



**Easy But Powerful Activity Ideas for History in the First Person Videos  
Recommended for Grades 6 through 12  
by Helen Headrick**

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**Idea 1: View Videos for Enjoyment/Learning on Their Own**

1. Have students select any video that looks interesting to them and use “Student Tool 75: Predict, Reflect, Question” worksheet available on our [“Teaching Homebound Students”](#) webpage and in our [“Using Video and Video Reflection”](#) Tool Kit.
2. Become a “member of the class” with your children/students and complete the same worksheet then engage them in conversation about the video you both watched.

**Idea 2: Vocabulary Growth**

Use the “Student Tool 68: Vocabulary Interesting to Me” worksheet available on our “Teaching Homebound Students” webpage and in our “Using Video and Video Reflection” Tool Kit. Students can use this activity on their own to share their learning and insights about new and interesting words they hear in any video they watch independently or as a group.

**Idea 3: Geography Exploration**

Many of the first person accounts occurred in other countries or in various locations throughout the United States. As your children/students view the videos have them make lists of where the events occurred. Once done viewing, they should research locations of particular interest to themselves and prepare a report about the location to be shared with others. Reports, posters, multimedia presentations or a something of their own choosing are acceptable but each should include a continent, country and city/area map.

**Idea 4: Understanding How to Evaluate Oral Historical Accounts**

1. Have your children/students view any of the many first person historical videos, with topics that range from the Holocaust, to civil rights to military experiences. After viewing the videos lead a discussion of their impressions of the subjects’ memories. Guiding questions in the discussion should include whether the memories seemed accurate, the people honest in relaying their tales and whether their stories align with what the children/students already know.

2. Now ask the children/students what might affect a first person account's accuracy. If they do not come to these ideas on their own, lead them to think about time and distance from the events affecting memory, reluctance to reveal uncomfortable events in their lives or if there might be an intentional distortion to cast themselves in a better light. Even the questions asked of the interviewee might not reveal the whole story.

3. Finally have the children/students develop a list of ways to validate the information. One of the most important methods is to compare their version of events with other primary source material, like newspaper articles, journals and other first person accounts given much closer to the time and place of the events.