

## SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

# “My Freedom Dream” Capstone Project

“Without new visions we don’t know what to build, only what to knock down.”

- Robin D. G. Kelley

### Overview

#### About This Assessment

Historian Robin D. G. Kelley coined the term “freedom dreaming” to describe the power of imagination as a tool for individual and collective liberation. In this project, students will expand on the learning they have gained in their year-long study of US History to develop and share their own “freedom dream.”

The three steps of the “My Freedom Dream” project—understand, assess, and act—are aligned to the C3 Inquiry Design Model and provide multiple opportunities for students to revisit their thinking and better understand how it is evolving and continues to evolve.

#### What’s Included

This assessment uses the following materials. Access materials in this [Google Folder](#).

- **Student-Facing Handout:** “My Freedom Dream” Graphic Organizer
- **Student-Facing Handout:** “My Freedom Dream” Capstone Project Prompt
- **Student-Facing Handout:** “My Freedom Dream” Capstone Project Reflection
- **Teacher-Facing Handout:** Planning the “My Freedom Dream” Capstone Project

#### Rationale

Engaging students in the act of civic “dreaming”—visualizing the future they would like to build and the tools necessary to achieve that vision—aligns with Facing History’s longtime emphasis on ongoing self-reflection. At Facing History, we believe that reflection is as important to informed civic participation as action. Reflection provides the opportunity for students to draw upon their identities and lived experiences, make connections to the content they are learning, document

the evolution of their projects and thinking, and apply what they've learned to issues that are meaningful to their lives.

This project aligns with the final step in our scope and sequence, "Choosing to Participate." It is the section of a Facing History unit or course where students reflect—and act—on their growing sense of voice and agency, which they have been developing, practicing, and applying throughout the journey. By reflecting on the connections between past and present, students consider how they can apply the lessons of "freedom dreamers" throughout history in order to bring about a more just, equitable, and inclusive society today.

## Preparing to Teach

### A Note to Teachers

Before teaching this lesson, please review the following information to help guide your preparation process.

#### 1. Develop Assessment Criteria and Timeline

To adapt this assessment for your unique context, you will need to develop an assignment handout that outlines your expectations, timeline, and grading rubric. You can consult the **Planning the "My Freedom Dream" Capstone Project** document for ideas on how to structure the assignment.

#### 2. Identify Additional Components for Implementing the Project with Students

Note that the following activities provide broad suggestions for introducing this project, but you will likely need to tailor the activities for your students. You will probably need to spend additional time helping students fully implement the project (the "act" component of the assessment).

For more guidance on implementing the project in your classroom, see the **Planning the "My Freedom Dream" Capstone Project** document.

## Teaching Ideas: Guiding Students through the Project

These teaching ideas support students in three stages of the project: introducing the project prompt, developing students' freedom dreams, and reflecting on new understandings. Each section has two teaching ideas that you can choose from or combine to support the process.

### I. Developing Students' Freedom Dreams

#### Teaching Idea: Return to Levers of Power

To help students think about how to enact their freedom dream, return to legal scholar Martha Minow's levers of power framework, which they explored previously in the inquiry, [In Pursuit of Democracy and Freedom](#). The framework maps out the organizations, institutions, and technologies that can enable us to strengthen the impact of our voices and our actions.

Spend a moment reviewing the metaphor of the lever in the title. Remind students that in a literal sense, a lever is a tool that allows one to pick up or move something much heavier than could be lifted without it. In other words, a lever allows someone to use a small amount of force to have a big impact.

Next, share a list of the levers of power with students:

1. Government (National, State, Local)
2. Nonprofit Organizations/Charities
3. Industry/Commercial Organizations
4. Professional Media
5. Social Media/Internet
6. Schools and Education
7. Influential Individuals (Authors, Lecturers, etc.)

Briefly walk students through each category in the list above. To check understanding, ask students for examples of individuals or groups that belong to each category.

Next, pass out the **Handout: "My Freedom Dream" Graphic Organizer**. Have students work in small groups with other students working on similar topics (established in Lesson 1, Activity 2: Journal Initial Thoughts) to discuss the questions on the handout, also listed below.

