# News. Voice. Power.

## Critical News Literacy in Action

Mikva Challenge

mikvachallenge.org

# Introduction

## What is Mikva Challenge?

Mikva Challenge is a nonpartisan 501(c)3 organization, founded in 1997 as a tribute to former White House Counsel, Judge, and U.S. Congressman Abner Mikva and his wife Zoe, a lifelong education activist. Mikva Challenge develops youth to be informed, empowered, and active citizens and community leaders. We do this by engaging youth in action civics, an authentic and transformative learning process built on youth voice and youth expertise.

Mikva Challenge was founded on the simple premise that civic and political life is strengthened when youth help shape their own futures. We believe that young people have expertise on the issues that affect their lives and deserve to fully participate in our democracy.

## What Is Action Civics?

Mikva Challenge believes that the best means of training young people for their roles as citizens and leaders is to give them a chance to participate in authentic democratic activities such as elections, advocacy, public debates, and the creation of new media.

We facilitate this learning for students through an action civics process in which:

- Experiences, knowledge, perspectives, and concerns of youth are incorporated
- Youth voice is encouraged, valued, and incorporated
- Students learn by doing, with a focus on collective action
- Student reflection and analysis are central to the process

We believe that this is the best way to begin cultivating a vibrant democratic ethos in young people.

## What is *News. Voice. Power.*?

In order to become an effective and engaged citizen in our democracy, one must be well informed. The increasingly complex and changing landscape of news consumption requires careful and thoughtful navigation. Engaged citizens are not only critical consumers of news, they know how to leverage the news media effectively. While literacy is stressed in public education, news literacy is noticeably absent. This is why we have created *News. Voice. Power.*

Through this curriculum, students will:

- Understand the necessity of an informed public in a well-functioning democracy
- Develop the skills to be critical news consumers
- Apply the skills of being news producers and media activists

# Introduction

## How to Use this Curriculum

All of our curricula are written to provide a clear and easily accessible structure for teachers to follow, while allowing for maximum flexibility and adaptability. We know that our curricula will not fit the needs of all learners; therefore, we anticipate that teachers will adapt and modify the lessons to differentiate for the needs of their students. Class size, length of class time, and access to technology will impact the implementation of this curriculum. We believe in a teacher's ability to make these adaptations.

Most of the lessons in this curriculum require some access to technology for successful implementation. If teachers have limited access to technology, they may alter the lessons as necessary. Powerpoints for each lesson can be dowloaded at http://bit.ly/1xdOzFy.

**This curriculum is broken into two sections:**
**Unit 1:** Becoming a Critical News Consumer
**Unit 2:** Taking Action: Leveraging the News Media

Each lesson in the *News. Voice. Power.* curriculum includes a lesson overview, student objectives, materials, assessments, and a list of the relevant Common Core State Standards. In addition, the lessons follow a **Before**, **During**, and **After** format, beginning with a **Bell-ringer**. Here is a brief explanation of the format:

**PREPARATION:** This section includes notes to the teacher of what materials and preparation of the room and resources need to be completed before students enter class.

**BELL-RINGER:** The *bell-ringer* helps get students settled and ready for the day's lesson. The purpose of the *bell-ringer* is to activate prior knowledge either by reviewing a past lesson or the previous night's homework, or by framing a theme for the day's lesson. Ideally, a *bell-ringer* should take no longer than five minutes and should be done independently by students (with minimal teacher direction) so the teacher can attend to logistics in the first few minutes of class such as taking attendance and conferring with individual students.

**BEFORE:** This part of the lesson usually builds off of the bell-ringer and acts as a transition to the day's lesson. For example, students might share their responses to the bell-ringer in a discussion or pair-and-share. The purpose of the *before* is to set the purpose for the lesson and is an opportune time for the teacher to review the lesson objectives with the class.

**DURING:** Generally consisting of new knowledge or skill acquisition, the *during* can be accomplished through the teacher modeling a skill, direct instruction of a concept, or deep student-directed inquiry.

**AFTER:** During the *after*, students apply their new knowledge in some way, either through guided work or independent practice to demonstrate their understanding of the new material. The *after* can act as the daily assessment so the teacher can gauge whether students understood the day's objectives. If the students do not seem to have understood the objectives, the teacher may want to stop and re-teach what they missed.

The appendix provides articles and additional resources.

## Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the *Why News Matters* program at the Robert R. McCormick Foundation for their generous support of our work. We would especially like to thank Clark Bell and Mark Hallett for their encouragement and support. An additional thanks the Polk Bros. Foundation for their generous support of Mikva Challenge's Center for Action Civics.

We would like to extend a sincere thank you to the teachers who have participated in Mikva Challenge over the years. Our teachers have provided inspiration and leadership that have helped thousands of students become active citizens. Their input and advice helped make this curriculum a reality. We'd like to especially thank Heather Van Benthuysan, Jessica Marshall, Erin Peterson, Dylan Genest, and Jill Bass for the development of this curriculum.

We are forever grateful for our students; without them, Mikva Challenge wouldn't exist. It is their passion, motivation, and dedication that has led to positive changes in their communities.

Visit www.actioncivics.org for additional resources and activities. If you want more information on how to get involved in Mikva Challenge programs, please contact us at cfac@mikvachallenge.org.

# Table of Contents

## Unit 1: Becoming A Critical News Consumer



## Unit 2: Taking Action: Leveraging Media

# Unit 1

This section engages students right away in the overarching purpose of the curriculum by posing the question "Why does news matter for the health of our democracy?" Students examine the decision making process involved in what "becomes news" and explore the tensions of the news industry as business. Students practice reading informational text with a critical lens to be able to detect bias and identify loaded language. They learn about the impact of social media on news information and how to use digital tools to fact check. By the end of this section, students should be seasoned critical news consumers.

# LESSON: What is News?

**Overview:**
What gets reported as news is the result of a complex decision-making process. Students will examine some of the factors that go into that decision-making process.

**Student Objectives:**
- Identify the factors that influence what gets reported
- Provide examples

**Assessment:**
- *Deciding the News* handout
- Homework assignment (optional)

**Materials:**
- *School Newspaper Story Ideas* handout (one per group of 3–4 students)
- Paper clips
- LCD projector
- *What is News?* PowerPoint document (slides 1–12)
- *Deciding the News* handout
- Blank legal-sized paper
- Glue stick
- Masking tape or push pins
- Sticky notes
- Chart paper

**Common Core State Standards**

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1.b**
Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.4**
Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

## Day 1

### PREPARATION

Post the lesson objectives, set up the LCD projector project the *Lesson Title* slide (1) onto the screen. Print one *School Newspaper Story Ideas* handout for each group of three to four students. Cut each *School Newspaper Story Ideas* handout into 19 story idea strips and clip them together. (Each group will get 19 story idea strips of paper.) Gather the legal-sized paper and glue sticks.

# **LESSON:** What is News?

## BELL-RINGER: What Is News?

Project the *bell-ringer* slide (2) onto the screen. Ask the students to respond in writing to the following prompt:

What is news? Who decides what is news?

## BEFORE: "What Is News?" Discussion

Have the students share their responses from the bell-ringer. Project the *News is What is Interesting and Important* slide (3) onto the screen. Suggest the idea that news is "what is important and interesting." Ask the students who gets to decide what is important and interesting.

Ask for student volunteers to define "journalist/reporter" and "editor/producer" and project the Definitions slide (4) onto the screen:

**Journalist/reporter**—collects and prepares a news story

**Editor/producer**—decides what stories to cover, the order of coverage (e.g., what makes the front page or lead story), and how much coverage (i.e., length of story or broadcast)

## DURING: What Is News?

Project the *Newspaper Editorial Board* slide (5) onto the screen. Have the students get into groups of three or four students. Explain that each group will act as an editorial board for their school newspaper. Pass out one sheet of legal-sized paper, a glue stick, and one set of the *School Newspaper Story Ideas* slips of paper to each group. (Each group should receive 19 strips of paper.) Tell the students that they should read all 19 fictitious story ideas and then select the four most important ones for the front page of their school newspaper. (Remind students that the front page is typically where the most important stories are placed.) Have them glue their top four stories to the legal paper and then write their rationale for choosing each story. Have each group use masking tape or push pins to attach their "newspapers" to the walls.

# LESSON: What is News?

## AFTER: Gallery Walk

After the groups have posted all of the "newspapers" around the room, give each student two or three sticky notes and project the *Gallery Walk* slide (6) onto the screen. Instruct the students to walk around the room, read the "newspapers," write comments about the story selections on the sticky notes, and then post their notes onto the relevant "newspapers." After the students have had a chance to walk around the room, have the groups read the comments posted on their "newspapers." As a class, have the students discuss the criteria they used to decide whether a story was deemed important or not. Write their criteria on chart paper and save it for tomorrow's lesson. Again, remind students that hundreds of thousands of things happen at a school every week that do not make it in the newspaper.

## HOMEWORK OPTION

Have the students list the story headlines on the front page of today's newspaper. Then, have them look through the rest of the paper to see what stories were not selected for the front page. Have the students comment on the editor's choices and suggest one or two buried stories that they think should have been on the front page and why.

