

COMMUNITY PHOTOJOURNALIST

Literacy and Multimedia Project | Grades 4-6 | 15-20 hours



BUCK INSTITUTE
FOR EDUCATION

reDesign 

COMMUNITY PHOTOJOURNALIST: PROJECT OVERVIEW

FINAL PRODUCT

Students design and present photo essays.

AREA OF STUDY

ELA/Social Studies

TIMEFRAME

15-20 hours

AGE GROUP

Grades 4-6

KEY STANDARDS ASSESSED

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2.A-E >>](#)

Write informative/explanatory texts

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.4 >>](#)

Produce clear/coherent writing

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.5 >>](#)

Use multimedia to present ideas

[D1.1.3-5 >>](#) Understand compelling questions

[D1.4.3-5 >>](#) Understand how questions support inquiry

[D1.5.3-5 >>](#) Determine sources to answer questions

[D2.Civ.6.3-5 >>](#) Benefits and challenges of community

[D2.Civ.10.3-5 >>](#) Identify points of view in communities

See [APPENDIX 1 >>](#) for the full list of standards.

RUBRICS

[Project Rubric >>](#)

[BIE Presentation Rubric >>](#)

PLANNING TOOLS AND TEMPLATES

[Project Design Companion >>](#)

[Student-Facing Planning Sheet >>](#)

DRIVING QUESTION

How can we, as photojournalists, tell the untold stories of our community?

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

WHY COMMUNITY PHOTOJOURNALIST?

This project provides students with a learning experience to research the cultural and social stories in their community and to create emotional awareness for their audience by visually documenting and narrating photo essays. This opportunity allows students to utilize their research skills, informational reading, explanatory writing, and photography techniques, presenting their final product to an audience of the community.

WHAT MAKES THIS PROJECT GOLD-STANDARD PBL?

CHALLENGING PROBLEM OR QUESTION

The driving question for this project provides broad framing for students and teacher to authentically follow their interests in understanding the community and culture. The teacher and class will together determine a theme to frame their driving question that is open-ended and offers rich opportunities for interpretation.

PUBLIC PRODUCT

This project could culminate in a live exhibition or be shared via online tools to others across the community. During the project, students also have an opportunity to receive feedback from community members.

KEY KNOWLEDGE, UNDERSTANDING, AND SUCCESS SKILLS

This project focuses on developing primary and secondary source research, writing, collaborating, and multimedia publishing skills. Students must think critically and innovatively about their environments and communities, collaborate in teams, and find ways to communicate those ideas to a broad range of people.

AUTHENTICITY

Students engage with teams of critical friends during the project's entire duration. During collaborative team time, students have regular opportunities to provide each other feedback as they work toward answering the driving question and developing the final product. Embedding thinking routines in lessons helps make student thinking visible, which allows for critique of the project process. Critique protocols, such as a Gallery Walk, throughout the project timeline plus ample time in between for revision build on the quality of the product and presentation.

SUSTAINED INQUIRY

Students have opportunities to ask and answer questions throughout the project as they research about their community and determine the photos that will capture the story. Through photographic hunts and interviews with adults, witnesses, or experts, students have moments of curiosity to learn more about how to tell the story of their chosen topic.

STUDENT VOICE AND CHOICE

Students determine topic ideas about aspects of their culture and community they want to learn about and want others to understand. In addition, students make critical decisions about who they will interview as experts to support their story, their explanatory essay content, the structure of the photo essay, and their presentation. Using the writing process empowers students as authors over the crafting of their explanatory essays.

REFLECTION

At several points during the project, students reflect on their learning through individual writing journals, group discussions, and whole-class seminars. Quick-writes and written exit tickets at the end of lessons allow for reflective thinking for the students and the teacher.

AUTHENTICITY

Students choose a community story of interest to them and have opportunities to learn about how photojournalists develop their stories through biographies and/or interviews. Like photojournalists, they develop and showcase their photo essays in a photo portfolio or digital slideshow.

EXPLORING WHAT IS A PHOTOJOURNALIST?

EXPLORING A PHOTO ESSAY VS. A PHOTO STORY

WHAT IS A PHOTOJOURNALIST?

Photojournalists are the storytellers of real-life events as expressed through a visual and creative medium in order to document and record something of historic or cultural significance. They need to be able to use digital as well as print photography equipment, editing tools, and publication software. The subject matter can vary greatly, from local civic issues to national political races to social unrest in a foreign country. Photojournalists are the eyes and ears of the community and are responsible for capturing compelling stories. Journalists strive to explore multiple perspectives and tell a story as clearly and objectively as possible. Photojournalists try to capture a wide variety of photos to help the viewer feel as though they are also in the story.

HOW IS A PHOTO ESSAY DIFFERENT THAN A PHOTO STORY?

Photojournalists use two approaches to tell stories. One is a photo story that tells a story of an event, place, or person from beginning to end (more or less). Photo stories could be about a person struggling with a sickness, a community farm, a Friday night football game, a dance recital—anything! In a photo story, the author's purpose is to tell a story about something that happened.

A photo essay refers to a common topic shown across a span of interpretations, cultures, etc. This could be playgrounds across the world, kindness, smiles, boats, etc. In a photo essay, the author's purpose is to examine and convey ideas on a topic.

In this project, students create a photo essay that uses several visual examples around a theme to give viewers the opportunity to develop greater meaning and understanding of the theme.

click to explore:

click to explore:

RESOURCE #1
Photojournalist Job Description, by Journalism Degree

>>

RESOURCE #2
About Photojournalist Pete Souza

>>

RESOURCE #3
About Photojournalist Ed Kashi

>>

RESOURCE #1
The Difference Between a Picture Story and Photo Essay

>>

RESOURCE #2
Example of a Photo Essay

>>

RESOURCE #3
Example of a Photo Story

>>

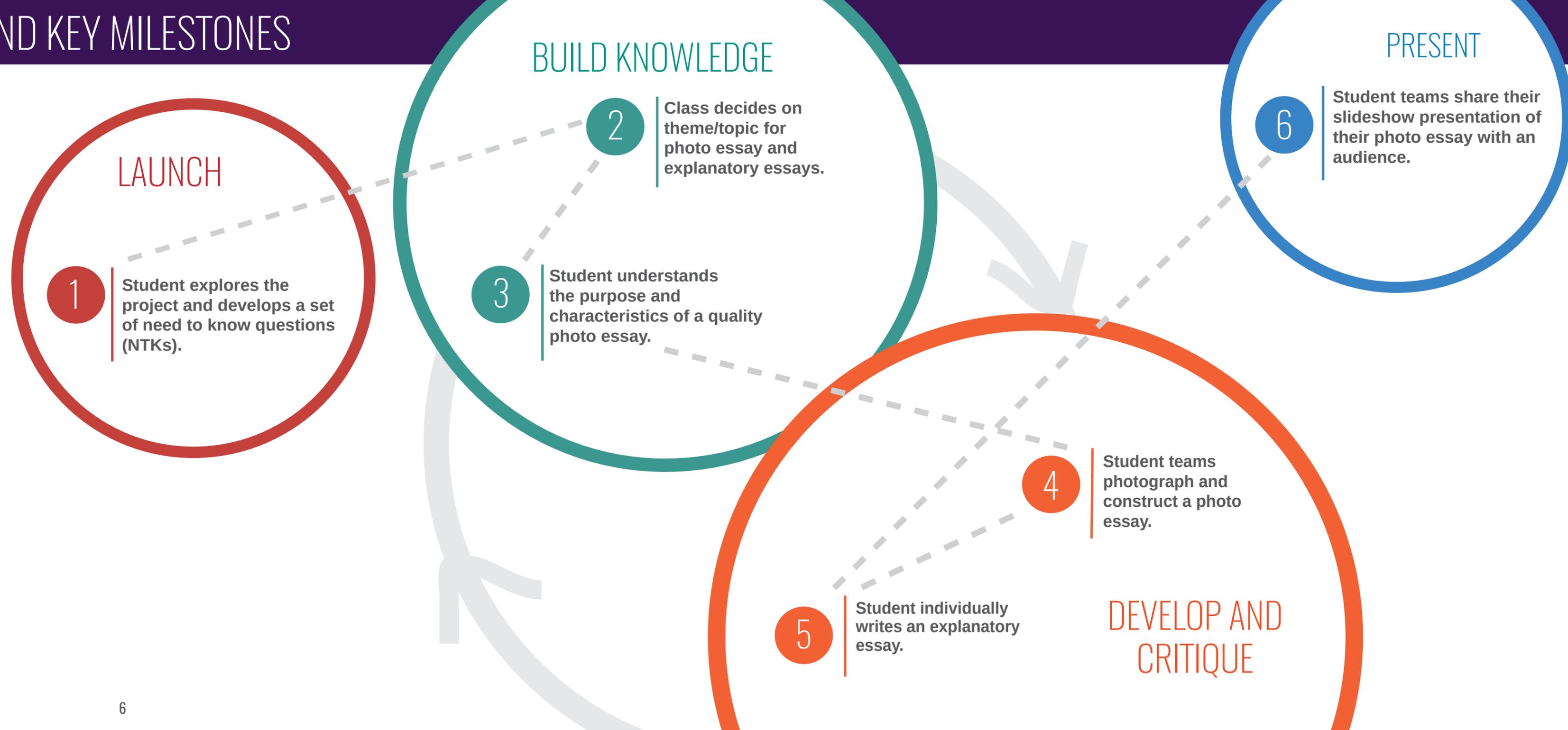
THE PROJECT PATH AND KEY MILESTONES

The Project Path illustrates the learning process in a project-based, competency-based setting.

