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

**Name of Educator:** Todd Swan

**Educator's Teaching Plan Number & Title:** Project 40, "Middle school cross-curricular unit plan"  
[Created as collaboration with projects 27 and 50]

**Level of Students for Educator's Teaching Plan:** Grade 8

**Subject Area for Educator's Teaching Plan:** Science, Social Studies, Language Arts, Math

**Educator's State:** Ohio

**Description of Educator's Teaching Plan:** This science class component of a collaborative, cross-disciplinary approach has students using math and tools to gather data and information; thinking critically to connect evidence and explanation; and developing models and description. Specific tasks include analyzing an oral history; researching May 4 photographic record; and conducting a new oral history. Students also learn the May 4 history, visit the site, and write a final reflection read by teachers of 4 subject areas.

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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## *Introduction/overview/unit rationale*

As teachers [in Northeast Ohio], we believe that the events of May 4th are not only relevant to our student population, but are essential to the development of informed, compassionate citizens of Northeast Ohio and the world. For years, we have engaged our eighth grade students in learning about May 4th, culminating in a field trip to campus that makes the facts and events they have studied more tangible and real. With this unit, we plan to strengthen the instruction we already have in place to provide a more robust learning experience for our students. The knowledge gained from this workshop has given us insight into the influential events and political structures leading up to May 4th, as well as a better understanding of the movements and legislation that occurred as a result of the tragedy. We plan to revise our lessons to better address these contextual factors, as well as address student questions more accurately and effectively.

Our unit strives to give students choice as they explore the complexities of May 4th. Not only will this increase student engagement, but it will allow students to investigate avenues that make May 4th more meaningful for them. Our unit is a hybrid of instruction, rigorous learning tasks, and assessment. Our hope is that, after engaging in the unit, students not only walk away with knowledge of May 4th and its significance, but emerge as young adults who have the tools to analyze information, make educated decisions, and advocate for what they believe in.

We appreciate the opportunity to not only develop ourselves as educators, but to bring an important learning experience to the next generation of citizens.

## *Unit goals*

- Students will understand the contextual factors (social and political) that influenced the events of May 4th.
- Students will understand the historical facts about the events of May 4th, and be able to discern which common understandings have supporting evidence to validate their truth and which do not.
- Students will extend their understanding of May 4th to current day political activism.
- Students will complete three interdisciplinary activities that require them to recall facts, synthesize information, and develop sophisticated analyses.
- Students will reflect on the learning experience and complete a reflection that communicates their personal understanding of the significance of learning about May 4th.

## *Connection to state standards*

<b>Social Studies</b>	<b>Science</b>	<b>Language Arts</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CS 1 - Primary and secondary sources are used to examine events from multiple perspectives and to</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inquiry 6-8-Use appropriate mathematics, tools and techniques to gather data and information.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• RL.8.6 — Analyze how differences in the points of view and perspectives of the</li></ul>

<p>present and defend a position.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CS 6 - Key events and significant figures in American history influenced the course and outcome of the American Revolution.</li> <li>• CS 20 - Active participation in social and civic groups can lead to the attainment of individual and public goals.</li> <li>• CS 23 - The U.S. Constitution protects citizens' rights by limiting the powers of government.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inquiry 6-8-Think critically and logically to connect evidence and explanations.</li> <li>•Inquiry 6-8- Develop descriptions, models, explanations and predictions.</li> </ul>	<p>characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create effects such as suspense.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RI.8.7 — Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.</li> <li>• RI.8.1 — Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</li> <li>• W.8.9 — Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</li> </ul>
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*Detailed description of what will happen each day*

**Day One Introduction (part one):**

**Slideshow Presentation and Discussion**

1- Pics of Nixon, Vietnam, Filo Photo, old hospital. How are they connected.

- 2- Student protest pics and clips
  - 3- Nixon video announcing invasion.
  - 4- 4 days at Kent State (pics, videos, oral history clips)
  - 5- Protests Today (BLM and Parkland)
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## **Day Two Introduction (part two):**

### **Video and Discussion**

Students will watch the PBS documentary “The Day the 60s Died.” (video available on Amazon.com) They will be required to fill in a basic video question sheet on the documentary while it is playing. Those questions will be used as a starting point for a group discussion following the documentary.

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**Days 3-5 Menu Board:**      **Sci**   **S S**   **LA**   **Math**

[taught by 5 educators]

### **Sci Options:**

- **Recording an oral history**
- **Photo research (using May4th digital archive)**
- **Analyzing an oral history (using May4th digital archive)**

### **SS Options:**

- **Compare/Contrast the Boston Massacre (1770) with the Kent State Shootings**
- **Analyze primary and secondary sources**
- **Examination of First Amendment freedoms**

### **ELA Options:**

- **Creative writing (flash fiction or poetry)**
- **Multimedia analysis**
- **Written activism plan**

**Math Options: (TBD — will coordinate with math teachers during school year)**

- **Graph events using lat and long coordinates?**
- **Geometry ?**

- **Measuring ?**

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## **Day 6- Field Trip: Sci S S LA Math**

### **Walking Tour and Guest Speakers**

Small groups of students will rotate through the following experiences:

- Walking tour (hosted by Visitors Center staff and/or using guided narration)
  - Guest speaker (firsthand account depending on availability of volunteers)
  - Visitors Center
  - Library visit to view selected materials from the May 4th archive
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## **Day 7- Assessment: ELA**

### **Reflection - Personal Significance of May 4th**

Note\* All teachers will participate in evaluating assessments.