# Day 2

## PREPARATION

Post the lesson objectives, set up the LCD projector, and project the *Lesson Title* slide (7) onto the screen. Print enough *Deciding the News* handouts for each student.

## BELL-RINGER: What Gets Reported Image

Project the *What is Reported* slide (8) onto the screen and have the students describe in writing what they think the image means. (Note: the image shows a large circle labeled "Everything that happens in the world" and a small dot labeled "What is reported as news.")

# **LESSON:** What is News?

## BEFORE: What gets reported discussion

Have the students share their interpretations of the bell-ringer image. Remind the students that while millions of important and interesting things happen every day, the news media cannot possibly report on all of them.

Project the *Short Discussion* slide (9) onto the screen. Lead a short discussion using the following prompts:

- How does a newspaper, news broadcast, or online news service decide what to report on?
- Who gets to decide what is worth reporting? What factors might influence that decision?

## DURING: Deciding the news

Distribute a *Deciding the News* handout to every student. Explain to students that the 10 factors listed on the *Deciding the News* handout represent 10 of the main criteria editors and reporters use to decide the "newsworthiness" of a story. Project the *Story Ideas* slide (10) onto the screen. It lists the story ideas from yesterday's lesson. Read the directions on the *Deciding the News* handout and allow time for the students to complete the handout.

## AFTER: Deciding the news discussion

Project the *Deciding the News Discussion* slide (11) onto the screen and post the criteria list the students created in class yesterday. Lead a brief discussion using the following prompts:

- How did your criteria for choosing a story compare to the criteria editors and journalists use?
- Did everyone agree on what was important and interesting? Why might that be the case?
- Are there other factors for deciding what makes "news" than what are listed here? What are they?

## HOMEWORK

Project the *Homework* slide (12) onto the screen. Have the students explain, in their own words, the difference between what is news and what gets reported.

## LESSON: What is News?

### School Newspaper Story Ideas

Print one copy of this handout for each small group (3–4 students) you will have in class. Cut each handout into individual story idea strips and clip them together. (Each group should get 19 story idea strips of paper.)

**Lunch is chicken patty sandwiches**

**Prom theme decided: A Night to Remember**

**Football team got new uniforms**

**Mr. Curie won a Golden Apple award**

**Susie Green won science fair**

**Thirty students went on field trip to the history museum**

**Billy Williams suspended for smoking in the bathroom**

**Mike Walker and Shavon Smith broke up**

**Brittany McKeon is pregnant**

## LESSON: What is News?

**A fight involving 10 students broke out in the lunchroom**

**School closed for one week due to broken furnace**

**Kanye West to visit during report card pick up**

**Puppy found roaming the halls of school**

**Ms. Crabapple is retiring after 60 years of teaching**

**Fred Frederick got straight A's this semester**

**The local school board is meeting next week**

**School district cutting budgets next year**

**New standardized tests to be unveiled**

**Local politician visits sophomore class**

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Deciding the News

**Directions:** News editors and producers use the following factors when deciding what to cover in their broadcasts or publications. Choose one story idea from yesterday's lesson as an example for each of the factors listed.

**1. Change**—Does it involve a change in policy or practice?

**2. Competition and profit**—Will it drive "eyeballs" (readers or viewers) to our news publication/broadcast?

**3. Conflict**—Does it represent a major conflict?

**4. Human interest**—Does it appeal to people's interest in personal stories?

**5. Importance and relevance**—Do people care about it?

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

**6. Magnitude**—Did it have a major impact?

**7. Prominence**—Does it involve a noteworthy individual?

**8. Proximity**—Is it happening in or near our community?

**9. Timeliness**—Is it happening? Did it happen recently?

**10. Unusualness**—Is it out of the ordinary?

# LESSON: Why News Matters

## Overview:

This lesson examines how an informed public is an essential part of a working democracy and explores the role the media plays in keeping the public informed.

## Student Objectives:

- Examine and define the powers of the news media
- Explore the role of information in maintaining a democracy
- Conduct a close read of non-fiction text
- Interpret and analyze non-fiction text
- Develop a position on the role of the news media in creating an informed public and communicate that position in a written position paper

## Assessment:

- Position paper

## Materials:

- LCD projector
- *Why News Matters* PowerPoint document (slides 1–12)
- *Learning Stations* handouts (one per student)
- Chart paper
- Markers
- Computer with Internet for one or two of the following "person on the street" videos: http://bit.ly/1fJQfRy (Jay Leno—Start at 3:31. End at 5:14.) http://bit.ly/1kOOQbA (Mikva students—Start at 2:04. End at 3:15.) http://bit.ly/SsVBXa (Start at :02. End at 1:25.)
- Stand and Declare signs (strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree)
- "How Ignorant Are Americans?" article http://bit.ly/1fJRFeE (one per student)

## Common Core State Standards

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.1**

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1**

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1**

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.3**

Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

OR

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7**

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

# **LESSON:** Why News Matters

## Day 1

### PREPARATION

Post the lesson objectives, set up the LCD projector, and project the *Lesson Title* slide (1) onto the screen. Print one *Learning Station* handout for each student. For efficiency, set up the learning stations by opening the website for each station on the computers or tablets. [NOTE: If you have a large class, you may want to create duplicate stations so you can engage all of the small groups (3–4 students) simultaneously.]

### BELL-RINGER: Who cares about news?

Project slide (2) on the screen and have students silently respond in writing to the following prompt: Yesterday we discussed what makes something news and who gets to decide. Today's question is "So what? Who cares? Does news matter? Why or Why not?"

Silently write your response to why you think the news may or may not be important and be prepared to share your response.

### BEFORE: Round robin

Explain to the students that they are not going to have a lengthy discussion on "why news matters" right now but that you want to get their initial responses to that question. Go around the room and have every student give one reason why they think news matters. Explain that if they don't think news matters, they should explain why not. Project the *News Matters Because* slide (3) onto the screen and read it aloud. (Note: the slide says, "News matters because it has the power to shape how people think.")

### DURING: Learning stations

Pass out one *Learning Stations* worskheets to each student. Project the *Learning Stations Instructions* slide (4) onto the screen and read the instructions for the *Learning Stations* aloud. Allow the students 7–10 minutes to complete each station.

### AFTER: In your own words

Project the *Does News Matter?* slide (5) onto the screen and instruct the students to reread their responses to the bell-ringer question, "Does news matter? Why or why not?" Underneath their original bell-ringer response, have them answer the bell-ringer question again. Encourage them to incorporate what they learned in class today.

## Day 2

### PREPARATION

Select one or two of the following "person on the street" video clip(s) in which interviewers ask random people questions about history, government, geography, and the news:

http://bit.ly/1fJQfRy (Jay Leno. Start at 3:31. End at 5:14.)
http://bit.ly/1kOOQbA (Mikva students. Start at 2:04. End at 3:15.)
http://bit.ly/SsVBXa (Start at :02. End at 1:25.)

Cue it to the starting time to avoid having to watch an advertisement.

Post the lesson objectives, set up the LCD projector, project the *Lesson Title* slide (6) onto the screen, and gather the handouts. Hang the Stand and Declare signs (strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree) around the room.

### BELL-RINGER: Stand up if

Post the *Stand Up If* slide (7) onto the screen and read the instructions for "Stand Up If." Quickly run through the "Stand Up If" activity, using the following statements:

- I should have a say in how our society works.
- It is important for people in a democracy to have some knowledge of current events.
- I read the newspaper at least a few times a week.
- I watch the news on TV at least a few times a week.
- I listen to the news on the radio at least a few times a week.
- I get my news from social media—Twitter, Facebook, or other.
- I'm not really interested in the news.
- I consider myself a pretty well informed person.

## LESSON: Why News Matters

### BEFORE: Should the public be trusted with self-government?

Explain to the students that in order to make good decisions in a democracy, people need to be knowledgeable about what is going on in the world so they can choose what issues and candidates to support.

Project the *Person on the Street* slide (8) onto the screen and show the "person on the street" video clips you selected prior to class.

Project the *Five Words* slide (9) onto the screen. Ask your students to write their reaction to what they just watched using only five words. Tell them that they may either write a five-word sentence or list five words that describe what they saw.

### DURING: Our ignorance is the news media's fault

Explain how Stand and Declare works by saying something like:

1. I'll read a statement. After I finish, decide whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement.
2. After you decide your position, move to the appropriate corner.
3. After everyone has chosen a corner, spend one minute discussing why you selected that corner and choose a representative.
4. Each corner's representative will then have one minute to explain his/her position to the class.
5. Be sure to listen carefully to the representatives. If you change your opinion, feel free to move to a different corner.

Project the *Stand and Declare* slide (10) onto the screen. Have the students select the corner that best represents their opinion of the following statement:

The news media is responsible for the ignorance of the citizenry.

## AFTER: Written assessment

Project the *Writing Prompt* slide (11) onto the screen. Have the students respond to the following writing prompt:

> Some people blame the media for the ignorance of the public, saying that people rely on the news for their information. Others say that the media just simply responds to the demands of the public. Write a short position paper on whether you think the media is responsible for the "ignorance" of the public.