- *How can your freedom dream be achieved? What small, everyday steps would be required to achieve it?*

- *Who has the power to help make your freedom dream a reality (for example, members of your community, policy or grassroots organizations, community leaders, artists, etc.)? Using the levers of power framework as a guide, identify a group or individual with power over your chosen issue.*

## II. Creating and Sharing Students' Poems

### 1. Teaching Idea: Revisiting the Prompt

Have students re-read the "Act" prompt out loud and clarify any misconceptions with students.

**Act:** Using the style of Langston Hughes' poem "I Dream a World," which repeats the phrase "I dream a world . . .," write a poem or spoken word piece that shares your freedom dream with a wider audience. You can choose to publish your poem in a variety of places, including but not limited to: on a social media page, on a blog such as medium.com, or on a poster that you display in your school, a business, or other community institution. The poem must also be accompanied by a reflection (see **Handout: "My Freedom Dream" Capstone Project Reflection**) that explains the artistic choices you made and what you have learned from the project.

Clarify any misunderstandings with students about the prompt. Then, pass out the handout **"My Freedom Dream" Capstone Project Reflection** and have students read the directions aloud, once again answering any questions students may have about the project. Give students class time to compose their poems and complete the reflection handout.

### 2. Teaching Idea: Sharing Students' Poems

As part of the project, students should publish their poems to an audience beyond the classroom (such as on a social media page, on a blog such as medium.com, or on a poster that you display in your school, a business, or other community institution.) But students also should be given the opportunity to share their work with others in order to develop community and foster connectedness by hearing each other's poems.

**Author's Chair:** Host an Author's Chair celebration where each student reads their poem to the class.

**Gallery Celebration:** Use the [Gallery Walk](#) teaching strategy to have students share their work with others. Either tape the poems to the walls or have students

place them on their desks. Give each student five large sticky notes that they will use to leave positive feedback on their peers' papers after reading their poems. It is important to model the feedback cycle and generate a list of sentence starters on the board, such as: *Something I liked . . .*, *Something that resonated with me . . .*, *Something that surprised me . . .*. Your students will be able to help you think of others that work for their context.

**Film Festival:** Use an online tool such as Vimeo or Flipgrid to have students record themselves reading their "My Freedom Dream" poems. Encourage students to choose a meaningful setting for their reading. They can even include music or other visuals to enhance their performance if they are familiar with and have access to the technology. Host a Freedom Dreams Film Festival as a celebration of learning or have students upload their finished products to a class web page for a viewing party.

**Podcast Production:** Have students record their poems to produce a podcast series that you curate on a class webpage. You can learn more about this process in the *New York Times* Learning Network's [Project Audio](#) and ReadWriteThink's [Podcasts: The Nuts and Bolts of Creating Podcasts](#).

### III. Reflecting on New Understandings

#### **Teaching Idea: Reflect on the Project and Connections to Democracy and Freedom**

It is important to provide time for students to reflect on their learning from the project and to connect to the theme of Democracy and Freedom, which students have explored throughout their US History course.

Use the following guiding questions to get them started. Have students submit their responses with their toolbox projects.

- What aspect of your project makes you the most proud?
- What would you do differently next time? Why?
- After working on this project, what have you learned about pursuing your freedom dream and making change in your community?
- What new insights do you have about how to make real the ideals of freedom and democracy

## **“My Freedom Dream” Capstone Project Prompt (Student-Facing Language)**

**Understand:** Use your “Freedom Dreams” journal to keep track of freedom dreams of individuals and groups you have encountered in your US history class, and to reflect on the lessons they offer as you think about the world you dream of and would like to create.

**Assess:** Come up with one freedom dream for a community you belong to—your school, neighborhood, or another community that matters to you. Then, identify how your freedom dream can be achieved:

- What small, everyday steps would be required to achieve it?
- Who would you enlist (policy or grassroots organizations, community leaders, artists, etc.) to help you enact your freedom dream?
- How would you include them?

**Act:** Using the style of Langston Hughes’ poem “I Dream a World,” which repeats the phrase “I dream a world . . .,” write a poem or spoken word piece that shares your freedom dream with a wider audience. You can choose to publish your poem in a variety of places, including but not limited to: on a social media page, on a blog such as medium.com, or on a poster that you display in your school, a business, or other community institution.

**Note:** Before publishing student materials, be sure to follow school or district policies regarding the sharing of student work online or in public spaces.

The poem must also be accompanied by a reflection (see **Handout: “My Freedom Dream” Capstone Project Reflection**) that explains the artistic choices you made and what you have learned from the project.