



SPIRITCORPS
2021 MAINE INITIATIVE

In this challenging time, we invite you on a powerful learning adventure: join the first statewide SpiritCorps conversation. Thanks to generous support from donors here in Maine, we are able to offer this engaging, high impact opportunity to 8,000 students—grades five through ten—in 2021. And do so at no cost to the school communities or families that participate.

WHAT: This 21st Century literacy, social emotional learning and positive core values project begins with heartfelt video stories from program staff and friends, inspired by the lives of the historic heroes we celebrate at SPIRIT SERIES. We hope our personal accounts of challenge and triumph inspire viewers to explore the positive values they exemplify: Courage, Gratitude, or Mindfulness. Participants then create their own videos in response. Led by a team of Story Coaches through a 5-Step self-reflection and writing process, students ages 11 to 16 identify, craft and record their own inspiring, true life stories. Then share them with classmates and their school communities. A selection of student work statewide will be shown at our end-of-year celebration: SpiritCorps Maine Showcase.

WHO: SPIRIT SERIES—an acclaimed drama-based literacy, SEL and positive core values curriculum—delivers rigorous academic intervention and character education in grades four to eight, with inspiring one-act historical biographies that students study, co-write, stage, and perform. As State Commissioner of Education Pender Makin, then Assistant Superintendent in Brunswick, concluded in 2018: “Frankly, the more students who can experience SPIRIT SERIES here in Brunswick, and throughout the state, the better off our communities will be!” Since 2001, over 50,000 pre-teens and adolescents have met the SPIRIT SERIES challenge from Maine to California, as they strive for academic excellence, forge a positive vision for themselves, and begin to become their own heroes.

WHY: Americans face challenges unlike any in our lifetime. Launched in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent school closures, the SpiritCorps initiative is designed to address the heart and soul of this crisis, celebrating the human spirit and building bridges to our common humanity. We hope it will inspire, lift our spirits and strengthen community when it is needed most. SpiritCorps Maine 2021 is our first statewide campaign. In 2022, this initiative will go national, with Maine leading the way! For more information, stories from SpiritCorps, and a CCR Standards analysis, [visit](#) our website.

Together We Grow!

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12-SESSION PROJECT SCHEDULE

LAUNCH

SESSION 1: **SPIRITCORPS Project Launch***

DATE

WEEK 1

◆ **STEP 1: FINDING YOUR STORY – THE PITCH**

SESSION 2: **Watch Week 1 Video + Story Partner Video**
Meet Story Partner & discuss Pitch ideas **

SESSION 3: Complete Pitch
Review Pitch with Partner & revise
Send Pitch to Story Coach

SESSION 4: Receive Pitch notes from Coach & revise Pitch as needed

◆ **STEP 2: TELLING YOUR STORY – 1ST DRAFT**

SESSION 5: Write 1st Draft & send to Partner

WEEK 2

◆ **STEP 3: CRAFTING YOUR STORY – 2ND DRAFT**

SESSION 6: **Watch Week 2 Video: Hook, Moment, Payoff**
Identify & craft story elements with Partner**

SESSION 7: Complete 2nd Draft & send to Partner

SESSION 8: Exchange 2nd Draft notes with Partner
Revise 2nd Draft & send to Coach

WEEK 3

◆ **STEP 4: COMPLETING YOUR STORY – FINAL POLISH**

SESSION 9: Receive & review 2nd Draft notes from Coach
Polish 2nd Draft from Coach notes

◆ **STEP 5: PRESENTING YOUR STORY – VIDEO RECORDING**

SESSION 10: **Watch Week 3 Video****
Record video story

SESSION 11: Meet in two Partner-Team Pods to view videos & select one **
Teacher curates Pod selections to pick three videos for Class Finale

FINALE

SESSION 12: **SPIRITCORPS Class Finale***

* SpiritCorps-led ** Classroom teacher-led

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GRATITUDE: WEEK ONE GUIDE

Useful tips can be found, below, for you as a Storyteller and your Story Partner. As you learned in our Launch, good storytelling is about reaching out to your audience. When we really go beyond ourselves to connect to others, we can create and deliver a great story. Your Partner is your first audience and stands in for everyone who will see your story in the future. Here is our advice for Week One:

STEP 1: THE PITCH – FINDING YOUR STORY

- Don't try too hard to figure it out - let the story idea(s) come to you
- For each idea, ask why you would tell this story. Why is it meaningful? What did you learn?
- Ask yourself what can this story teach others? How might it help them in their lives?
- Write your ideas down, step away, then revisit them to get a sense of which one(s) is/are best

PITCH QUESTIONS: FOR YOUR PARTNER

- What freedom is your story about? Freedom to get an education? To live without fear? To come and go?
- Have you taken this freedom for granted? If so, what caused you to realize that?
- Do others enjoy this freedom? If not, why not? And if not, does that make you appreciate it more?
- Was there a moment when you first became aware of how lucky you were to have this right or privilege?
- If so, did that make you feel thankful? And how has that Gratitude made a difference in your life?

