



Sample Activities for Classrooms

These sample activities are intended to serve as examples of how HistoryMaker VR might be used in a classroom setting and how it can support learning standards. They are far from the only way to use HistoryMaker VR, so feel free to use them as-is, adjust them to fit your needs, or do something else entirely!

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Full Class Activity Example: Historical Perspectives

Summary: Groups of students will use HistoryMaker VR to present accounts of a historical event, movement, or topic from the perspective of two different historical figures, while embodying those historical figures. Then, the class will discuss why those views did or did not match up and what may have influenced the perspective of each historical figure.

Materials: HistoryMaker VR, Oculus Rift or Rift S, Min spec computer (Minimum specifications can be found [here](#), and the list of Oculus-Ready computers as curated by Oculus can be found [here](#).)

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the points of view of various historical figures, from what sources they obtained their information, and what factors influenced their perspectives.
2. Compare different accounts of the same topic and critically analyze their similarities and differences. For example, how Harriet Tubman and Sonia Sotomayor might each describe the 1831 rebellion led by Nat Turner.

Standards Alignment:

- PA History Standards
 - Points of View
 - 8.1.B
 - 8.1.6.B
 - Differentiate between fact and opinion, multiple points of view, and primary and secondary sources to explain historical events.
 - 8.1.7.B
 - Identify and use primary and secondary sources to analyze multiple points of view for historical events.
 - 8.1.8.B
 - Compare and contrast a historical event, using multiple points of view from primary and secondary sources
 - PA Core Terminology
 - Point of View
 - CC.8.5.6-8.F
 - Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts)
 - C3 Framework

- Perspectives
 - D2.His.4.6-8
 - Analyze multiple factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras

Class Time Required:

- If materials are prepped and performances recorded in HistoryMaker VR **outside of class time:** 1-2 class sessions.
- If materials are prepped and performances recorded in HistoryMaker VR **during class time:** 1-2 weeks

Relevant Units and Historical Figures:

- Revolutionary War and the Founding of America
 - Benjamin Franklin
 - Abigail Adams
 - Tecumseh
- Civil War and Reconstruction
 - Abraham Lincoln
 - Harriet Tubman
 - Mark Twain
 - George Washington Carver

Setup

1. Divide the class into groups of 4, and have each group divide itself into two pairs.
 - a. Each pair will have a “Director” and a “Performer”
 - i. Both students will research and write the script for the performance together.
 - ii. The Director will be in charge of selecting the VR setting (e.g., background) and providing feedback to help their partner give their best performance.
 - iii. The Performer will record themselves giving the performance they prepared with their partner.
2. Assign or have each group choose two of the relevant historical figures for the unit (it is okay if multiple groups work on the same person).
 - a. Each pair will focus on one historical figure.
3. Assign or have each group choose an event, movement, or topic that both historical figures would likely have known about.
 - a. Their selection does not have to be something that both historical figures were directly involved in, but it should be something they could reasonably have known about, and it’s even better if they choose something both historical figures engaged with.

- b. Alternatively, for a more theoretical or advanced project, you could use events from a different time and explore how the historical figures would have reacted had they been alive during that time.
4. In HistoryMaker VR, create an Account for each group. See “Creating a Class, Account, and Project” in the *Tour of HistoryMaker VR* document.

Part 1: Prepare Reference Materials for VR

1. Students collect and examine sources relating to their historical figure and topic.
 - a. For each source, they should complete a brief analysis of the source appropriate to their grade level.
2. Students use the information they have collected to write an account of their topic from their historical figure’s perspective.
 - a. They should focus on capturing their historical figure’s perspective rather than being accurate according to our modern understanding of the topic.

Part 2: Perform and Record in VR

1. Each group should work in their Account in HistoryMaker VR.
2. Each pair in the group should create their own Project within their group’s Account.
3. Each pair can upload their written speech or notes to their project so that it will be available on the in-game teleprompts.
4. The Director should use the VR headset first. They will start the project, choose the appropriate historical figure, and either choose an existing set or create their own using our Custom Setup tools. This set will be the backdrop for their presentation.
5. Once the set is ready to go, the Director or Performer should wipe down the headset with disinfectant wipes, being careful not to wipe the lenses (this can damage them). If the lenses need to be cleaned, use a microfiber cloth or lens cleaning wipes.
6. When the headset is clean, the Performer should put it on. They will go onto the stage as their chosen historical figure.
7. Once on stage, the Performer can use the teleprompter to access their notes, choose props, and choose a camera angle for their recording.
8. When everything is set up, they should rehearse sharing their historical figure’s perspective on their topic. The Director can watch their partner’s performance on the desktop and can help by giving suggestions to improve the performance.
9. When they feel ready, the Performer should record themselves giving their speech. They may record multiple takes until they have one they like. Again, the Director can help by giving suggestions to improve the performance.

