LAW DAY PODCAST PROJECT CURRICULUM PLAN

Grades 9–12 | 6–12 Minute Podcast | Duration: 7 Class Periods

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Students will research, script, and produce a short podcast (6–12 minutes) exploring the ABA Law Day theme, which for 2026 is *The Rule of Law & the American Dream*. They will learn how to combine storytelling, interviews, and sound design to create a compelling podcast episode that informs and inspires. The podcast should educate listeners while telling an engaging story that connects civic ideas to real-world experiences.

TEACHER PREPARATION

Before starting the project:

- Review the Podcast Prompt for *The Rule of Law and the American Dream*

- Review available recording tools (See the document titled *Podcasting Resources* for more details.)

- Arrange for headphones and microphones if possible, or ensure students can record via phones or laptops

- If participating in a contest, review and share submission guidelines (format, time limit, file type, etc.)

LEARNING GOALS

- Explain a civic concept or issue using evidence, examples, and real-world voices.

- Script, record, and edit a clear and engaging podcast episode.

- Conduct, record, and edit an interview with good sound quality.

- Use free tools to source content, and record, edit, and enhance quality audio recordings.

- Use and credit legally sourced sound clips and background audio.

- Reflect on how storytelling strengthens civic understanding and active citizenship.

TIES TO IDAHO STATE EDUCATION STANDARDS

The table below aligns the Idaho State Department of Education (SDE) content standards for Social Studies, English Language Arts/Literacy, and Speaking & Listening/Communication with the objectives and activities in the Law Day Podcast Project. It is intended as a teacher reference tool for lesson planning, documentation, and curriculum alignment.

Sources: Idaho State Department of Education. Social Studies (2025), English Language Arts/Literacy (2025), and Speech Guidance Standards. Available at https://www.sde.idaho.gov/.

Content Area	Relevant Standards	How the Podcast Project Aligns
Social Studies / Civics & Government	Idaho Content Standards: Social Studies (K–12). Students investigate and evaluate ideas and perspectives about civic and political life, rights and responsibilities of citizens, the formation of governmental	Students research civic topics, prepare and conduct interviews, and produce podcasts explaining civic systems, rights, and responsibilities—fulfilling investigative

Content Area	Relevant Standards	How the Podcast Project Aligns
	systems, and the influence of individuals and groups. Example: USH1.4.3.1 – Provide and evaluate examples of social and political leadership in early American history.	and evaluative expectations of the Social Studies standards.
Social Studies / Media Literacy Integration	Standard: Use speaking, listening, reading, writing, and media literacy to apply knowledge of social studies.	Students demonstrate integrated skills by scripting, interviewing, and producing podcasts that connect historical or civic themes to modern contexts.
English Language Arts / Literacy – Writing & Research	Idaho K–12 Standards for ELA/Literacy (Grades 9–10 and 11–12). Students produce clear and coherent writing for a range of tasks and audiences, and conduct research to build and present knowledge, integrating multiple sources and assessing credibility (W.9–10.4, W.11–12.7).	Students draft scripts, integrate interviews and researched evidence, and revise content for accuracy and tone—aligning with ELA writing and research standards.
English Language Arts / Literacy – Speaking & Listening	Speaking & Listening Strand (SL.9–10.4, SL.11–12.5). Students present information clearly, sequence ideas logically, and use digital media to enhance understanding.	Students record narration, conduct interviews, and present civic concepts via podcast, demonstrating logical organization, clarity, and appropriate digital integration.
Communication / Speech (Idaho Speech Guidance)	Students initiate and participate effectively in discussions, adapt speech to context and task, and use audio/visual tools for presentation.	Through interviews and narration, students practice formal and informal speaking, demonstrate listening and questioning skills, and apply audio tools to communicate civic themes effectively.

PROJECT TIMELINE

Day	Focus	Key Outcome
1	Introduction to civic storytelling	Choose a civic topic
2	Research & story development	Research topic and outline story
3	Interviews	Identify possible interview subjects and practice interviewing set up and techniques
4	Script writing	Draft questions and identify audio sources
5	Recording	Record the podcast narration from the script
6	Editing & production	Add interview, music, and other sound clips
7	Showcase & reflection	Present final podcast and reflect on civic learning

LESSON PLAN OUTLINE

DAY 1: INTRODUCTION TO CIVIC STORYTELLING

Objectives:

- Understand the podcast medium and expectations for the project.
- Explore examples of civic storytelling podcasts.