**Enrichment and Extension:**

Have the students create their own "person on the street" videos, first, by creating a list of information they think people should know for a well-functioning democracy, and second, by interviewing people on the street about that information.

Project the *Socratic Seminar* slide (12) onto the screen. Have the students read *How Ignorant Are Americans?* (http://bit.ly/1fJRFeE) and facilitate a Socratic Seminar using the following opening question: "How does ignorance impact the United States?" Additional prompts include:

- What roles/powers do citizens have in a democracy?
- What roles/powers does the news media have in a democracy?
- Do citizens in a totalitarian government need to be informed? Why or why not?
- What are the dangers of an ignorant public in a democratic society?
- Citizens elect their government. What information do they need in order to make an informed choice?
- Citizens can vote elected officials out of office. What information do they need in order to know if their elected officials are doing a good job?
- How do citizens learn about current events so that they are informed? (Encourage them to think about local, national, and international news.) Is it possible for an individual to know what is going on around the world?
- What information should people know?
- If we rely on the news media to help keep us informed, who is responsible for our ignorance?
- The author suggests we need to search for a cure to ignorance. What recommendations do you have?

## **LESSON:** Why News Matters

**NAME:** _____ **DATE:** _____

### Learning Station #1: The news media is powerful because ...
### ... they help shape our understanding of events and people.

In 1994, former football star and celebrity OJ Simpson was put on trial for the murder of his wife and another individual. This controversial event received a tremendous amount of press coverage. Go to http://bit.ly/1rVAxTw and scroll down and look at Simpson's mugshot on the covers of *Time* and *Newsweek*. Describe the difference in the covers and their representations of Simpson.

**How might the images have impacted how the readers perceived his guilt or innocence?**

**Respond the Malcolm X quote below. What does it mean? Do you agree? Why or why not?**

*"The media's the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent, and that's power. Because they control the minds of the masses."*

—Malcolm X

**Overall, how would you say young people are portrayed in the news media? Is the representation positive or negative? Use examples to support your position.**

## Learning Station #2: The news media is powerful because ...
## ... it can influence elections.

One power we have as citizens of a democracy is the power to elect our public officials. The public looks to the news media to help them learn about the candidates and to follow the elections. This creates an important and powerful role for the news media.

A good example of the impact that the news can have on electoral politics is the John F. Kennedy–Richard Nixon presidential debates. In 1960, John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon squared off in the first televised presidential debates in American history. The Kennedy–Nixon debates not only had a major impact on the election's outcome, but ushered in a new era in which crafting a public image and taking advantage of media exposure became essential ingredients of a successful political campaign. It was a close election with Kennedy winning the popular vote 49.7% to 49.5%. Polls revealed that more than half of all voters had been influenced by the debate, while 6% claimed that the debates alone had decided their choice. The fact that Kennedy was young and handsome was noteworthy as well. Many have argued that some earlier presidents, not naming names here, might not been elected if television had been around. In his memoir, Nixon himself reflected on the impact of his performance in the debate by saying, "I should have remembered that 'a picture is worth a thousand words.'"

In addition to televised debate coverage, the news media have turned election coverage into a sport. Given that the public is more likely to follow election news if a race is close than if it is a blowout, it is not uncommon for reporters to report daily about who is ahead in the polls. This is often referred to as "horse race journalism." To that ends, nothing brings in viewers/readers more than a scandal; therefore, small incidents are often blown up into large news stories in order to inject excitement into the news cycle.

Because a typical news sound bite (video clip) is less than seven seconds, candidates are challenged to condense complicated ideas into quick and easy-to-communicate slogans. This "dumbing down" of the political issues has been criticized for not providing the public enough information to make informed decisions when entering the voting booth. Some argue that candidates who craft the best messages are often elected despite the fact that they might not be the best candidates for office.

---

**What are three ways in which the news can influence electoral politics?**

## Learning Station #3: The news media is powerful because ...
## ... it is how the public stays informed.

All-powerful totalitarian leaders know that to control the public, they must control information. For example, Nazi Germany and the former communist Soviet Union controlled access to the news. Nikita Khrushchev, one of the leaders of the Soviet Union during the Cold War, said, "The press is our chief ideological weapon." North Korea uses similar practices today. For example, all news in North Korean must be sanctioned by the government-controlled news agency.

In the U.S., however, we live in a democracy. The 1st amendment protects free speech and a free press. Democracy, government of, by, and for the people, requires that people know what is going on so that they can make wise and informed decisions in their own self-governance. Our Founding Fathers recognized this. Respond to the following quotes by James Madison and Thomas Jefferson.

*"Whenever the people are well informed, they can be trusted with their own government."*

—Thomas Jefferson

**What does this mean? Do you agree? Why or why not?**

*"Knowledge will forever govern ignorance; and a people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives."*

— James Madison

**What does this mean? Do you agree? Why or why not?**

## LESSON: Why News Matters

### Learning Station #4: The news media is powerful because ...
### ... they can influence public opinion.

Life magazine photographer Charles Moore is credited with numerous influential and iconic images taken during the Civil Rights Movement. His images had the power to bring what was happening across the South into people's homes around the world. His photos, along with videos and images from other photographers and journalists, brought the world face to face with the brutality the civil rights activists were confronting. Go to http://n.pr/1idAcuj and view the slideshow of his images.

**How do you think bringing those images to people's living rooms may have influenced public opinion?**

**Pick one photo from the slideshow that you would describe as a powerful image. Describe what you see. What makes this image powerful?**

  

## LESSON: Why News Matters

### Learning Station #5: The news media is powerful because ...
### ... they can influence public opinion.

The news media is also credited with influencing public opinion, and subsequently public policy, regarding the Vietnam War. What started as a war that, for the most part, had public support, evolved into a highly unpopular war with mass protests. Go to http://bit.ly/Rlfdva and read the text and view the photos on that page.

---

**List the ways in which the news media impacted public opinion about the Vietnam War.**

# LESSON: With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility

**Overview:**
The news media has a tremendous amount of power to shape public opinion, decide what and who is "important," and to shed light on wrongdoing. In order to avoid abusing this power, journalists follow a code of ethics. Students will become familiar both with the powers of the news media and the ethics of doing their jobs well.

**Student Objectives:**
- Identify the 3 main powers of the news media
- Conduct a close read of the *Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics*

**Assessment:**
- Written response to Mencken quote

**Materials:**
- LCD projector
- *With Great Power* PowerPoint document (slides 1–7)
- *Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics* handout located at http://bit.ly/1iQhnyS (one per student)

**Common Core State Standards**

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.2**
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

**NOTE:** If you are integrating *News. Voice. Power.* with either the *Issues to Action* or the *Democracy in Action* curricula, you will not need to do this lesson as your students should have chosen their issue(s) already.

## PREPARATION

Set up the LCD projector, project the *Lesson Title* slide (1) onto the screen, and gather the newspapers and handouts.

# LESSON: With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility

## BELL-RINGER: With great power comes great responsibility

Project the *Bell-ringer* slide (2) onto the screen. Have the students respond in writing to the following prompts:

- How might the adage "With great power comes great responsibility" relate to the news media?
- What power does the news media have?
- What responsibilities do they have?

## BEFORE: Share bell-ringer responses

Have the students share their responses from the bell-ringer.

## DURING: Powers of the news media

Project the *Powers of the News Media* slides (3) onto the screen. Ask for student volunteers to read the slide text aloud. After each example, encourage the students to think of other examples.

**Gatekeeper:** The news media decide what becomes news by introducing topics and giving them lots of "airtime."

**Example:** The media's coverage of the debate about Obama's birthplace (United States or Kenya) legitimized the debate and made it an issue in the election.

**Scorekeeper:** The news media keeps track of who is important by the amount of airtime and the type of coverage it provides.

**Example:** In the 2008 presidential primary, the media did not give Democratic candidates Dennis Kucinich and Chris Dodd as much attention as the other candidates; therefore, Kucinich and Dodd were not considered viable contenders.

**Watchdog:** The news media scrutinizes powerful people, agencies, and organizations and alerts the public to unethical behavior, injustice, inequities, safety concerns, and abuses of power.

**Example:** The media exposed the torture of prisoners at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.

## LESSON: With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility

### AFTER Journalists' code of ethics

Project the *With Great Power* slide (4) onto the screen. Remind the students of the adage "with great power comes great responsibility" from the bell-ringer. Explain that while the news media providers have a lot of power to decide who and what is important, they also have the power and responsibility to expose wrong-doing.

Explain that like superheroes, journalists follow a code of ethics that govern their behavior.

Pass out one *Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics* handout to each student. (Note: You will refer to this handout several times throughout the unit so tell your students to bring their copies to class every day. You may also want to print a blown-up version of the handout and hang it on the wall.)

Have a student read the Preamble to the Code of Ethics aloud. (For fun, you could play patriotic music in the background.) Project the *Code of Ethics* slide (5) onto the screen. Have the students use the following symbols to annotate the article while they read it:

- ! = This is really important
- ? = I don't understand this
- ☹ = Journalists rarely follow this

After the students are done annotating the Code of Ethics, project the *Journalist = Superhero?* slide (6) onto the screen have the students respond in writing to the following prompt:

How does the role of journalist compare to that of a superhero?

