

Rich or King “Founding” Fathers or Mothers’ Mythology

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Abstract

This unit, *Rich or King “Founding” Fathers or Mothers’ Mythology* is intended for ninth through twelfth grade learners in an American history humanities classroom, but it can be used in an English Language Arts or Social Studies stand-alone class. This unit interrogates the contradictory narratives of American “Founders” with those of contemporary “Founding” Business leaders. Students will explore how the self-made person became our standard bearers of American might and power. Students will compare and contrast the archetypes of American founding fathers or mothers with those of global brands leaders or entertainers. Ultimately, based on comparative biographies and archetypes, students will render their own historical narratives of founding fathers or mothers and famous American business leaders or entertainers.

Content Objectives

“A myth is not a lie. A myth is a story based on facts and fiction, that expresses the worldview and values of the people who tell it.”(Chernus 2013)

Problem Statement

I previously taught a high school humanities unit that explored fact and fiction surrounding the founding fathers of America. In particular, we examined Lin-Manuel Miranda’s hip-hop musical, inspired by Hamilton’s biography, by historian Ron Chernow. Accordingly, students tried to make sense of Alexander Hamilton’s life as a fatherless child to his rise to become the country’s first Treasury Secretary. Students explored the American Revolution and its myth-making features. But ultimately, I believe the unit fell short in closely examining how the myth of the “rags to riches”, “American Dream” promotes notions of individualism that at times can run contrary to important collective democratic principles.

I am proud to be a Founding Humanities teacher at the U School where my mantra is “I teach my students to read, write and make sense of the world.” The U School incorporates a mastery-based learning approach into our curriculum design. The school also provides the following elements in our design approach: personalized learning, design thinking principles, youth development, and restorative practices. The Humanities department co-designs our students learning experiences, integrating English Language

Arts and History content using Common Core States Standards aligned competencies. Accordingly, this unit is designed with a specific American History lens.

Declaration of Independence

The Declaration of Independence will be one of the anchor texts for this unit. Although many of my students may not immediately draw connections between the Declaration of Independence and the American Dream, many can recite it, or are at least are familiar with this seminal text.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

Does the pursuit of happiness and individualism serve as engines to the American entrepreneurial ethos? Does the “get rich or die tryin”, ethos represented in hip hop culture an embodiment of the pursuit of happiness? According to David Korten, in *YES Magazine* “We grow up in the United States proud of our nation’s historic role in leading humanity’s transition from monarchy to democracy.” However, we rarely ask, whether the system we have truly fit the definition of democracy. (Korten, 2019). What forces control or influence our democracy? What forces control our ability to obtain our rights?

Adam Smith, often credited as the father of capitalism and the author an important text on economic theory, *The Wealth of Nations*, noted that individual freedom of choice ensures the most efficient production and distribution of goods and services. Consequently, it is important that my students, understand some theories about happiness, individualism, and collectivism and make sense of the founding fathers' intentions and contradictions.

Happiness Theory

According to the University Of Pennsylvania scholars, Martin E. P. Seligman and Ed Royzman, authentic happiness is represented by three types of traditional theories. These theories of happiness have implications for how you lead your life, raise your child, or even cast your vote. (Martin 2003)

Hedonism Theory or the Pleasant Life - Deals with maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain. Hedonism theorists posit that happiness is a matter of raw subjective feeling. Unfortunately, the constant pursuit of pleasure or happiness can run into some practical realities. Barry Schwartz, the author of the book *The Paradox of Choice -Why More is*

Less, notes that because of adaptation, we get used to things and then we start to take them for granted. (Schwartz 2004) What makes matters worse is that adaptation to pleasure is unavoidable yet it may cause more disappointment in a world that places such high value on happiness and pleasure.

Desire Theory or the Good Life - holds that happiness is a matter of getting what you want. Desire theory is subjective in a similar vein to Hedonism. However, they differ on the view, that desire contributes to one's happiness regardless of the amount of pleasure (or displeasure). Ultimately desire theory takes into account the degree to which a person evaluates their overall quality of life.

Objective List Theory or Meaningful Life - holds that happiness consists of a human life that achieves certain things from a list of worthwhile pursuits. This list might include relationships, meaningful knowledge, autonomy, achievement, pleasure, etc. This Meaningful Life approach is less subjective than the Pleasant or Good Life. However, tension exists around who determines what items are worthwhile on the list. Who determines what things make people happy?

For this unit, exploring happiness theories is fundamental when students take a deep dive into understanding the meaning of the pursuit of happiness and close reading, *The Declaration of Independence*. Thomas Jefferson took the phrase "pursuit of happiness" from the English philosopher John Locke. Who argued that the pursuit of happiness is the foundation of liberty since it frees us from attachment to any particular desire we might have at a given moment.

Individualism versus Collectivism

Some may argue that personal happiness referenced in the Declaration Of Independence was conflicted by the desire of individual achievement and fledgling material culture that was taking root in America. T.H. Breen in his book, *The Marketplace of Revolution* argues that an empire of goods came to impede the pursuit of happiness. Therefore, students should explore what is the true cost of pursuing happiness and what is its relationship to the economic success in the American creed. (Breen 2004)

Individualism holds the belief in the importance of the individual and the virtue of self-reliance and personal independence. The American idea of pulling yourself up by your own bootstraps gets at the essence of individualism that is rooted in historical contexts where people's personal differences were dismissed or even punished.

In this unit, I want students to interrogate the "Rags to Riches" or "Get Rich or Die Tryin" narratives that espouse individualistic notions. We will explore how the self-made person became our standard bearers of American might and power.

On the other side, I want my students to juxtapose the counterview of collectivism. Students should examine the role collective societies have on an individual's liberties and their pursuit of happiness.

