

Student Guide: Wallace DVD & Web Quest

The introduction:

Congratulations! You've been selected as the newest interns at the American Century Museum (ACM).

At the ACM we interpret documents, artifacts and other treasures and move history forward.

We are storytellers.

Our staff discovers the people and events that have changed who we are...and tells those stories to the public.

We are investigators.

We uncover the historical achievements, contributions and the controversies surrounding people or events.

We take "History on Tour" across the country.

We create an *experience*, hit the highway and take it to the people.

Our exhibits travel to places where the admission is free, but the experience is priceless. Schools, libraries and malls are some of our destinations.

The task:

You've been hired to design a traveling exhibit called "History on Tour!" (HOT!) for the American Century Museum. Your exhibit will feature a person, group or event from 1900-1950 that has forever changed our world.

Your goal is to feature a person, group or event that, for better or worse, has had a ripple effect in our world.

- How has the person, group or event impacted what you read and *don't* read in history books?
- Explain *why* and *how* this person, group or event changed the world and the course of history.
- Finally, look ahead. Predict how the topic of your exhibit may impact the future. You may choose from one of these categories: **science, politics or the arts.**

Where to start:

Before you design your traveling exhibit, you'll need to explore some sources and brainstorm ideas. A good place to start is on the DVD in the "Meet Your Mentor" and "The Experts" sections. "The Media Archive" will provide additional media that will help you learn about the early half of the 20th century. The Web site contains valuable information and links to helpful Web sites.

After you've explored these sources, share your research findings with the class. Then form a team with some of your classmates and brainstorm ideas for your exhibit.

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What is the goal?

Design a traveling exhibit that features a person, group or event between 1900-1950 that has greatly impacted history.

What is your message?

Think about what you want to say.

Ask yourself, "What's the best way to communicate the message?"

What makes a good exhibit?

A great exhibit starts with a good plan. Brainstorm ideas before you make a plan. Base all your decisions on your goal and your research.

Here are a few tips:

- Use clear communication in your written plan and design of the exhibit.
- Check your facts.
- Make your audience *feel* something, *think* something...maybe even *do* something.

Remember, the best exhibits leave the audience hungry for more. What you create should build curiosity.

What will the exhibit look like?

It could be a multimedia presentation, a collection of artifacts, or a video documentary.

Maybe it's a poster display, a theatrical production, a collage or a song.

For example:

- ✓ Write a one-act play depicting the aftermath of the 1963 bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham where four little girls were killed in the Civil Rights Movement.
- ✓ Create a chart illustrating the effects of hybridization over the past and its impact on the future.
- ✓ Design a multimedia presentation featuring Eleanor Roosevelt's role in the New Deal.

What are the steps in designing the exhibit?

Let's break down this job into smaller steps.

- First, explore resources about the era (1900-1950). **Refer to the "HOT RESEARCH" TIP SHEET found at the end of this document.**
- Share your findings.
- Form a team.
- Brainstorm ideas for the exhibit with teammates. **Refer to the "BRAINSTORMING HOT IDEAS" sheet found at the end of this document.**
- Choose a topic and put the goal of your exhibit in writing. Use it to guide your decisions. **Refer to the "CHOOSING A HOT TOPIC" sheet found at the end of this document.**

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- Make a list of things you need to find out and begin research on your chosen topic. (You will find plenty of valuable information on the *Henry A. Wallace* DVD and Web site).
- Create your exhibit and check it against the guidelines provided by your teacher. **Refer to the "CHECKLIST FOR AN EFFECTIVE EXHIBIT" sheet found at the end of this document.**
- And finally, present your exhibit.

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"HOT!" Research Tip Sheet

Research involves exploring a variety of sources. Your initial research will consist of a general scan of the era (1900-1950) in order to help you choose a topic for your exhibit. Later, after you've chosen your topic, you will embark on a search to collect information for your HOT! exhibit.

Here are a few ideas to keep in mind:

- ❑ Remind yourself of your purpose and the goals of the exhibit.
- ❑ Consult a wide range of reliable resources.
- ❑ Check primary and secondary sources.
- ❑ Chart the progress of your research.
- ❑ Document your sources.
- ❑ Meet your deadlines.

And ask yourself:

- ❑ What were the major events and issues of the time?
- ❑ Who were some prominent historical figures of the time?
- ❑ What prevailing values and opinions guided the times?

Brainstorming "HOT!" Ideas

Brainstorming is a technique used to generate new ideas.
Warning: a brainstorming session may generate radical ideas!

Steps to a successful group brainstorming session:

- ❑ Focus on an issue and then come up with creative ideas for addressing the issue.
- ❑ Develop ideas as fast as possible.
- ❑ Entertain new ways of looking at things.
- ❑ Don't criticize other's ideas.
- ❑ Break down assumptions.
- ❑ Open up new possibilities.
- ❑ Evaluate ideas generated AFTER the brainstorming session.

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Choosing a "HOT!" Topic

Selecting a topic can be tough. After you and your teammates have brainstormed ideas, choose a topic for your exhibit.

Think about these tips when choosing your topic:

- ❑ Pick a topic that interests you and the other members of your group.
- ❑ Keep your purpose in mind.
- ❑ Consider areas of expertise you and your teammates have.
- ❑ Narrow down a broad topic; expand a narrow topic.
- ❑ "Test" a topic with people outside your team.

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Checklist for an effective exhibit:

- Say something.*

Make your meaning clear as you tell a story, demonstrate an idea, or communicate a message.

- Be historically significant.*

Be historically accurate, and demonstrate your understanding and interpretation of history while you help others understand too.

- Make an impact.*

Make personal connections with your viewers by stirring their thoughts and emotions.

- Look good.*

Be creative, original, and organized. Your exhibit should have an impact.

- Make it a total experience.*

Your exhibit should promote curiosity. Viewers will see the “big picture” of your exhibit as they explore the “great stuff” and want to discover more “hidden treasures.”