Activities:

1) Listen & Discuss (15 min): Play a short civic or news-style podcast (e.g., NPR's Civics 101, Throughline).

   ▪ What makes it engaging?

   ▪ How does it teach about civic life or law?

2) Project Overview (15 min): Explain assignment requirements, timeline, and evaluation rubric.

3) Topic Brainstorm (15 min): Students brainstorm issues or stories connected to the year's theme.

Homework:

Research possible approaches to the podcast and bring 2–3 ideas next class.

DAY 2: TOOLS & RESEARCH TOOLS FOR PODCASTING

Objectives:

- Select a podcast topic and identify reliable sources.
- Review various podcasting resources for research and recording
- Learn how to turn research into a compelling narrative.

Activities:

Note: Information about research can be found in the document titled *Podcasting Tools and Resources.*

1) **Topic Selection** (10 min): Students choose a focused issue, question, or story based on the podcast prompt.

2) **Mini-Lesson:** Research tools for Podcasts (15 min): Discuss how to find credible sources (government, academic, local experts) and use freely available tools to create a podcast

3) **Public Sources & Fair Use** (10 min)

4) **Outline Podcasts** (10 min): Students create a 3-part outline:

   ▪ Introduction and hook

   ▪ Key information (including interviews and other firsthand perspectives)

   ▪ Conclusion and reflection

Homework:

Begin gathering research and quotes and outline interview questions

DAY 3: INTERVIEWING

Objectives:

Draft interview questions and conduct a practice interview.

Activities:

Note: Information about interviewing can be found in the document titled *Conducting Interviews for your Podcast.*

1) **Mini-Lesson:** Interview Prep (15 min):

 ▪ Why interviews matter in podcasts (e.g., add expertise and perspective, helps move the story forward).

 ▪ Interview research and questions.

 ▪ Interview techniques and recording.

2) **Practice Interview** (25 min): Students pair up and write sample interview questions and then conduct a short, recorded interview.

3) **Reflection** (5 min): Students reflect on successes and challenges in the interview process.

Homework:

Find someone to interview and finish drafting interview questions.

DAY 4: WRITING THE SCRIPT

Objective:

Draft a podcast script with an engaging opening and logical structure.

Activities:

Note: Information about research and interviewing can be found in the document titled *Podcasting Script Writing Guide*

4) **Mini-Lesson:** Writing for the Ear (10 min):

 ▪ Use conversational language.

 ▪ Keep sentences short.

 ▪ Use repetition and tone for emphasis.

5) **Drafting Time** (25 min): Students begin scripting.

6) **Peer Review** (10 min): Exchange scripts and provide feedback on clarity and flow.

Homework:

Finalize script draft and prepare for recording.

DAY 5: RECORDING BASICS

Objectives:

• Learn basic audio recording and editing techniques using free tools

• Begin recording narration and interviews (where possible)

Activities:

Note: Information about recording and editing can be found in the document titled *Podcasting Tools and Resources*

1) **Mini-Lesson:** Audio Tips (15 min):

   ▪ Demonstrate microphone set up and recording in a quiet space.

   ▪ Practice voice pacing and tone with an emphasis on speaking clearly and with emotion.

   ▪ Keep consistent distance from mic.

2) **Practice & Record** (30 min): Students record rough cuts of their narration and any interviews.

Homework:

Finish recording segments if needed.

DAY 6: EDITING AND PRODUCTION

Objectives:

- Edit the podcast for clarity, pacing, and sound quality.

- Add transitions, background music, and closing credits.

Activities:

Note: Information about recording and editing can be found in the document titled *Podcasting Tools and Resources*

1) **Mini-Lesson:** Audio editing fundamentals (10 min):

   ▪ Cut filler words.

   ▪ Balance audio levels.

   ▪ Add transitions, music, and credits.

   ▪ Add intros/outros.

2) **Editing Time** (30–40 min): Students edit individually or in pairs.

Homework:

Finalize audio file and export as MP3 or WAV.

DAY 7: PRESENTATION & REFLECTION

Objectives:

- Share and evaluate final podcast projects.

- Reflect on the civic lessons learned.

Activities:

1) **Podcast Showcase** (30 min): Play excerpts (3–4 minutes each) or host a class "listening party."

2) Reflection Discussion (15 min):

   ▪ What did you learn about your topic?

▪ How might your story inspire civic engagement?