Project Milestones help clarify the path from Launch to Present, as learners move through an iterative process of building new knowledge and skills, and applying their new knowledge and skills to develop, critique, and refine their products in collaboration with peers.

The Project Path and the Project Milestones provide a concrete but flexible structure for project design and implementation.

The Project Milestones are color coded in this Project Path and throughout the document.



PROJECT MILESTONES AND STEPPING STONES

MILESTONE #1: Student explores the project and develops a set of need to know questions (NTKs).

ENTRY EVENT **PREVIEW THE PROJECT** **EXPLORE THE DRIVING QUESTION**

Student explores compelling photos through the [Zoom In >>](#) routine.

Student is introduced to one example of the final product and discusses using the See-Think-Wonder Routine.

Student explores the question, "How can we, as photojournalists, tell the untold stories of our community?" and develops a list of need to know questions to guide their inquiry.

MILESTONE #2: Class decides on theme and topic for photo essay and explanatory essays.

DETERMINE THEME AND TOPIC **FORMULATE QUESTIONS**

Class determines unifying theme for community photo essay. Student teams select related topic to research.

Using the Question Formulation Technique (QFT), students formulate questions to interview people for their photo essay and to sustain inquiry in their research.

MILESTONE #2: Class decides on theme and topic for photo essay and explanatory essays.

MILESTONE #3: Student understands the purpose and characteristics of a quality photo essay.

MILESTONE #4: Student teams photograph and construct a photo essay.

UNDERSTANDING EXPOSITORY ESSAY **MAKING MEANING** **LEARNING FROM THE EXPERTS**

Student identifies the traits of a quality expository essay text.

Student identifies the characteristics of a quality photo essay.

Student describes how to take quality photographs.

PHOTOGRAPH THE ESSAY **GALLERY WALK**

Student teams photograph and organize the elements needed to create their community photo essay.

Student teams provide feedback to each other and revise photo essays.

MILESTONE #5: Student individually writes an explanatory essay.

MILESTONE #6: Student teams share their slideshow presentation of their photo essay with an audience.

EXPLAINING THE PHOTO **ESSAY FEEDBACK AND REVISION** **PREPARE** **PRESENT** **REFLECT**

Each student chooses one photo from their team photo essay and writes an explanatory essay.

Student gives and receives feedback on the explanatory essay.

The class makes final preparations for their photo essay presentation, and explanatory essays are curated in written or digital form.

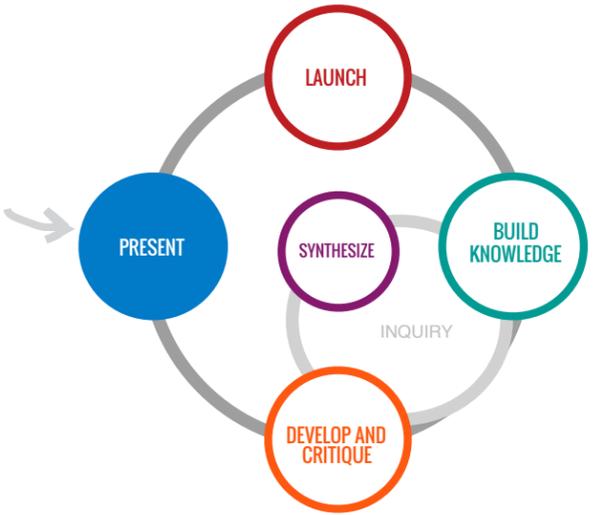
Student teams present photo essays to public audience.

Students and teacher reflect on their original need to knows and their current sense of understanding.



CUSTOMIZING THE PRODUCT OR PERFORMANCE

Begin with the end in mind! It's time to tee up a few significant decisions you'll need to make about the final project. As you make decisions, reflect on what you believe will work best with your students and your community, as well as time constraints, budgets, and your own skills and comfort level.



WHAT TO DO:



1. Review the three decision points below.
2. After weighing your options, make your decision and document them in your [Project Design Planning Companion >>](#).

DECISION POINTS:

	Low Complexity	Medium Complexity	High Complexity
What will the product and/or performance include?	Photo essays are collections of photos on a trifold or board display.	Photo essays of digital photos with links to individual photos.	Photo essays with digital photos and audio of narration embedded in a movie medium.
Who will the audience be, and how will you ensure an audience?	Public gallery presentation to other classes or schoolwide.	A shared online showcase that allows for a virtual audience to comment and offer feedback.	Live presentation event (that might include digital display) with invited community members.
How much decision-making power will students have regarding the topic, audience, and final product?	Teacher decides on photo essay theme, and teams choose topic from preselected ideas.	Students decide on class concept together and brainstorm possible topics from which students choose.	Students decide on class concept together, and teams choose topics with peer feedback.



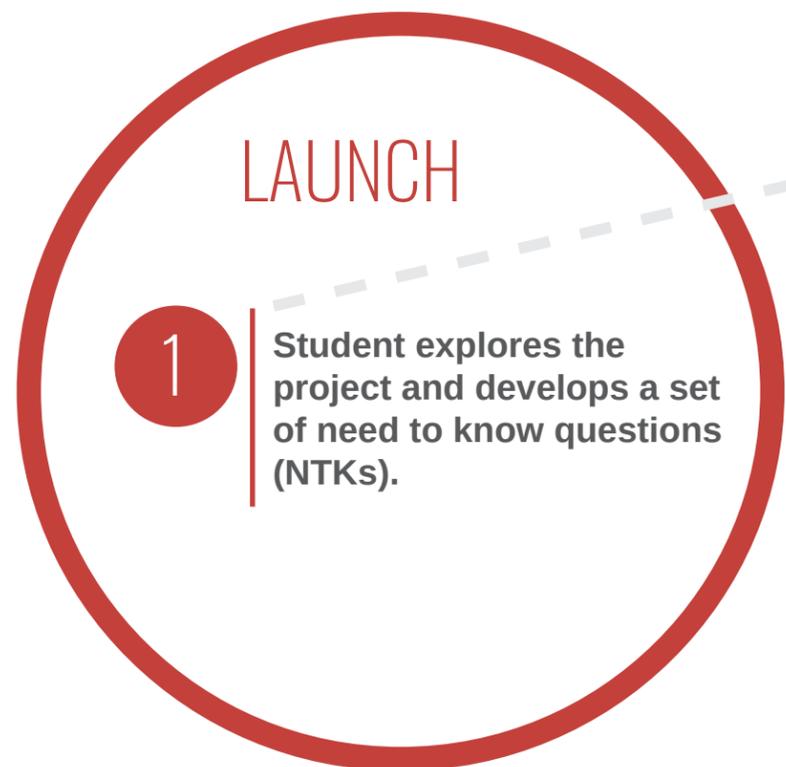
MILESTONE #1: LAUNCHING INQUIRY

The Launching Inquiry milestone is the “entryway” into the Community Photojournalist project. Student begins their exploration of the driving question, “How can we, as photojournalists, tell the untold stories of our community?” by analyzing a single photo through questions and reflection.

The entry event of every good project creates the opportunity to begin an inquiry cycle driven by students’ own need to know questions. In Community Photojournalist, the entry event sparks student questions about their community, about storytelling, and the impact of photos in revealing story. In addition, students’ questions may touch on the similarities and differences that exist in their community. Differences may be influenced by culture, economic status, gender, or other factors students will discover in their inquiry.

The key is to honor all questions as students orient to the project.

Note: The recommended resources will be helpful as you design lessons for this milestone.



LAUNCH

1

Student explores the project and develops a set of need to know questions (NTKs).



STEPPING STONES

ENTRY EVENT

Student explores compelling photos through the [Zoom In Routine >>](#).

