

## Storytelling Activity

### LESSON SUMMARY

This flexible lesson plan is designed to accompany the student-friendly documentary, *Building Hope: The Story of Mahiga Hope High School*. Shot in both east Kenya and Texas, the film tells the engaging story of how a determined community in rural Kenya, Africa and the Central Texas-based Nobesity Project come together, overcome obstacles, and build the first high school in the region.

Students will engage with the inspiring “characters” that appear in the film and with the series of events that comprise their successful collaboration. Students will self-select a format for their student-created, written and illustrated version of the film’s story, which they will tell from the perspective of a Kenyan student, and direct towards an audience of American students. This lesson provides students with a variety of opportunities to make real world connections, think critically about global issues such as education and citizenship, and work creatively.

### COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

#### Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

#### 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

#### 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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.9

Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

### EXAMPLES OF RELATED CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

- physical and human geography of Africa
- character, leadership, citizenship
- global studies
- philanthropy / advocacy / community
- science, technology and society
- culture (e.g., government, economics)
- contemporary issues / current events
- sustainable human development

## Storytelling Activity

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. What are the geographic features (physical and human) of rural Kenya, Africa?
2. What is the culture / school life of rural Kenya like?
3. How is culture/school life in rural Kenya, Africa similar or different to school life in Texas, United States?
4. Why is having a good education (e.g., high school, college) important to parents and children all around the world (Or is it?)
5. Whose responsibility is it to help those in need in our communities (local and global)?
6. Why should we help those in need - even those who may live thousands of miles away from us? (Or should we?)
7. Why do some people choose to help those in need, while others don't?
8. What rights and responsibilities do we have as global citizens?

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to...

- Identify the main characters and significant events in the film, Building Hope.
- Identify and document (write/draw) various aspects of culture in rural Kenya, with a focus on school life.
- Formulate and express (verbally and in writing) their opinions regarding school, education, community, and citizenship, within the context of the film, Building Hope.
- Create a written and illustrated version of the story told in the film, Building Hope, from the perspective of a Kenyan student, and for an American student audience.

### TEACHER PREPARATION

- Closely review this lesson plan document with your students in mind.
- View the Building Hope documentary yourself.
- Closely review the student handouts.
- Make copies of the student handouts.
- Gather / prepare supplemental resources of your choice (e.g., maps of Africa).

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### DIFFERENTIATION

Teachers are encouraged to modify this lesson plan as needed to meet the specific needs of their classroom and students (e.g., Special Education, English Language Learners, grade Level versus Pre-AP, Gifted and Talented).

Sample Modifications:

#### 1. Modifications for Main Characters and Timeline activities

While viewing the film, vary the amount of teacher modeling of the Main Characters and Timeline activity while using the “I do. We do. You do” teacher modeling strategy. Periodically stop the film and have a brief whole class discussion in order to “fill in gaps” and assess comprehension.

#### 2. Modifications for Storyteller activity

- Eliminate the cover/title page portion of the assignment.
- Alter number of required scenes (currently 10) and/or characters (currently 5)
- Predetermine specific scenes and/or characters students must use
- Reduce format choices available to students (e.g. all create a graphic novel)
- Vary the standard template or modify to increase structure provided to students. Alternately, allow students greater freedom to create their own “template.” Example: students might create a realistic-looking journal or children’s book
- Decide if this will be an independent, partner or small group project. If students are collaborating, then assign each student particular tasks/roles
- Adjust amount of text/writing required (e.g., dialogue)
- Alter the type of assessment and display of students’ final drafts (e.g. gallery walk, presentations, contest with peer judging based on the project criteria)

## Storytelling Activity

BEFORE VIEWING (introducing the lesson)

Engage students through their personal connections and prior knowledge by using “hooks” in the form of 3-5 minute Warm-Ups (Do Nows) at the start of class (or just prior to introducing the lesson). Whenever possible, provide students with sentence stems/starters.

Describe a time that someone was very generous with you, and expected nothing in return (or that you were very generous). How did it feel?

What do you hope for in your life – now and in the future?

Describe a time when you felt hopeful.

Identify three major events from your life and list them in chronological order.

List 3 specific aspects of your local physical geography (i.e., landforms, land cover, water, climate, wildlife).

Write a 3 sentence paragraph describing your own personal attitude about learning/school/education.

