



OUR MARATHON

THE BOSTON BOMBING DIGITAL ARCHIVE & WBUR ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Lesson Plan for High School Students: *WBUR Oral History Project*

Overview

Oral history is both a critical methodology for the historian and a valuable pedagogical tool for the social studies/history teacher. Students will practice literacy, writing, and speaking and listening skills from their engagement with and assessment of oral histories related to the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing.

Objectives

After completing this lesson and activity, students will be able to:

- Explain in detail what an oral history is and describe the function of public memory in analyzing historical events; and
- Practice college-ready level literacy, writing, and speaking and listening skills

Grade Level

9-12

Topic(s)

2013 Boston Marathon Bombing
Oral History and Public Memory

Subject

American History

Standards

Common Core State Standards <http://www.corestandards.org/>

English Language Arts Standards: Literacy

Key Ideas and Details

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

English Language Arts Standards: Speaking & Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration

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.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

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.

English Language Arts Standards: Writing

Text Types and Purposes

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.



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Preparation

Background Information

About WBUR Oral History Project

The WBUR Oral History Project collects stories from individuals whose lives were changed irrevocably by these events. Thanks to the generous sponsorship of WBUR, our team of oral historians, and the participation of these interview subjects, **Our Marathon** has tried to ensure that these stories are not forgotten. We believe that these stories matter, and that they demonstrate the ways historical events transform the lives of the people who lived through them.

Mission Statement

We hope that these stories help with the healing process of the people who tell them, and we believe that a permanent record of these events in **Our Marathon** is an invaluable resource to students, historians, and later generations interested in the story of the 2013 Boston Marathon.

About Our Marathon: Boston Bombing Digital Archive

The Boston Marathon is woven into the fabric of our community: it brings together runners from around the world, spectators, family members, and neighbors, forging a river of people stretching from Hopkinton to downtown Boston. The April 15, 2013 bombing at the marathon finish line aimed to destroy that fabric. We invite you to help mend and strengthen the fabric of our community by contributing your stories and media from the week of April 15 in Boston.

Mission Statement

Our Marathon is a crowd-sourced, digital archive of pictures, videos, stories, and social media related to the Boston Marathon bombing. We believe that sharing stories from survivors, families, witnesses, visitors to the city, and everyone around the world touched by the event will speed the healing process. This is the place to share those images, emotions, and experiences to help us understand the bombing and its aftermath.

Materials Used

- WBUR Oral History Project < <http://marathon.neu.edu/wburoralhistoryproject> >
- Journals/Paper

Procedure

Before first class period:

Distribute journal/paper. Have each student reflect on their memory of the 2013 Boston Marathon and subsequent bombings. (This will be the start of their journals.)

During first class period:

Start by discussing the initial journal entries. This can be done as a whole class or in small groups. Emphasize differences and similarities in memories and experiences and discuss their implications in analyzing the history of an event.



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By the end of first class: In pairs/groups or as individuals select oral history to analyze and transcribe. Layout the final assignment goals (project, paper, presentation) and provide appropriate rubric for consultation. Assign journal entries. Provide rubric that outlines requirements for entries (Observe, Reflect, Question, Research Further). Clearly define skills to be considered during the length of the project.

During second class period:

Report back on transcription progress (ideally transcribing sections of note rather than the entire interview) and discuss with groupmates or in groups. Remind class of skills to be considered while approaching the project.

By the end of second class: Journal entry on final project (paper, presentation, etc) for the teacher to assess and provide feedback.

During third class period:

Present oral history to class. Students who write papers should prepare an additional, brief presentation on the key ideas and themes of their interview and discuss their analysis briefly, preferably integrating clips from the interview.

By the end of the third class: Collect journals for evaluation in addition to presentation related materials. Ideally there is time to discuss the classes overall experience interacting with oral histories as historical tools that includes an opportunity for final thoughts and questions.

Evaluation

- Have students self-assess the skills to be mastered through the project
- Have students write a conclusion journal entry answering questions demonstrating mastery of skill
- Final projects

Optional

Students can submit their transcriptions, final projects to the **Our Marathon** archive.

Teachers can submit their adapted teaching guide/lesson plan, summary of experience to the **Our Marathon** archive.

Additional Resources for Support

Oral history in the classroom by Kathryn Walbert and Jean Sweeney Shaweaver

< <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/oralhistory2002/762> >

Using Primary Sources from the Library of Congress

< <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/> >

Credit: Adapted from *Library of Congress* lesson plan <www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/journal>