PREVIEW THE PRODUCT

Student is introduced to one example of the final product and discusses using the [See-Think-Wonder Routine >>](#).

EXPLORE THE DRIVING QUESTION

Student explores the question, “How can we tell the untold stories of our community?” and develops a list of need to know questions (NTKs) to guide their inquiry.



RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

PHYSICAL MUSEUMS

- [The Way to School >>](#) by Rosemary Carney
- [Material World: A Global Family Portrait >>](#) by Peter Menzel
- [The Story of the “Migrant Mother” >>](#)

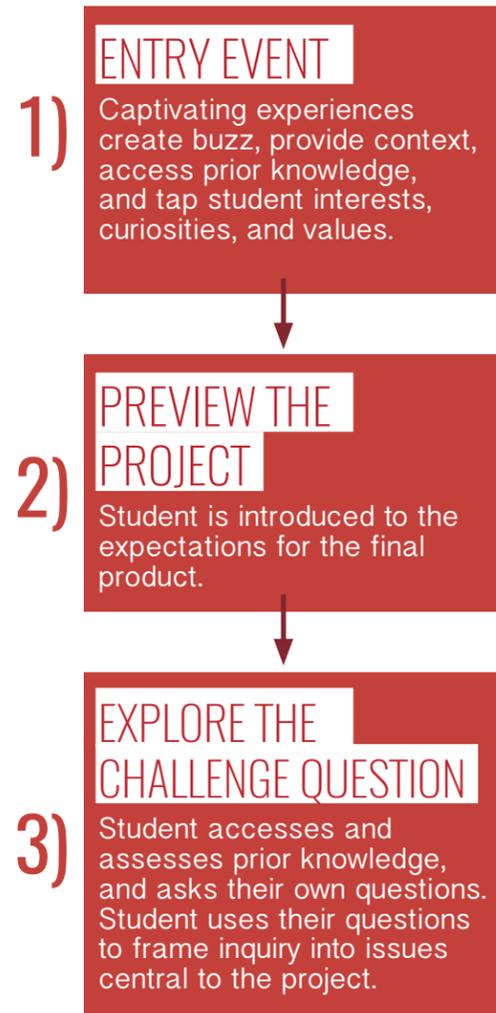
AUDIO AND VISUALS : PHOTO ESSAYS

- [Hungry Planet: What the World Eats >>](#)
- [ONE in 8 Million >>](#)

TOOLS AND FORMS

- [Zoom In Routine >>](#)
- [See-Think-Wonder Routine >>](#)
- [Know/Need-to-Know Chart >>](#)
- [Inquiry Chart >>](#)
- [Student Planning Sheet >>](#)
- [Action-Feelings-Setting >>](#)

Structure of a Launch...



As you design your launch, consider this three-part structure to help guide your efforts: Entry Event, Project Preview, and Driving Question Exploration. The launch may be only one lesson, but these three key segments each involve careful decision-making, planning, and materials development. Let's take a closer look.

DESIRED OUTCOMES



MATCH, LIT.

Students participate in an engaging shared experience that generates excitement about the Community Photojournalists project.



PROJECT, LINKED.

The connection between the provocation or entry event and the final project is totally clear; basic project expectations are communicated upfront.



INQUIRY, LAUNCHED.

Opportunities for students to generate their own questions pique their innate curiosity as they begin to connect with the driving question, "How can we, as photojournalists, tell the untold stories of our community?"

MIGHT LOOK LIKE...

- Viewing and reflecting on a compelling photo using the [Zoom In Routine >>](#).
- A guest photojournalist sharing about his or her work.
- Students sharing personal photos that "tell" a strong emotion about their lives.

- Students annotate a document that outlines project expectations as you review it.
- The teacher may preview key aspects of the photo essay and/or presentation.

- Students use [Think/Puzzle/Explore >>](#) to capture their questions and identify their need to knows.
- Students reflect in a journal about what the driving question means to them and their learning from the launch.

EXAMPLES OF INITIAL STUDENT NEED TO KNOWS

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The need to know process is essential to the project. It helps students activate their prior knowledge and identify their own questions for exploration.



To support your planning, these questions are examples of what students may ask for this project.

QUESTIONS ABOUT COMMUNITY

- How do we find out more about our community?
- How do we choose which community topics are important to share?
- What are some stories about our community that need to be told?
- How do we find out about community stories?
- How can our photo essay make a difference and help make our community better?

QUESTIONS ABOUT PHOTO ESSAYS

- What is a photo essay?
- What does a photojournalist do?
- How do photojournalists choose their topics?
- How do you take a quality photograph?



LESSON LAUNCH



THE ENTRY EVENT

How many of you have heard the phrase, “A picture is worth a thousand words.” What do you think that means? Some photos, if you look carefully, give clues to the what was happening during that moment in time. If there are people in the photos, you might be able to infer (or guess) what they are feeling or thinking. Let’s look at this photo together. I’m going to reveal small parts of it so we can [Zoom In >>](#). As I reveal each piece of the photo, I want you to jot down what you see and what makes you curious. We’ll talk about your observations as a whole group before I show you another piece of the photo.

INVESTIGATE



PREVIEW PROJECT EXPECTATIONS

Now, let’s look at a series of photos put together in what is called a photo essay. A photojournalist created [Hungry Planet: What the World Eats >>](#) to help make others aware of a story or issue in a community or our world. In this photo essay, a message or story is being told. As you watch this photo essay, think about what you see, how it makes you feel, and what you think. Capture your thoughts on the [See-Think-Wonder page >>](#). I’ll have you discuss in small groups, and then I’ll invite people to share their reflections with the class. After watching the photo essay and discussing it with your group, what did you see, feel, and think? What sort of response do you think the photographer wanted you to have? What group, event, issue, or community is shown? What story are the photographs telling? What details in the photographs help to tell that story?

Using photos, our challenge is to capture people, moments, or events in our community, and organize them to help share the stories yet to be told and shared. You’ll work in teams to try and meet that challenge. Individually, you will write about your topic based on moments you’ve photographed.

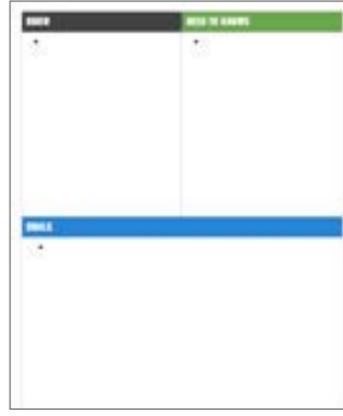


For the entry event and previewing the project, look for examples that show diversity and multiple perspectives on a similar topic.

Possible questions: What do the similarities tell us about the community? What do the differences tell us about the community? What do you think influenced those differences?

Don’t forget to create a document that provides students with a clear picture of the project’s expectations.

INVESTIGATE (CONT’D)



EXPLORING THE DRIVING QUESTION AND NTKS

We will be using photo essays to make others aware of things that many of us don’t take time to see. In this project, you’ll explore the driving question, “How can we, as photojournalists, tell the untold stories of our community?”

Drawing from the discussions we’ve just had, let’s organize our shared knowledge. What do you already know about photo essays? What do we need to know or learn in order to be able to narrate the “untold” stories of our community? Take a moment to write down other questions that you have about this project. Preview the project expectations document. What questions come to mind? Feel free to make notes on [K/NTK Sheet >>](#) as I read through the checklist.

SYNTHESIZE AND REFLECT



CLOSING THE LAUNCH

The heart of our project is to showcase the hidden stories of our of our community. This will not be easy, and we will need to work hard together. How might photos be a powerful tool in learning about our community? Let’s jump into a [Share Sheets >>](#) activity where we can share our thoughts and ideas about the project.



SYNTHESIZE AND REFLECT

We want students to be excited for this project, and one way to do that is to have them predict how they will feel after the project. You can modify the [Action-Feelings-Setting >>](#) strategy to help you lead students through the process of writing a story or visualizing how they will feel after doing their community service project.

