



## AN AMERICAN MUSICAL

### Teacher Guide

***Civics! An American Musical*** is a web-based role-playing game (RPG) for middle schoolers, based on digital collections from the Library of Congress. ***Civics! An American Musical*** helps learners engage with, analyze, and understand some of our nation's most important primary sources.

 <b>Grade</b> Grades 6 - 8	 <b>Subject</b> Civics	 <b>Duration</b> 20 - 40 minutes per topic	 <b>Browsers</b> Windows, Mac, iOS, and Android
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### How to Play

#### Goal

Help the cast and crew put on a successful musical by picking the best primary sources for each game.

#### Gameplay

1. Pick a pitch and watch the tutorial video.
2. Choose a crew member assistant. Complete each minigame by helping all of the crew members get ready for Opening Night. Earn points by choosing the primary sources that best meet each crew member's needs.
3. Choose the lyrics and music for opening night.
4. Enjoy the show!



## Implementing the Game

### Preparation

Play the game a couple of times to get familiar with the content and mechanics. In ***Civics! An American Musical***, students are putting their analysis skills into action in a fun and engaging way. They are also building connections to the work you are doing in your classroom as they explore primary sources in the game. That's why it's important for you to explore the game first so you can determine the most effective ways to incorporate the game play into your learning activities.

### Classroom Expectations

Before you use the game in your classroom, talk about your expectations for behavior:

- How much noise is acceptable? How can you cue students to lower their voices if they are too loud?
- May students talk to neighbors other than their game partners?
- May students “visit” other players during the game?
- How do you avoid mouse-hogging?
- What if someone isn't on-task?
- How and when can students ask for help?

### Classroom Setup: Ways to Play

- ***Civics! An American Musical*** can be used as an engagement activity, or to reinforce prior learning about primary sources.
- Choose a pitch that aligns with your social studies content.
- Students can play individually or in pairs. Headphones will minimize disruption. Student pairs should collaborate before they make choices in the game activities.
- Project the game onto a white board or screen to play the game as a whole class. Allow students to vote to make choices as a class, or take turns so that all students have an opportunity to make decisions.
- Assign the game for homework if class time is an issue. Preview the game in class, and assign one or two pitches to do at home.
- Showcase the big finale musical number!
- Encourage reflection by asking students to discuss the game and the activity. Ask students to discuss what they liked, what challenged them, and what they learned.



## Distance Learning: Ways to Play

The game can be a distance learning activity on how to analyze primary sources by observing-reflecting-questioning. Consider which students may need additional support and plan a way to help them participate in the activity.

Practice together first.

- Show the class your own primary source item or photo. Lead the group in observing, reflecting, and asking questions about it. Tell them what it is, where it is from, and why it's important to you. (Some ideas include scrapbook page/s, family photo, a souvenir, a diploma or certificate.)
- Ask students to select a family photo or other primary source from home. Primary source ideas include a diary, old newspaper article, or an important object, ideally from a parent or grandparent. Students may also use primary source images from the internet, if needed.
- Ask students to share their primary sources with the class. Students can upload photos to shared Google folder, present their sources on a video conference, or submit them in an online discussion forum.
- During the online class, group 2-3 students to work together. Each student will analyze the other's primary source and make an observation, give a reflection, and ask a question about the student's source.
- Invite students to share their responses with the group. (This can be a formative assessment.)
- Lead a class discussion about what worked or didn't, what they liked or didn't, what they understood or didn't, and what they learned from their own objects. Note what isn't understood and reteach or practice when possible.
- Now, introduce the game to the students and assign one pitch.

## Introduce the Game

Players take on the role of a famous Broadway producer, helping to create and perform a civics-themed musical based on real-life historical events. At every step of the creative process, the player's expertise is needed to look at and analyze the primary sources serving as the basis for the musical's characters, themes, lyrics, dialogue, set, and costumes.

## Meet the Characters

Explain that at the start of the game, students meet Melody, their production assistant. Melody serves as a guide to the game. Her role is to help them design an authentic and historically accurate musical by explaining the difference between primary and secondary sources, and providing hints about what to do next.



**Melody, Production Assistant,** serves as the student's guide to creating the next great American musical.



**Ruthie, Costume Designer,** wants help identifying primary sources that show details about the way people dressed.



**J. Van, Set Designer,** needs help finding primary sources that show authentic location and setting details from the time period.



**Fay and Manuel, Writing Team,** want help using primary sources as inspiration for the dialogue and lyrics.



**Rivers, Reporter,** wants to hear directly from the producer when she writes her show review.



**Banks, Director,** needs help settling a disagreement with one of the actors. Students share their point of view and reflect on their opinion.

## Preview Game Topics

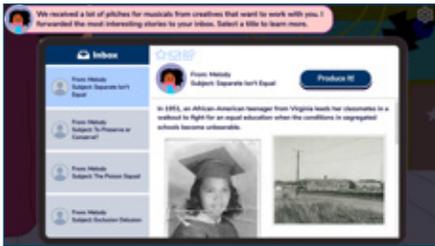
Students have the opportunity to choose from four different historical events/topics. In each topic, students will evaluate primary source documents and provide information to the cast and crew as they plan for their musical production.