Have the students share their responses.

Project the *Cartoon* slide (7) onto the screen. (Note: the slide shows one man holding a "no" sign surrounded by reporters and a large group of people holding "yes" signs without reporters.) Ask the students to describe what they see, what it means, and how it relates to the *Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics* handout.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Powers of the News Media

**Gatekeeper:** The news media decide what becomes news by introducing topics and giving them lots of "airtime."

**Example:** *The media's coverage of the debate about Obama's birthplace (United States or Kenya) legitimized the debate and made it an issue in the election.*

**Scorekeeper:** The news media keeps track of who is important by the amount of airtime and the type of coverage it provides.

**Example:** *In the 2008 presidential primary, the media did not give Democratic candidates Dennis Kucinich and Chris Dodd as much attention as the other candidates; therefore, Kucinich and Dodd were not considered viable contenders.*

**Watchdog:** The news media scrutinizes powerful people, agencies, and organizations and alerts the public to unethical behavior, injustice, inequities, safety concerns, and abuses of power.

**Example:** *The media exposed the torture of prisoners at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.*

# LESSON: News Media Bias

**Overview:**
This lesson introduces students to the challenges of being objective in reporting and exposes students to bias techniques so that they can more easily recognize them. This lesson uses clips from the film *Outfoxed*, a documentary that criticizes the biased reporting of the Fox News Network to illustrate some practices used by news media outlets.

**Student Objectives:**
- Define objective, subjective, perspective, bias, and propaganda
- Identify bias techniques in news reporting
- Compare bias techniques to *Professional Journalists Code of Ethics*

**Assessment:**
- *Investigating the News* assignment

**Materials:**
- LCD projector with speakers
- *News Media Bias* PowerPoint document (slides 1–6)
- Excerpts of *Outfoxed* (http://bit.ly/1fJZy3Q)
- *Outfoxed* handout
- *Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics* handout located at http://bit.ly/1iQhnyS (one per student)

**Common Core State Standards:**
**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.4**
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text.

## PREPARATION

Select the *Outfoxed* clips (see the list below) that you would like to show and cue them to the starting times to avoid having to watch an advertisement.

Post the lesson objectives, set up the LCD projector, project the *Lesson Title* slide (1) onto the screen, and gather the *Outfoxed* handouts.

  

# **LESSON:** News Media Bias

## BELL-RINGER: Fight scenario

Project the *Bell-ringer* slide (2) onto the screen. Have the students respond in writing to the following prompt:

A fight between two girls broke out in the hallway last period. The principal asked those who witnessed the fight to report what happened. The witnesses included:

- the best friend of one of the students who fought,
- sister of the other student,
- teacher who knows both students,
- teacher who does not know either student,
- student who was just walking by halfway through the fight, and
- student who was in the hallway when the fight broke out.

**How might the witnesses' reports differ? Why?**

## LESSON: News Media Bias

### BEFORE: Defining objectivity and bias

Have the students share their thoughts from the bell-ringer.

Project the *Definitions* slide (3) onto the screen. Introduce the following vocabulary words:

**bias:** to show a preference for a certain issue or position

**perspective:** point of view

**objective:** the ability to describe an issue or event without expressing an opinion or taking sides

**subjective:** one's personal interpretation of events

**propaganda:** often false or misleading information used to promote a person, institution, or organization

Have the students write down how each word applies to the bell-ringer scenario. For example, the sister of the student might have a hard time being objective.

Ask the students whether they think all of the witnesses in the scenario would be objective when retelling the events and have them explain why or why not.

Ask the students to find principles in the Code of Ethics that encourage journalists to be objective. Then ask, "Can reporters be objective?"

**Explain:**

- We all have our own unique worldview that is influenced by many factors such as our race, class, gender, nationality, education, etc. For example, the teacher and the student in the scenario are witnessing the fight through their own perspective or viewpoint. Conscientious reporters aim to be objective and work hard to be cognizant of their unique worldviews and the values and perspectives tied to them.
- There is another kind of bias in which people intentionally try to promote a specific worldview or perspective. For example, in the bell-ringer scenario—if the brother of one of the girls in the fight was asked to describe what happened, his personal relationship with his sister might influence his story. He might want to protect her; therefore, his retelling of the events might be skewed in her favor.
- Either way, intentional or not, the individual biases of reporters, editors, and producers influence how we get our information and what we think.

Project the *Cartoon* slide (4) onto the screen. (Note: the slide shows one man holding a "no" sign surrounded by reporters and a large group of people holding "yes" signs without reporters.) Have the students look at the cartoon they analyzed during the "With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility" lesson and ask them how it might also relate to bias.

## DURING: Watch segments of *Outfoxed*

Project the *Outfoxed* slide (5) onto the screen. Say something like, "We can empower ourselves as news consumers by learning how to detect bias in the media. We are going to watch clips from a 2004 documentary called *Outfoxed* that details some of the tactics that the 24-hour news cable station Fox News sometimes uses to influence its audience. While Fox News may have pioneered these tactics, they have become common practice at many news outlets around the country."

Below are a list of video segments and their times from the documentary, *Outfoxed* (http://bit.ly/1kFjO4a). You do NOT need to show all of the segments (or the entire film) in order to achieve the lesson objectives. (If you have limited time, show the starred segments.) After each segment, ask the students if they have any clarifying questions and then have them fill out one row of the *Outfoxed* handout. Repeat this process until you have finished showing all of the video clips you selected.

**Introduction**: (Start at 00:00. End at 8:30.) Provides an overview of the Fox News Company.

***Polling, graphics, and music:** (Start 12:50. End at 15:00.) Shows how the network uses music and graphics to appeal to the audience and create an emotional response.

***News commentary:** (Start at 15:00. End at 17:40.) Describes how the network intermixes news with commentary to the extent that they are indistinguishable to the viewer.

***Some people say/sources:** (Start at 17:40. End at 19:08.) Describes questionable sourcing techniques that allow reporters to insert their political opinions into a broadcast.

**Paid experts:** (Start at 19:08. End at 21:24.) Explains the use of paid experts to promote a point of view.

***Character assassination:** (Start at 21:25. End at 24:30.) Documents the practice of discrediting a public figure.

**Limited diversity of opinions/guests:** (Start at 24:40. End at 27:52.) Demonstrates the lack of diversity of opinions of newscasters and guests.

**Stories they cover:** (Start at 27:52. End at 31:47.) Details how the Fox News leadership influences whether stories are covered or ignored.

## AFTER: Investigating the news

Project the *Investigating the News* slide (6) onto the screen. For homework, have the students respond to the following writing prompt:

Find one example of media bias in a broadcast and/or print new source. (While *Outfoxed* examined media bias in broadcast news, many print news organizations use similar tactics.) Pick a news source other than Fox News.

- Identify the news source
- Describe the bias technique
- Explain what messages might be missing

## Enrichment and Extension:

*Peace, Propaganda and the Promised Land* (available at http://bit.ly/1fJZy3Q) provides perspective on how the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is covered by the U.S. media and how that coverage supports U.S. foreign policy.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: *Outfoxed*

**Directions:** For each video segment, label the technique, describe it, and then identify a *Journalist Code of Ethics* principle that conflicts with it.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Technique:**<br><br>**Description:** | **Code of Ethics principle:** |
| **Technique:**<br><br>**Description:** | **Code of Ethics principle:** |
| **Technique:**<br><br>**Description:** | **Code of Ethics principle:** |

# LESSON: The Power of Language

**Overview:**
Language has the power to elicit emotions. Again, while news reporting aims to be objective, sometimes the language used can influence the way news consumers feel about the story. This lesson has students examine the intricate nuances of language and connotation and the impact it can have.

**Student Objectives:**
- Distinguish neutral language from similar words with positive or negative connotations
- Examine the power of language to shape a news consumer's understanding of an event

**Assessment:**
- *Identifying Biased Language* handout
- *Investigating the News* assignment

**Materials:**
- LCD projector
- *The Power of Language* PowerPoint document (slides 1–7)
- *Identifying Biased Language* handout
- Newspapers from the past couple of weeks (one classroom set) OR computers with Internet

**Common Core State Standards:**
**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.4**
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines faction in Federalist No. 10).

## PREPARATION

If you plan to use newspapers in this lesson, gather enough recent newspapers so you have one for each student. We recommend you remove distracting features like the comics, sports, and the classified section.

Post the lesson objectives, set up the LCD projector, project the *Lesson Title* slide (1) onto the screen, and gather the handouts and newspapers.

  

# **LESSON:** The Power of Language

## BELL-RINGER: The power of language

Project the *Bell-ringer* slide (2) onto the screen. Have the students respond in writing to the following prompt:

What is the difference between calling a person a "soldier" versus calling him or her a "freedom fighter"?

## BEFORE: identifying biased language

Have some of the students share their responses to bell-ringer. Ask the students how language can influence how people think.

## DURING: Identifying biased language

Project the *Definitions* slide (3) onto the screen. Explain that the relationship between words and meanings is extremely complicated and that words do not have single, simple meanings. Explain that the meanings of words can be separated into two parts:

- **Denotation:** a literal meaning of the word
- **Connotation:** an association (emotional or otherwise) which the word evokes

Project the *House/Home* slide (4) onto the screen. Explain that, for example both "house" and "home" have the denotation "place where a person or people live," but "home" has a positive connotation, while "house" is neutral.