MILESTONE #2: UNDERSTANDING THEME FOR COMMUNITY

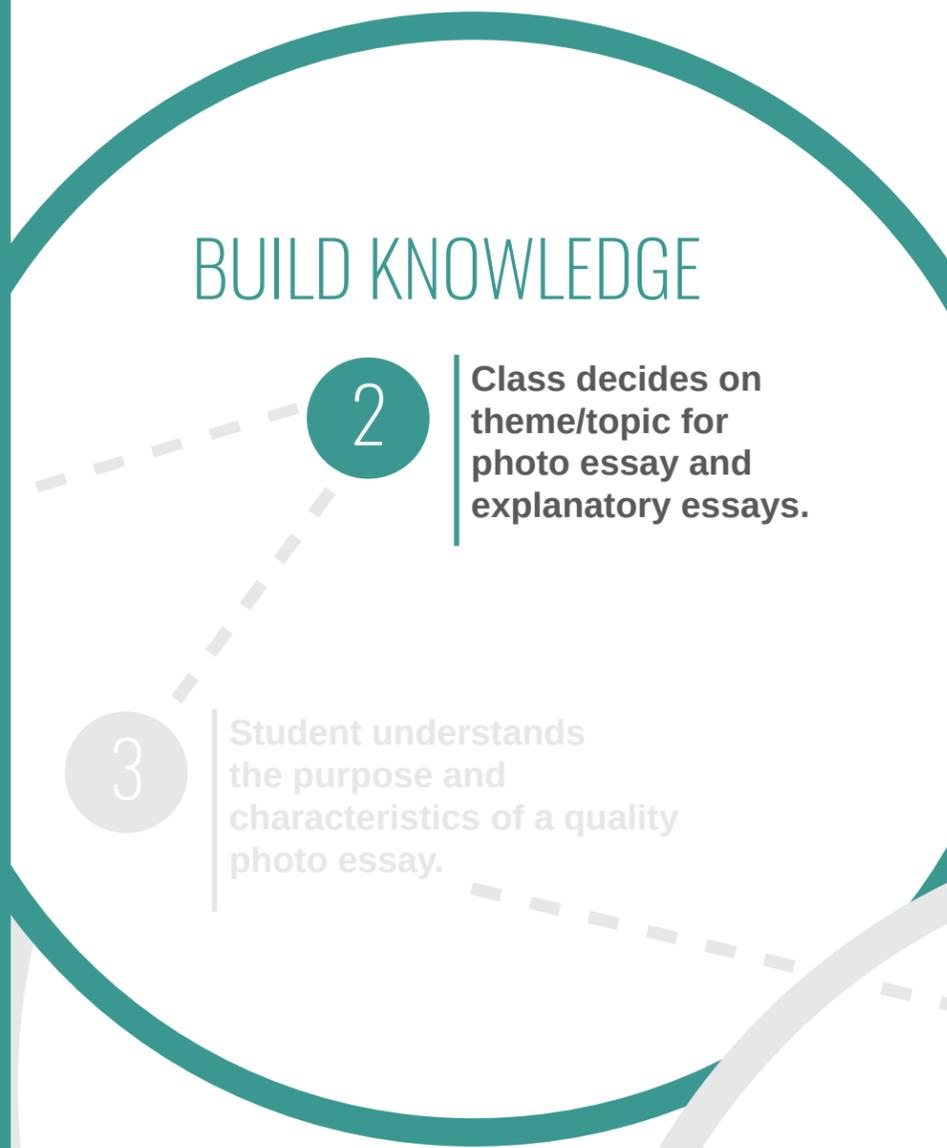
This milestone unifies the community photo essay topics with one overarching theme.

In the first stepping stone, the class reflects on what “community” means to them and, through a discussion, determines a whole-class theme. This is the “lens” students use to examine their community and decide on a specific topic for their research.

Once their team topic is selected, the second stepping stone emphasizes the importance of questioning in interviewing and researching their topic. Students will use the Question Formulation Technique (QFT) to sustain inquiry throughout the rest of the project.

To build their knowledge of explanatory essays, students immerse themselves in mentor text to identify the traits of this writing structure in the third stepping stone.

Note: The recommended resources will be helpful as you design lessons for this milestone.



STEPPING STONES

DETERMINE THEME AND TOPIC

Class determines unifying theme for community photo essay. Student teams select related topic to research.

FORMULATE QUESTIONS

Using the [QFT process >>](#), students formulate questions to interview people for their photo essay and to sustain inquiry in their research.

UNDERSTANDING EXPOSITORY ESSAY

Student identifies the traits of a quality explanatory essay text.

NOTE: The last stepping stone above connects to later work.

EXPLAINING THE PHOTO

Each student chooses one photo from their team photo essay and writes an explanatory essay.



RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

TEXTS AND DATA

- [Expository Essay Samples >>](#)

AUDIO AND VISUALS

- [What Does Community Mean to You? >>](#)

TOOLS AND FORMS

- [Connection Activities >>](#)
- [The Question Formulation Technique \(QFT\) >>](#)
- [Making Meaning Routine >>](#)
- [Generate, Sort, Connect, Elaborate >>](#)
- [Conferencing >>](#)
- [Choose a Topic >>](#)

STEPPING STONES TO UNDERSTANDING THEME FOR COMMUNITY



1. DETERMINE THEME AND TOPIC

In this stepping stone, create two to three lessons that help students reflect on their community, determine a class theme for their photo essays, and have each student team choose a topic related to the class theme. Ultimately, you want them to understand that the class theme/concept can be interpreted in multiple ways. Therefore, each team can approach the theme with a different “lens.” (For example, if the class theme is “giving,” possible topics might be, “how community members give” or “how we can give to others in need.”)

In your lessons, help students make connections to the NTKs they developed in the launch.

IDEAS FOR ACTIVITIES

As you design lessons, it might be helpful to review the concept of community and to show more examples of photo essays, focusing only on different theme possibilities (i.e., struggle, change, friendship, giving, understanding, empathy, etc.). The traits of a quality photo essay will come later in the unit.

NARROWING IDEAS

In this stepping stone, you’ll need to create a lesson in which student teams can narrow down their list and select a topic related to the class theme. The [Evaluate the Possibilities >>](#) task includes ideas for different ways (decision matrix, voting procedures) that may help you select a system for how your students will make this decision.

	1. DETERMINE THEME AND TOPIC	2. FORMULATING QUESTIONS
Standards	D1.1.3-5 >> ; D2.Civ.6.3-5 >>	D1.4.3-5 >> ; D1.5.3-5 >>
Students will be able to ...	Determine a class theme and team topic for their community photo essay project.	Formulate questions to interview people for their photo essay and to sustain inquiry in their research.
Ideas for Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To define community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a individual, team, or class Concept Map >> Making Meaning Routine >> Generate, Sort, Connect, Elaborate >> to define “community” To help teams narrow down their topic using Evaluate the Possibilities >> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> QFT process >>
Reflection and Synthesis Prompts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can we answer any of our NTKs, or do we need to add new questions based on what we’ve learned? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you formulate questions for your research? Why are questions important in our project?
Formative Assessment Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask students to come up with a picture or several words that they might use to represent their topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students explain how the questions they developed will help them address their topic or answer need to knows.
Suggestions for Feedback and Support		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some students may struggle to think of questions. Conferencing >> with those students is one way to provide additional support.



2. FORMULATE QUESTIONS

In this stepping stone, create one to two lessons that will help students formulate questions for interviewing purposes as well as deepen the inquiry process for the rest of the project.

The [Question Formulation Technique \(QFT\) >>](#) is the research based method that is suggested for this lesson.

It’s important to help students see how questioning might help a writer learn more relevant information about the topic and “see past the obvious.”

IDEAS FOR ACTIVITIES

You can show age-appropriate news interviews for students to watch or do a [Fishbowl activity >>](#) of two people (e.g. you and the principal) interviewing each other. For both examples, students can use [See-Think-Wonder >>](#) process to capture their observations and thoughts. Also, after completing a set of interview questions, have students practice interviewing each other.

DISCUSSION

After students have shared examples of their interview questions, discuss what are some positive ways to conduct an interview.

STEPPING STONES TO UNDERSTANDING THEME FOR COMMUNITY



3. UNDERSTANDING EXPLANATORY ESSAYS

In this stepping stone, create one to two lessons that will help students see what are the text features and structures of an explanatory essay.

Students need to understand that an explanatory essay is used when the writer is trying to inform others about a particular subject of which they may not be familiar.

It consists of an introduction with a thesis, the body of the text with cited information supporting the thesis, and the conclusion, which sums up the points presented in the essay.

IDEAS FOR ACTIVITIES

Modeling is powerful. Sharing a piece written by you, the teacher, or an essay written together as a class would help students gain a better understanding of not only the characteristics but also of the writing process.

EXTENSION

Some students may be motivated at this point to begin writing ideas. Encourage them to keep their ideas in a writer's notebook for later reference.

3. UNDERSTANDING EXPOSITORY ESSAY	
Standards	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2.A-E >> ; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.4 >>
Students will be able to ...	Identify the traits of a quality explanatory essay text.
Ideas for Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use explanatory text prompts >> to get students writing, and use their examples to identify the key traits and skills identified in that standards. Or unpack key traits analyzing existing examples of explanatory texts >>.
Reflection and Synthesis Prompts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What makes a quality explanatory essay? What are some possible resources and people you could use for more information about your topic?
Formative Assessment Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students analyze examples and non-examples of explanatory essays. Then students decide if the example is an explanatory essay and give evidence for their answer.
Suggestions for Feedback and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If students need more support in organizing identifying explanatory text, use a graphic organizer and support their identifying features.



