

**MY SCHOOL
VOTES**

DESCENDANT DOCUMENTARY

ACTIVITY GUIDE



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When We All Vote is a nonpartisan initiative launched by Michelle Obama on a mission to change the culture around voting and increase participation in each and every election by helping to close the race and age gap in voter participation. We are working to build an engaged and inclusive democracy where our electorate mirrors the country's makeup and young people are inspired to become active citizens throughout their lives.

Through its **My School Votes (MSV)** program, When We All Vote is broadening its efforts to reach and engage young people. By institutionalizing civic engagement programs in our schools through MSV Clubs, we can ensure students are educated, registered, and equipped with the skills necessary to become lifelong civic participants and leaders.

The Purpose of this Guide

MSV provides high schools with transformative extracurricular programming where students learn firsthand about the importance of voting, civic engagement, and what it means to be active citizens. Through monthly engagements and activities, students and participants have the opportunity to explore topics and issues they feel passionate about as well as recognize, appreciate, and celebrate the hard work and achievements of the people that make our democracy possible.

In honor of Black History Month, our engagement activities will center around the Netflix documentary [Descendant](#). This month we will:

- Reinforce the importance of our stories and heritage, by exploring the concepts of legacy and storytelling through film and social media.
- Build social, emotional, and cultural awareness by celebrating diversity and promoting awareness of the contributions and stories of the Black community in the United States.

If you are a student, teacher, parent, or administrator this guide is for you.

Join us in a series of activities that can be done inside and outside the classroom as we celebrate Black History Month!

Activity 1: Panel Discussion

Activity Summary

On February 23, 2023, My School Votes will host a panel discussion with the makers of the documentary *Descendant*. In preparation for the conversation, we ask participants, students, and teachers to email us five questions they would like the director and activists to answer during the event.

Step 1:

Register participants for this panel discussion using weall.vote/descendant. Once registered, you will receive a confirmation email with additional details.

Step 2:

Brainstorm a series of questions to ask the panel participants and pick the top five.

Step 3:

All questions should be emailed to myschoolvotes@civictionation.org by Friday, February 17, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. ET. or 4:00 p.m. PT.



Activity 2: In Classroom Discussion

Activity Summary

After watching the documentary *Descendant*, this youth-centered activity allows participants to reflect on its themes and teachings. The activity is divided into three sections allowing for small group discussion, independent reflection time, and big group discussion.

Duration: 45-60 minutes

Materials:

Netflix documentary *Descendant* (1h 49m), “Opinions, Questions and Feelings” worksheet “Activity 2” at the end of this guide, pencils, markers, poster paper, and/or whiteboard.

Step 1: Small group discussion

After watching the documentary, *Descendant* participants will divide into small groups (between 3-4 participants). They have 15 minutes to share with each other any ideas, opinions, or feelings about the film.

The following questions can be written on a poster or whiteboard visible to the participants to support their discussion, however, they are encouraged to create their own questions for each other.

- 1.** Have you ever heard of Africatown before?
- 2.** How did you feel after watching the documentary?
- 3.** Did you feel connected to any particular person in the film?
- 4.** What was your favorite part or moment of the film?