10. The pair should review their recordings together and select one to Export.
11. The exported recording will be a video file that can be submitted to the teacher.
12. *Bonus:* Groups with editing skills and software could create a debate between their historical figures by editing their videos together.

Note: If the VR headset will be available for use during class, we recommend giving each group a set amount of time during the class to use the headset and encouraging them to do the analysis or other work while other students are using the equipment. This project could be paired with one that does not use the VR equipment so that all students have something to work on when it is not their turn to use HistoryMaker VR. If time to use the VR equipment is limited, have the students do all their prep, plan their set, and rehearse their speech in advance so that when they do get into the headset they can move quickly to the recording phase.

Presentation and Wrap Up

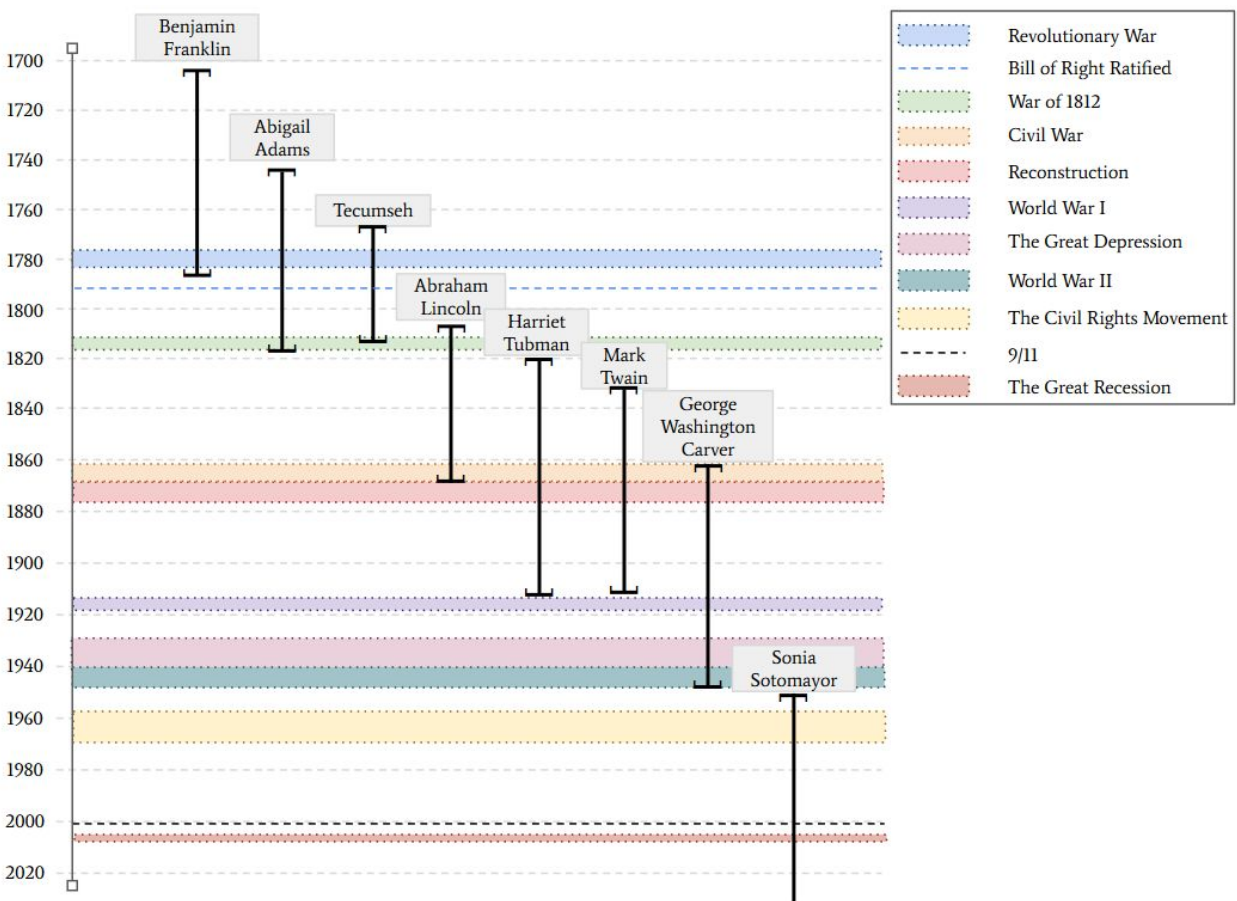
1. Watch the recordings for each group together as a class.
2. Have a discussion or prompt the students to complete written analyses about:
 - a. Where do the two figures agree or disagree?
 - b. Why are their accounts similar and/or different?
 - c. What factors may have influenced their perspectives?

