

These activities are based on the Veterans Story Collection Project.

<b>Activity 1: Post-Your-Impressions</b>
<b>Focus Question(s):</b> What did you observe about this portrait? What questions do you have about this portrait?
<b>Step One:</b> Instructor hands each student two post-its. The instructor draws two circles on the whiteboard/chalkboard/post-it board, one labeled “Observations” and one labeled “Questions” For online learning, this activity can be done on <a href="#">Jamboard</a> .
<b>Step Two:</b> The instructor shows the students the portrait. Students are instructed to write down their observations on a post-it note. Students are invited to put their post-its in the “Observations” circle.
<b>Step Three:</b> Mid-activity discussion - What are your first impressions? What is the main message of this speech?
<b>Step Four:</b> The instructor shows the students the same portrait. Students write their questions on a post-it. Students place the post-its in the “Questions” circle on the board.
<b>Discussion Questions:</b> What are your first impressions from viewing this portrait? What did you connect with more - recording your observations or recording your questions? How does this portrait affect your perception of the experiences of veterans? What might you infer about this person's experience based on what they share?
<b>Suggested Portraits:</b> 50-year-old male, Angela, Dustin
<b>Themes &amp; Curriculum Connections:</b> making inferences, critical thinking
<b>Target Audience:</b> High School Students

<b>Activity 2: Reading, Hearing, Seeing</b>
<b>Focus Question(s):</b> Does reading, hearing, and then seeing a portrait change your understanding of the message?
<b>Step One:</b> Students are instructed to make three sections on a piece of paper with the following labels: “Reading,” “Hearing,” and “Seeing.”
<b>Step Two:</b> Instructor shares print-out or digital copies of the portrait’s text with the students. Students <b>circle</b> key words or phrases from the text.
<b>Step Three:</b> Think, Pair, Share: What key words or phrases did you circle?
<b>Step Four:</b> This time, the instructor plays the audio of the same portrait. Students are

instructed to **underline** key words or phrases from the text.

**Step Five:** Think, Pair, Share: Did any of your key words or phrases change in this round?

**Step Six:** This time, the instructor plays the video of the same portrait. Students are instructed to **highlight or mark** key words or phrases from the text.

**Discussion Questions:** Did your key words or phrases change between reading, hearing, and then seeing the portrait? Did this person sound how you expected? Did this person look how you expected? In one sentence, what do you think is the overall message of this speech? How does this portrait affect your perception of the experiences of veterans?

**Suggested Portraits:** Heather, Brad, Kit

**Themes & Curriculum Connections:** gender identity, race, sexual assault, addiction, PTSD

**Target Audience:** High School Juniors/Seniors (more mature content)

### **Activity 3: Role-on-the-Wall**

**Focus Question(s):** How does the person in this portrait see themselves? How does the outside world view this person?

**Step One:** Instructor split students into small groups. Each group is instructed to draw a blank figure or face of a person. For online learning, this activity can be done on [Jamboard](#).

**Step Two:** Instructor shows the class the portrait. Students write words or phrases that reflect the way this person sees themselves inside of the figure or face.

**Step Three:** Instructor shows the portrait again. Students write words or phrases that reflect the way the outside world views this person outside of the figure or face.

**Step Four:** As a group, students identify their top three responses to share with the rest of the class.

**Discussion Questions:** How is the outside world's perception of this person similar to how this person sees themselves? How is it different? Which perception do you resonate with more? Do you think that outsiders place judgement on veterans? How does this portrait affect your perception of the experiences of veterans?