Activity 2: In Classroom Discussion

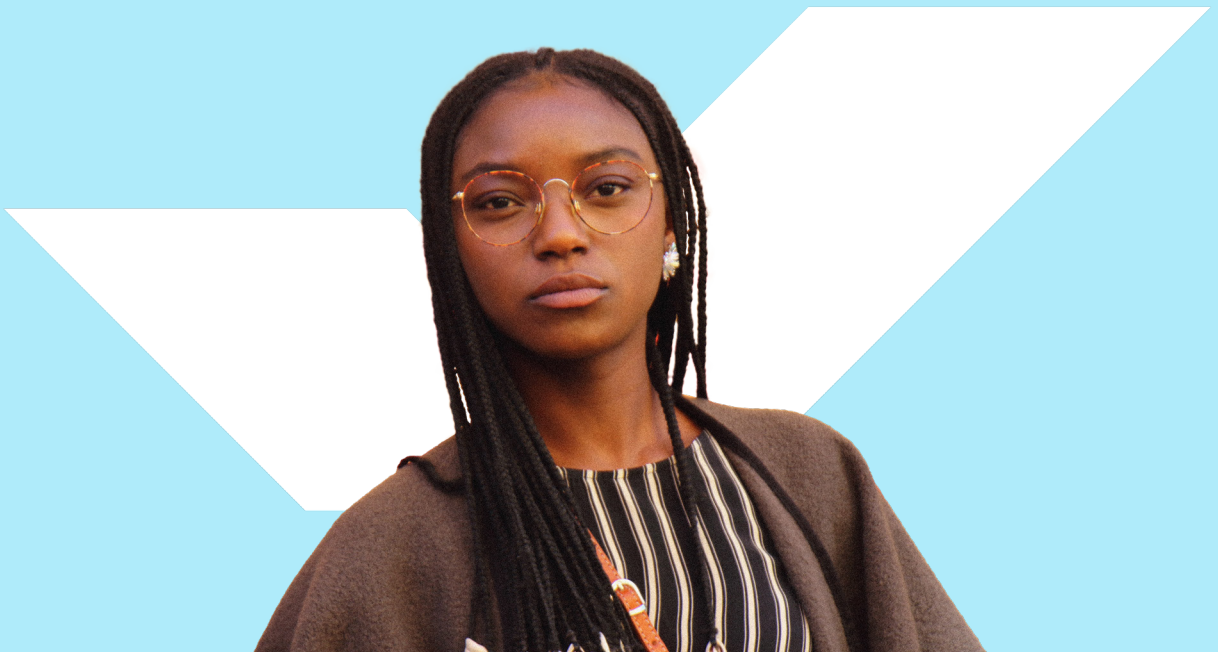
(Continued)

Step 2: Independent Reflection Time

Using the worksheet below, participants can reflect and share their opinions, questions, and feelings about the documentary. They will have 15 minutes for this activity and choose two of their top opinions, questions, and/or feelings. A folded copy of their top choices gets cut out and placed in a container.

Step 3: Big group discussion

After participants share their top choices, the whole group conversation begins. The facilitator/instructor selects one of the pieces of paper and reads aloud the opinions, thoughts, questions, and feelings participants shared. The selected participant has 2 to 3 minutes to explain their choice. Once they finish, the facilitator/instructor opens up the discussion to the rest of the group. If there are no additional comments then another piece of paper is selected. This step can be repeated between 3-10 times depending on the amount of time and level of discussion.



Activity 3: My Legacy

Activity Summary

Legacy is one of the recurring themes of the documentary *Descendant*. This activity will provide participants with the opportunity to explore their own legacy and familiarize themselves with the rich history of their family and community members.

- Stream the documentary *Descendant* on Netflix.
- Then, interview one of your family members about your family's legacy.
- Either, pick a photo of the person you interviewed and write a short paragraph about your family's legacy.
- Or, film a video explaining what your family's legacy means to you and the impact you hope to leave behind.
- Post your family photo and short paragraph, or your video, on Instagram using **#DESCENDANTChallenge** and tag [@myschoolvotes](#).

Duration: 30-45 mins

Materials: Worksheet Activity 3 “My Legacy” and “Interview Prep Brainstorm” at the end of this guide, pen or pencil, phone with a voice recorder and camera, and an Instagram account.

Step 1: Participants take 20 minutes to select the family member they want to interview and come up with interview questions.

Step 2: Participants may schedule the time to connect with their family/community members and conduct their interview. Participants may aid themselves by recording the interview with a voice recorder application from their phones. This interview can be conducted via phone call, zoom, or in person!

Step 3: Once the interview has been conducted participants will post a video or a photo on Instagram, based on the criteria above.

Step 4: Post and share on Instagram using **#DESCENDANTChallenge** and tag [@myschoolvotes](#).

