Principles of Government Summer Work

At HAIS we believe in preparing our students to be "active global citizens." In order to achieve this goal all freshmen students take Principles of Government and Public Policy to learn more about the government, its sections and processes. We also believe in developing student voices through writing, argumentation, action. All opinions and beliefs are welcome in our classrooms and in discussions, but students must have the evidence to support their claims and be ready to defend them.

In order to introduce students to this writing and give the teachers, Ms. Avis Rodriguez and Mrs. Jill Williams (JWilli) a better idea of their starting point all freshmen are required to create and share a short audio and/or video commentary about an election issue important to them. A commentary is a short media piece (two minutes or less) that combines a personal narrative with issue-based argument.

Read below for further instructions on HOW to create this commentary and submission details.

What Matters to Me?

Ms. Rodriguez and JWilli want to hear about issues that matter to you. But issues you care about can't be separated from who you are, where you come from and what you value.

A persuasive commentary asks writers to make a claim or take a stand using both personal experience or opinion *and* evidence-based analysis.

Choosing an Issue

As we learned, strong persuasive commentary includes personal experience, stories or opinion along with evidence-based reasoning. When choosing your commentary topic, getting personal can create empathy and open a connection between you and your audience. A compelling story is a powerful way to learn and teach others about your issue.

You may already have an idea for what issue you want to focus on and how to make your commentary personal. Here are a few techniques to help you get started.

Directions:
1. Make a copy of this document.
2. Use that document to brainstorm ideas of an issue that matters to you in the 2020 election.
3. Places to look for ideas can be this document or the campaign pages for the nominees: Donald Trump and Joe Biden.
4. When choosing an issue, don't forget to check the rubric!

Creating A Script

So, you've chosen an issue that matters to you. Now what? Now, we start making our persuasive commentary. But, how we can make our persuasive commentary even more powerful? By supporting our personal experiences with **evidence** to support your **claim**.

Maybe you or your family immigrated from another country. Maybe you or a family member experienced a serious illness. Or maybe you simply love to spend time outdoors. A personal experience doesn't have to be dramatic, but it does give purpose to your message. You need to ask yourself as you write, **"what am I really trying to say?" Why does this issue—and my story—matter to the rest of the world?** The answer to those questions would be your **claim.** But, it is NOT enough to just give claims throughout your commentary, you also need back up your personal story with **evidence** from reliable sources.

Directions:
1. Make a copy of the script graphic organizer.
2. Rename the document **LastName_FirstName_Script** (for example, Ms. Rodriguez' would be **Rodriguez_Avis_Script** or JWilli's would be **Williams_Jill_Script**)
3. Collect your evidence. You can use the sites on this document or other news organizations (BBC, CNN, Fox News, New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, etc.)
4. Organize your evidence into sentences and paragraphs. Use this document for examples of evidence.
5. Use this organizer to write your **FULL script** of your persuasive commentary. DO NOT just include bullet points. It should be written in **FULL SENTENCES** and be able to be organized into **PARAGRAPHS**.
6. You may also use this example script for organization help and examples of evidence.
7. Don't forget to check the rubric!

Submission:
When your script is **COMPLETE**, **upload it** to the Script Submissions folder. Make sure your document is **labeled correctly** with **LastName_FirstName_Script**.

Creating Media

Now that you have a script written, it's time to pick your media format: will your commentary be purely audio (i.e. podcast), or will it include images or video as well (think TiKTok, selfie video, narrated slideshow, or animation)? Either way, it is important to think about how your script will sound when spoken aloud and with music.

You may already have revised your script to make sure your claim is clear and your evidence is strong, but there is still some work to do. It's time to revise with audio in mind!

- Do you notice any awkward phrasing that doesn't work when you speak it aloud? Revise long sentences to make them shorter and clearer, and try to put the most important information at the end of a sentence. This helps your listener keep track of what's important in your piece.
- Mark up your script with anything else that will help you sound smoother when recording: words or phrases you want to emphasize, or places where you will need to speed up, slow down, pause, or change your tone.

One you've gotten rid of all the narration booby traps, you'll be ready to record.

Voicing your script is a little like acting. You need to put a little energy into it or your audience won't buy it. Practice different ways of speaking and consider these six aspects of voicing. See how sound can enhance an audio piece in this interactive.

Creating Media

Directions:
1. Choose a media format (podcast, video, etc.) and create a submission!
2. If you are doing a video, read these important tips.
3. Don't forget to check the rubric!

Created by: Samantha McMillan   5th-8th Social Studies   Adventure STEM   San Jose, CA

Post-Production

Once you've recorded your piece, it's time for "post-production."

In post-production, you bring everything together. It's time to:

- Decide which editing software is best for you
- Edit for clarity and length
- Add music and sound

Directions:
1. Read this document that discusses tips on how to edit, add music and guidelines for following copyrights.
2. It is very important that you are aware of copyright guidelines, otherwise your video can be considered plagiarism.
3. Don't forget to check the rubric!
4. Save the media file as a **.mp4, .mov, or .wav** OR **upload it to YouTube or Soundcloud** and copy the link to the media piece onto a document
5. Name the file **LastName_FirstName_Media** (for example, Ms. Rodriguez' would be **Rodriguez_Avis_Media** or JWilli's would be **Williams_Jill_Media**)

Submission:
When your media file is **COMPLETE**, **upload it** to the Media Submissions folder. Make sure your document is **labeled correctly** with **LastName_FirstName_Media**.

Rubric

Remember to review the rubric as often as possible and before each submission and component.

Citations

All of the documents used in this assignment are edited versions of documents found in the curriculum folder of KQED's Let's Talk About Election 2020 initiative. Thank-you to KQED for providing resources for students to discuss political issues that affect them daily. If you would like to learn more about this initiative visit https://learn.kqed.org/challenges/election2020.

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