Project the *Words with Different Connotations* slide (5) onto the screen. Ask the students for examples of different words or phrases that mostly mean the same thing but have different connotations.

Project the *Which Statement is Neutral?* slide (6) onto the screen. Ask the students to identify the neutral statement on the slide.

Distribute one copy of the *Identifying Biased Language* handout to each student and have the students complete the handout on their own. Discuss their answer choices as a class. Since connotations are not universal (for example, one person might think being called "skinny" is a compliment while another might find that word insulting), the students' evidence and rationales for their choices are as important as the choices themselves.

Remind the students that in order to be vigilant critical consumers of the news, they need to be aware of subtle language choices that may influence their perspectives of news events.

## LESSON: The Power of Language

### AFTER Investigating the news

Project the *Investigating the News* slide (7) onto the screen. Students will need access to news stories for this activity so you can either distribute one newspaper to each student or have the students use the Internet.

Have the students look for and write down an example of biased language. For the biased word/phrase, have the students write the connotation of the word/phrase as well as a less biased word/phrase.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Identifying Biased Language

The words we choose to use can reflect a bias. Certain words and phrases are neutral while others may have positive or negative connotations. When the news media uses certain words, it can influence our view of the events or individuals in the story.

**Directions:** For each trio of phrases below, put an "x" under the sentence(s) that use neutral phrasing.
**NOTE:** There may be zero, one, two, or three neutral sentences in each row.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **1. Our school is full of haters.** | **Students in our schools share their opinions freely.** | **Our school has students with negative attitudes.** |
| **2. They violated the school's code of conduct.** | **They were inappropriate.** | **They acted like barbarians.** |
| **3. The Smiths live in west town.** | **The Smiths live in the ghetto.** | **The Smiths live on Main Street and Elm Ave.** |
| **4. He replied to the question with a guilty smirk.** | **The witness looked embarrassed as he answered the question.** | **The witness made a face as he answered.** |
| **5. They were standing on the corner.** | **They were loitering on the corner.** | **They were hanging out on the corner.** |

**How might this exercise influence how you consume news media?**

# LESSON: Identifying Perspectives in News Stories

## Overview:

This lesson is a chance for students to examine how one story can be reported from a variety of perspectives. Students will read different news stories from various sources on the same subject and compare perspectives.

## Student Objectives:

- Examine how one story can be told from a variety of perspectives
- Infer the impact of different perspectives on the understanding of the news

## Assessment:

- *Identifying Perspectives in News Articles* handout

## Materials:

- LCD projector
- *Identifying Perspectives* Power Point document (slides 1–6)
- *How Perspectives Shift the Story* handout (one per student)
- Three articles about a current event from different news sources or use the Hurricane Katrina articles listed below (1/3 of a classroom set for each)
- *Identifying Perspectives in News Articles* handout (one per student)
- Chart paper and markers (optional)

## Common Core State Standards:

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.4**
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.6**
Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.2**
Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

## LESSON: Identifying Perspectives in News Stories

### PREPARATION

Find three articles about a current event from different news sources. If you cannot find articles about a current event, use the articles about Hurricane Katrina below.

Post the lesson objectives, set up the LCD projector, project the *Lesson Title* slide (1) onto the screen, and gather the handouts.

Create a table on the board that looks like the one below.

| **Article Title** | **Rats Bite Baby** | **Rats Bites Infant. Landlord, Tenants Dispute Blame** | **Rat Bites Rising in City's "Zone of Death"** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Who?** | | | |
| **What?** | | | |
| **Where?** | | | |
| **Why? (May be inferred)** | | | |

# **LESSON:** Identifying Perspectives in News Stories

## BELL-RINGER: Rats bite baby

Pass out one *How Perspectives Shift the Story* handout to each student.

Project the *Bell-ringer* slide (2) onto the screen. Have the students read the "Rats Bite Baby" section of the handout and then turn to a partner and identify the who, what, where, and why of this story.

## BEFORE: Rats bite baby continued

Solicit student responses from the bell-ringer and post them on the table in column one.

Project the *Rats Bite Infant. Landlord, Tenants Dispute Blame* slide (3) onto the screen. Have a student volunteer read the "Rats Bite Infant. Landlord, Tenants Dispute Blame" section of the handout aloud. Add the article title to column two and complete the column as a class.

Project the *Rat Bites Rising in the City's "Zone of Death"* slide (4) onto the screen. Have a student volunteer read the "Rat Bites Rising in the City's 'Zone of Death'" section of the handout aloud. Add the article title to column three and complete the column as a class.

Ask the students to draw conclusions from the table by asking, "What does this tell us about how the same event can be covered in the news media?"

## DURING: Identifying perspective in news articles handout

Project the *Identifying Perspective in News* slide (5) onto the screen. Explain to the students that they will now look at actual news articles that demonstrate different perspectives about the same event. We recommend that you print copies of three articles about a current event from different news sources (e.g., newspapers, news magazines, online news outlets, and blogs). If that is not possible, you can find three articles about Hurricane Katrina at:

- http://ind.pn/1fK1ABa
- http://bit.ly/1juTfR1
- http://bit.ly/1sbOheJ

Divide the class into groups of six students and then have them find a partner in their group. Pass out the *Identifying Perspective in News Articles* handouts. Within each group, give each pair a different article to read. Have each pair read their article and complete the *Identifying Perspectives in News Articles* handout.

# LESSON: Identifying Perspectives in News Stories

## AFTER Comparing stories

After all three pairs in each group have completed the *Identifying Perspectives in News Articles* handout, project the *Comparing Stories* slide (6) onto the screen and encourage the students to discuss the similarities and differences in how the same event was reported in the three news sources by considering the following discussion prompts:

- In what ways do the different articles represent different perspectives? What evidence do we have to support this?
- What facts do all the articles have in common?
- What information is in one article but absent in another?
- If someone read just one of these articles, how would their view of the event differ from someone who read the other articles?

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## How Perspectives Shift the Story

Three newspapers reported the same story differently.

### Rats Bite Baby

The first newspaper reported the following details about the story:

> In a run-down apartment building in a low-income community, a single mother left her baby alone in his crib while she went to cash her unemployment check. When she left, the mother left the door open so her neighbors could keep an ear out for the baby. While she was gone, rats bit the baby repeatedly. A neighbor responded to the baby's cries and took the child to the hospital. The baby was treated and released to his mother.

The picture showed a picture of the mother walking into her run-down apartment building.

### Rats Bite Infant. Landlord, Tenants Dispute Blame

The second newspaper reported the following details about the same story:

> After a baby was bitten in an apartment building, concerned neighbors protested their landlord for allegedly ignoring their repeated requests for rodent extermination. The landlord denied their claims and blamed the tenants for improperly disposing their garbage.

One picture showed angry and concerned residents protesting. Another picture showed the landlord with his jacket over his head jumping into his Mercedes in his wealthy neighborhood while being hounded by lawyers and cameras.

### Rat Bites Rising in City's "Zone of Death"

The third newspaper reported the following details about the same story:

> After a baby was bitten in an apartment building, a group of residents went to City Hall to protest the "rat epidemic" in the urban "Zone of Death." During the protest, the mother of the baby who was bitten asserted that her son is only the latest victim of the rat epidemic plaguing low-income neighborhoods and accused city officials of neglect and corruption.

The picture showed the mother speaking to reporters in front of City Hall with residents holding signs in the background.

*Adapted From: Robert Bray, SPIN Works!, San Francisco: Independent Media Institute, 2002*
*http://spinacademy.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/SPIN-Works.pdf*

## LESSON: Identifying Perspectives in News Stories

### BELL-RINGER: Before Chart Sample Responses

| Article Title | Rats Bite Baby* | Rats Bites Infant. Landlord, Tenants Dispute Blame** | Rat Bites Rising in City's "Zone of Death"*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Who? | *Mother* | *Landlord/tenants* | *City/tenants* |
| What? | *Neglected her baby and as a result, baby was bitten* | *Dispute over poor conditions in the apartment building* | *Neglecting low-income communities and as a result rat Infestation* |
| Where? | *Run-down apartment in low-income neighborhood* | *Apartment building (fancy neighborhood of landlord)* | *City hall* |
| Why? (May be inferred) | *She is a bad mother* | *Landlord/tenants not taking care of building—dispute over who's to blame* | *Neglect (city doesn't care) and/or corruption* |

***Rats Bite Baby**

The perspective of the story paints the mother who left her baby alone to go cash her unemployment check as the central character. The story makes it sound like she is responsible for the rat biting her baby. In fact, the story infers that those who receive unemployment assistance in general and unwed mothers specifically are at fault.

****Rats Bite Infant. Landlord, Tenants Dispute Blame**

Now it is an investigative story. This version of the story includes information from other tenants who claim that the landlord has ignored their repeated requests for rodent extermination. The photos and language suggest that the landlord is at fault.