<b>Separate Isn't Equal</b>	Students explore the ways in which young people fought back against school segregation stemming from the 1896 <i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i> Supreme Court decision all the way to 1954, with <i>Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka</i> .
<b>To Preserve or Conserve?</b>	Students discover how our nation's system of national parks began out of a desire to protect and preserve pristine areas of natural beauty. Students explore the differences between the important efforts of preservation and conservation.
<b>The Poison Squad</b>	Students learn how an enterprising chemist conducted a campaign to raise public awareness about the hidden dangers lurking in American food supplies. Students learn how the campaign led to changes in the law to protect our health and safety.
<b>Exclusion Delusion</b>	Students learn about the impact of immigration policy and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. Students discover how Chinese Americans fought against negative stereotypes and discrimination through personal activism.



# Explore Minigames

## Pick a Pitch



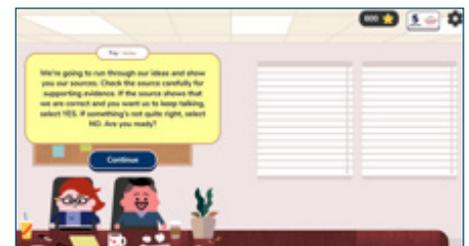
View the email messages from Melody with four interesting pitches. Choose one of the story titles to learn more and Produce It!

## Get Sorted



Help the crew analyze primary sources and choose whether each statement is an observation, a reflection, or a question. You will meet the theater departments that will need your help.

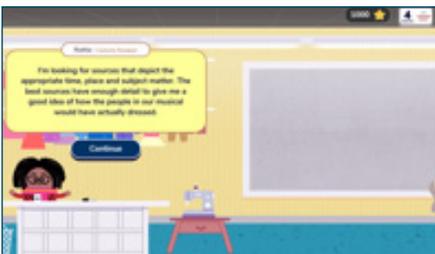
## What's the Story?



### *Writers' Room*

Help Fay and Manuel write the musical's story and songs. Read and think about the pitch statements to decide if the primary sources support them.

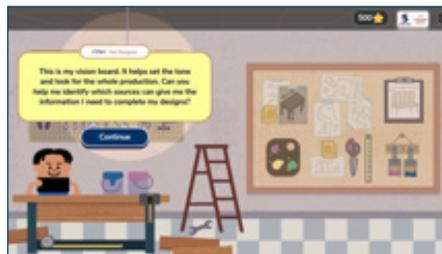
## Dress for Success



### *Costume Design*

Help Ruthie design appropriate costumes for the musical. Analyze primary sources to help the costume designer create historically accurate costumes.

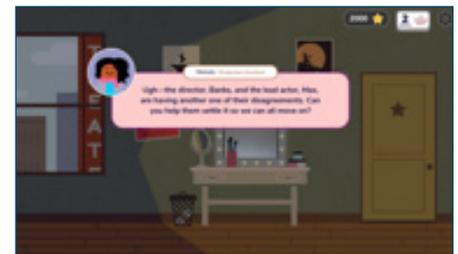
## Gimme Props



### *Set Design*

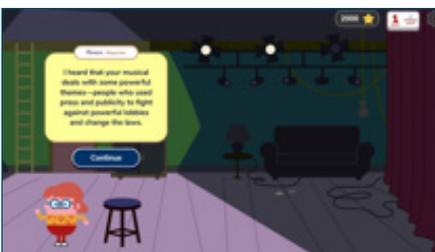
J. Van needs help designing and building sets for the musical. Analyze photos for the vision board to help the set designer create sets that correctly show the time period.

## Drama!



Help the director and an actor solve a creative dispute. Listen to their opinions about a civics issue. Choose who you agree with and share your point of view.