Supplemental Activity Example: Historical Lives Timeline

Before or as part of an activity involving multiple historical figures, prompt students to create timelines showing when several historical figures lived and what major events happened during their lives.

This is a good way to help students visualize the idea that historical figures they may know of for different reasons may have actually lived at the same time and experienced the same events from very different perspectives.

Example chart for the historical figures in HistoryMaker VR:



Full Class Activity Example: Historical Perspectives Over Time

Summary: Groups of students will use HistoryMaker VR to portray one historical figure's views on a single topic at 2-3 different times in their life. For each time presented, one student will portray the character in HistoryMaker VR and give a short speech about what that person was thinking about their topic at that time in their life.

Materials: HistoryMaker VR, Oculus Rift or Rift S, Min spec computer (Minimum specifications can be found [here](#), and the list of Oculus-Ready computers as curated by Oculus can be found [here](#).)

Learning Objective:

1. Understand how and why the perspective and opinions of a single person can change over time.

Standards Alignment:

- PA Core Terminology
 - Point of View
 - CC.8.5.6-8.F
 - Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts)
- C3 Framework
 - Perspectives
 - D2.His.5.6-8
 - Explain how and why perspectives of people have changed over time

Class Time Required:

- If materials are prepped and performances recorded in HistoryMaker VR **outside of class time:** 1-2 class sessions.
- If materials are prepped and performances recorded in HistoryMaker VR **during class time:** 1-2 weeks

Relevant Historical Figures:

- Any of the historical figures featured in HistoryMaker VR could be used for this project.
- In particular, we recommend the following due to how significantly their views changed throughout their lives:
 - Mark Twain
 - George Washington Carver

Setup

1. Divide the class into groups of 2-3 students.
2. In HistoryMaker VR, create an Account for each group.
3. Assign or have each group choose one historical figure (it is okay if multiple groups work on the same person).
4. Assign or have each group choose a topic that was important to that historical figure.

Part 1: Prepare Reference Materials for VR

1. Each member of the group will embody their selected historical figure at a different time in their life.
2. Students collect and examine sources to discover how their historical figure understood and felt about their topic at the time in their life each student is focusing on.
 - a. For each source, they should complete a brief analysis of the source appropriate to their grade level.
3. Students use the information they have collected to write an account of their topic from their historical figure's perspective at each time in their life.
 - a. They should aim to be true to their historical figure's perspective rather than accurate according to our modern understanding of the topic.
 - b. The account should include why the historical figure thinks the way they do about the topic.

Part 2: Perform and Record in VR

1. Each group should work in their Account in HistoryMaker VR.
2. Each group should create their own Project within their group's Account. Each student may have their own Project if they would prefer, but because they are all using the same character it is not necessary.
3. Each student can upload their written speech or notes to their project so that the materials will be available on the in-game teleprompters.
4. They will start the project, choose the appropriate historical figure, and either choose an existing set or create their own using our Custom Setup tools. This will be the backdrop for their presentation. They may want to create multiple sets to highlight changing circumstances in their historical figure's life.
5. Once on stage, each student can use the teleprompter to access their notes, choose props, and choose a camera angle for their recording.
6. When everything is set up, they should rehearse sharing their historical figure's perspective on their topic. The other group members can watch their partner's performance on the desktop and should help by giving suggestions to improve the performance.

7. When they feel ready, each student should record themselves giving their speech. They may record multiple takes until they have one they like. Again, the other group members should help by giving suggestions to improve the performance.
8. The group should review their recordings together and select one of each student to Export.
9. The exported recordings can then be submitted to the teacher.

Note: If the VR headset will be available for use during class, we recommend giving each group a set amount of time during the class to use the headset and encouraging them to do the analysis or other work while other students are using the equipment. This project could be paired with one that does not use the VR equipment so that all students have something to work on when it is not their turn to use HistoryMaker VR. If time to use the VR equipment is limited, have the students do all their prep, plan their set, and rehearse their speech in advance so that when they do get into the headset they can move quickly to the recording phase.