*****Rat Bites Rising in City's "Zone of Death"**

Now City Hall is implicated. Elected officials, urban policy, economic empowerment zones, and affordable housing become part of the story. The good guys and the bad guys have changed places. The mother who was demonized in the first "Rats Bite Baby" story has now become a spokesperson for families victimized in the urban "Zone of Death." She becomes the emblem of the story.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Identifying Perspectives in News Articles

| | |
|---|---|
| | **Title:**<br><br>**Author:**<br><br>**News source:** |
| **Who?** | |
| **What?** | |
| **Where?** | |
| **Why?**<br>**(may be inferred)** | |

# LESSON: Distinguishing News from Commentary

## Overview:

This lesson will provide students the tools to distinguish between news and political commentary.

## Student Objectives:

- Distinguish a news story from commentary and identify key elements of each
- Describe the purpose of commentary
- Discuss the implications of blurring the lines between news and commentary

## Assessment:

- Exit Ticket

## Materials:

- LCD projector
- *Distinguishing News from Commentary* PowerPoint document (slides 1–8)
- Find a news media article and commentary about a current local, regional, or national issue (half of a classroom set of both)
- Four Corners signs (Story A: Commentary, Story A: News Story, Story B: Commentary, Story B: News Story)
- *Exit Ticket* handouts

## Common Core State Standards:

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.4**
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text.

## PREPARATION

Find a news article and commentary piece about a current local, regional, or national issue. Write "Story A" at the top of one story and "Story B" on top of the other story. Photocopy half of a classroom set of each. (If you cannot find a pair of stories, you can use the following commentary and article about same sex marriage in Illinois: http://bit.ly/Rho41o and http://bit.ly/Q6vAuK.)

Create and then hang the Four Corners signs (i.e., Story A: Commentary, Story A: News Story, Story B: Commentary, Story B: News Story).

Post the lesson objectives, set up the LCD projector, project the *Lesson Title* slide (1) onto the screen, and gather the article and commentary copies. Cue the MSNBC clip.

  

# **LESSON:** Distinguishing News from Commentary

## BELL-RINGER: What is an editorial?

Project the *Bell-ringer* slide (2) onto the screen. Ask the students to respond in writing to the following question prompt:

What is an editorial and how is it different from a news article?

## BEFORE: Critical read

Project the *News Article or Commentary?* slide (3) onto the screen. Give half your students the article and the other half the commentary. Instruct them to read their story quietly on their own, decide whether it is a news article or commentary, and prepare to explain their reasons.

## DURING: Taking stock

Project the Four Corners slide (4) onto the screen.

Do a Four Corners activity. Have the students decide whether their stories are commentaries or news stories and then have them stand in the appropriate corner. (For example, if a student read story B and he thinks that it is a commentary, he would stand in the corner labeled, "Story B: Commentary.")

Have the students in each corner discuss why they think their piece was a news story or a commentary and encourage them to provide evidence from the text. Then, have a representative share their corner's perspective. After all four groups have presented, announce the answer.

Explain that the editorial page is the section of the newspaper (or other news source) that is acceptably and intentionally subjective. Explain that the commentary section of the news is where the editors/producers share their opinions on current events. Remind the students that the commentary section is specifically labeled as such and stands separate from the news reporting. Explain that nowadays, both newspapers and TV news media stations sprinkle commentary throughout their coverage. For example, the *Chicago Tribune* includes an opinion column on the second page of the paper. This can be confusing to news consumers.

# LESSON: Distinguishing News from Commentary

## AFTER Blurred lines

Project the *Blurred Lines* slide (5) onto the screen. Explain that while we can distinguish news from commentary, sometimes it is difficult to separate the two. Explain that most election coverage mixes commentary with the news. Show the video segment of Chris Matthews's election coverage on MSNBC (http://bit.ly/1mvscsz) and encourage the students to pay attention to the reporter's language. (You don't need to watch the entire clip.)

Project the *Blurred Lines Discussion* slide (6) and have the students answer the following discussion prompts:

- Was Chris Matthews reporting the news, was he giving us his opinion, or was it a mixture of the two?
- What did he say that supports your position?
- What are the impacts of mixing commentary and news reporting?

Project *On MSNBC, Opinion Dominates Reporting* slide (7) onto the screen and have the students interpret the slide image, explain how it might influence consumers' understanding of what is going on in the world, and explain how it might impact having an informed public in a democracy. (Note: The slide has a graph that shows the percentage of commentary/opinion and factual reporting for MSNBC, Fox News, and CNN on three days.)

Project the *Exit Ticket* slide (8) and have the students complete the *Exit Ticket* handout.

  

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Exit Ticket

**One way a news story is different than a commentary is ...**

**An impact of blurring the lines between news and commentary is ...**

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Exit Ticket

**One way a news story is different than a commentary is ...**

**An impact of blurring the lines between news and commentary is ...**

# LESSON: Just the Facts: Fact Checking in the Digital Age

**Overview:**
How do you know if what you read or hear in the news is true? In this lesson students explore various techniques for fact checking the accuracy of what is reported.

**Student Objectives:**
- Explain the importance of fact checking
- Practice techniques to verify the accuracy of information
- Infer the implications of unverified information
- Critically analyze information and source it

**Assessment:**
- *Fact Checking in the Digital Age* handout

**Materials:**
- LCD projector
- *Just the Facts* PowerPoint document (slides 1–6)
- Computers with Internet
- *Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics* handout located at http://www.spj.org/pdf/ethicscode.pdf (one per student)
- *STEM* handout (one per student)
- *Fact Checking in the Digital Age* handout (one per student)

**Common Core State Standards:**
**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.1**
Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

## PREPARATION

Prior to class, you may want to open the lesson's websites in separate windows to save instructional time during class.

Post the lesson objectives, set up the LCD projector, project the *Lesson Title* slide (1) onto the screen, and gather the handouts.

## BELL-RINGER: What's wrong with this picture?

Project the *Bell-ringer* slide (2) onto the screen and ask the students to write down what is wrong with the picture from 9/11/01.

  

# **LESSON:** Just the Facts: Fact Checking in the Digital Age

## BEFORE: What's wrong with this picture?

Have the students share their thoughts from the bell-ringer. Explain that the photo is a fake and that it was Photoshopped. Ask the students what might be the impact of publishing false or misleading information.

Project the *10 Fake Photos* slide (3) onto the screen. Show the photos from the "10 Fake Photos of Hurricane Sandy" article (http://bit.ly/1iiIPze) and discuss how people trying to get information about the hurricane might have been influenced by the images.

Project the *Dewey Beats Truman* slide (4) onto the screen. Show the photo from the "Dewey Beats Truman" article (http://bit.ly/1rVJLix) and explain that the Chicago Tribune prematurely and inaccurately declared Dewey the presidential victor, when in fact Truman had beaten Dewey in an upset. Ask the students what they think the impact of that newspaper headline might have been. Explain that a similar situation occurred in 2000 when Fox News prematurely and inaccurately announced that George W. Bush had defeated Al Gore in Florida and had won the presidency.

## DURING: Whom can you trust

Ask the students which principles from the *Professional Journalists Code of Ethics* relate to reporting accurate information. Explain that a critical news consumer knows that there are certain key elements to look for in identifying whether a news report or image is trustworthy and accurate. Distribute one copy of the *STEM* handout to each student and ask for student volunteers to read the handout aloud.

Project the *Whom Can You Trust?* slide (5) on the screen. Project the "Obama to Write New U.S. Constitution" article (http://bit.ly/1mvn7My) and explain that you are going to model how you might test the accuracy of this story.

You might want to say something like, "First, let's read the first few paragraphs. Do you think this article sounds credible? Why or why not? Now, I want to know a bit more about the source itself and whether it is credible. Let's look at the other articles on the site. Does it look like a reputable news site? Let's scroll to the bottom and look on the 'About' tab. It mentions UFOs, Bigfoot, and classified government cover-ups. It doesn't sound legitimate to me. Okay, now I am going to go to a well-respected site for checking the accuracy of information—Snopes.com. When I type 'Obama new constitution' into the search field, there is a Snopes article that provides all sorts of information and evidence that indicates that the Obama story is false."

## AFTER Fact checking

Project the *Fact Checking in the Digital Age* slide (6) on the screen. Distribute one copy of the *Fact Checking in the Digital Age* handout. Have the students work in pairs or in small groups to complete the handout. Each pair/group will need a computer with Internet to complete the activity.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: STEM: Are Your Sources Credible?

With the overwhelming amount of information floating around the media, it's hard to distinguish credible (reliable) sources from the junk. When looking at or listening to a source, ask yourself the following questions (remember STEM):

**Source**

S

**What's the source?**

A news agency? A think-tank? A personal blog? An educational institution? A not-for-profit?

Does this institution have an agenda or bias?

**Example:** The Sierra Club is an environmental conservation group; therefore, keep their agenda in mind when you visit their website.

**Two-source check**

T

**Does the author cite more than one source?**

This is especially important for numerical data—you can never fully trust numbers and statistics from only one source. Inconsistencies in different sources can reveal inaccuracies in reporting.

**Experts**

E

**Are the quoted statements made by experts?**

Who's quoted? Are they eye-witnesses or just people who know the information second-hand? Are they educated and informed about that topic? What qualifies them as an expert?