Collectivism holds the belief that an individual's life belongs not to them but to the collective group or society of which they are a part, that they have no rights, and that they must sacrifice their values and goals for the group's "greater good." Therefore there are other ways to understand happiness and how other cultures view it. For example, how do people in "collectivist societies," such as Japan, India, Thailand, and in many Middle Eastern and African cultures, regard liberty, and freedom? How do collectivist values stand up against our American individualist values? (Biddle 2012)

United States Senator and 2020 presidential candidate, Elizabeth Warren shares her view on collectivism during one of her stump speeches:

There is nobody in this country who got rich on his own. Nobody. If **Steve Jobs or Bill Gates** created a new company like **Apple or Microsoft** out there — good for you guys. (Warren 2012 [Youtube](#))

While, former United States Senator, Rick Santorum, notes that "liberty is freedom coupled with the responsibility to something bigger or higher than the self. It is the pursuit of our dreams with an eye toward the common good. Liberty is the dual activity of lifting our eyes to the heavens while at the same time extending our hands and hearts to our neighbor." (Biddle 2012)

Putting aside Warren and Santorum's political positions, they articulate a fundamental dilemma, how do we pursue individual liberty while still enacting collective responsibility?

Founders Dilemma

The illustration below comes of a Harvard Business Review article titled "Founders Dilemma". It points out the straightforward choice many entrepreneurs make over having control or making more money. Fundamentally "founders" have to decide do they want to be rich or king? (Wasserman 2014) .

The Trade-Off Entrepreneurs Make

Founders' choices are straightforward: Do they want to be rich or king? Few have been both.

		FINANCIAL GAINS	
		WELL BELOW POTENTIAL	CLOSE TO POTENTIAL
CONTROL OVER COMPANY	LITTLE	Failure	Rich
	COMPLETE	King	Exception

(Wasserman)

Our “Founding Fathers” faced their own “rich or king” dilemmas in choosing the virtuous ideas of liberty over the reality of extracting labor and mass wealth through profiting from slavery. Noted African American Historian Roger Wilkins, in his book *Jefferson's Pillow: The Founding Fathers and the Dilemma of Black Patriotism* examines the many trade-offs, flaws, and contradictions of the four Virginian founding fathers – George Mason, George Washington, James Madison, and Thomas Jefferson. Wilkins reveals that in light of their inability to divest themselves of slaves or even push for the abolition of slavery, they all touted the virtues of liberty. (Wilkins 2012)

Ultimately, it is important that my high school students question what the “original founding” American fathers have in common with some of the famous founders of American global brands such as Nike or Starbucks? And how the allure of the Rags to Riches, American mythos created poverty and wealth, villains and heroes -from Ray Kroc, Donald Trump to Jay Z and Meek Mills.

Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, and Alexander Hamilton were the original rock star, brand ambassadors of their times. Their connections with the founders of modern brands are inextricably linked to what makes America, America. And what is America, without our marketplace? This marketplace represents the desire for material goods and the profound ideas about life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Unit Objective

This unit will problematize the dilemmas “founders fathers ” face when choosing liberty over freedom and analyze archetypes - heroes or villains- of modern entrepreneurs.

Ultimately, we will compare the “founding fathers” archetypes with those of American founding business leaders and entertainers.

Profile of American Founding Fathers & Pioneers

In order to craft their own founders' narratives student will be able to understand and reinterpret the narratives of the Founding Fathers and other great American pioneers. Therefore, students will explore the good, the bad and ugly parts of these figures whose treatment in most standard history textbooks are revered and exalted. The information which follows provides brief backgrounds and dilemmas of selected “American Patriots”, a portrait of Frederick Douglas and an explanation about the missing “Founding Mothers.”

Thomas Jefferson

Jefferson is an important figure, recognized as the primary author of the Declaration of Independence. Not only did Jefferson famously pen “... that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness... He was a renowned statesman, diplomat, lawyer, architect, and Founding Father who served as the third president of the United States from 1801 to 1809. He also served as the second vice president of the United States from 1797 to 1801. One of his most troubling dilemmas was his complicated relationship to slavery and Sally Hemings. Jefferson an ardent believer in liberty owned slaves for his entire life. According to *Biography.Com* , Jefferson claimed to abhor slavery as a violation of the natural rights of man. He saw the solution of America's race problem as the abolition of slavery followed by the exile of former slaves to either Africa or Haiti. Furthermore, the Sally Hemings controversy is a historical debate over whether a sexual relationship between Jefferson and his slave, Sally Hemings resulted in his fathering some or all of her six children. Jefferson lofty ideas and controversial views and depths offer lots of fodder to examine. (Biography.com 2019)

Ben Franklin

Franklin is one of the leading figures of early American history he was a respected statesman, author, publisher, scientist, inventor, and diplomat. Franklin who pioneered the spirit of self-help in America was paradoxical, like many other founding fathers. Franklin owned slaves and viewed them as inferior to white Europeans, His newspaper the Pennsylvania Gazette advertised the sale of slaves and frequently published notices of runaways. However, he also published antislavery ads from Quakers. (see image “Slavery and the Abolition Society” <https://images.app.goo.gl/jaebwnWhykA5ETtbA>)

Franklin also had a complicated relationship with his wife and children and was known for philandering. His first son William Franklin was born out of wedlock and raised in his household with Franklin common-law wife Deborah Read Franklin, while their son,

Francis Folger Franklin, died of smallpox at the age of four. Their daughter, Sarah "Sally" Franklin was known as the fatherless daughter, as Franklin had a mostly estranged marriage and relationship with her Sally's mother. Read remained in Philadelphia where, despite her limited education, she successfully ran her husband's businesses, maintained their home, and cared for their children. Franklin's offers a contradiction in character worthy of exploring. (USHistory.org 2019)

George Washington

George Washington is famously dubbed the father of our country. He was an astute political leader, military general, statesman, and served as the first president of the United States. He led Patriot forces to victory in the nation's War for Independence.

Washington who fought for liberty and was a believer that "all men are created equal," yet he lived with an internal conflict as a wealthy owner of a plantation that was built and maintained by slave labor. Ona Judge Staines a runaway slave was a particularly vexing conflict for both Washington and his wife Martha Washington. During Washington's final months as president, Ona Judge Staines slipped out of the President's House in Philadelphia. The president discovered she was living in Portsmouth, N.H., and tried to get her back. He enlisted the help of family, friends and local officials, used tricks, threats and finally attempted kidnapping. This less flattering narrative of the father of our country offers provocative insights into the intersection of slavery and freedom with the dilemmas of our founding fathers. (Cobb 2017)

Alexander Hamilton

Alexander Hamilton represent the embodiment of the "Rags to Riches" American story. He was a compelling statesman, a founder of the nation's financial system, the Federalist Party, the United States Coast Guard, and met his death in one of the most iconic duels in U.S. history.

Hamilton narrative may seem like an unlikely topic for hip-hop musical. However, Miranda scored the musical after being inspired by reading the biography of Hamilton by Ron Chernow. Miranda noted that in every other chapter I was going, "This is Tupac! This is Biggie!" The contemporary connections between Hamilton "rags-to-riches" story could offer a gateway for many of my students who gravitate toward, similar hip-hop archetypes.

Frederick Douglass

Frederick Douglass was born into slavery sometime around 1818 well after the birth of the United States of America, yet he shares complicated parallels to our Founding fathers. Douglass, born of racially mixed heritage. His mother was a black slave while his father was an unknown slave owner. After escaping slavery, Douglas became an important

American statesman, national leader of the abolitionist movement and a major supporter of women's rights.

Douglass, primarily self-taught, wrote a moving autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. He was also a powerful orator; who invoked sayings such as "Power concedes to nothing" and delivered the famous speech, "The Meaning of the Fourth of July for the Negro," which addressed some of the polarizing racial complexities during his era.

Similar to the "founding fathers," Douglas had a complicated relationship with women. Jewel Parker Rhodes wrote *Douglass' Women* a research-based historical fictional account of Douglas' wife, Anna Douglass, and his mistress, Otilie Assing. Parker Rhodes tells the story from the women's perspective. According to her research, Anna Douglas was a free Maryland woman, of color, who helped finance Douglass' escape from slavery. Otilie Assing, of German-Jewish ancestry, was Douglass' educated and literate mistress for twenty-eight years. Ironically, after Anna Douglass died, Douglass married Helen Pitts, a much younger white woman as his second wife. (Parker Rhodes 2017)

Anna, Otilie, and Helen stories represent the invisible thread in many celebrated stories of American heroes. When revisiting the stories of great men like Douglas and our Founding Fathers it is important to give students space to render the stories of women who often remain in the shadows but were indispensable in the founding and shaping of America.

What about Founding Mothers?

This unit would be incomplete if it did not recognize, explore and provide opportunities for students to understand and question why the voices and stories of women - mothers, sisters, heroes- are missing.

Beth Olanoff in her New Yorker podcast noted: "that the American history that most of us were taught is incomplete at best, misleading and incorrect at worst." She points out that gender bias is pervasive in classrooms and our culture. K-12 textbooks and curricula portray women as bystanders to history with fewer than 11 percent of textbook references devoted to specific women. (Olanoff 2014)

This unit will leave space for students to present narratives that reveal that women are instrumental characters in the American narrative. Students will be provided the opportunity to render stories of courageous, talented, determined and complicated women who have contributed to American progress such as Abigail Adams, Phyllis Wheatley, Sojourner Truth, Deborah Sampson, Mercy Otis Warren, Elizabeth Schuyler Hamilton, Harriet Tubman.

A field trip to the Colored Girls Museum in Philadelphia would offer a great opportunity for my students to share and amplify the stories, experiences, and history of women of color in particular. Additionally, the National Park Services will be commemorating 100 years of women suffrage and passing of the 19th amendment. This could offer an opportunity for students to visit and experience historic sites that represent America's women's history of struggle and triumph.

Profiles for Modern Entrepreneurs & Leaders

After exploring “founding fathers” narratives student will study biographies of influential American business founders and leaders. Students will compare the positive and not so positive traits of “founders” with those of the “founding fathers”. Students should be able to develop archetype traits that they can draw on to write their own historical or modern founders’ narratives. The information which follows provides brief profiles and traits of selected American Business founders and leaders from industries including fast food, tech, real estate, and entertainment,

Ray Kroc (McDonald's)

Ray Kroc revolutionized the fast-food industry and made McDonald’s a household name. Yet he is not the true founder of this global brand. In the early 1950’s he partnered with the true founders, the McDonald brothers (Richard and Maurice) and eventually bought them out. Kroc, in his 1977 autobiography “Grinding It Out provides his McDonald's origin story. He wrote “I was 52 years old. I had diabetes and incipient arthritis. I had lost my gall bladder and most of my thyroid gland in earlier campaigns... But I was convinced that the best was ahead of me.” According to Adam Chandler in his Atlantic Magazine Review the Biopic “The Founder bears resemblances to recent industry-themed movies—Steve Jobs, The Social Network—that have not only sought to chronicle the histories of hugely influential companies and gesture at their far-reaching impacts, but also gawk doubtfully at the manias of their creators. Chandler further notes that the “Founder” is a provocation: because the “McDonald brothers created McDonald’s and, like the Winklevii of an earlier era, their roles have been mostly written out of the history.” (Chandler, 2017)

It is also interesting to note that Kroc’s narrative has some parallels to Donald Trump. Kroc was brand wizard presario, a real estate magnate; he was known for his narcissistic tendencies and grabbing credit for things. And like Trump Kroc was a thrice-married billionaire.

Reviewing Kroc Life and the film the “Founder” will serve as anchor text for my students to closely critique the American Dream. Is Kroc story really a nightmare and the true “founders” the Mc Donald’s brothers the true American dream story?

Howard Schultz (Starbucks)

Howard Schultz offers another interesting Founders narrative. The former CEO and chairman of Starbucks, epitomizes the “Rags to Riches American Dream” story. According to Bryant Simon in *Everything but the Coffee: Learning about American from Starbucks*, Schultz’s family did not climb the ladder of postwar prosperity in the 1950’s. He came from a working-class family, where his father drove a diaper truck and a host of other blue collar jobs.

A football scholarship at the University of Western Michigan University enabled Schulz to earn a degree and then a job at IBM. He eventually left IBM and landed a job with Swedish manufacturer, Perestorp. Just as Kroc took a sales road trip to “discover McDonald’s in San Bernardino, , Schulz took a sales road trip at the Pike Place Market and was captivated by the potential he saw at the original Starbucks in Seattle. The original “founders” of Starkbuck’s included Jerry Baldwin and his two partners, Zev Siegl and Gordon Bowler. They modeled Starbucks off of Peet’s Coffee in the Bay area. Schultz convinced Baldwin and his partners to allow him to join the company, but due to early conflicts in their visions Schultz left Starbucks in 1985 to open his own Italian inspired coffee brand Il Giornale. However, after a few years, and some bad business moves by Baldwin, Schutz, arranged an injection of major capital, took over and became the CEO Starbucks that is as much a household name today as McDonald’s. (Simon, 2011)

Schultz's Rags to Riches narrative is particular on stage as he entertains an independent presidential run for 2020. Some critics like Congresswoman, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, believe that billionaires should not think that their wealth and power automatically qualify them to be President. “They need to 'work their way up' or that 'maybe they should start with city council first'?" wrote Ocasio-Cortez on Twitter in response to a Daily Beast report that her 70 percent marginal tax proposal inspired the businessman to run for office. (Lowe 2019)

Other would say, Schultz’ meteoric rise from rags to riches makes him an ideal person to run for president. He transformed Starbucks from a small Seattle coffee house to become a global brand. But is Schultz's accession to power and success, a story about hard work, lucky breaks or is it the rags-to-riches myth found in Hamilton the Musical ? Contemplating the idea of working hard versus luck as described in Malcom Gladwell’s *Outliers* would be invaluable for students. (Gladwell 2013)

Steve Jobs & Social Network (Mark Zuckerberg)

The biopics *Steve Jobs* and *Social Network* provide character study of two complex men who have had significant impact on modern technologies, Steve Jobs and Mark Zuckerberg. Both Jobs and Zuckerberg dropped out of college and founded iconic companies that are at times at odds.

According to the IMDB summary, the biopic *Steve Jobs* takes us behind the scenes of the digital revolution, to paint a portrait of the man at its epicenter. The story unfolds backstage at three iconic product launches, ending in 1998 with the unveiling of the iMac.

While *Social Network* depicts how Harvard student Mark Zuckerberg created the social networking site, that would become known as Facebook. The story is adapted from the book *The Accidental Billionaires: The Founding of Facebook, a Tale of Sex, Money, Genius, and Betrayal* by Ben Mezrich. (Mezrich 2011)

For the purpose of this unit, the biopics *Steve Jobs* and *The Social Network* would allow students to use a media literacy angle to explore contemporary tech related leaders. (IMDB)

Shawn Carter (Jay Z)

Jay Z recently donned the Forbes list of billionaires making him one of only a handful of entertainers — and the first hip-hop artist to do so ... (Greenburg 2019). His blueprint and journey from a drug dealer to entertainment and business mogul fits the American Dream narrative that many of my students can relate to. His diverse business interests include record labels, clothing lines, high-end alcohol, an upscale sports club, streaming service, art collections, and real estate.

But what is the real origin story of Jay Z? In the *Unreleased Jay-Z Documentary*, Kim Osorio, former Editor and Chief of the Source Magazine says “ if you are in Jay-Z's's life and expecting him to be there with him through thick and thin, and rock with Jay , from the beginning to the end... you ‘might’ realized that I am not that important to his business to keep me around. While Jay-Z's early music mentor, Jonathan Burks better known as Jaz-O, points out in plain-spoken details that Jay-Z, “used a lot of people, and once he had whatever was needed from them, he just, ‘you know’ separated himself.” On the other hand, writer and cultural critic, Micheal Gonzalez, doesn't understand where all the hate from Jay Z comes from. He counter argues that “you may not like Jay Z as an artist, but if you don't respect him as a businessman, that is a problem”.

For this unit , students will view clips of the *Unreleased Jay-Z Documentary* alongside excerpts of the Forbes feature *Artist, Icon, Billionaire: How Jay-Z Created His \$1 Billion Fortune* and come to their own conclusion about Jay-Z's origin and blueprint to success. (Martin 2018 [Youtube](#))

Donald Trump

A study and close review of Donald Trump's profile could be an option for this unit. Prior to becoming the 45th president of the United State of American, Trump had long crafted his myth as a savvy tycoon and art of the deal, real estate magnate and reality TV star. As the 2020 presidential race nears, some students might be interested in digging deeper into Trump's background and explore not only his personal myth-making but inquire if his narrative fits the archetype of the American Dream hero?

A Note about Entertainers Especially Hip Hop Artists

Some educators may not want to include entertainers and especially hip-hop artists in this "founders" unit, because many students are already overexposed to their stories. This point is well taken, however, this unit is designed with flexibility to bring in contemporary figures which many of my students are familiar with and to connect to traditional business "Founders". Furthermore, as the Jay-Z's "narrative" shows, entertainment is a gateway American enterprise that offers alternatives investments, that may inspire my students.

Last is very brief profiles of contemporary American leaders Onika Tanya Maraj, (Nicki Minaj) and Robert Rimeek Williams (Meek Mills). They deserve profiling not because they once dated and could have been a power Hip-Hip couple, but because they both represent American narratives that could easily resonate with many of my students.

Meek Mill-

Meek Mill is a highly popular artist whom most of the students view in high esteem. Although his from the ghettos of Philadelphia narrative is similar to Jay-Z's , his Philadelphia connection and roots makes his redemption story more resonate to my students. Meek Mill's journey through rap battles, to being arrested for illegal possession of a firearm, to his off and on probation battles to his current prison reform activism provides lots of fodder for students to render a compelling American Dream Chasers myth.

Nicki Manaji

Nicki Manaji topped the 2018 list of richest female rappers and her net worth is more than Meek Mills. She was born in Saint James, Trinidad and Tobago, in 1982, and immigrated to Queens, N.Y., with her family at the age of 5. She began her music career singing with various rappers and working odd jobs. The Time Style Magazine Feature story *Nicki Minaj, Always in Control:* reveals an unflinching narrative of how the queen of hip-hop fought her way to the top of the music industry — and never made compromises. (Gay 2017)

The earlier referenced biased treatment of “Founding Mothers” is echoed in the sentiment expressed by Manaji’s during MTV interview. (MTV 2010) She said “When you're a girl, you have to be everything, You have to be dope at what you do, but you have to be super sweet, and you have to be sexy, and you have to be this and you have to be that and you have to be nice, and you have to-- it's like, I can't be all of those things at once. I'm a human being.”



Using Nicki Manaji’s narrative, quotes and alter egos could provide students with ample opportunities to consider women and other non-dominant narratives for this unit.

Culminating Performance

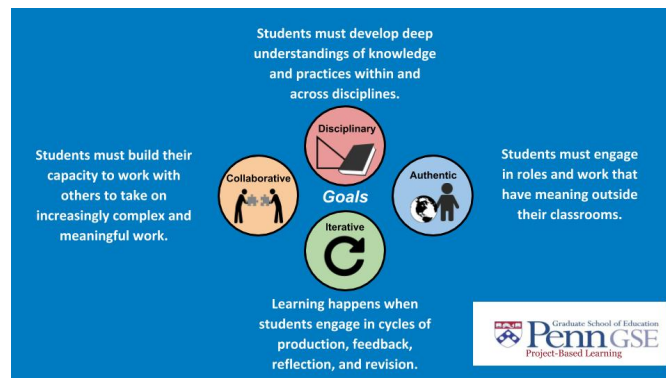
The culminating performance task for this unit is to design, develop and deliver multimedia narratives of mythical founding fathers or mothers and famous American business leaders or entertainers. Through students considering comparative narratives, they should gain a deeper appreciation of the struggles and opportunities of chasing the American Dream. And understand how some groups (rich white men) have been systematically privileged over other groups in their pursuit of happiness. Accordingly, students will undertake the primary learning objectives listed below:

- Develop an understanding of the meaning of the Declaration of Independence and American Dream through reading, viewing and discussing fiction and nonfiction text.
- Critically read to compare and contrast biographical narratives of founding fathers and/or mothers versus modern business leaders and/or entertainers
- Develop a narrative arch for a mythical “founder’s” story

- Critically read and identify central ideas in the text and cite evidence to support claims
- Use critical media literacy skills to analyze and
- Distinguish between facts and fiction in order to reveal important American myths and values
- Use technology and critical media literacy skills to view, analyze and share work.

Teaching Strategies

This unit will rely upon important fiction, non-fiction readings, and short biographies to explore and understand some basic theories noted in the objectives. It should be noted that this unit will be implemented using core principles adapted from the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School Education Project Based Learning certificate program. These core practice in include: disciplinary learning, authentic engagement, iterative learning cycles, and collaboration. (Grossman et al 2019) See Illustration below



In the [Appendix](#) of this unit is the Student Facing Unit Guide that includes an overview of the unit, its essential question, key vocabulary, competencies aligned to the Common Core State Standards , Habits of Success along with a list of activities and strategies that will be used to teach the content and unit objectives previously discussed.

Anchor Strategies

Some anchor strategies for this unit include activating prior knowledge , using close reading strategies , teaching vocabulary in context, and using the RAFT writing strategies which are outlined below.

Before, During and After Reading and Writing Strategies

K-W-L What You Already Know, What You Want to Know and What You Learned

Venn Diagram Supports comparing and contrasting biographies, key theories and concepts

Frayer Model Vocabulary - A visual 4 square vocabulary graphic organizer to teach vocabulary in context.

TAG Reading and Analysis Strategy. This Response strategy will support students in turning a prompt about a biographical profile, theory or concepts into an opening statement, answer the prompt and give evidence to support their claims.

RAFT Strategy This writing strategy helps students understand their roles as writers, the audience they will address, the varied formats for writing, and the topic they'll be writing about. For example, students will understand their role and audience for writing historical Narratives for their choose founding father, founding mother modern business leader or entertainer.

Graphic Organizers - Other graphic organizers that may be used include: timelines, the Who, What When, Where, Why and How Chart and the Hero's Journey Dramatic Arch Chart

Assessment and Competencies

This unit will be assessed using Reading , Writing , History and habits of success competences referenced in the appendix. A sample competency continua is provided below for illustration purposes (How well do I use precise language, vocabulary, and techniques? (ELA 4.4)



How well do I use precise language, vocabulary, and techniques? (ELA 4.4)	I can provide specific facts and information about my topic in my own words, using charts, graphs, images, etc., when appropriate.	I can provide specific information about my topic to fully define my categories and/or support my argument, while integrating charts, graphs, images, etc., purposefully.	I can provide significant information about my topic to engage my audience, while integrating charts, graphs, images, headings, etc. effectively.	I can provide the most significant information about my topic that is relevant to my audience, while integrating charts, graphs, images, headings, etc. effectively.
	I can choose quotations and introduce them with phrases like "the author said," or "according to the text."	I can ensure that all my information is from trusted and significant sources.	I can fully develop and define my categories and/or support my argument.	I can fully develop and define my categories and/or support my argument as well as evaluate other points of view and/or conflicting information.
	I can add an in-text citation at the end of the sentence, in parenthesis, and before the period.	I can choose quotations, integrate them into my own sentences, and provide information about the quotation's location in the text or source ("after Susan hits Bill"; "according to the narrator").	I can ensure that I use multiple trusted and significant sources.	I can ensure that I use multiple trusted and significant sources.
		I can add an in-text citation at the end of the sentence, and I can use ellipses to shorten or remove unnecessary parts of quotations.	I can choose quotations and integrate them into my own sentences, providing context for the reader to understand the quotation.	I can choose quotations and integrate them into my own sentences, sometimes using strings of related quotes in the same sentence, and always providing details and context for the reader.
		I can add an in-text citation at the end of the sentence, and I can use ellipses to shorten quotations, and brackets to make changes in person and tense, and to clarify unclear pronouns.		

Classroom Activities

Overall this unit will take 4 weeks or a half the 8 week quarter system. What follows next are 3 sample classroom activities that can be implemented while teaching this unit.

Sample Lesson Plan 1 - Project Launch (Authenticity and Disciplinary learning)

Title: KWLQ - Declaration of Independence - What does pursuit of Happiness mean ?

Grade Range and Subjects: English / World History 9-12th Grade Large Group (20 - 33 students)

Duration of Lesson: 2 -3 Class Periods (45- 60 Minutes)

Goal(s) : Students will complete a KWLQ chart and reflect on what does life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness mean?

Mini Lesson: Students will complete the KWLQ Chart before, during and after viewing 2 following video clips:

1. [Civil Right Leader John Lewis On Life Liberty and Pursuit of Happiness](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fSkqu8M5Rno)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fSkqu8M5Rno>
2. [The United States Army Band On Life Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fSkqu8M5Rno)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fSkqu8M5Rno>

Each column should have at least four details written.

<p>K: What do you already KNOW about the Declaration of Independence ?</p>	<p>W: What do you want to learn about what Life , Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness means ?</p>	<p>L: After viewing the videos from Civil Right Leader John Lewis and from the United States Army Band , what new views do you have about, Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness ?</p>	<p>Q: What new questions do you have about the Declaration of Independence what Life , Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness means?</p>
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Activities: Students will closely read and annotate theories about happiness, individualism and collectivism. Students will identify three central ideas, track the development of the central ideas and write an objective summary discussing how the pursuit of happiness can help or not help the collective “ common good” of a society.

Teachers should be prepared to support students in discussing the ways the marketplace of goods and ideas impacted the American Revolution? Students should share their responses and be prepared to describe the conflicts that may arise when in pursuing individual liberties versus collective responsibility?

A graphic organizer to help students identify and analyze the development of the central ideas found in the text will be a useful accommodations for students needed additional scaffolding . Sentence starters to help students construct their summaries and discussions would also be helpful.

Sample Lesson Plan 2 - Compare Biographical Narrative (Iterative Design and Collaboration)

Title: Rich or King Biographies - Compare & Contrast Original Founding Fathers / Mothers to Modern Business Founders / Entertainers

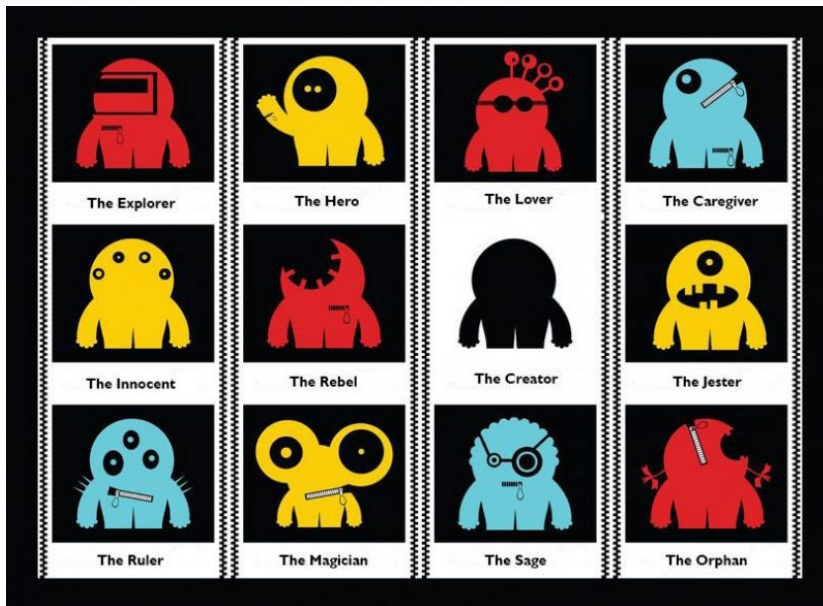
Grade Range and Subjects: English / World History 9-12th Grade Large Group (20 - 33 students)

Duration of Lesson: 2 -3 Class Periods (45- 60 Minutes)

Goal(s) : Students will closely read biographical profile to determine character archetypes and compare and contrast past historical figures to contemporary leaders

Mini Lesson: Students will make predictions about historical and contemporary leaders archetype using the charts below. After reading the full biographies students should determine if their predictions were valid.

An archetype is a pattern we see across stories, myths, movies, plays, novels, etc —. Make predictions for which archetype would best fit the founders fathers / mothers and founder business leaders/ entertainers provided below.



(Learning Mind 2018)

<p>Founder Father or Mother -Select at least 4</p>	<p>Archetype Prediction Prior to reading biography write or illustrate the archetype.</p>	<p>After Reading / Viewing the biography does the Archetype change or remain the same? Write or illustrate the archetype.</p>	<p>Why was the prediction valid or not valid?</p>
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Thomas Jefferson			
George Washington			
Alexander Hamilton			
Benjamin Franklin			
Abigail Adams			
Frederick Douglas			
Sojourner Truth			
<i>Other - see Educator for approval or advice.</i>			
Founding Business Leaders or Entertainers - Select at least 4			
Ray Kroc- McDonalds			
Howard Schultz- Starbucks			
Steve Jobs - Apple			
Mark Zuckerberg - Facebook			
Jay Z			
Nicki Manaji			
Meek Mills			
Donald Trump			
Other Founder - See			

Educator for approval or advice			
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Activities: Students will write a compare and contrast constructed response to analyze the similarities and differences between a Historical Figure (Founding Father or Mother) and a Contemporary Figure (Business Founder or Entertainer). Students should compare personality traits, archetypes, origins, dilemmas, etc.

Students' responses should be at least 3-5 paragraphs in length, and should include at least 3 pieces of textual evidence. Students should answer the following questions:

How are your selected founding father or mother and your selected business founder or entertainer similar (personality traits, archetypes, origins, dilemmas)

How are your selected founding father or mother and your selected business founder or entertainer different (personality traits, archetypes, origins, dilemmas)

How are your selected founding father or mother and your selected business founder or entertainer either more similar or different? Summarize your findings.

A compare and contrast graphic organizer could be used to help students plan and construct the suitable organizational structure required for this type of response.

Sample Lesson Plan 3- Develop Biographical Narrative (Authenticity and Collaboration)

Title: Rich or King Hero's Journey- Writing Historical or Contemporary Fictional Narratives

Grade Range and Subjects: English / World History 9-12th Grade Large Group (20 - 33 students)

Duration of Lesson: 3 -5 Class Periods (45- 60 Minutes)

Goal(s) : Students will plan, draft, revise, edit and publish their own

Mini Lesson: Students consider and plan the hero's journey for their own historical and contemporary narrative

Think about who founders narrative will be about a historical or modern figure?

Who is this narrative about? A Founding Father, Mother or Modern Business Leader or Entertainer?	
What archetype fits with your hero or villain's story.	
What dilemma did he/ she face?	
What will your setting be? Will this place be mostly real or mostly imagined?	
Who are other characters in your story? Are you a character?	
In what time period is your narrative occurring?	
What historical facts do you need to make sure you include?	
What format will you use? Written story Short play Animation Song Comic	

Activities: Students will create a plot map of the major events and major turning points in their founders' narrative. Students plot map should summarize their exposition, and provide key events in the rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. Students can use a hard copy or use this [digital copy](#) of a plot map.

Extension- Students can create a storyboard if they plan to create a comic or other visual version of their founder narrative. Furthermore, this unit may culminate with an exhibition showcase. With support from U School'd media arts educator students' work may be presented at out of school venues.

Resources

Annotated Teacher's Bibliography

- Biddle, Craig. "Individualism vs. Collectivism: Our Future, Our Choice." *The Objective Standard*, Feb. 2012. Provida philosophical comparisons of individualism and collectivism. www.theobjectivestandard.com/issues/2012-spring/individualism-collectivism/#_edn13 .
- Breen, Timothy Hall. *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence*. Oxford University Press, 2004. A comprehensive text that reveals how consumer politics shaped the founding of America.
- Chandler, Adam. "How Ray Kroc Became an American Villain." *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company, 26 Jan. 2017
www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2017/01/ray-kroc-mcdonalds-america/514538/ A review of the biopic of the McDonald's mogul that gets a 21st-century spin.
- Chernus , Ira. "The Meaning of Myth In The American Context ." *Mythic America: Essays*, 11 Sept. 2013, www.mythicamerica.wordpress.com/the-meaning-of-myth-in-the-american-context/ Essays about America's national myths in the past, present, and future.
- Grossman, Pam, et al. "Preparing Teachers for Project-Based Teaching ." *Kappanonline.org*, 25 Mar. 2019, www.kappanonline.org/preparing-teachers-project-based-teaching-grossman-pupik-dean-kavanagh-herrmann/ .
- Korten, David. "Confronting the Great American Myth." *YES! Magazine*, 1 Feb. 2019, www.yesmagazine.org/people-power/confronting-the-great-american-myth-20190201 About how the founders of the United States have the society they wanted—one that keeps people like them in power.
- Mezrich, Ben. *The Accidental Billionaires: The Founding of Facebook: a Tale of Sex, Money, Genius and Betrayal*. CNIB, 2011. The movie Social Network was based off this book which delves into the myths regarding the founding of Facebook.
- Parker Rhodes, Jewels. "How I Came to Write Douglass' Women." June 2017, www.jewellparkerrhodes.com/books/douglass-women/how-i-came-to-write-douglass-women/ . Provided insights about Frederick Douglass, wife and concubine.
- Schwartz, Barry. *The Paradox of Choice: Why More Is Less*. HarperCollins Publishers, 2004. An important text about authentic happiness and the complexities of choice.
- Seligman, Martin E P, and Ed Royzman. *Authentic Happiness*, University of

- Pennsylvania, June 2003,
www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu/newsletters/authentic happiness/happiness
 . Provides brief survey of some theories about happiness use for teachers and students.
- Simon, Bryant. *Everything but the Coffee: Learning about America from Starbucks*. University of California Press, 2011. Everything Starbucks and great comprehensive biographical profile of Howard Schultz.
- Wasserman, Noam. "The Founder's Dilemma." *Harvard Business Review*, 11 Aug. 2014, www.hbr.org/2008/02/the-founders-dilemma.. Provides business and financial insights for business founders and startups.
- Wilkins, Roger W. *Jefferson's Pillow: the Founding Fathers and the Dilemma of Black Patriotism*. Beacon Press, 2002. This book offers insights on the contradictions of the Founder fathers especially as it relates to the issue of slavery and racism.

Reading List For Student

- Cobb, Vicki. "George Washington's Dilemma." *HuffPost*, 7 Dec. 2017, www.huffpost.com/entry/presidents-day-dilemma_b_4789452 . Suitable text for high school students provides critical treatment of George Washington and his treatment of his slaves.
- Gladwell, Malcolm. *Outliers: the Story of Success*. Back Bay Books, Little, Brown and Company, 2013. A fascinating text about luck, hard work and how people attain high levels of success.
- Greenburg, Zack O'Malley. "Artist, Icon, Billionaire: How Jay-Z Created His \$1 Billion Fortune." *Forbes*, Forbes Magazine, 3 June 2019. www.forbes.com/sites/zackomalleygreenburg/2019/06/03/jay-z-billionaire-worth/#268194263a5f. This article can be read with students to demonstrate Jay-Z's blueprint of how he accumulated his wealth.
- Lowe, Tiana. "Dunk on Howard Schultz's Politics, but Don't Deny His American Dream." *Washington Examiner*, 30 Jan. 2019, www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/dunk-on-howard-schultzs-politics-but-dont-deny-his-american-dream. This article can be with students to discuss Howard
- Olanoff, Beth. "The Missing Half of American History." *WHYY*, WHYY, 7 Aug. 2014, www.whyy.org/articles/the-missing-half-of-american-history/ . This article argues for more inclusive coverage of women's contribution to American history.
- "Quick Biography of Benjamin Franklin." *Ushistory.org*, Independence Hall Association, www.ushistory.org/franklin/info/index.htm. Suitable text for high school students to learn about Benjamin's Franklin Biography.
- "Thomas Jefferson." *Biography.com*, A&E Networks Television, 15 May 2019,

www.biography.com/us-president/thomas-jefferson .Suitable text for high students to learn about Thomas Jefferson’s biography.

Materials for Classroom

Gay, Roxane. “Nicki Minaj, Always in Control.” *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 16 Oct. 2017, www.nytimes.com/2017/10/16/t-magazine/nicki-minaj.html. This New York Times Style magazine offers a potrait and profile of Nicki Mainaj that could provide a rich discussion about her queen of hip-hop origin.

MTV News, 26 Nov. 2010, www.mtv.com/news/1653115/nicki-minaj-vents-about-being-a-female-mc-in-my-time-now-preview/. MTV provides snippets about Nicki Minaj’s views of gender bias in the music industry.

Martin, Jamarlin. YouTube, 1 June 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWmGqjAVGoM&feature=youtu.be. This unreleased documentary about Jay Z could be viewed about the Founder’s myth of Jay Z (Hip Hop Mogul)

“The Social Network.” *IMDb*, IMDb.com, 1 Oct. 2010, www.imdb.com/title/tt1285016/. This movie could be viewed for classroom discussion about the Founder’s myth of Mark Zuckerberg (Facebook)

“Steve Jobs.” *IMDb*, IMDb.com, 23 Oct. 2015, www.imdb.com/title/tt02080374/. This movie could be viewed for classroom discussion about the Founder’s myth of Steve Job (Apple).

Warren Elizabeth, YouTube, 11 Oct. 2011, www.youtube.com/watch?v=AHFHznu-N-M. A short youtube clip with Where Warren argues that nobody gets rich on their own (collectivism)

“What Are the 12 Archetypes and Which One Dominates Your Personality.” *Learning Mind*, 21 Sept. 2018, www.learning-mind.com/12-archetypes/. Provides a graphic chart of 12 major archetypes.

Appendix

Rich or King “Founding” Fathers’ Mythology

Humanities Student Facing Unit Guide;

Overview

Essential Question: What do the “Founding Fathers” of America have in common with founders of American businesses such as McDonald’s, Nike, Starbucks or famous celebrities?

“A myth is not a lie. A myth is a story based on facts and fiction, that expresses the worldview and values of the people who tell it.” (Chernus, Ira) In this unit, we will explore the dilemmas the “founders fathers of American ” faced between choosing liberty over freedom and the conflicts business leaders and entertainers face between “doing good” versus making money. Furthermore, we will analyze the Declaration of Independence and try to make sense of the founding fathers' beliefs and conflicts that relate to “life liberty and the pursuit of happiness”.

Culminating Performance Task(s)

The culminating performance task for this unit is to design, develop and deliver a historical narrative of a founding father and/or famous American business leader. Through producing historical narratives, you should gain a deeper appreciation of the struggles and opportunities of chasing the American Dream. And understand how some groups have privilege over other groups in their pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness.

Expectations:

- Written: 500-1,200 words, typed, double-spaced
- Or a Short Film 3-7 minutes, with a written film treatment of the screenplay
- Or Graphic Narrative: At least 10 panels with illustrations and captions. (This is the more challenging option)

You will have to complete the activities listed below to be prepared to complete the culminating performance task. **This unit has a minimum of 20 evidence requirements.**

Key Unit Vocabulary

- Happiness
- Myth
- Individualism
- Unalienable Rights
- Liberty

- Comparative Narratives
- Rags to Riches
- Origin
- Hero's Journey
- Plot Structure

Competencies	Sub-competencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ELA 1: I can read and comprehend appropriately complex literary texts independently and proficiently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How do I use evidence to support my interpretation of the text? (RL.1) ● How well do I analyze the ways in which people, events, and ideas develop in the text? (RL.3) ● How do I use and build my academic vocabulary (L.6)?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ELA 2: I can read and comprehend appropriately complex informational text independently and proficiently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cite Evidence to support my interpretation ● Identify Central Idea in a text
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ELA.5 I can write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well - chosen details, and well - structured event sequences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engage and orient the reader in the opening ● Develop the story and characters ● Use words and transitions to create cohesion (suspense) ● Provide a compelling conclusion ● Use technology to share work. ● Acquire and use academic vocabulary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● HIS.2 I can analyze the motives, actions, values, and attitudes of individuals and groups to help me understand the significance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Analyze factors that shaped perspectives of people in the past.

of events and developments from a range of perspectives.

- **HOS.1** I can demonstrate effective personal work habits to help me achieve my academic and personal goals.
- **Growth Mind -Set** I can demonstrate a growth mindset in my approach to challenges, learning, and new opportunities.

- **Manage tasks and deadlines**

- **Taking On Challenges**
- **Learning from Mistakes**
- **Accepting Feedback and Criticism**
- **Perseverance**
- **Asking Questions**
- **Taking Risk**

Student Activities	Practice or Mastery	Completed Date
1.01: Understanding The Declaration of Independence.	Practice (Habits of Success)	
1.02: Understanding Theories about Happiness, Wealth and Freedom	Practice (Habits of Success)	
1.03: What is The American Dream Myth?	Practice (Habits of Success)	
1.04: Maps and Geography	Practice (Habits of Success)	
1.05 HOT TASK Quiz- Vocabulary, Maps, and Geography	Mastery (Evidence Requirements)	

1.06: Deep Topic Dive Get Rich or Die Tryin Myths	Practice	
1.07: Deep Topic Dive Founding Father's Biographies	Practice	
1.08 Deep Topic Dive Founding Business Leaders Biographies	Practice	
1.09: HOT TASK: Comparative Biographies	Mastery (Evidence Requirements)	
1.10 HOT Task: Founding Father Myth Vocabulary	Mastery (Evidence Requirements)	
1.11: Selecting "Founding Fathers" and "Modern Founders" characters for the American Dream or Rags to Riches Myth.	Practice (Habits of Success)	
1.12: Performance Task - Brainstorm Founders Myth	Mastery (Evidence Requirements)	
1.13 Mini Lesson- Historical Fiction Plot Mapping (Hero's or Villians Journey)	Practice	
1.14 Performance Task - Draft an exposition that orients the reader in the opening of your Founders Myths		
1.15 Performance Task- rising action and build tension to a climax for your Founders Myths.		
1.16 Performance Task- Draft the falling action and resolution fiction for your Founders Myths. What historical information and values will readers learn from reading your narrative?		
1.17 First Draft of Your American Myth		
1.18 Peer Revision of American Myth		

1.19 Best Draft of American Your Myth: Revise and Submit		
1.20 Public Sharing and Practice Exhibition of Founders Myths		
1.21 End of Unit Reflection		