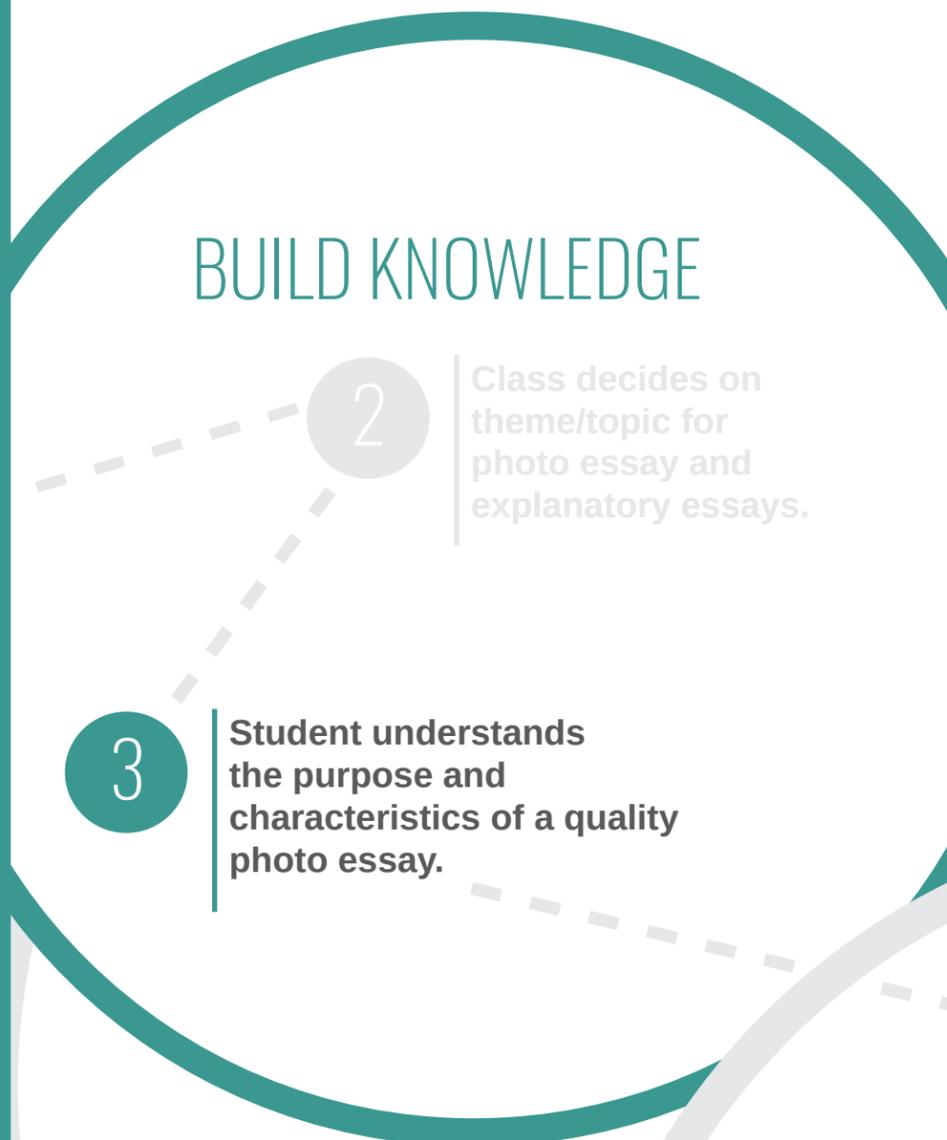
MILESTONE #3: DEFINING QUALITIES OF A PHOTO ESSAY

This milestone begins by revisiting and immersing students in a variety of photo essays. This time, students try to answer the questions, “What makes a great photo essay?” “What qualities do they all have in common?” and “How are they different?”

The focus then shifts to the craft and skill of taking photographs. Students learn about techniques to help them capture images.

As you design lessons, think about ways to help students think deeply about how photojournalists use images to capture the moment and event.

Note: The recommended resources will be helpful as you design lessons for this milestone.



STEPPING STONES

MAKING MEANING

Student identifies the characteristics of a quality photo essay.

LEARNING FROM THE EXPERTS

Student describes how to take quality photographs.



RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

TEXTS AND DATA

- [Explore the Genre of Photo Essays >>](#)
- [How to Shoot a Photo Essay >>](#)
- [Beginner Photography Course >>](#)
- [Digital Photography Tips and Tutorials for Beginners >>](#)
- [The Best Free Online Photography Course >>](#)

AUDIO AND VISUALS

- [Stronger Together: A Photo Essay of Communities United >>](#)
- [What Playgrounds Look Like Around the World >>](#)
- [These 20 Powerful Photos of Kids' Bedrooms Will Change the Way You Look at the World >>](#)

TOOLS AND FORMS

- [Making Meaning Activities >>](#)
- [Photo Drop >>](#)
- [Making Meaning Routine >>](#)

STEPPING STONES TO DEFINING QUALITIES OF A PHOTO ESSAY



1. MAKING MEANING

In this stepping stone, create one to two lessons that make meaning of the characteristics of a quality and effective photo essay.

When selecting activities and planning lessons for this stepping stone, try to focus on three things: (1) providing more examples of photo essays, (2) analyzing the characteristic of a photo essay, and (3) generating words to describe a high-quality photo essay.

RESOURCES

There are many examples of photo essays besides the ones provided in this unit. By searching on the internet for “photo essays,” you can find age-appropriate examples for students to view. Even the poorly designed essays will allow for further discussion. Invite students to bring examples of photo essays, too.

PREPARING FOR THE PROJECT

Students need to interview and photograph people, things, and/or places for their essay in the coming lessons. Begin arranging visits, Google Hangouts, or possible ways to make this successful.

	1. MAKING MEANING	2. LEARNING FROM THE EXPERTS
Standards	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.4 >> ; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.5 >>	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.5 >>
Students will be able to ...	Identify the characteristics of a quality photo essay.	Describe how to take quality photographs.
Ideas for Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Photo Drop >> Explore the Genre of Photo Essays >> Making Meaning Routine >> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to Shoot a Photo Essay >> Beginner Photography Course >> Digital Photography Tips and Tutorials for Beginners >> The Best Free Online Photography Course >>
Reflection and Synthesis Prompts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisit our NTKs. Can we answer any of our questions or add any additional questions based on what we’ve learned? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name three ways to improve a photograph. Explain how you can use photography to report information. What connection can you make to a newspaper reporter and a photojournalist? Compare them.
Formative Assessment Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe what makes a compelling photo essay. What is the purpose of a photo essay? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask students to show examples of photos that depict their use of specific photography techniques.
Suggestions for Feedback and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an anchor chart with examples of characteristics. Small-group discussion using an anchor chart of characteristics and new images. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some students may struggle with taking photographs, or some may have more of a natural talent for photography. Partner students to help each other either to reinforce a skill or take the photograph for each other.



2. LEARNING FROM THE EXPERTS

This stepping stone needs two to three lessons that help students learn from photographers and photojournalists about the skills needed “on the job” to be successful. As you design these lessons, provide hands-on experiences to apply these skills as well as the critique protocols to help students give feedback on the quality of photos being taken. This is also a great opportunity to integrate academic and vocational language that photojournalists would use in their profession.

Students should begin taking photos for their photo essays if possible.

RESOURCES

To find an “expert” photojournalist to visit your classroom may not always be possible, so take advantage of the internet and look for YouTube videos and online photography tutorials.