**Multiple perspectives**

M

**Does the article include statements or quotations that reflect various opinions on an issue? Does the author point out both the pros and cons of a particular argument or interpretation?**

**Example:** A news article about a crime should have quotations from not just the victim but also any witnesses, the police, and the defense attorney.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Fact Checking in the Digital Age

Go to http://bit.ly/StlGp9 and answer the following questions:

**1. Where are the tree octopuses found?**

**2. Why are they threatened with being endangered?**

**3. Use your STEM handout to check the accuracy of this information. What did you find out?**

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Fact Checking in the Digital Age

For the following questions, conduct an online search to find the answers.

**4. What is the leading cause of death in the U.S. in 2013? List your answer and three sources that reported the answer.**

**5. It was reported that Obamacare provided free gasoline for low-income people. Fact check this information, provide the sources you consulted, and use your *STEM* handout to check your work.**

**6. It was rumored that children's toy Play-Doh was originally invented to be wallpaper cleaner. Is that true? Fact check this information, provide the sources you consulted, and use your *STEM* handout to check your work.**

**7. It was rumored that uniforms for the 2012 U.S. Olympic team were produced in China. Fact check this information, provide the sources you consulted, and use your *STEM* handout to check your work.**

# LESSON: The Business of the News

**Overview:**
While an informed public is a key element for a well-functioning democracy, running a newspaper or a news broadcast is not a public service, it is a business. And as such it needs to make a profit in order to stay in business. In this lesson students will examine the financial pressures that often influence editorial decision-making.

## Student Objectives:

- Describe financial pressures that influence editorial decisions
- Describe the impact of profit on the quality of news
- Analyze the competing values of the Professional Journalists Code of Ethics to the business pressures of a running a news organization

## Assessment:

- *News and Money* handout

## Materials:

- LCD projector
- *The Business of the News* PowerPoint document (slides 1–5)
- *News and Money* handout
- Computers with Internet

## Common Core State Standards:

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.7**
Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1.c**
Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.

## PREPARATION

Post the lesson objectives, set up the LCD projector, project the *Lesson Title* slide (1) onto the screen, and gather the handouts.

  

# LESSON: The Business of the News

## BELL-RINGER: Public service or a business?

Project the *Bell-ringer* slide (2) onto the screen. Have the students respond in writing to the following prompt:

Is the news media a public service or a business?

## BEFORE: News for profit

Have the students share their responses from the bell-ringer. Explain that while there is some public-supported media such as National Public Radio (NPR) and Public Broadcast Systems (PBS), the most popular news outlets are private, for-profit entities. In order for them to survive, they must make a profit.

Project the *How Might the Need for Profit* slide (3) onto the screen and ask the students, "How might the need to make a profit impact the reporting of the news?"

## DURING: Group work

Project the *Group Work* slide (4) onto the screen, divide the class into small groups, and have the students use a computer with Internet access to complete the *News and Money* handout.

## AFTER News and money

Project the *Homework* slide (5) and have the students respond in writing to the following prompt for homework:

To what extent does the need for profit influence the news? (Think about quality, quantity, content, accuracy, etc.) What is the possible impact on the public?

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: News and Money

### Cutting Corners

In order to maximize profit, many news outlets have seriously cut back on their reporting staff. Watch the clip: http://bit.ly/1nj2Tai

1. **According the media specialist interviewed in the clip, why is investigative journalism on its way out?**

2. **According to the video clip, what are news stations like CNN spending their money on instead of investigative journalism?**

3. **What do you think the impact of these decisions could be?**

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Companies, government agencies, and organizations seeking press around their work distribute information through written press releases and, more recently, video news releases (VNRs) to news media outlets to persuade journalists to report on a story. For example, your student government president might send a press release about an upcoming school event to your local paper. With the scaling back of news staff, some news outlets now run press releases and/or VNRs as-is without actually fact checking or reporting on the stories. (In fact, many PR firms now make their VNRs look like broadcast news clips so they can be inserted easily into a newscast.) This means the news media are not always reporting; sometimes they are merely "relaying" information that groups trying to promote a specific agenda send them.

Watch examples of how newscasts incorporated VNR's into their broadcast at http://bit.ly/1q7hVV8.

**4. Which VNR did you watch?**

**5. Knowing what you know about the code of journalists, how is the VNR you watched different than an actual reported story?**

**6. What do you think is the impact of portraying VNRs as journalism?**

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: News and Money

### Quantity Over Quality

Many Americans used to get most of their news through reading a newspaper. Today, with the 24-hour news stations, morning, afternoon, and evening news, national and local news, news shows like 60 Minutes, online news outlets, blogs, and social media—news is a 24/7 experience. This non-stop access and demand for news is often referred to as an "information glut."

**1. What might be the benefits of this news "information glut"?**

**2. What might be the consequences of this news "information glut"?**

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

This 24-hour news cycle has created a demand for a quick news turnaround and pressure to find ways to fill broadcasts and news feeds. News media sources also have a strong desire to beat their competitors to a "breaking news" story to get more viewers. This sometimes causes news outlets to run a story before it has been adequately sourced and fact-checked. Go to http://bit.ly/1juVELy.

**3. Summarize the story.**

**4. What responsibilities do news media sources have to adequately check their news before they report it?**

**5. What may be the impact of misreporting information?**

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: News and Money

### Infotainment

News outlets need viewers in order to survive. With so many media and entertainment options, the pressure is on to give viewers what they want. There will probably always be a tension between what journalists believe is newsworthy and what their corporate bosses believe will increase viewership. Some critics argue that what now passes as "news" is a combination of information and entertainment, or "infotainment."

According to a 2005 poll by the Pew organization, 53% of journalists felt that financial pressures were hurting television news and 74% felt that news organizations were moving too far into entertainment.[1] According to Neil Postman and Steve Powers, when people "turn on the news, they want relief, not aggravation."[2] For example, Britney Spears's head-shaving incident and Justin Bieber's arrest were covered widely on serious news outlets even though the stories were neither serious nor important. Additionally, Thinkprogress.org, reported that on the day after Playmate Anna Nicole Smith's death, CNN referred to her death 522% more than the Iraq war and MSNBC referred to her death 708% more than the Iraq war.

**1. How does the need to drive "eyeballs" to a news outlet impact the type of news covered?**

**2. To what extent should news outlets give people what they want? To what extent do they have a responsibility to report on news, even if it is unpleasant or challenging?**

[1] *Bettag, Tom. (2006). Evolving Definitions of News. Nieman Reports, Vol.60, Iss. 4; pg. 37, 3 pgs*
[2] *Postman, Neil, and Steve Powers. How to Watch TV News. New York, NY, U.S.A.: Penguin, 1992. Print.*

  

# LESSON: Media Consolidation

**Overview:**
This lesson explores the importance of independent news sources that add a variety of perspectives to the public dialogue and the threat that media consolidation has created.

## Student Objectives:

- Examine the importance of multiple sources for news
- Interpret informational text from multiple online sources
- Write a informative/explanatory letter to principal

## Assessment:

- *Why Media Consolidation Matters* handout

## Materials:

- LCD projector
- *Media Consolidation* PowerPoint document (slides 1–5)
- Computers for learning stations
- *Media Consolidation Learning Stations* handout (one per student)
- *Why Media Consolidation Matters* handout (one per student)

## Common Core State Standards

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.7**
Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.2**
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

## PREPARATION

Arrange for someone to barge into your room during the first few minutes of class while the students are working on the bell-ringer. (It might be fun to have your intruder be a colleague wearing a disguise or someone the students don't know.) Have the "intruder" create a fuss (e.g., mumble something hard to understand or take something off your desk) and then leave. The entire event should take no longer than 10–15 seconds.

If possible, set up the computer learning stations before the students enter the room to save instructional time.

Post the lesson objectives, set up the LCD projector, project the *Lesson Title* slide (1) onto the screen, and gather the handouts.

# LESSON: Media Consolidation

## BELL-RINGER: News from multiple perspectives

Project the *Bell-ringer* slide (2) onto the screen. Have the students respond in writing to the following question:

"Would it be good or bad to have only one source for news?"

While students are writing, have the "intruder" enter the room, create a fuss (e.g., mumble something hard to understand or take something off your desk) and then leave.

## BEFORE: What just happened?

Project the *What Just Happened?* slide (3) onto the screen. Tell the students to imagine that they are a journalist reporting on this "event." Tell them to describe in writing what just happened without talking to anyone and encourage them to be as detailed as possible.

Have a few students report their version of what happened. Encourage other students to share any alternative descriptions, interpretations, or information. Say something like, "There are different interpretations of what happened. What is the truth?" Ask them if they were to write a news report on the event, how would they get the most accurate account. Ask them how many people would they have to interview for it to be reliable.

## DURING: Learning stations

Project the *Learning Stations* slide (4) onto the screen. The design of this section works best if you can create learning stations in your room using laptop computers. (Ideally, have at least two of each station so you don't have too many students at each station.)

Distribute one *Why Media Consolidation Matters Learning Stations* handout to each student. Have the students rotate through the stations and answer the questions for each station. After five minutes, call "switch!" and instruct the students to rotate clockwise to the next learning station.

