crow)**
- **1964 UC Berkeley and the Berkeley Invention**
 - Exigence: University rule that no political group can solicit on campus. Arrest Mario Savio which led to a sit-in.
 - = Free Speech Movement (FSM)
 - Berkeley Invention “authentic political invention”
 - Initiation by a core group of activists
 - Mesh major social and political issues with local university issues.
 - Disrupt administration of university.
 - When the police intervene, this will rally more moderate students.
 - Decision making for the protest will be made through consensus.
- **1965 Malcolm X assassinated.**
- **1965 President Johnson sends U.S. combat forces into Vietnam.**
- **1965 Bloody Sunday Selma, AL**
- **1965 Voting Rights Act**
- **1965 SDS teach-ins - March on Washington SDS & SNCC**
- **1965 Watts Riots**
- **1966-67 University of Washington “student riot”**
- **1967 President Johnson creates National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorder which finds the causes of disorder include**
 - Accumulation of social ills
 - High unemployment

- Inadequate housing
- Racial discrimination
- Police repression.
- **1967** Selective Service Law
- **1968** Tet Offensive in Vietnam
- **1968** My Lai Massacre Vietnam
- **1968** Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. assassinated.
- **1968** Robert F. Kennedy assassinated.
- **1969** Richard Nixon becomes president.
- **December 1, 1969** The Selective Service Administration announces the draft lottery.
- **May 30, 1970** President Nixon announces the extension of war into Cambodia

Next Step Options & Ideas for Assessment

This lesson could be a multiple day exercise depending on your particular interest/needs.

- Formative Assessment: **What is the purpose of dissent? Why would dissent be met with violence? Are there occasions where dissent should be met with violence? What are the costs of dissent? What are the rewards of dissent? Focus on the role of the YOUTH.**
 - No Tech : Socratic Seminar.
 - No Tech / Low tech: Have seven posters around the room. Write one of the five questions per poster and the last posters, one titled "Questions" and one blank. Have kids graffiti the walls with their thoughts (make it silent time and play some music for them). You could do the same activity on Jamboard or Slide decks.
 - Low tech: use Pear deck to share-out on the final questions.
 -
- A few writing assessment ideas:
 - Write a definition essay on the concept of "dissent." This would be a great place to have some writing mini-lessons on different ways to develop writing: analogy, etymology, personification, narration, cause/effect, etc.
 - Synthesis essay. Have students use the four questions about dissent to analyze their images or writing from Lesson One.
 - Creative - Create a series of dissenting gifs with a small justification of choices for each.
 - Curation - Have students curate a gallery of dissenting propaganda. This could be signs, stickers, buttons, t-shirts, tattoos, merch of any kind. This could turn into a really cool research project and display.
 - Personal Writing: Journal about ways they have seen dissent in their own lives/the world around them in the past 2-3 years. You could also have them write about their feelings about

the response. For kids who struggle writing about emotions, give them the Lego Pain Assessment Tool to help them start labeling their feelings.

[Image - Lego Pain Assessment Tool]

Lesson Three: Dissent at Kent State 1960s-1970.

Kent as an example of the intersection of civil rights, student, and anti-war activism.

Kent as an example of what dissent looked like on college campuses.

Information for this section taken from National Landmark Nomination & *Kent State: Death and Dissent in the Long Sixties, Fire in the Heartland*, presentation by Chic Canfora (2021). Recorded tour of Kent State by Alan Canfora,

Opening Activity: Start with this brief overview of student activism on the Kent campus from 1925-May 4,1970. Have them identify which three items from the list seem like things that could be done on campus in 2021.

- No tech: discuss and a table pod.

- Low tech: Respond on a Pear Deck or Jamboard.

Shared Text: “Between Two Worlds A Look at the Impact of the Black Campus Movement On the Antiwar Era of 1968-1970 at Kent State University” Lae’l Hughes-Watkins.