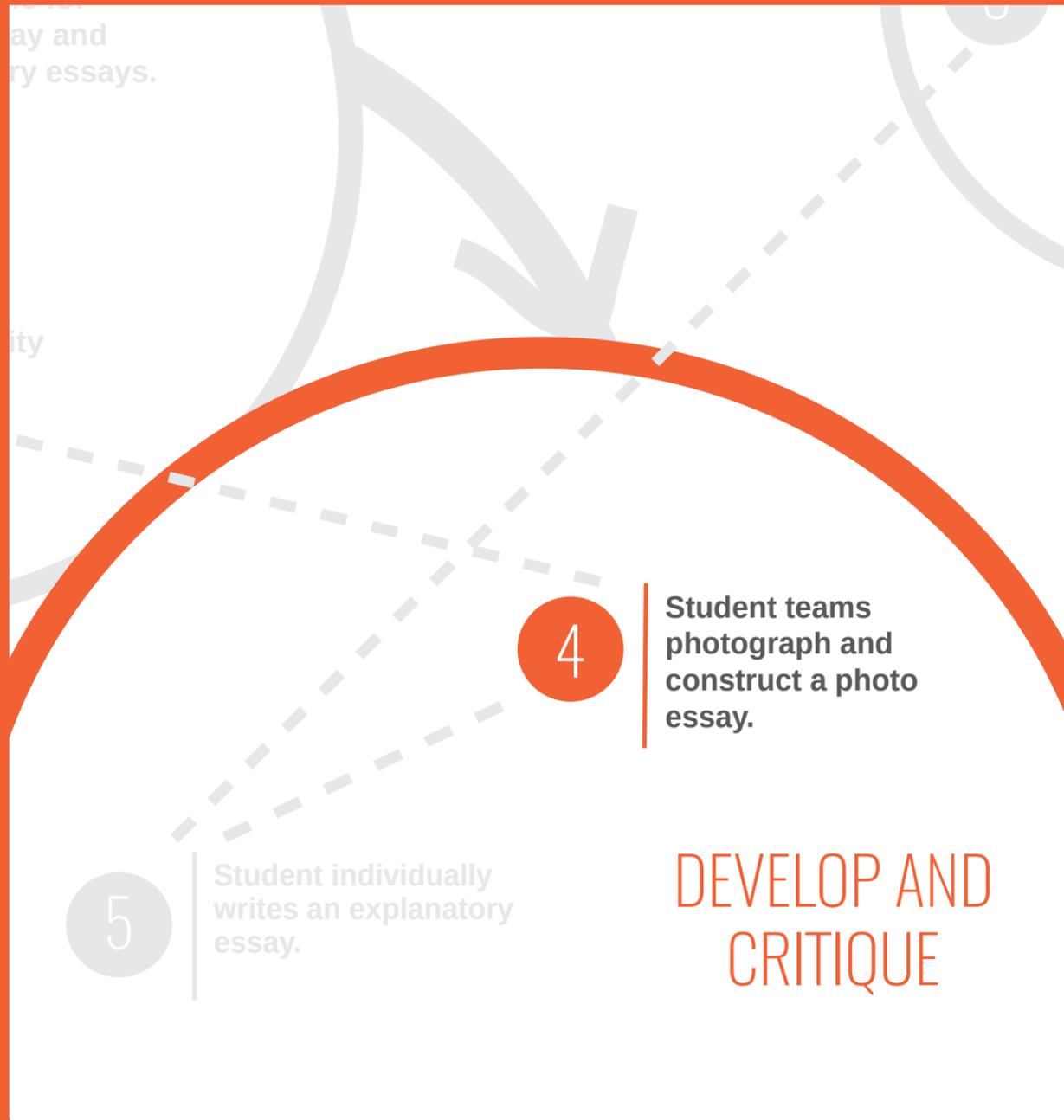
Also, remember that photography for many people can be a passion or hobby besides their occupation. Send out a survey and ask parents, colleagues, or staff members if they like to take photographs. With modern technology, a camera is more accessible. If a camera is not accessible, use cameras on phones, mobile devices, or tablets.

MILESTONE #4: PHOTOGRAPH THE ESSAY

This milestone is the nitty-gritty of the community project—creating the photo essay. Students know their topic, have questions to dig deeper in their research, and now can apply techniques in photography to improve their captured images.

For the first stepping stone, students photograph and organize the elements they want in their photo essay. This time could also serve as an opportunity to interview people for their research.

The second stepping stone is pivotal in improving the quality of the final product. A Gallery Walk provides constructive feedback to students to move forward with developing their photo essay.



STEPPING STONES

PHOTOGRAPH THE ESSAY

Student teams photograph and organize the elements needed to create their community photo essay.

GALLERY WALK

Student teams provide feedback to and revise photo essays.

NOTE: The last stepping stone above connects to later work.

EXPLAINING THE PHOTO

Each student chooses one photo from their team photo essay and writes an explanatory essay.



RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

TEXTS AND DATA

- [Explore the Genre of Photo Essays >>](#)
- [How to Shoot a Photo Essay >>](#)
- [Giving and Receiving Feedback on Photo Essays >>](#)

AUDIO AND VISUALS

- [Stronger Together: A Photo Essay of Communities United >>](#)
- [What Playgrounds Look Like Around the World >>](#)
- [These 20 Powerful Photos of Kids' Bedrooms Will Change the Way You Look at the World >>](#)

TOOLS AND FORMS

- [Evaluate the Possibilities >>](#)

STEPPING STONES TO PHOTOGRAPH THE ESSAY



1. PHOTOGRAPH THE ESSAY

In this stepping stone, create two to three lessons in which students photograph people, places, or things related to their team topic. Ultimately, you want your students to have a variety of photo choices.

For the student teams, it might be helpful to identify a range of how many photos should be in the photo essay. This helps students be selective about which photos they include in the essay. Every student should have at least one photo represented in the photo essay.

Photography sessions are also an opportunity to interview people.

ACCESS TO SUBJECTS

Depending on your location and other factors such as scheduling and funding for field trips, students may not have accessibility to photograph offsite. Some alternate possibilities are: Invite community members to one event to be photographed and interviewed; send a student photographer from each group with a guardian, teacher, or other responsible adult to take an after school photoshoot field trip; or ask someone on location to take photographs for the group and email or send them to the teacher.

	1. PHOTOGRAPH THE ESSAY	2. GALLERY WALK
Standards	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.4 >> ; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.5 >> ; D2.Civ.10.3-5 >>	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.4 >> ; D2.Civ.10.3-5 >>
Students will be able to ...	Create their community photo essay.	Provide feedback to and revise photo essays.
Ideas for Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a plan for photo essay using Storyboards >> • Brainstorm Exploration >> • Problem Solution Brainstorm >> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gallery Walk >> • Discussion Web >> • Giving and Receiving Feedback on Photo Essays >>
Reflection and Synthesis Prompts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you decide which images to include in your photo essay? • How is the need we selected important to the community? How are you capturing that need in images? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the best piece of feedback you received? • How did that feedback impact your photo essay?
Formative Assessment Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a storyboard, design plan, or other plan for the photo essay for teacher and peer feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised photo essay
Suggestions for Feedback and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give in-the-moment feedback during the brainstorming to help students refine ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence starters may be helpful for students who struggle to know how to give constructive feedback.



2. GALLERY WALK

Feedback plays a vital role in this stepping stone. Design one or two lessons to allow student teams to give and receive feedback on the drafts of their photo essays.

If your classroom has an established routine for critique and revision, this stepping stone will be a natural next phase of the project. As you design your lesson/s, make sure your students have a knowledgeable understanding on the types of feedback and the expectations for a high quality photo essay. It is important to provide time for students to revise their photo essays after feedback is given.

IDEAS FOR ACTIVITIES

If your students are new to feedback and the Gallery Walk, model this protocol by giving feedback to a sample photo essay. For students who need language support, provide feedback sentence stems as visuals. To help scaffold the feedback, do the Gallery Walk in “rounds,” and have each “round” requiring feedback on a specific aspect of the photo essay.

TYPES OF FEEDBACK

Consider whether students will have an opportunity to reshoot after the Gallery Walk. If not, consider focusing feedback on the arrangement of the photos or which photos of those taken might be appropriate to include in the final product.