## Backstage Pass



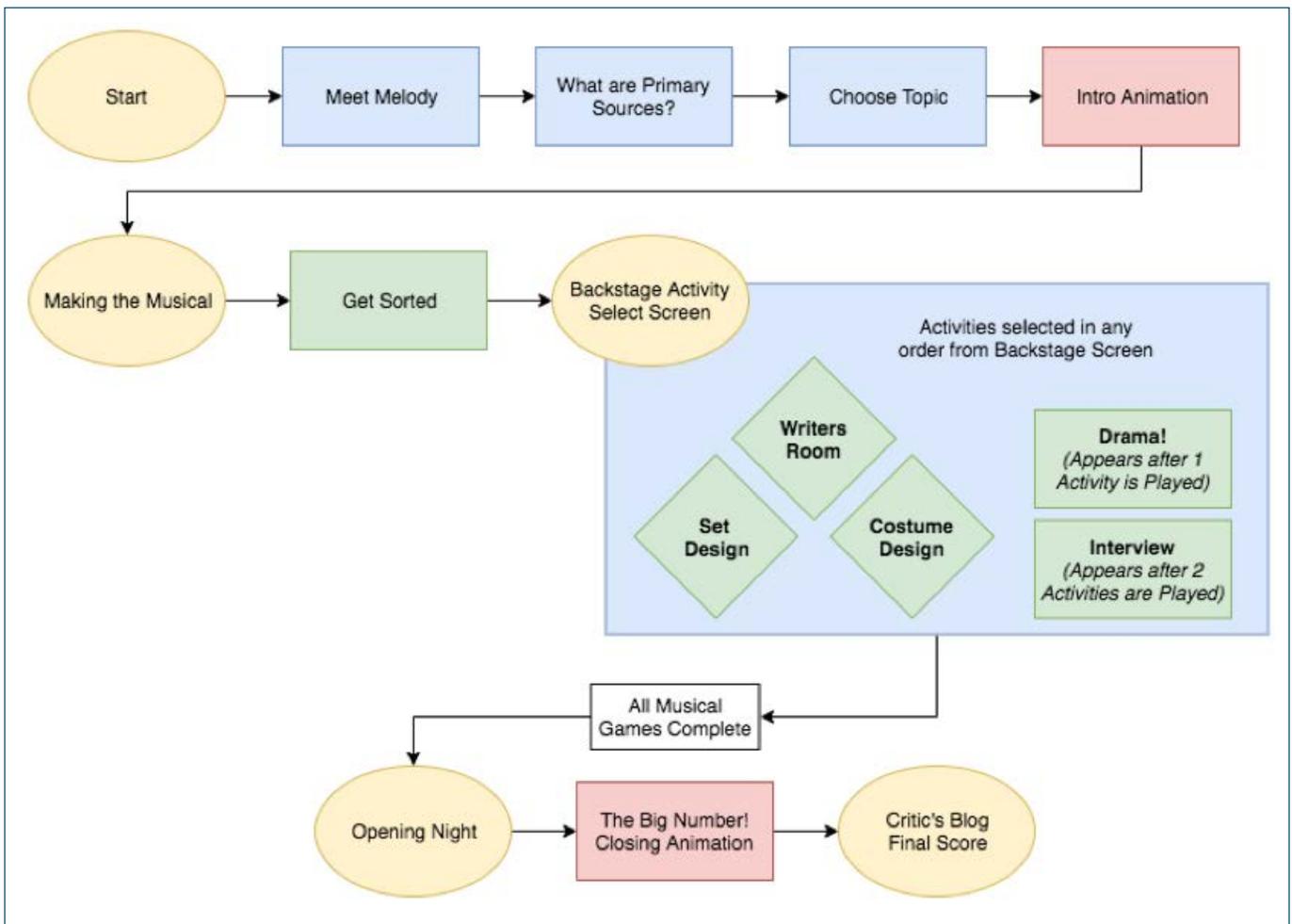
Talk to a musical theatre reporter who will help attract a huge audience. Your quote could be great publicity for the show!

## Showtime!



Complete each minigame for points that get you closer to the final activity. The higher the score, the more lyrics and backing tracks you get for your song. The song will be part of the finale as the Big Number at the end of the game.

## Follow the Game Flow



## Learning Outcomes and Standards Alignment

***Civics! An American Musical*** is designed for the following learning outcomes:

- Students will use the Teaching with Primary Sources (TPS) program to learn about and practice analyzing primary source documents.
- Students will develop an understanding of history and civics from a variety of perspectives, including through a modern lens.
- Students will develop appreciation of different ideologies, understand the role of citizens in making positive change, and use historical thinking to discuss current issues.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to think through the context in which a piece of media was created, plus understand and analyze questions of creator bias, purpose, point of view, and audience.
- Students will learn about the role of Congress in each topic.

***Civics! An American Musical*** aligns to the C3 Framework as follows:

1. Dimension 1: Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries
  1. Constructing Compelling Questions
    1. D1.1.6-8
  2. Determining Helpful Sources
    1. D1.5.6-8
2. Dimension 2: Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Tools
  1. Civic and Political Institutions
    1. D2.Civ.1.6-8
    2. D2.Civ.6.6-8

2. Participation and Deliberation: Applying Civic Virtues and Democratic Principles
    1. D2.Civ.10.6-8
  3. Processes, Rules, and Laws
    1. D2.Civ.12.6-8
    2. D2.Civ.13.6-8
    3. D2.Civ.14.6-8
  4. History: Change, Continuity and Context
    1. D2.His.1.6-8
    2. D2.His.3.6-8
  5. History: Perspectives
    1. D2.His.6.6-8
  6. History: Historical Sources and Evidence
    1. D2.His.10.6-8
    2. D2.His.13.6-8
  7. History: Causation and Argumentation
    1. D2.His.14.6-8
3. Dimension 3: Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence
    1. Gathering and Evaluating Sources
      1. D3.2.6-8



## Learning Outcomes and Standards Alignment Cont.

*Civics! An American Musical* aligns to the Common Core State Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects as follows:

- Key Ideas and Details:
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- Craft and Structure:
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6: 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).
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7: Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.
- Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.10: By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.



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