Activity 3: My Legacy

(Continued)

The **#DESCENDANTChallenge** was designed to honor the legacy of our ancestors and bring families, friends, and communities together. The social challenge asks participants to share photos and their family history on social media. Mrs. Obama [participated](#) and asked others to reflect on their ancestry and share their family stories. Have students post their content on Instagram using **#DESCENDANTChallenge** and tagging [@myschoolvotes](#) for a chance to be featured on When We All Vote's Instagram!



Worksheet Activity 2

Opinions, Questions and Feelings

Name:

Instructions: Use the following areas to write three opinions, questions and feelings that stood out about the documentary Descendant. Once written, use the area below and copy your two favorite options. When finished, your facilitator/instructor will ask you to share them with the group. For your reference, we've included an example below.

Opinions

I believe...

I believe...

I believe...

Questions

I wonder...

I wonder...

I wonder...

Opinions, Questions and Feelings

(Continued)

Feelings

I feel...

I feel...

I feel...



1

2

(Example)

Name: _____

Instructions: Use the following areas to write three opinions, questions and feelings that stood out about the documentary Descendant. Once written, use the area below and copy your two favorite options. When finished, your facilitator/ instructor will ask you to share them with the group. For your reference, we've included an example below.

Opinions

I believe... what happened to the people brought from Africa was not correct, it was unfair.

I believe... that the people affected deserve to be compensated for everything that their ancestors went through,

I believe... everything that people are going through today with pollution is a by-product of what their ancestors went through.

Questions

I wonder... if one day more pieces of the Clotilde ship will be found.

I wonder... if Africatown will become a big tourist spot in Alabama.

I wonder... how many people will be impacted by this documentary.

1

Everything that people are going through today with pollution is a by-product of what their ancestors went through.

2

I was surprised to see that so many people were interested in preserving the history of their ancestors despite how painful it was.

Worksheet Activity 3

My Legacy

Name:

Instructions: A recurring theme in the documentary *Descendant* is the concept of legacy. This worksheet is intended to help you reflect, use the following questions to support you. Once you have answered them, write the script you want to use in your one-minute video. For your reference, we've included an example below.

What do I want to be known for?

What are my top five values and am I living them?

What types of gifts, perceptions, knowledge, or experiences do I want to share with others?

My Legacy

(Continued)

What am I passionate about?

.....

What's my legacy?

(Example)

Name:

Instructions: A recurring theme in the documentary Descendant is the concept of legacy. This worksheet is intended to help you reflect, use the following questions to support you. Once you have answered them, write the script you want to use in your one-minute video. For your reference, we've included an example below.

What do I want to be known for?

I want to be remembered for being a persevering person. For being a person who was always willing to help others. My laugh is contagious and I am always dressed for the occasion.

What are my top five values and am I living them?

Honesty, loyalty, integrity, optimism, and family. I think that I live my values every day because they are values that are very impregnated in my education. My parents taught them to me and they have been passed from generation to generation.

What types of gifts, perceptions, knowledge, or experiences do I want to share with others?

I always want when people are around me to have a good time, feel like themselves, and feel safe to share with me who they really are without fear of being judged. My gift to the world would be the ability to be myself unapologetically and with humility.

What are you passionate about?

I am passionate about animals and people. I am very interested in the behavior between them. I love music and fashion.

.....

What are you passionate about?

Hello world, my name is Nanis and I am 18 years old. When I think about my legacy and what I want to leave for the world, I think that I want to continue my family's traditions of values. I want to be remembered for being an honest, hard-working person who was always available to help others. A person who worked hard so that people's human rights were respected and who did all this with style and grace.

My Legacy

Worksheet Activity 3 Interview Prep Brainstorm

Name:

Instructions: Use this worksheet to brainstorm questions to help you interview the family/ community member community whom you would like to celebrate. You can use the basic prompt questions below to support you. Then, you record the interview. Once you have finished the questions, you can use the bottom part of this sheet to write a draft for the content of your Instagram caption.