EVALUATION RUBRIC (100 POINTS TOTAL)

Category	Excellent (20)	Proficient (15)	Developing (10)	Needs Work (5)
Civic Understanding	Demonstrates deep understanding of civic theme and its relevance	Shows clear understanding	Somewhat unclear or superficial	Lacks focus on civic theme
Research & Accuracy	Uses multiple credible sources that are legally sources and credited; accurate and well-cited; strong interview questions	Mostly accurate sources and crediting; minor errors; somewhat strong interview	Limited sources and and/or unclear attribution; pacing issued with interview	Inaccurate or unsupported claims that are improperly cited
Script & Storytelling	Clear, engaging, creative, and well-organized narrative	Logical flow with minor lapses	Some disorganization, uneven, and/or repetitive flow	Disjointed or confusing
Audio Quality & Editing	Smooth editing, balanced, clean audio, appropriate music	Minor technical issues and/or background noise	Noticeable issues but understandable	Distracting audio quality
Creativity & Impact	Original, thought-provoking, memorable, inspiring	Engaging but conventional	Predictable or limited impact	Lacks creativity or engagement

CIVIC EDUCATION PODCAST MINI-LESSON

You can use the mini-lesson if you don't have 6 class days to dedicate to the podcast.

QUICK PROJECT OVERVIEW (1–2 CLASS PERIODS)

Purpose:

Students learn the basics of podcast storytelling and produce a short (2–3 minute) audio segment related to Law Day Podcast topic.

Recommended Time:

One or two 45-60-minute class periods

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- Identify a civic idea worth discussing.
- Write and record a short script or interview.
- Practice using free recording/editing tools.
- Use or cite short public-domain sound clips correctly.

ONE-DAY PLAN (CONDENSED)

Time	Activity	Description
10 min	Introduction & Examples	Play a short civic podcast excerpt (Civics 101 or Short Wave). Discuss what makes it engaging and how it teaches something about civic life.
10 min	Brainstorm Topics	Students list civic issues or current events that matter to them.
15 min	Mini-Lesson: Audio Basics	Demonstrate quick recording in Online Voice Recorder or Soundtrap. Cover clear speech, quiet space, and avoiding overlap when someone speaks.
15–20 min	Hands-On Creation	Students work individually or in pairs to write and record a 2-minute story, opinion, or interview clip. Encourage adding a short royalty-free music intro/outro.
5 min	Wrap-Up & Reflection	Share a few clips; discuss what they learned about expressing civic ideas through audio.

OPTIONAL TWO-DAY EXTENSION

DAY 1:

- Brainstorm civic topics and outline scripts.
- Learn recording/interview basics.
- Homework: finish script or contact one interviewee.

DAY 2:

- Record and edit using free tools (Audacity, Soundtrap, or Online Voice Recorder).

- Add short public-domain and/or Creative Commons sound clips.

- Share final audio and reflect on takeaways.

TIPS & TRICKS

Note: More details on tools can be found in the *Podcasting Resources* document on the Law Day web page.

QUICK GUIDE TO FREE TOOLS

Purpose	Free Tool	How to Use
Record voice	Online Voice Recorder	Press Record, stop, trim, and save as MP3.
Edit audio	Soundtrap	Create free account, import clips, add background music, and fade transitions.
Add music/effects	Pixabay Music, Free Music Archive	Choose tracks marked Free Use or CC BY and credit the creator.

INTERVIEW & SOUND CLIP TIPS

Finding an Interviewee

- Ask a classmate, teacher, or family member for a brief (1–2 minute) perspective..
- Use quiet spaces; confirm consent to record.

Good Sound Practices

- Speak clearly, no side chatter or typing.

- Only one person talks at a time.

- Use headphones when possible to avoid echo.

Using Other Audio

- Public Domain Sources: National Archives, Library of Congress, Internet Archive.

- Creative Commons: Check licenses on FreeSound or ccMixter.

- Fair Use Rule: Short (under 30 seconds), used for commentary or education, and fully credited. Example credit: "Excerpt of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'I Have a Dream' speech — U.S. National Archives, public domain."

OPTIONAL WRAP-UP

- Play selected clips in class or post them on a class site.

- Discuss: How can audio storytelling inspire civic participation?

QUICK EVALUATION (50 POINTS TOTAL)

Category	Excellent (10)	Developing (5)
Civic Connection	Clear and meaningful	Limited or unclear
Script/Content	Organized and engaging	Hard to follow
Audio Quality	Clear voice, good balance	Distracting noise
Creativity	Original and expressive	Predictable
Proper Use of Sources	Legal, credited	Unclear credit or improper use