This is a 25 page article. Therefore, you will need to consider the needs of your students.

The article is subdivided into the following sections:

- Overview 41-44
- Divisions Between Freedom and Peace Movements 44-46
- Black Power Births Black Campus Movement at Kent State 46-48
- Hubert Humphrey Walkout 48-51
- Mass Student Walkout for Amnesty 51-57
- Kent State Shootings 57-64

This could be assigned as homework to be completed before class. You could use the questions from the first two lessons to guide their reading:

- What is the purpose of dissent?
- Why would dissent be met with violence?
- Are there occasions where dissent should be met with violence?
- What are the costs of dissent?
- What are the rewards of dissent?
- What makes someone vulnerable?
- What makes someone strong?

You could divide the reading into small pieces and prepare a JIGSAW activity.

Here is what I would do.

1. Start with storytelling. Tell them the story of the Corner Bar sit-in from 1960 based on the information in Thomas M. Grace’s *Kent State: Death and Dissent in the Long Sixties*. Have students do a in-time “Tweet stream.” (I don’t know *how* to do that yet, but I have faith I can figure it out.)
2. Summarize (PPT) the key points from p. 41-48. Reviewing some of the key points we looked at in the last lesson and explaining the birth of Black United Students (BUS) on the Kent State campus.
3. Then, I would do a 25 minute reading period in-class so students could do the ten page reading between pages 48-47 (slower readers might only get one of the two sections read and faster readers may finish the whole article.)
 - What is the purpose of dissent? What did BUS want?
 - What actions did BUS take?
 - What was the result of the dissent?
4. End with a discussion of what they noticed. I’m not sure what structure I will use for this activity yet.

HOMEWORK: Have them read the final section of the article on Kent State.

Other Moments of Student Activism Worthy of Study

- 1964 UC Berkeley
- 1966 University of Wisconsin

- **1968** Orangeburg Massacre
- **1968** Columbia Protests in NY
- **1969** Spring Intensive at Kent State.
- **May 15, 1970** Jackson State University Massacre

Lesson Four Kent State May 1-4, 1970 “They had it coming.”

Opening: “Dates and facts are not enough to show what happened in the past. It is necessary to delve into the human side of history to come up with the truth. History must be made relevant to the present to make it useful.” ~Allison Krause (1 of 4 students killed on May 4). Reflect on the unit, and identify one image/story/song that has illuminated “the human side” for you. What was the “human” truth that you realized through that image/story/song?

- No tech: Have each person in the pod share their response.
- No tech/Low tech: Have each student respond to this prompt in a journal.
- More tech: use Pear Deck or Jamboard.

Transition: Time 13 seconds of silence in the room. Keep at it; it may take more than one attempt.

Activity:

- 1) Watch the video "[The Day the War Came Home](#)" from Al Jazeera. (22 minutes)

Student task: 3-2-1 3 things that caught your attention (words, images, facts)

2 questions - consider things you want to know more about

1 word to name an emotion you felt while watching the video.

