Documentary Format Timeline

It is important to think about breaking up your documentary into smaller segments, just like an exhibit is divided into sections. It will be easier to organize your thoughts into these smaller parts. It is also easier for your viewers to follow along when you have a well-organized documentary. Here are some general ideas about how you want to organize your documentary. Remember: these are just ideas. As long as your project is organized you can create it however you want!

- **Title** (15 seconds)
- **Historical Context/Background** (2 minutes, 30 seconds)
- **Short and Long Term Impact** (2 minutes, 30 seconds)
- **End Titles/Credits** (15 seconds)

- **Thesis Statement** (1 minute)
- **Heart of the Story** (3 minutes)
- **Conclusion** (1 minute)

Audio Track # 1 – Student-read narration + Oral History Interview

Audio Track # 2 – Historically Appropriate Music + Sound Effects
Documentary Format Timeline – Title, Thesis Statement, Historical Context

Title – 15 seconds
- Project Title (s)
- Student Name(s) - optional

Historical Context – 2 minutes, 30 seconds
- Explore the background of your topic (25-75 years earlier)
- What information in the past do you need to know in order to understand why your topic in historically significant?
- Identify and introduce key players, ethnic/social/economic groups, organizations, governments, ideas, movements, etc.

Thesis Statement – 1 minute
- 40 to 70 words in length
- Should answer “W” questions – who, what, when, where, why, when
- Incorporate theme words into thesis statement
- Thesis statement is the road map to your project
Documentary Format Timeline – Heart of the Story, Impact, Conclusion, Credits

“Heart of the Story” – 3 minutes
- What is the main point of your topic?
- Include specific details about the most critical people and events related to your topic
- Cover a smaller time period (several months to several years) in this section

Short and Long Term Impact – 2 minutes, 30 seconds
- What immediate change was caused by my topic?
- If change did not occur, why not?
- Over time, what was the impact of my topic on society?
- What is the historical significance of my topic?
- Did it influence other historical events?

Conclusion – 1 minute
- Restate your thesis statement
- Focus on the main points of your project you want your audience to take away
- Reincorporate theme words

End Titles/Credits – 15 seconds
- Credit the principal sources of audio and visual resources
- Thank people, organizations, and libraries who helped or contributed to your project