

GIFT Form

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GIFT Preparation
Title of GIFT entry: The People vs. The Simpsons
Entry Subtitle: The First Amendment Survey, Multimedia Style
Summary
Please describe in 1,000 words or less all pertinent details about your GIFT entry, including: ™ What is your idea? ™ Goals? ™ How does it work in the classroom? - Student reaction? Please e-mail your GIFT description as a Word attachment to the GIFT coordinator, Nicole Kraft at kraft.42@osu.edu. Type GIFT ENTRY (Name) [Your name] in the SUBJECT line on your email. All submissions must be received by Sunday, April 17, 2016. Submitters give the AEJMC GIFT Committee approval to use their entry for the competition and to disseminate to members. Email entry is required.
GIFT Poster Display Information
If a panel of judges chooses your GIFT, you will be notified by May 15 and asked to create a visual display of your GIFT to fill your personal bulletin board (measuring approximately 4 feet high and 3 feet wide) by Aug. 1. You will have the opportunity to share more about your GIFT with those who attend the poster session at AEJMC in Minneapolis. An email to all finalists detailing the poster display will follow.

Introduction:

This lesson introduces a number of skills in our freshman/sophomore level storytelling across platforms class, including basic cell phone video shooting, interviewing and follow-up questions, selecting diverse subjects to interview, writing a basic “man-on-the-street” story, video editing skills in Premiere, posting to WordPress and building a ThingLink.

Implementation:

The students are sent out on the first day of class, immediately after we cover the syllabus. They’re warned via email ahead of time to make sure their smart phones are charged up and have some free space open for video recording.

The assignment is made in four parts and takes about three weeks (two classes per week) to complete:

Part 1 -- Five freedoms information gathering

The students are told to go to a busy place, preferably off campus and outdoors, where they can find a variety of people to choose from.

They are told to:

- Interview five people who exhibit a mix of genders, races and ages. At least one of the people must be significantly older than the student reporter.
- They cannot use roommates, classmates, friends, sorority or fraternity members, or family. Their subjects must be people they've never met before. If the student works in student media, they cannot interview people who work with them in the newsroom.
- Students are told to introduce themselves to their subjects as journalism students working on a class assignment and to ask them if they have a couple of minutes to answer some questions. (Being up-front is the generally the best approach.) The students are warned they should be prepared to get turned down a few times before they find people who are willing to take the time to talk.
- The students use their cellphones to shoot video of the answers (questions below) and any further discussion. They're reminded of some basic video dos and don'ts:
 - get close and try to pick settings where there is not a lot of background noise like buses or other people talking around you
 - make sure the light is coming from in front of the subject, rather than from behind them
 - watch for trees or light poles in the background
 - no vertical video!
 - be sure the source knows the interview will be published, probably on our classroom website at mmsjmc.com.

The questions the students will ask:

Name: (Be sure to get the proper spelling – have them spell it out on the video)

Age:

Major, if they're a student:

Interview question #1: Name the five freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment.

Interview question #2: Tell me the names of the five Simpsons characters.

(The subject might have more to add. Listen for it or encourage additional responses. The students are encouraged to ask follow-up questions.)

Bring the video to the next class meeting to begin editing – the students also have to figure out (with help) how to get the video out of their phone.

Part 2:

Students are instructed to write a story in news style that explains the First Amendment survey they conducted and look for other background information on surveys like this that have been conducted. What did they find? Is there any significance to the information? The students are told to work this into their story for background and context.

A draft of the story is due in the student's designated Dropbox folder by the beginning of class (due date here). It will be critiqued and returned for revisions. Final version is due: (due date here)

Part 3:

The class begins to learn editing skills in Premiere Pro and works to edit their interview videos in class. Final videos are posted to Vimeo by (due date) at the beginning of class.

Part 4:

In class, we create a “Thinglink” project with multiple links, including one the students’ final video and an embedded text file of their final text story. The final ThingLink should be posted to the WordPress classroom website by (due date) at the beginning of class with a keyword-friendly headline (SEO) and introductory paragraph.

Deadlines are subject to change as the assignment progresses. Sometimes, the classroom learning/lab portions of the assignment take longer than a single period.

Rubric:

Story grading

Story draft: 10 pts.

Final story: 25 pts.

--Proper attribution and quote styles: 5

--Grammar and spelling: 5

--Appropriate lead and news values: 10

--Organization, following directions: 5

Video story grading rubric: 25

--Audio quality: 10

--Video quality: 10

--Organization, following directions: 5

Total: 50 points

ThingLink completed and posted to website: 25 points

Total assignment points: 110 pts.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of the exercise, students have a greater understanding of what it takes to create a package of information for the web from start to finish. They also realize that few people know much about the First Amendment and that many are more familiar with The Simpsons characters than the freedoms guaranteed in the Bill of Rights.

The interviewing, reporting and writing portions of the exercise reinforce the skills learned in the earlier Writing Across Platforms class. Shooting and editing the cell phone video, embedding it in WordPress and posting the ThingLink to the classroom website reinforce skills taught in the earlier multimedia class called Writing Across Platforms. Assembling the ThingLink itself is a brand new skill and often the first time students have created an integrated multimedia project.

The interview part of the assignment is especially fun – the students think it’s funny to listen to their subjects struggle for the answers to both the five freedoms and The Simpsons questions. Students feel a great sense of accomplishment when they complete the assignment — we often see ThingLinks chosen for other projects as the course progresses and as the students move through our curriculum.