Presentation and Wrap Up

1. Watch the recordings for each group together as a class.
2. Have a discussion or have the students complete written analyses about:
 - a. What were the major influences on this person's views?
 - b. How did those influences change over their life? Did how they felt about those influences change, and why?

Full Class Activity Example: Evidence

Summary: Pairs of students will use HistoryMaker VR to create short videos where historical figures “Address the Rumors” and either confirm or debunk a story about themselves.

Materials: HistoryMaker VR, Oculus Rift or Rift S, Min spec computer (Minimum specifications can be found [here](#), and the list of Oculus-Ready computers as curated by Oculus can be found [here](#).)

Learning Objectives:

1. Evaluate sources for bias.
2. Differentiate between fact and opinion.
3. Understand some of the reasons a source may be inaccurate.
 - a. *Bonus:* Relate these learnings to the evaluation of present-day news sources.

Standards Alignment:

- PA History Standards
 - Primary and Secondary Sources
 - 8.1.6.B
 - Differentiate between fact and opinion, multiple points of view, and primary and secondary sources to explain historical events.
 - 8.1.7.B
 - Identify and use primary and secondary sources to analyze multiple points of view for historical events.
 - 8.1.8.B
 - Compare and contrast a historical event, using multiple points of view from primary and secondary sources

Class Time Required:

- If materials are prepped and performances recorded in HistoryMaker VR **outside of class time:** 1-2 class sessions.
- If materials are prepped and performances recorded in HistoryMaker VR **during class time:** 1-2 weeks

Relevant Historical Figures:

- Any of the historical figures featured in HistoryMaker VR could be used for this project.
- In particular, we recommend the following due to the way they have been sensationalized:

- Sonia Sotomayor
- George Washington Carver
- Mark Twain
- Tecumseh
 - Tecumseh may present a particular learning opportunity, as it is difficult to find primary sources from his life.

Setup

1. Divide the class into pairs.
 - a. Each pair will have a “Director” and a “Performer”
 - i. The Director will be in charge of choosing or creating the VR setting and helping their partner give their best performance.
 - ii. The Performer will record themselves giving the performance they prepared with their partner.
 - iii. Both students will research and write the performance together.
2. Assign or have each group choose a historical figure (it is okay if multiple groups work on the same person).
3. Assign or have each group choose something that is or was believed about that person but may or may not be true.
 - a. Good examples include things that were published in newspapers of the time about them, or written about them by journalists, or theories that currently exist.
4. In HistoryMaker VR, create an Account for each group.

Part 1: Prepare Reference Materials for VR

1. Students collect and examine sources relating to their historical figure and topic.
 - a. For each source, they should complete a brief analysis of the source appropriate to their grade level.
2. Students use the information they have collected to write a short talk where they talk as the historical character about what is being said about them, how true it is or isn't, and why they think it's being said.

Part 2: Perform and Record in VR

1. Each group should work in their Account in HistoryMaker VR.
2. Each pair should create their own Project within their group's Account.
3. Each pair can upload their written speech or notes to their project so that it will be available on the in-game teleprompters.
4. The Director should use the VR headset first. They will start the project, choose the appropriate historical figure, and either choose an existing set or create their own using our Custom Setup tools. This will be the backdrop for their presentation.

5. Once the set is ready to go, the Performer should switch into the headset. They will go onto the stage as their chosen historical figure.
6. Once on stage, the Performer can use the teleprompter to access their notes, choose props, and choose a camera angle for their recording.
7. When everything is set up, they should rehearse sharing their historical figure's perspective on their topic. The Director can watch their partner's performance on the desktop, and should help by giving suggestions to improve the performance.
8. When they feel ready, the Performer should record themselves giving their speech. They may record multiple takes until they have one they like. Again, the Director should help by giving suggestions to improve the performance.
9. The pair should review their recordings together and select one to Export.
10. The exported take will be a video file that can be submitted to the teacher.

Note: If the VR headset will be available for use during class, we recommend giving each group a set amount of time during the class to use the headset and encouraging them to do the analysis or other work while other students are using the equipment. This project could be paired with one that does not use the VR equipment so that all students have something to work on when it is not their turn to use HistoryMaker VR. If time to use the VR equipment is limited, have the students do all their prep, plan their set, and rehearse their speech in advance so that when they do get into the headset they can move quickly to the recording phase.