STEP 2: FIRST DRAFT – TELLING YOUR STORY

- Get it all down. Write fast. Let it flow – don't try to make it perfect right now
- More is better at this stage – your final story will only be 500 words, but first drafts can be longer

GRATITUDE PROMPT

Until she was 29, Harriet Tubman lived as a slave. For her, all those years, freedom was just a dream. We hope her story can remind us of the rights and personal privileges we so often take for granted. Now, we invite you to join us at SpiritCorps and share YOUR story of a time you learned, or wished you had learned, to appreciate the freedom you have.

STORY PITCH

Here is a one-paragraph summary of my story idea:

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GRATITUDE: WEEK TWO GUIDE

STEP 3: 2ND DRAFT – CRAFTING YOUR STORY

- Begin with your Partner by rereading your 1st Draft
- Together, discuss & craft your **Moment** (climax) by answering the Moment Questions below
- Next, discuss & craft your **Payoff** by answering the Payoff Questions below
- Finally, discuss & craft your **Hook** by answering the Hook Questions below
- Write your answers down in the spaces provided

PARTNER QUESTIONS: FOR YOUR MOMENT

- Were you unaware of your freedom, or did you take it for granted, before your story's Moment?
- Does your story's Moment, or climax, wake you up to this freedom you enjoy? If so, how?
- Have you found the one most important event that opened your eyes?

PARTNER QUESTIONS: FOR YOUR PAYOFF

- How has your sense of Gratitude made a difference in your life?
- What did you learn from this realization? About yourself? About someone else, or life itself?
- Do others enjoy this freedom? And if not, does that make you appreciate it even more?

PARTNER QUESTIONS: FOR YOUR HOOK

- What are you promising? To teach us something? To share a secret? Scare us? Make us laugh?
- What is at stake? Why should we care? And how can you tell us that without giving too much away?

MY MOMENT:

MY PAYOFF:

MY HOOK:

KEY QUESTIONS: FOR COMPLETING YOUR 2ND DRAFT

- What does we need to know before we get to the Moment? (For Lance: how much he loves to read)
- What details will help build tension or make clear what is at stake? (For Morgan: life was terrible in Russia)
- Does your story stay engaging throughout? If not, where do we lose interest? And why?

PARTNER NOTES

- Re-watch the SpiritCorps Partner video, then use the questions above to give your Partner notes
- When receiving Partner notes, look for that something in them that feels right and revise your draft

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GRATITUDE: WEEK THREE GUIDE

STEP 4: FINAL POLISH – COMPLETING YOUR STORY

- Study notes from your Coach about your Hook, Moment, Payoff, Story Tension, and Length
- What feels right to you about what they said – where is the gift to you?
- Discuss Coach notes with your Partner and make a plan for your Final Polish
- Do your Final Polish
- Now read your story aloud – several times
- Step away – come back later and read it aloud again
- Make any last changes now

STEP 5: VIDEO – PRESENTING YOUR STORY

- Record against a blank wall or neutral background
- Light yourself from the front – no light behind you
- Dress the part – simple and clean
- Fill the frame – in the center, sitting or standing straight, leave a little headroom on top
- Look at the camera – place your script close to the camera: print it out, scroll it, or use teleprompter

Here are two free teleprompter apps:

- For computers/laptops: <https://cueprompter.com/>
- For tablets/phones: <https://zacue.com/>

If you do decide to use a teleprompter – copy and paste your script in, then:

- Put into CAPS any words you want to emphasize
- Add spaces and/or ellipsis (. . .) to remind you to pause or take a breath
- Read it through on the teleprompter several times to set the speed and get comfortable

FINALLY: Use STAR. Do your best. And have fun!! Remember to end your story with this: **“Thank you for listening. My name is _____ and this has been my story of Gratitude for SpiritCorps (*Spirit Core*). Together We Grow!**

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LOOKING BACK: Please tell us the most important thing you learned from your SpiritCorps experience...