**Suggested Portraits:** Dustin, Kit

**Themes & Curriculum Connections:** mental health, addiction, PTSD

**Target Audience:** High School Juniors/Seniors (more mature content)

<b>Activity 4: Doc's Newspaper</b>
<b>Focus Question(s):</b> How do individual people personally respond to major historical events?
<b>Step One:</b> Students are shown an image of a newspaper featuring a headline about JFK's assassination. <a href="#">Example here</a> .
<b>Step Two:</b> Instructor shows the students Doc's portrait.
<b>Step Three:</b> Students split off into small groups and are instructed to write a newspaper headline and blurb in the voice of Doc reporting the assassination of JFK.
<b>Extension Activity:</b> For a homework assignment, students write a journal entry about Doc's experience delivering the news about JFK's assassination. The next day in class, students are invited to share their entries with the whole class. * creating scenes from the journal entries? Drama activities improvising the newspaper blurb?
<b>Discussion Questions:</b> 1) What was your prior understanding of JFK's assassination? 2) How do individuals receive major news? 3) Has your perception of the assassination of JFK shifted? 4) Has your perception of veterans been impacted? 5) Can news be delivered through a personal lens?
<b>Suggested Portraits:</b> Doc
<b>Themes &amp; Curriculum Connections:</b> news, JFK assassination, historical events
<b>Target Audience:</b> High School Students

<b>Activity 5: Identity Reveal</b>
<b>Focus Question(s):</b> How did the choice to cast across identity affect your assumptions of this person's identity?
<b>Step One:</b> Instructor plays an audio recording of the portrait. Using their imagination, students write down notes about what they believe this person may be like.
<b>Step Two:</b> Instructor plays the video recording of the portrait. Students are told that the actor's identity differs from the person being portrayed. Further exploring this character, students write down their assumptions. Examples: Where did this person grow up? What do they like to do in their free time? How tall are they? Do they have a big presence or a small presence?
<b>Step Three:</b> Instructor shows a picture of the person, revealing their true identity.

**Discussion Questions:** Based on your impressions of this portrait, what would you assume about this person? In your mind, what does this person look like? Why do you think this portrait was cast across identity? What are the benefits and deficits of casting across identity?

**Suggested Portraits:** Heather

**Themes & Curriculum Connections:** Sexual Assault, making inferences

**Target Audience:** High School Juniors/Seniors (more mature content)

### **Activity 6: Rewriting “Thank You For Your Service”**

**Focus Question(s):** How can we show veterans that they are seen, heard, and valued?

**Step One:** Instructor shows students images with the classic “Thank You For Your Service” phrase. [Example here](#).

**Step Two:** Think, Pair, Share: Students turn to their neighbor and share their thoughts about these images.

**Step Three:** Instructor shares portrait with the class. Following the portrait, the instructor prompts a discussion: what do you think the person in this portrait would say about the “Thank You For Your Service” phrase?

**Step Four:** In small groups or individually, students are invited to create new cards that transcend the message of “Thank You For Your Service.” Students can make a card specifically for the person represented in the portrait. Students are also given the option to film a video of their message instead of writing a card.

**Discussion Questions:** Did your perception of “Thank You For Your Service” shift during this activity? How does this portrait affect your perception of the experiences of veterans? How can we reach out to veterans in more empathetic ways?

**Suggested Portraits:** 50-year-old male, Angela, Dustin, Scott

**Themes & Curriculum Connections:** empathy, Veteran’s Day

**Target Audience** Middle School and High School Students

### **Activity 7: Here and Now**

**Focus Question(s):** What would the veterans depicted in these portraits say about this moment

in history?

**Step One:** Read headlines about the recent withdrawals in Afghanistan and the Taliban's takeover (This step can be modified to fit current events).

**Step Two:** Instructor shows the students three portraits.

**Step Three:** Instructor shares a [Jamboard](#) that has a page for each character. Students are given access to the Jamboard.

**Step Four:** Instructor prompts students: If you could ask any of these veterans a question about the current events, what would that question be? Students post their questions on the individual pages.

**Extension Activity 1:** The Jamboard is shared with the veterans featured in this activity. They are invited to respond to the students' questions on the Jamboard through audio/video recording or a written response.

**Extension Activity 2:** This extension is suited for students who are interested in drama and theatre. Students are invited to write a monologue as one of the veterans that answers the question: what would you say about the current events in Afghanistan? The monologues can be shared with the class in-person, filmed, and/or posted on the Jamboard.

**Discussion Questions:** Why did you ask these specific questions? How do you think the current events in Afghanistan are affecting these veterans? How does this activity change your perception of what is going on in Afghanistan?

**Suggested Portraits:** 50-year-old male, Angela, Dustin, Scott

**Themes & Curriculum Connections:** empathy, war, PTSD

**Target Audience:** High School Juniors/Seniors (more mature content)