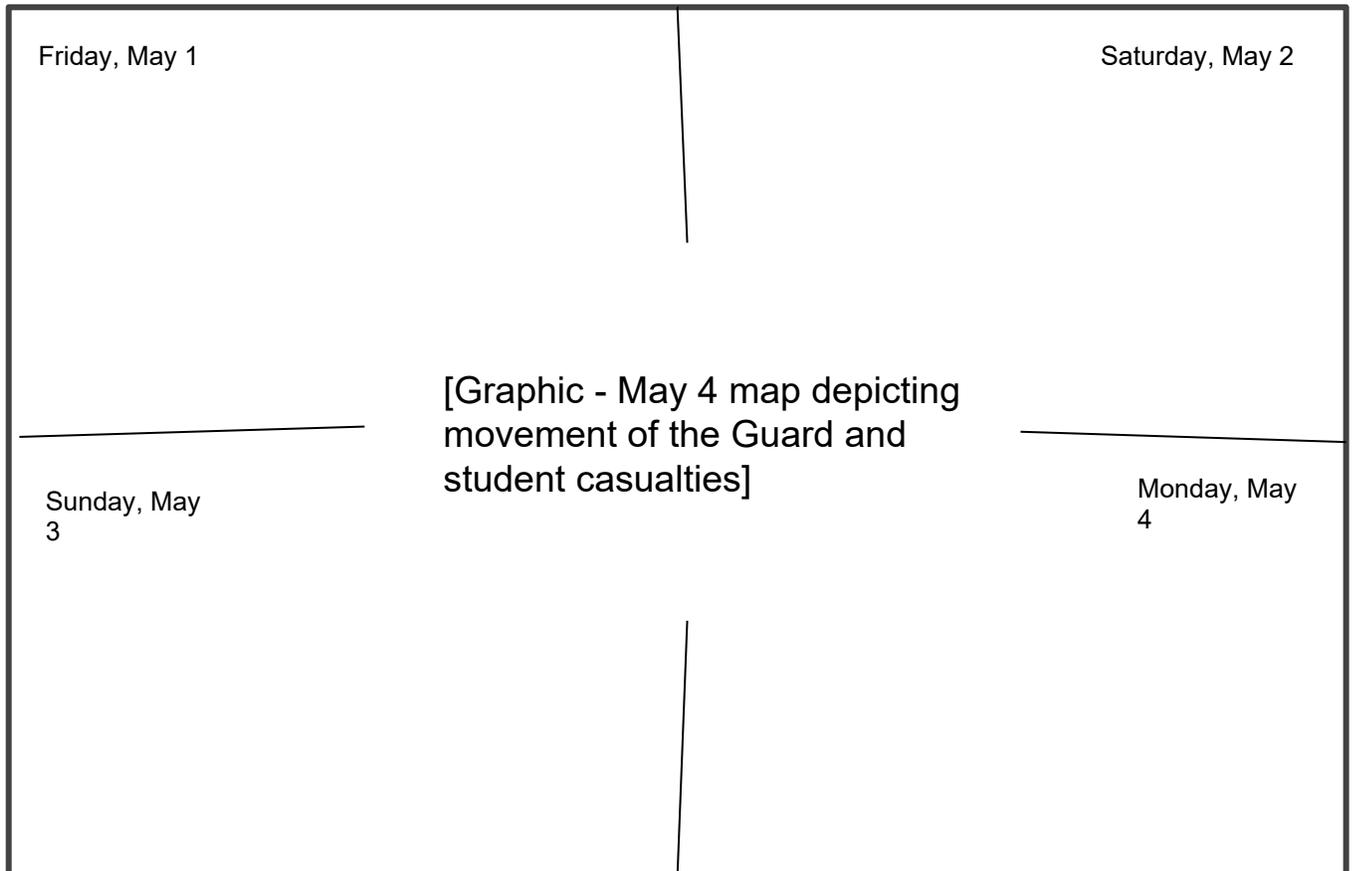
After the film, give them the link to [these 24 photos](#). Then give them another 5 minutes to complete their 3-2-1

- 2) Be the **Sage on the Stage** and have students share their noticings, questions, and emotions.

Depending on teacher knowledge about KSU and the events that transpired between April 30 and May 4, you may want to tailor the notes to May 4 only. If there are questions you don't know how to answer, have a student write them on a board and end the day with a discussion of how they can find answers to their questions and/or choose a question to research.

I suggest giving them a handout (see below) in order for them to take notes.

(This could be used for a listening assessment or just for practice with note taking.)



Here is information I would consider sharing with them during the discussion. It is a lot and there are a lot of links on the document. Another resource you might want to read to become more familiar with the situation and/or to help students to answer their own questions is: [“The May 4 Shooting on Kent State University: The Search for Historical Accuracy.”](#)

Alternative: If you don't feel confident in the Q/A session, no problem.