Students will compose a minimum of two typed pages of reflection that address the following question: “You have spent a large amount of time studying the events of May 4, 1970. You have also learned about the social and political environment before and after this historical turning point. Knowing what you know now, in your own words, why is it important for young people to learn about May 4th?” Students will be encouraged to “connect facts to feelings.” As they expound on their personal opinions about the significance of May 4th, they should support these opinions with facts learned during the unit. When appropriate, students should cite their sources. If students choose to draw comparisons to modern events and issues, they should engage in supplementary research and cite the evidence used in their reflection paper. Our hope is to share some of the especially well-written, poignant reflections with our workshop leaders at Kent State to show them how their efforts in designing the NEH workshop has impacted the next generation.

## **Day 8- Sharing projects with other classmates: Science**

Students will have a chance to explore each other’s projects.

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

- Informal assessments include class discussion, progress monitoring and conferencing with students as they work through the choice board, and development of questions for KSU field trip.

- The formal assessment for the unit will be a reflection paper in which students expound on their personal understanding of the significance of learning about May 4th.

### *Technological needs*

In order for our unit to be successful, the following technology is recommended:

- Student access to computers, chromebooks or tablets
- Student access to the internet
- Presentation capabilities for teachers (white board projector, SmartBoard, etc)
- Access to hardware that can run the Google Earth platform

### *Materials needed to complete the unit*

Physical materials are limited due to the constraints of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers will, whenever possible, use technology tools to avoid the sharing and passing of physical materials. Materials needed to complete the unit:

- Technology access for both teachers and students (see above)

## **Language Arts Choice Board Options**

Level of students: Grade 8

Subject area: Language Arts

State: Ohio

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Making Meaning of May 4: The 1970 Kent State Shootings in US History.

[www.kent.edu/ehhs/making-meaning-of-may-4](http://www.kent.edu/ehhs/making-meaning-of-may-4)

### **Language Arts Choice Board Options**

Students will be provided with exemplars for each option to assist them in developing quality work. Because students will receive an overall grade for their work in the choice board, the criteria for grading their language arts choice will be simplified compared to traditional assignments that are not cross-curricular in nature. Grading criteria for each choice board option are listed below using a single-point rubric. The teacher will provide feedback to students in the columns labeled “Areas for Growth” and “Areas of Strength.”

#### **Creative Writing**

- For this option, students can compose a 2-page “flash fiction” or a short poem (3 stanzas or less). They will be encouraged to write to the length needed to show their understanding of historical facts and events, and their understanding of dramatic irony.
- Students will be encouraged to be respectful in their writing. The teacher will explain in detail what this looks and does not look like. Students will be discouraged from writing with an unnecessary focus on weapons, violence, or gore. Teachers will monitor students as they work on their choice board projects to hopefully intervene if a student’s writing is unintentionally insensitive.
- Students will be encouraged to compose their writing in a Google Doc and share it with their language arts teacher.
- Grading criteria:

<b>Areas for Growth:</b>	<b>Criteria:</b>	<b>Areas of Strength:</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Student writes using historical facts according to the material presented in class and the sources available to them.</li><li>● Student demonstrates an understanding of dramatic irony by developing a narrative thread in which the reader knows something that one/more character(s) don’t know.</li><li>● Writing is complete and is ready for publishing (free of major errors).</li></ul>	



### **Multimedia Analysis**

- For this option, students will use the May 4th archives available on the Kent State University Library's website to search by subject area and locate one audio/video, one photo, and one text document related to the same topic (subject area).
- Students will then analyze the three multimedia items and their ability to communicate information by answering the following questions:
  - Identify which media was **best** at conveying information and why.
  - Identify which media was **worst** at conveying information and why.
  - Explain the situations and contexts in which each type of media would be best to use.
- Students can use a variety of formats for this project choice. They may choose to place the multimedia in a short Google Docs presentation and add captions that answer the above questions (or record and embed narration). They may also choose to create a video (either YouTube or FlipGrid) to present the multimedia and answer the above questions.
- Grading criteria:

<b>Areas for Growth:</b>	<b>Criteria:</b>	<b>Areas of Strength:</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Student chooses three related multimedia materials appropriately.</li><li>● Student answers the guiding questions and demonstrates depth of thought in their analysis and comparison.</li><li>● Student expresses their ideas clearly (written or spoken).</li></ul>	

### **Activism Plan**

- For this option, students will consider a current political issue that they feel strongly about and create an “activism plan” that describes how they would mobilize a movement for change. Students who want to pursue this option but are less politically aware may want to do some preliminary research to choose an appropriate political issue.
- Students will be required to use at least 3 activism ideas used by students at Kent State. This can be walkouts like BUS did in protest of disciplinary action (Grace, 2016, 140), shock and awe like Bill Arthrell's threat to napalm a dog on campus (Grace, 2016, 195), or symbolic gestures like the burying of the Constitution at the Victory Bell (Grace, 2016,

219). Students will be encouraged to think beyond the activism that occurred strictly on May 4th.