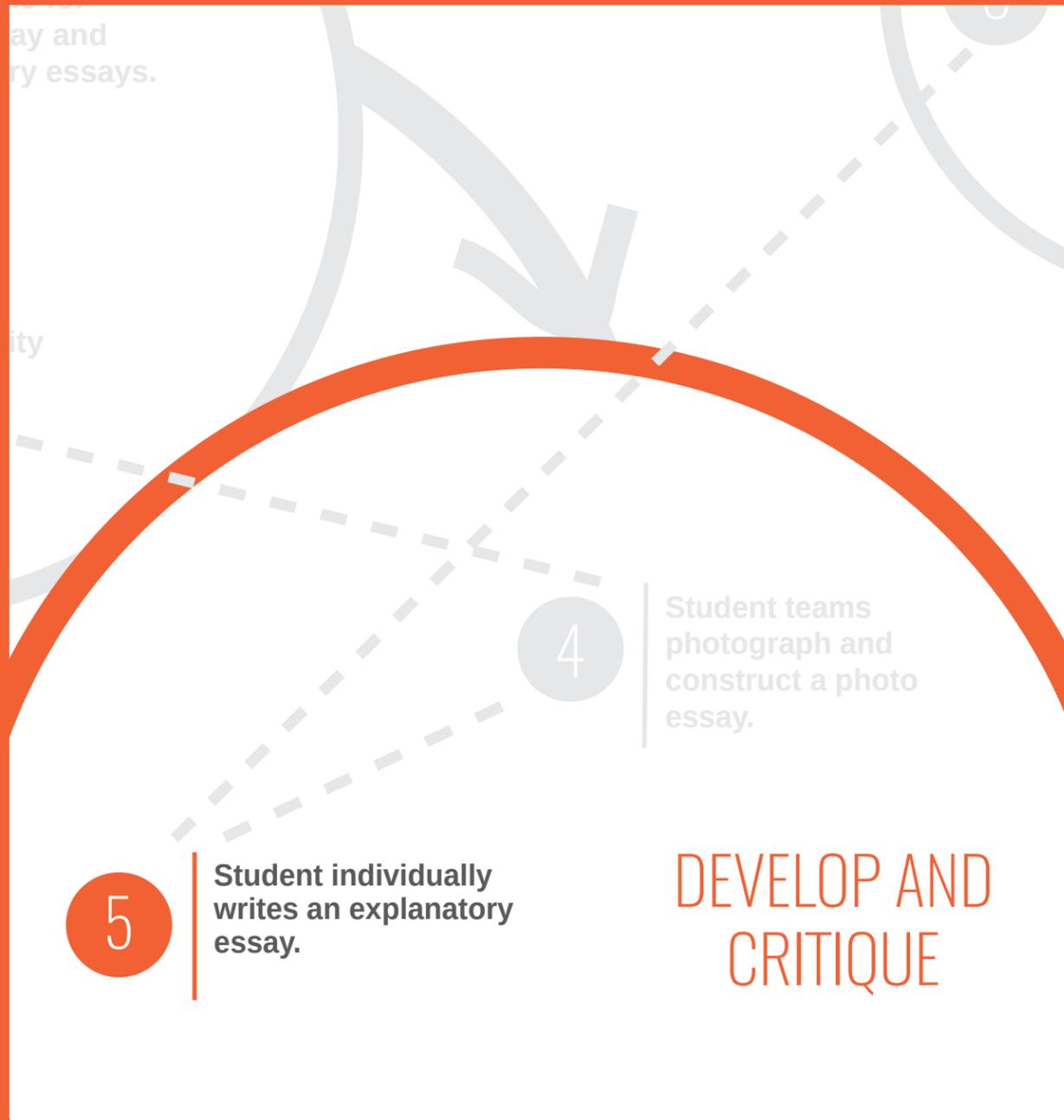
MILESTONE #5: WRITE THE EXPOSITORY ESSAY

This milestone helps students delve into the individual writing piece of this project.

In milestone 4, the focus was making meaning of a collection of photographs and organizing them to convey information about a specific community topic. In this milestone, students choose a photograph from the photo essay as a focus or reference for their written explanatory essay.

Each explanatory essay will be part of an anthology of essays to be shared at the Photo Essay Gallery Event, either in a booklet form or digitally.

The second stepping stone wraps up the loose ends for the student teams in terms of the photo essay and individual writing pieces. This is where students have their last opportunities for feedback and revision.



STEPPING STONES

EXPLAINING THE PHOTO

Each student chooses one photo from their team photo essay and writes an explanatory essay.

ESSAY FEEDBACK AND REVISION

Student receives feedback and revises his/her final presentation and explanatory essay.

NOTE: Keep in mind the need to make preparations for:

PRESENT

Student teams present photo essays to public audience at a gallery event.



RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

TEXTS AND DATA

- [Explore the Genre of Expository Writing >>](#)
- [Writing Genres >>](#)
- [Tips on Writing an Expository Essay >>](#)
- [Giving and Receiving Feedback >>](#)
- [Revise: How Can You Improve Your Draft? >>](#)
- [Edit: How Can You Improve Your Draft? >>](#)

TOOLS AND FORMS

- [Conferencing Tools >>](#)

STEPPING STONES TO WRITE THE EXPOSITORY ESSAY



1. EXPLAINING THE PHOTO

In this stepping stone, create two to three lessons in which students apply what they learned previously on the traits of explanatory essay writing to a selected photo.

For each student, allow him/her to choose a photo from the photo essay as the focus for an explanatory essay about their team topic.

Students need to make a connection between the selected photo and the essay. Depending on the content of the picture, the photo may be the central focus of the explanatory essay or an image that is referenced in the essay.

IDEAS FOR ACTIVITIES

During this stepping stone, try utilizing the tools of Writing Workshop to help with conferencing, revision, and editing. Another way to help scaffold the process is to model or co-author a draft of an explanatory essay with students.

	1. EXPLAINING THE PHOTO	2. ESSAY FEEDBACK AND REVISION
Standards	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2.A-E >> ; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.4 >> ; D2.Civ.6.3-5 >> ; D2.Civ.10.3-5 >>	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2.A-E >> ; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.4 >> ; D2.Civ.6.3-5 >> ; D2.Civ.10.3-5 >>
Students will be able to ...	Write an explanatory essay using a photo from the photo essay as a focal point or a reference.	Revise photo essay and written explanatory essay based on feedback.
Ideas for Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the Genre of Expository Writing >> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Giving and Receiving Feedback >> Revise: How can you improve your draft? >> Edit: How can you improve your draft? >>
Reflection and Synthesis Prompts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How is capturing ideas in images different from capturing them in words? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What was the most useful piece of feedback you received? Why? What ideas for your project did you get from reviewing someone else's work?
Formative Assessment Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a draft of your explanatory essay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised explanatory essay
Suggestions for Feedback and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher feedback is essential here to fill any gaps in the student to-do lists. This can be done through conferencing >> or during a whole-class discussion >> activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conferencing >> with individuals or small groups of students about their specific tasks is a great way to provide additional support for this stepping stone.



2. ESSAY FEEDBACK AND REVISION

In this stepping stone, create multiple lessons (depending on the complexity of the photo essays and the presentation format you choose) that give students opportunities to receive feedback on the overall products and presentation. This includes the student team photo essay and the individual explanatory essays for select photos.

For this stepping stone, students focus on accomplishing their assigned tasks but continually receive feedback and time to revise the product and presentation.

IDEAS FOR ACTIVITIES

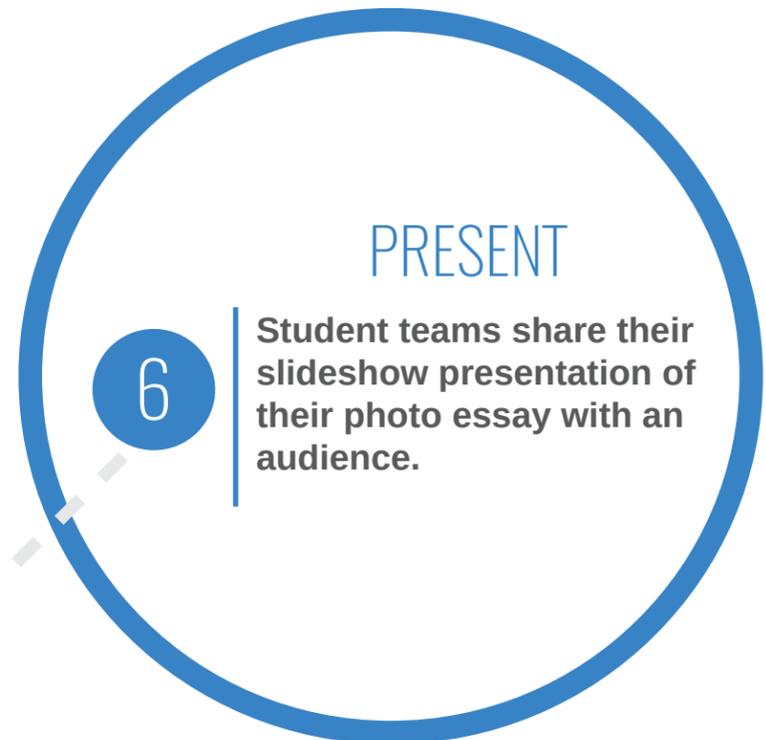
To help get a “fresh” perspective, extend feedback opportunities to groups beyond the classroom, such as other classrooms, an expert, or a community member.

MILESTONE #6: PRESENT THE PHOTO ESSAY GALLERY

This milestone has three stepping stones: prepare, present, and reflect. All three are essential because they provide students with both the authentic experience of bringing their work out into the world with elegance and grace, and reflection on their learnings to inform future projects and classwork.

As you plan lessons to help students prepare, think about how you may support them in striving for a very high level of readiness. For the presentation, take the stance that anything that can go wrong will, and plan accordingly. For the reflection, try to create an open, thoughtful, and calm moment for students to look inward, backward, and forward.