Interviewee Name:

These questions can help you get started:

- What do you do for a living?
- Where do you live?
- When and where were you born?
- How would you describe your personality?
- How and why did you choose your profession?
- How has the world changed now from when you were a child?
- What advice would you give to people of my generation?
- What has been one of the biggest challenges you have faced, and how did you overcome it?

Additional questions:

1

2

3

4

5

Instagram Caption (150-200 words)

My Legacy

Worksheet Activity 3 Interview Prep Brainstorm (Example)

Name:

Instructions: Use this worksheet to brainstorm questions to help you interview the family/ community member community whom you would like to celebrate. You can use the basic prompt questions below to support you. Then, you record the interview. Once you have finished the questions, you can use the bottom part of this sheet to write a draft for the content of your Instagram caption.

Interviewee Name:

Gina Romero (my nana)

These questions can help you get started:

- What do you do for a living?
- Where do you live?
- When and where were you born?
- How would you describe your personality?
- How and why did you choose your profession?
- How has the world changed now from when you were a child?
- What advice would you give to people of my generation?
- What has been one of the biggest challenges you have faced, and how did you overcome it?

Additional questions:

- What year did you and grandpa migrate to the United States?
- Was it hard to work and raise 8 children?
- Did you grow up in a diverse community?
- Were you part of any activist groups growing up?

Instagram Caption (150-200 words)

Gina Romero, my grandmother, was born in South Texas. She was the first female in our family to leave her hometown to raise her 8 children as a single mother, and fulfill her dream of becoming a professional seamstress. In May 1972, she was able to open the doors to her first store where she fixed and designed clothing.. With the earnings of her business, she was able to send all 8 children to college and open up a second successful business. Today, Gina's daughters continue to operate both shops and have become a staple of the community. Gina continues to pass on her sewing and design skills, teaching at the local community center, and being a judge at the local drag races and beauty pageants.

ANNEXATION

WHEN WE ALL VOTE RELEASE FORM

LOCATION: DATE:

EVENT (if applicable):

I hereby grant to When We All Vote ("WWAV"), and anyone authorized by WWAV, permission to: (a) photograph and record me (on film, videotape, audiotape, digital media or otherwise), (b) edit and modify any resulting photographs, recordings or other media or materials (the "Photographs and Recordings"), and (c) use and distribute such Photographs and Recordings, in whole or in part, together with my name, likeness, voice, story, comments, and persona, in any manner or media and for any purpose whatsoever at the sole discretion of WWAV. I represent and warrant that I have all rights necessary to grant such permission as set forth herein and that no infringement or violation of any third-party rights will result from the use of my name, likeness, voice, story, comments or persona as captured in the Photographs and Recordings. I understand and agree that WWAV will own all rights of any kind in the Photographs and Recordings and that I will retain no rights therein. I further understand that WWAV shall have no obligation to make any use of the Photographs or Recordings and that all rights granted herein are fully sub-licensable and assignable.

I hereby release and discharge WWAV, and its respective officers, directors, agents, employees, contractors and assigns, and anyone acting under their authorization, from any claims that such use as authorized herein violates any of my rights, including without limitation any rights of publicity or privacy. I understand that I will not be entitled to any additional compensation for the permission and release granted herein or for any use of the Photographs and Recordings.

This grant and release are irrevocable, so that WWAV may proceed in reliance thereon, and I agree that I will not be entitled to any injunctive relief that would prevent or interfere with the use, display, distribution or other exploitation of the Photographs and Recordings. I hereby attest that I have read, and agree, to the above statements.

Print Name:

Signature:

Phone:

Date:

Address:

Email:

Signature of parent or guardian is required below if the above person is under 18 years of age.

I represent that I am the parent or legal guardian of the above-named participant and I hereby consent to the foregoing on his/or her behalf.

Signature of Parent or Guardian:

Print Name:

Phone:

Date:

Email:

FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY: