

LISTENING DEEPLY: THIS MONTH IN *THE THREAD*

A meaningful exercise at the close of the school year is to have students reflect on their personal and intellectual growth through the lens of another's life story.

This month, [The Thread](#) episodes are woven together by the theme of **facing adversity**. We learn from a lawyer, poet, and non-profit leader who was incarcerated as a teen (Reginald Dwayne Betts), a skateboarding maverick and successful entrepreneur who was bullied as a kid (Tony Hawk), a head of one of the leading philanthropic foundations who benefited early on from the Head Start program (Darren Walker), and a celebrated journalist who suffered the loss of her husband to colon cancer and is now a tireless cancer prevention advocate (Katie Couric).

Each of these stories of resilience, vulnerability, and courage can spark meaningful discussion and writing exercises. The corresponding lessons in [Teaching The Thread](#) will show you how.



Reginald Dwayne Betts, Poet & Prison Reform Advocate



Tony Hawk, Professional Skateboarder & Entrepreneur

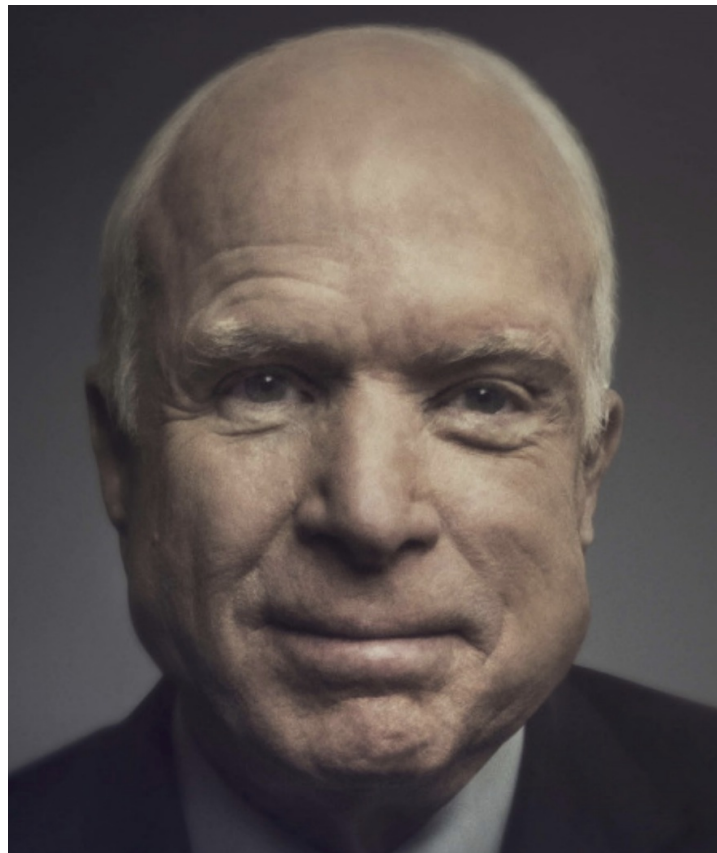


Darren Walker, President, Ford Foundation



Katie Couric, Journalist

REFLECTING ON MEMORIAL DAY: JOHN MCCAIN



John McCain, United States Senator

“Nothing is better than the story of someone who sacrifices for causes greater than themselves.”

- Senator John McCain, (1936 - 2018)

This week we commemorate Memorial Day and honor the service of Senator John

McCain who agreed to participate in the Life Stories documentary, [John McCain: For Whom the Bell Tolls](#), near the end of his life. This account combines the senator's own voice—culled from original interviews, commentary, and speeches—with archival news footage and previously unseen home movies and photographs. Senator McCain's continuing crusade for the causes he believed in, even during his battle with brain cancer, underscores his fighting spirit and resilience. What emerges is a portrait of a maverick with an unerring sense of duty who never forgot the most important American ideals.

Described by his speechwriter Mark Salter as “a passionate believer in an exceptional America that embodies its ideals, protects him at home, and advances them abroad,” we hope you can share the story of Senator McCain with your students.

Download the accompanying [Screening Guide](#) for tips on bringing this film into your class.

LOOKING FORWARD

We'll be taking a break in June from the Learning Newsletter but will be back in July. Here are some things we don't want you to miss!

Summer preview

June: [The Thread](#)

[Jason Alexander](#), “The Power of Laughter”

[Betty Rollin](#), “First You Cry”

[Father Greg Boyle](#), “Welcoming the Unwelcome”

July 12-13

[National Association for Media Literacy Education \(NAMLE\) Conference 2024](#) - Virtual

Make a date with media literacy this summer! Join the upcoming virtual conference organized by NAMLE for open and honest dialogue between educators and experts on the state of #MediaLiteracy. We will be presenting a session on July 13! [Register here](#).

This Fall

November 7 - 10

[Journalism Education Association National Conference](#) in Philadelphia. Register [here](#).

November 12-14

[CASEL Exchange - Chicago](#). We'll be attending and elevating our work within the SEL landscape. Drop a line if you are going and we can connect! Register [here](#).

November 21-23

[National Council of Teachers of English Conference \(NCTE\) 2024](#)

We'll be presenting a session “Documentary Storytelling: Teaching Compassion and Solidarity Alongside Argument and Critical Media Literacy” focusing on The *Thread* series! More information [here](#).

Stay Tuned...

We can't wait to share a new educational partnership that will launch in August with the amazing organization, [826 Digital](#). If you are not familiar with their work, check them out!

“A Minute On Democracy ”

Beginning in September and leading up to the November election, we will be posting weekly a minute long video exploring the many facets of our democracy. All will be culled from our Interview Archive and films, posted on the Life Stories Instagram page and website, and accompanied by a short lesson to expand the conversation and inspire and inform students of all ages.

We'd love to hear from you! Contact Fran Sterling, Director of Education at fran@lifestories.org.



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