Instead, do an analysis of Neil Young's "Ohio." Here are the lyrics.

You could include an analysis of both the lyrics & the performance.

"Ohio" performed by [Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young](#).

An interesting pairing is the performance of "[Ohio](#)" by DEVO. (I think this pairing is interesting for the contrast in sound but also because DEVO originated at Kent state in the 1970s. In fact, member Jerry Casale was present on May 4, 1970. Here is an [interview with Casale](#).)

For context, you may also want to read Chapter 10 "Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young 'Ohio'" from the book *33 Revolutions Per Minute: A History of Protest Songs, from Billie Holiday to Green Day*. Let me know if you want to borrow this book.

Closing Scranton Commission (The President's Commission on Campus Unrest) declared that the actions of the ONG on May 4, 1970 were "unnecessary, unwarranted, and inexcusable." If you are interested in more of Nixon's reaction to Kent state and his ongoing attempt to blame the victims, check out [Mission Betrayed: Richard Nixon and the Scranton Commission Inquiry into Kent State](#).

Students can journal in response to one of the following statements.

- Scranton Commission: "unnecessary, unwarranted, inexcusable"
- A. Krause (killed) "Flowers are better than bullets"
- Chic Canfora (hid behind a car; brother was wounded) "What is worth knowing?"
- Joe Lewis (wounded): "You didn't have to be shot to be wounded."
(to students today): "This will be your world, will you allow for dissent?"
- Capt. Snyder (ONG) "Be careful who you follow."

OR You might want to end with movement. Use the question: Could something like this happen today? Have students create a line between "strong yes" on one side and "strong no" on the other. They must decide where they land on that line. Go from there.

Next Step Options & Ideas for Assessment

- Creative. Convey the weight of 13 seconds in any way you choose. You can write, you can manipulate sound, you can make an interactive activity, you can use origami.
- Activism can be creative. For example, Kent students served unseasoned pumpkin soup in order to illustrate what many Vietnamese ate. Another student activist had a rally to “napalm a dog.” No dogs were hurt, but the point was made: you are mad at the idea of napalming a dog - what about the fact that humans are suffering this fate in Vietnam? In 2020, TikTok teens took down Trump’s Tulsa rally. Either 1) research and report on an act of creative dissent or 2) identify something you believe in and create a creative dissent.
- Words matter. May 4, 1970 has been called many things: a disturbance, a shooting, a massacre, a riot. Either 1) choose 4 different terms and go find out WHO used the term and WHY they chose that term and WHAT THE EFFECT of that term has on the public perception of May 4 events, or 2) Write a definition essay that illustrates the differences between calling something a riot, a massacre, a disturbance, etc has in general. You don’t have to confine your paper to May 4. You might consider some of the protest after George Floyd’s murder or the attack on the U.S. capital in January 2021.
- Say their names. At Kent State, there are commemorative markers for each of the four students killed on May 4: William (Bill) Schroeder, Sandra Scheuer, Allison Krause, Jeff Miller. And there are also commemorative markers for the nine wounded: Alan Canfora, Joseph Lewis, John Cleary, Thomas Grace, Dean Kahler, Douglas Wrentmore, James Russell, Robert Stamps, and D. Scott Mackenzie. More recently, we have heard the call to say these names: George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Sandra Bland and so many more. ([#saytheirnames](#)). Get creative. Curate a list of names that you want remembered. Then do something to make those names memorable. Write a poem (or a series of poems), create a sculpture out of uncommon materials. Design a T-shirt. Do something that shows honor and draws attention to these memorable people.

Resources to Pair with *The Things They Carried* (this section is under construction)

- Music from the era. It could be interesting to start each day with “poetry analysis” of one song from the era. Many of these songs have Biblical references or allusions.
- The poetry of
- Poetry pairing Bill Ehrhart “The Invasion of Monuments” & YK “
- Poem by Bill Ehrhart