Presentation and Wrap Up

1. Watch the recordings for each group together as a class.
2. Have a discussion or have the students complete worksheets about:
 - a. How credible they think the sources discussed are.
 - b. What other reasons there might be for someone to believe or spread the topic discussed.

Enrichment Activity Example: Intro to New Unit

Summary: Have a single, highly engaged student introduce a new unit by performing live in front of the class as a relevant historical figure. They will perform a short speech that gives an overview of the unit and their connection to it. For a longer activity, have the student also answer prepared questions from the class as the historical figure.

Materials: HistoryMaker VR, Oculus Rift or Rift S, Min spec computer (Minimum specifications can be found [here](#), the list of Oculus-Ready computers as curated by Oculus can be found [here](#).)

Class Time Required:

- To view a recorded presentation: 1-5 minutes
- To perform a live presentation 5-15 minutes

Relevant Historical Figures:

- Any of our historical figures could be used for this activity.
- Examples:
 - Benjamin Franklin introducing the Revolutionary War
 - Abigail Adams introducing the founding of the American Government
 - Tecumseh introducing Native American relations with the US Government
 - Harriet Tubman and/or Abraham Lincoln introducing the Civil War and Reconstruction
 - George Washington Carver introducing World War I and the Great Depression
 - Sonia Sotomayor introducing the Legislative Branch of the US Government

Setup

1. This activity works best for an individual highly engaged student or as an extra credit opportunity for individual students (it can be repeated for each relevant unit if desired).

Part 1: Prepare Reference Materials for VR

1. Prepare a short speech introducing the historical figure, the topic, and what the historical figure thinks about the topic.
 - a. If this is an extra credit opportunity, have the student prepare this.
2. Prepare questions to have other students ask the historical figure. Hand them out before the performance. Put together notes for the performer to reference when answering these questions.

3. Set up a project in HistoryMaker VR with the correct character and an appropriate set selected before the presentation.
4. Load the speech and notes into HistoryMaker VR so it will be accessible on the in-game teleprompters.
5. Give the student a chance to rehearse the speech and answer questions before performing in front of their classmates.

Part 2: Perform in VR

1. Start HistoryMaker VR and open the prepared project.
2. Have the student put on the headset and get ready.
3. Change the Desktop View to a camera facing the stage.
4. Have the student give their speech to the class and answer the questions.

Enrichment Activity Example: Intro to New Topic

Summary: As an extra credit opportunity, invite students to write short speeches they would give as a historical figure relevant to the upcoming topic. Choose the best to record their speech using HistoryMaker VR and show the recording to the other students at the start of the new topic.

Materials: HistoryMaker VR, Oculus Rift, Min spec computer

Class Time Required:

- 1-5 minutes

Relevant Historical Figures:

- Any of our historical figures could be used for this activity.
- Examples:
 - Benjamin Franklin introducing the Declaration of Independence, Treaty of Paris, or Constitution
 - Abraham Lincoln introducing the Emancipation Proclamation
 - George Washington Carver introducing American Farming or Innovation
 - Sonia Sotomayor introducing a significant court ruling
 - Mark Twain introducing himself or one of his books

Setup

1. This activity works best for individuals or pairs of students.
2. Invite students to prepare a short speech introducing an upcoming topic as a historical figure from HistoryMaker VR.
3. Have them submit the speeches for extra credit.
4. Select the best speech or speeches to be made into a video with HistoryMaker VR.

Part 1: Prepare Reference Materials for VR

1. Outside of class time, have the student set up a project in HistoryMaker VR with the correct character and an appropriate set.
2. Load their speech into HistoryMaker VR so it will be accessible on the in-game teleprompters.

Part 2: Perform and Record in VR

1. Give the student a chance to rehearse the speech in VR, outside of class time.
2. Record the speech with HistoryMaker VR and export it to a video.
3. Show the video to the rest of the class at the start of the new topic.

Full Class Single Historical Figure Example: Benjamin Franklin

Summary: Students will study several pieces of media by and about one of the historical figures featured in HistoryMaker VR. They will use those sources to put together a portfolio from the perspective of that historical figure, including an interview filmed with HistoryMaker VR. In preparation for the interview, students will also study what makes a compelling performance and apply those insights to their own performances.

Materials: HistoryMaker VR, Oculus Rift or Rift S, Min spec computer (Minimum specifications can be found [here](#), the list of Oculus-Ready computers as curated by Oculus can be found [here](#).)