Note: The recommended resources will be helpful as you design lessons for this milestone.



Student teams photograph and construct a photo essay.



STEPPING STONES

PREPARE

The class makes final preparations for their photo essay presentation, and explanatory essays are curated in written or digital form.

PRESENT

Student teams present photo essays to a public audience at a gallery event.

REFLECT

Students and teacher reflect on their original need to know and their current sense of understanding.



RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

TEXTS AND DATA

- [Plan an Event >>](#)
- [Create and Implement an Action Plan >>](#)
- [Debrief the Event >>](#)

TOOLS AND FORMS

- [What? So What? Now What? >>](#)
- [Metacognition Log >>](#)
- [How Did I Learn It? >>](#)
- [Debrief the Event >>](#)
- [Project Rubric >>](#)
- [BIE Presentation Rubric >>](#)

STEPPING STONES TO PRESENT THE PHOTO ESSAY GALLERY



1. PREPARE

Much of the preparation for this event occurred in the previous milestone. As you plan one or two lessons that address final-stage preparations for the photo essay gallery event, keep the following in mind:

- Collect all explanatory essays.
 - Prepare photo essays for display.
 - Have each team write a brief introduction for their photo essay to help give context.
- Note: Check out some of the recommended resources on the first page of this milestone.

IDEAS FOR THE GALLERY EVENT

- If possible, have a art/museum gallery curator speak about how they showcase photo essays or visit a museum virtually.
- Have teams choose appropriate instrumental music to accompany the photo essay presentation to set a mood or tone.
- Display the written essays along with the selected photos as part of the gallery event.

	1. PREPARE	2. PRESENT	3. REFLECT	
Standards	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.5 >>	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.5 >>	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2.A-E >> ; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.4 >> ; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.5 >> ; D1.1.3-5 >> ; D1.4.3-5 >> ; D1.5.3-5 >> ; D2.Civ.6.3-5 >> ; D2.Civ.10.3-5 >>	Standards
Students will be able to...	Make final preparations for their community event.	Take part in a community service event.	Reflect on their original NTKs, their learning of new skills and knowledge, and their market research analysis.	Students will be able to...
Ideas for Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an Audience Feedback Form >> to support audience engagement. • Revisit the to-do lists to ensure all the tasks have been completed. • Rehearse or practice depending on the specifics of the project. • Role-Play >> • Use the Presentation Rubric >> to self-assess and assess each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The event! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What? So What? Now What? >> 	Ideas for Reflection on Work Product and Process
Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is where you'll need to ensure that all the logistics are in order (transportation to the site, chaperones, supplies, someone to take photos, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will need to manage the event in cooperation with chaperones or community volunteers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metacognition Log >> 	Reflection on Presentation
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How Did I Learn It? >> 	Ideas for Reflection on NTKs and Key Knowledge



2. PRESENT

You probably won't need to plan a lesson for the gallery event, but there are always many logistical details and potential complications that are important to anticipate and plan for.

It's often helpful to imagine all that can go wrong and think of ways to address the issues: What if the technology doesn't work? What if the event is canceled?

What are your backup plans to ensure that students still have the opportunity to showcase their work?

3. REFLECTION & SYNTHESIS

It's important to give students the opportunity to reflect on the product (the event), the process of creating the photo essay and explanatory essay, and the learning. This is a chance to revisit those driving questions, "How can we, as photojournalists, tell the untold stories of our community?" Through discovering the commonalities and differences within their community, did they learn about issues that concern them or inspire them?

Use reflection protocols like the [Metacognition Log >>](#) to help students think about their learning journey throughout the project.

APPENDIX I: STANDARDS

Writing

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2.A-E >>](#)

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2.A >>](#)

Introduce a topic clearly, provide a general observation and focus, and group related information logically; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2.B >>](#)

Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2.C >>](#)

Link ideas within and across categories of information using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., in contrast, especially).

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2.D >>](#)

Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2.E >>](#)

Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.4 >>](#)

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Social Studies: National Social Studies Standards

[D1.1.3-5 >>](#)

Explain why compelling questions are important to others (e.g., peers, adults).

[D1.4.3-5 >>](#)

Explain how supporting questions help answer compelling questions in an inquiry.

[D1.5.3-5 >>](#)

Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration the different opinions people have about how to answer the questions.

[D2.Civ.6.3-5 >>](#)

Describe ways in which people benefit from and are challenged by working together, including through government, workplaces, voluntary organizations, and families.

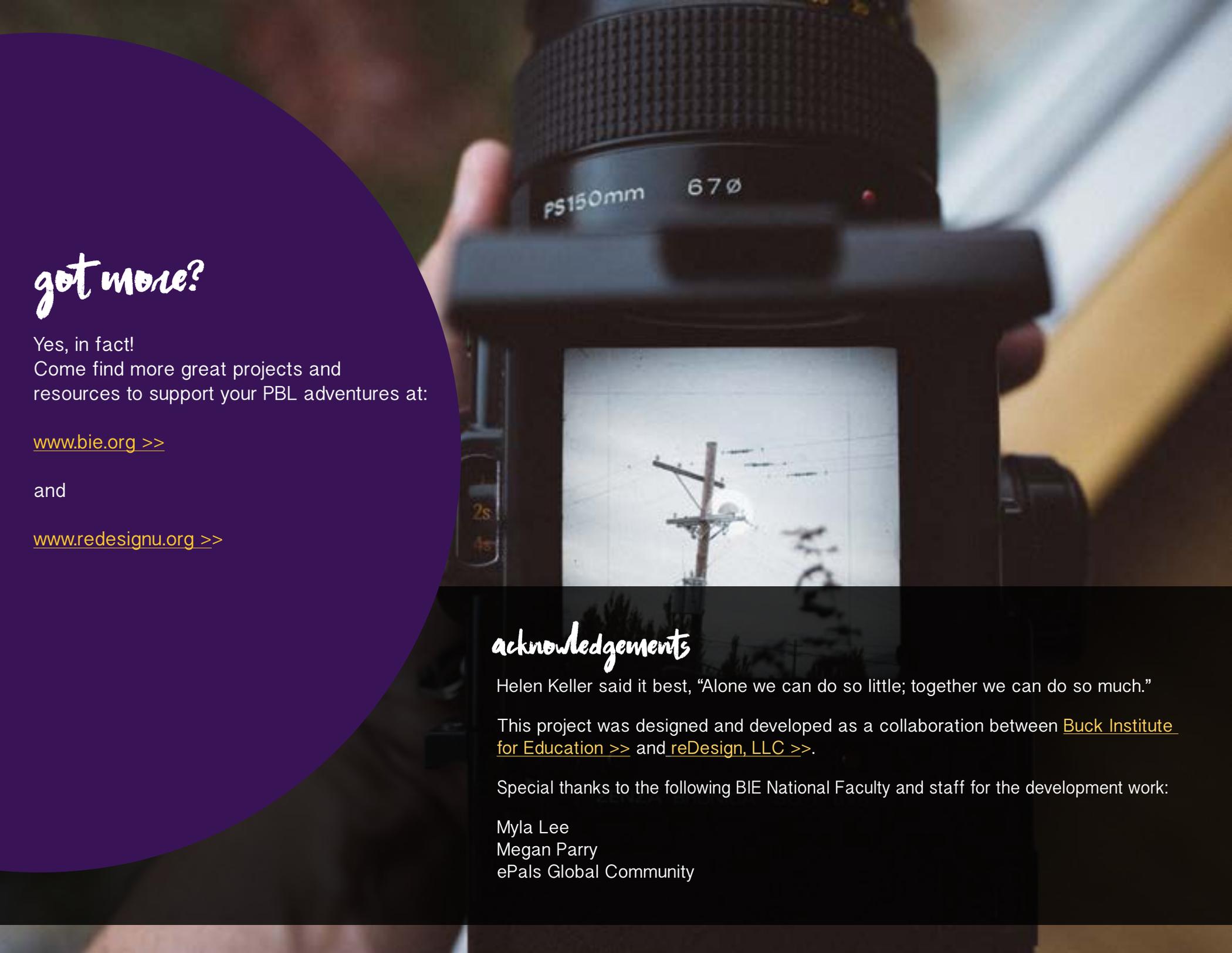
[D2.Civ.10.3-5 >>](#)

Identify the beliefs, experiences, perspectives, and values that underlie their own and others' points of view about civic issues.

PRESENT

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.5 >>](#)

Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, sound) and visual displays in presentations when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas or themes.



got more?

Yes, in fact!

Come find more great projects and resources to support your PBL adventures at:

www.bie.org >>

and

www.redesignu.org >>

acknowledgements

Helen Keller said it best, “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”

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