- Students will be required to cite the primary or secondary sources where they found their three activism ideas. We will require students to cite in MLA format, as that is a building-wide requirement when writing about research.
- Students should state their audience by identifying who holds the power to make the change they're advocating for (school principal, town mayor, President of the United States, etc.) They should explain in their plan how they will appeal to this audience (and may choose to discuss ethos, pathos, and logos here).
- Students should include a timeline that chronologically outlines what activism they will engage in, who will be involved in these events, and what the intended outcome will be.
- Students can compose their activism plan in a Google Doc, or create a Google Slides presentation and include related media.
- Grading criteria:

Areas for Growth:	Criteria:	Areas of Strength:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Student correctly identifies three activism ideas utilized by students at Kent State.</li><li>● Student correctly cites the sources of the three activism ideas in MLA format.</li><li>● Student identifies their intended audience and how they plan to appeal to this audience.</li><li>● Student outlines what activism they will engage in, who will be involved, and what the intended outcome will be.</li></ul>	

### **Reflection Paper**

The culminating summative assessment for this unit is the student reflection paper. Students will compose a minimum of two typed pages of reflection that address the following question: “You have spent a large amount of time studying the events of May 4, 1970. You have also learned about the social and political environment before and after this historical turning point. Knowing what you know now, in your own words, why is it important for young people to

learn about May 4th?” Students will be encouraged to “connect facts to feelings.” As they expound on their personal opinions about the significance of May 4th, they should support these opinions with facts learned during the unit. When appropriate, students should cite their sources in MLA format. If students choose to draw comparisons to modern events and issues, they should engage in supplementary research and cite the evidence used in their reflection paper.

For students who struggle with extended writing pieces, teachers may choose to provide an outline or sentence starters. The reflection paper will be assessed using the Brown Middle School common writing rubric. Our hope is to share some of the especially well-written, poignant reflections with our workshop leaders at Kent State to show them how their efforts in designing the NEH workshop has impacted the next generation.

### **Bibliography**

Grace, T. M. (2016). *Kent State: Death and Dissent in the Long Sixties*. University of Massachusetts Press. 978-1-62534-111-2

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Level of students: 8

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State: Ohio

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### **Social Studies Choice Board Options**

#### **Compare/Contrast the Boston Massacre (1770) with the Kent State Shootings**

##### *Boston Massacre and the Kent State Shootings - "Arc of Tragedy"*

All too often, we see history repeating itself...especially tragic events. Give students an opportunity to study/review the Boston Massacre and also to examine the Kent State Shootings using the May 4th digital archives. Construct a Venn diagram showing what aspects of the two events applied only to the Boston Massacre, only to Kent State, and also the aspects the two shared in common.

Decide who do you think was the most responsible for the Boston Massacre: The English, The Colonists, or Both were Equally at Fault. Explain your reasons. Do the same for the Kent State Shootings: The Student Protestors, The National Guard, or Both were Equally at Fault. Again, explain your reasons.

Groups will then be formed from all the classes according to how they answered the questions to this Choice Board option. Time will be set aside at a later date to have an open forum and discuss their thoughts and opinions on these two historic issues. Students will need to be prepared to defend their positions based on their research.

#### **Analyze Primary and Secondary Sources**

In this Choice Board option, students look for accuracy in primary and secondary source materials. Students will select three primary and three secondary sources pertaining to the Kent State Shootings from the May 4th digital archives. The emphasis for the activity is to understand both perspective and reliability of the information found in primary and secondary source materials. By determining the reliability of sources, students will attempt to determine the facts for the event in question.

Students will indicate an understanding of how to analyze the reliability of primary and secondary sources based on three criteria:

**Immediacy** - How soon after the event was the source created?

**Motive** - What was the reason for the creation of the source?

**Bias** - Could there have been any prejudice or preconception held by the creator?

Students will create a chart showing their findings for their six source choices based on the above criteria. Students will conclude with an overall explanation of what qualities to look for in a source to best defend one's position on a topic.

### Examination of First Amendment Freedoms

*The right to freedom of speech means that you can voice your own opinion. This includes speaking out against the government as a basic right. The government cannot suppress different political viewpoints.*

*The right to freely assemble means that groups of people can gather peaceably for reasons of their choice. The government cannot limit this as a form of protest or meeting.*

Many would argue that the events that took place on May 4th at Kent State University demonstrated a clear violation of students' First Amendment freedoms, particularly their freedoms of speech and assembly. Write an explanation as to how these rights limit the power of government in order to protect the rights of individuals. Then think about the following two questions:

When do individual rights conflict with the rights of the community or the nation?

What might happen when a government starts to restrict the rights of its citizens?

Research a country that does NOT allow its citizens individual freedoms. Imagine you live in a country such as the one you researched and write a short story depicting a time when your freedom(s) were grossly violated by American standards.

Sources:

"Teaching American History: Ohio as America," Summit County Educational Service Center, 2009.