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the points of view of various historical figures, from what sources they obtained their information, and what factors influenced their perspectives.
2. Understand and be able to discuss what makes a compelling performance.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the skills and accomplishments of a historical figure.

Standards Alignment:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.2
 - Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.5
 - Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.7
 - Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.3
 - Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.4
 - Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the

organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.5
 - Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

Class Time Required:

- Approximately 1 week, depending on the length of the class period.

Relevant Historical Figures:

- Any of the historical figures featured in HistoryMaker VR could be used for this project.
- For this example, we used Benjamin Franklin.

If the performances are recorded ahead of time, we recommend adding deliverables to the final project that do not involve HistoryMaker VR. That way students can complete them in any order and do not need to use the VR headset at the same time. For example, theme a project around creating a whole portfolio for Benjamin Franklin with deliverables including a resume, an interview video, and a website. That way, students can work on several meaningful deliverables in tandem.

If the performances are live, then see days 4&5 of this plan.

Day 1 & 2: Who was Ben? What makes a good performance?

1. Have students perform a play or dialogue at their reading level and evaluate themselves and their peers using this [Reader's Theatre rubric](#). Frame the exercise as preparation for how to sell their performance and for reading fluency practice, not for a grade. Bonus points if it's a play about that time period or figure.
2. Have students read something that Benjamin Franklin wrote, then write tweets that he would have written advertising his big ideas.
 - a. OR have them read something that Ben wrote and write big ideas off to the side, then use several different highlighter colors to identify Claims, Support, and Evidence.
3. Ask students to watch a video and read a children's book of Benjamin Franklin's life (something below their reading level) and then create **a venn diagram** of what was emphasized and why, and create a list of flavor details they might mention offhandedly in their performance. Discuss how small details help a character feel more real.
4. Have students watch one or several actor's performances and rate the actor based on [this oral presentation rubric](#), then write a brief review and reflection

about what they'd like to borrow or avoid in their own performances in terms of acting.

5. Have them watch the video a second time and add onto this rubric with examples that address the above standard's goals.

Day 2 & 3: Writing Days.

Rather than stations, students have a portfolio of materials to prep. Consult 1:1 with students throughout.

1. Give students a selection of between 10 and 20 "juicy" questions or ideas that Benjamin Franklin would be able to weigh in on, including some from his rivals. Have them all sign up for different ones so their presentations aren't too similar.
2. **Storyboarding:** Have students storyboard their interview conversation between Benjamin Franklin and his interviewer, with high-level answers. Do this individually or in pairs. Consider: what props will Ben use, and why? What is he arguing? How will they help tell a story, grab his audience, or make a point?
3. **Writing Dialogue:** Have the students write the actual words they're going to say into a text doc. Ask them to use a persuasion map or something similar.
 - a. <http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/printouts/persuasion%20map.pdf>
4. **Character Sheet:** Have a variety of resources on Ben's life, and have them fill out a literary character sheet with as much detail as possible to help inform their performance.
5. **Recording:** Once their dialogue is written, students use HistoryMaker VR to record Benjamin Franklin's side of the interview and export the video.

Day 4 & 5: Ben Tells All

Culminate this preparation phase with a 2- or 3-day stretch where everyone watches these interviews.

Seat students in groups and have them take turns doing different roles during presentations:

1. **Green Hat Evaluators** will do a rubric like the one on Day 1 for the performances in-headset. They will focus on what the performer could have added to make their performance better.
2. **Yellow Hat Evaluators** will do a rubric like the one on Day 1 for the performances in-headset. They will focus on what the performer did that was the strongest in terms of the rubric.

3. **Black Hat Evaluators** will do a rubric like the one on Day 1 for the performances in-headset. They will focus on two things each performer could change for next time.
4. **Analysts** will collect information as though this were a real interview, in preparation for a "Ben Franklin Tells All" set of blog posts about his answers. They will focus on what his argument is, and what he uses to support it. Students will be instructed to treat every interview as "Really Ben," no matter how nonsensical some responses might be. Have them post these notes in real-time to a class repository.

Have students rotate roles.

Additional Materials to Consider:

1. Students can consider their audience and what Ben's role is by using RAFT.
 - a. <http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/printouts/RAFTWriting.pdf>
2. Students can break apart the speaker's argument using Power Notes:
 - a. <http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/printouts/Power%20Notes.pdf>
3. Students can focus research on their chosen topics and questions using an I-chart:
 - a. <http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/printouts/Inquiry%20Chart.pdf>