Make a list of the materials/equipment/technology/facilities available in your classroom / on your campus (e.g., textbooks, PC lab, gymnasium).

Describe your style of dress and what you typically wear to school. Describe your school’s dress code.

Name the title and author of your favorite book. Briefly describe the plot. Explain why you like it.

Where did you get it (e.g., public library)?

Write the statement that most closely reflects your personal opinion. Next, explain your point of view.

- All kids (everywhere in the world) should finish 8th grade.
- All kids (everywhere in the world) should finish high school.
- All kids (everywhere in the world) should finish college.

Review the Essential Questions (above) with students, without requiring upfront answers or discussion.

Use campus and online resources to provide students with very basic background information about rural Kenya, Africa (e.g., location, geography, Kikuyu ethnic group/language) and the non-profit, The Nobility Project.

## **Storytelling Activity**

Introduce film, generate interest and create anticipation by showing the *Building Hope* trailer.

In a whole class discussion, read aloud each of the documents in their entirety, briefly explaining challenging vocabulary along the way (e.g., Nobel Peace Prize Laureate; NOTE: Avoid excessive detail at this point, since viewing the film will create context and aid student comprehension.). Randomly select students to participate in the read aloud.

Explain to students that, while viewing the film, their task will be to look and listen attentively for each of the main characters and timeline events. At the first appearance of each main character in the film, students will put a check in the box next to the character's name. At the occurrence of each timeline event, students will put a check in the box next to the event. Communicate the expectation that all students will successfully identify (and check) all characters and events by the end of the film.

Preview the post-viewing activity, Storyteller (see student handouts document for detailed instructions) so students watch the film with that activity in mind.

## **Storytelling Activity**

### DURING VIEWING

Instruct students to look, listen and think while closely watching the film. Remind them that there is as much information available in the visuals as there is in the words spoken.

Encourage them to do their best with identifying the list of characters and events. Monitor student performance and redirect students as needed. At the start of the film, it may be best to model the Main Characters and Timeline activities/instructions to ensure that students know exactly what you expect.

Some form of student note-taking while watching the film may be beneficial to aid in retention of important scenes that students may choose to use in the post-viewing activity, Storyteller. This will encourage student choice and creativity, while reducing their tendency to rely solely on the limited events that appear in the timeline provided.

## Storytelling Activity

### AFTER VIEWING

#### Discussion (post-film)

Select a teaching strategy (e.g., whole class discussion; think, pair, share) that provides students with a brief post-film opportunity to process information, think critically, and allow teachers to check for understanding. Possible discussion topics:

Which scene(s) did you find most appealing (significant, interesting, inspirational)? Why?  
Which character(s) did you find most appealing (significant, interesting, inspirational)? Why?  
What is your general reaction/response (thoughts, ideas, opinions, feelings, critique) to the film?  
Explain.

Revisit the Essential Questions. Have students attempt to answer them, encouraging them to apply these questions (and their responses) to Building Hope.

Have students generate their own questions for use in a discussion of the film.

Exit Ticket: End class (the lesson) by requiring students to complete a 3-5 minute activity related to the film (similar to a warm-up at the start of class). Example: List three interesting facts you didn't know prior to watching the film. Write in complete sentences.

#### NOTES:

Providing sentence stems/starters is an effective strategy for promoting student responses (e.g., "In my opinion, the most inspirational scene was \_\_\_\_\_.")

## Storytelling Activity

### EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Consider offering an additional post-viewing activity to Pre-AP or Gifted and Talented students, or offer them a choice. Decide if students will complete them as classwork, homework or extra credit. Assign them as independent, partner, or small group work. A variety of final student products are possible (e.g., PowerPoint slideshow, research paper, oral presentation). Criteria for each extension should be based on the specific needs of individual classes and students.

Sample extension activities:

Students will do further investigation of rural schools in Kenya.

Students will investigate what has occurred at Mahiga Hope since the film was released.

Students will watch the full-length version (81 minutes) of Building Hope and document differences in the two versions.

Students will write a film summary, focusing on main ideas, and citing supporting details (e.g., scenes, quotes) from the film.

Students will write a personal reflection based on their reaction to the film (i.e., thoughts, ideas, opinions, feelings, critique).

NOTE: For writing assignments, teachers should establish their own specific criteria based on the needs of their students (e.g., minimum length, minimum number of paragraphs or supporting details).