- Station #1: http://bit.ly/1j2UXJY
- Station #2: http://bit.ly/1kFs97P
- Station #3: http://bit.ly/1lS3Wy8

Alternatively, you could give groups of students a laptop and have them go to the different websites without physically moving.

After the students have finished visiting all three stations, have each student switch his or her handout with a student from another group. Go through the answers as a class and have the students check each other's work.

## LESSON: Media Consolidation

### AFTER Reflection

Project the *Why Media Consolidation Matters* slide (5) onto the screen. Distribute one *Why Media Consolidation Matters* handout to each student. Have the groups generate a list of response ideas in class and then have each student write a response for homework.

### Additional resources:

Media Moguls Infographic: http://bit.ly/1rVMYP8

  

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Media Consolidation Learning Stations

**STATION 1:** Go to http://bit.ly/1j2UXJY and answer the following questions:

**What does the map demonstrate?**

**How did media ownership in the U.S. change from 1996 to the present day?**

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

**STATION 2:** Go to http://bit.ly/1kFs97P and answer the following questions.

**Choose a media company from the drop-down menu and see its list of holdings. What is one thing about the company's list of holdings that interests, surprises, or concerns you?**

**Choose a different media company from the drop-down menu and see its list of holdings. What is one thing about the company's list of holdings that interests, surprises, or concerns you?**

**STATION 3:** Go to http://bit.ly/1lS3Wy8 and complete the following statements.

**From 1982 to 2011, the U.S. media went from being owned by _____ companies to _____ companies.**

**Ever wonder why the music you hear from radio station to radio station sounds so similar? Maybe it's because _____ % of radio stations have matching playlists.**

**70% of cable TV is owned by _____ media companies.**

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Why Media Consolidation Matters

Imagine that the principal just entered the room to observe the class. Your teacher explains that the students are learning about media consolidation. The principal is intrigued; so she approaches your group and asks, "What is media consolidation and why does it matter?"

Prepare a response for your principal. In your response, consider: diversity of opinion, influence, transparency, profit, and the importance of an informed public in a democracy. In your groups, generate a list of ideas. For homework, write a response on your own.

# LESSON: From Headlines to Hashtags: How and Where People ARE Getting Their News

**Overview:**
Technological changes have caused traditional media to redefine itself and have opened the door for new forms of media. In this lesson, students learn about and interpret recent news media trends.

## Student Objectives:

- Interpret data in various formats
- Compare the benefits and challenges of new forms of media with traditional media
- Analyze non-fiction text, summarize the main idea, take a position in support or opposing the main idea and provide evidence for a position

## Assessment:

- *Citizens: The New Fourth Estate* handout

## Materials:

- LCD projector with speakers
- *Headlines to Hashtags* PowerPoint document (slides 1–11)
- *News Media Trends* handout (one per student)
- *Citizens: The New Fourth Estate* handout (one per student) (http://huff.to/1nj5uB3)
- Two different colored highlighters (one of each per student)
- Sticky notes

## Common Core State Standards

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.1**
Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1**
Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

## PREPARATION

Post the lesson objectives, set up the LCD projector, project the *Lesson Title* slide (1) onto the screen, and gather the markers and handouts.

# LESSON: From Headlines to Hashtags: How and Where People ARE Getting Their News

## BELL-RINGER: Where do I get my news?

Distribute one *News Media Trends* handout to each student. Project the *Bell-ringer* slide (2) onto the screen. Have the students respond in writing to the following prompt:

> Put a check next to all the news media source types where you get your news. Then, rank your top three sources. For example, write a "1" next to the source type you use the most.

## BEFORE: Introduce new media

Have the students share their responses from the bell-ringer.

## DURING: Powers of the news media

Have the students get into pairs or groups of three. Go through the *News Media Trends* handout with the students. During this activity you will use slides 3–9. For each section, allow the students time to work through the relevant questions in their groups before discussing the answers as a class.

Project the *Tweet It* slide (10) onto the screen. Have each group create one 140 character or less "tweet" that highlights one way the media has changed/is changing. Have the groups write their tweets on a sticky note. Have one person from each group read their tweet to the class and then place it on the board. As the tweets grow, encourage the students to group similar tweets together.

Note: Some of the important changes include:

- Newspaper usage is declining.
- Internet news usage is increasing.
- Newspaper and TV newsroom workforces are declining.
- Social media is increasing as a news source.

## AFTER Reflection

Distribute one *Citizens: The New Fourth Estate* handout to each student. Project the *Citizens: The New Fourth Estate* slide (11) onto the screen. While the students read the story, have them highlight the facts in one highlighter color and the opinions in another. Tell them to create a color key at the top of the page. After they finish reading and highlighting, have them respond to the following prompts in writing: What is David Hoffman's thesis? Do you agree with it? Provide evidence to support your position.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: News Media Trends

Bell-ringer instructions: Put a check next to all the news media source types where you get your news. Then, rank your top four sources. For example, write "1" next to the source type you use the most.

| I get my news from: | News Media Sources | My top 4 news sources are: |
|---|---|---|
| ○ | **Blog** | |
| ○ | **Facebook** | |
| ○ | **Magazine** | |
| ○ | **Newspaper** | |
| ○ | **Online magazine** | |
| ○ | **Online newspaper** | |
| ○ | **Radio** | |
| ○ | **TV news** | |
| ○ | **Twitter** | |
| ○ | **YouTube** | |

Group activity instructions: With your group members, for each section, complete all the questions with your group members until you see the word "stop."

## Slide 3: Where Do Americans Go for Their News?

1. Rank the following news sources from the most popular to the least popular in the United States. (1 is the most common, 4 is the least common.)

   **Internet** _____ **Newspaper** _____ **Radio** _____ **Television** _____

2. Which news type(s) do you think are losing audience?

   **Internet** _____ **Newspaper** _____ **Radio** _____ **Television** _____

   *Discuss why with your group members.*

3. Which news type(s) do you think are gaining audience?

   **Internet** _____ **Newspaper** _____ **Radio** _____ **Television** _____

   *Discuss why with your group members.*

**STOP and wait to discuss your answers with the class.**

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Slide 4: Main Source for News Graph

4. Use the graph to check your answers for questions 1–3 above.
5. What is the main source for news for all Americans?

6. What is the fastest growing news source for all Americans?

7. This graph shows the media usage for all Americans. Do you think the rankings might be different for younger Americans ages 18–29? If so, how might the rankings change?

8. This graph shows the media usage for all Americans. Do you think the rankings might be different for older Americans? If so, how might the rankings change?

**STOP and wait to discuss your answers with the class.**

## Slide 5: Main Source for National and International News Graph

9. Use the graph to check your answers for questions 7 and 8 above.
10. Why might it be useful for advertisers to see media usage broken down into these different age groups?

11. How might the declining usage influence newspaper and TV news media organizations?

**STOP and wait to discuss your answers with the class.**

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Slide 6: Newspaper Newsroom Workforce Continues Its Decline Graph

12. Take a minute to look at the graph and then have someone in the group describe it aloud.
13. Why do you think newspapers are reducing their newsroom staff?

14. How might having fewer newsroom workers impact the quality of newspaper news?

15. How might these changes impact democracy or self-governance in the United States?

**STOP and wait to discuss your answers with the class.**

## Slide 7: What News Source Would You Use?

16. How would you most likely learn about and/or share breaking news that happened in your school? Why?

17. What news source would you use to learn more about breaking news or an emergency (fire, shooting, robbery, etc.) in your neighborhood? Why?

18. What news source would you use to learn more about breaking news in your city? Why?

19. What news source would you use to learn more about breaking news in the United States? Why?

**STOP and wait to discuss your answers with the class.**

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Slide 8: More People Getting News on Social Networks

**As a class, discuss:**

20. How did the use of social media change between 2010 and 2012?

21. What might be the benefits of the increased reliance on social media for news?

## Slide 9: Hurricane Sandy Conversation on Twitter

**As a class, discuss:**

22. What might be some drawbacks or limitations of the increased reliance on social media for news?

23. How might the growing reliance on social media for our news impact our exposure to different perspectives?

# LESSON: Being A Critical News Media Consumer

**Overview:**
There is a difference between being cynical and being critical. We want to empower students to be critical, not paralyze them with cynicism. For that reason, this lesson (or at the very least, the handout provided here) is key.

**Student Objectives:**
- Identify key actions they can take to be critical consumers of the news
- Develop and implement strategies for how to educate others to be critical consumers

**Assessment:**
- Variable (depending on the action you/they decide)

**Materials:**
- LCD projector
- *Being a Critical Consumer* PowerPoint document (slides 1–6)
- Stand and Declare signs (i.e., strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree)
- *10 Ways You Can Empower Yourself to Be a Critical News Consumer* handout
- Project supplies (paper and markers if students are creating posters; computers if they want to create a social media campaign)

**Common Core State Standards**

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1.b**
Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.2**
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

## PREPARATION

Post the lesson objectives, set up the LCD projector, project the *Lesson Title* slide (1) onto the screen, post the Stand and Declare signs around the room, and gather the handouts and project supplies.

# LESSON: Being A Critical News Media Consumer

## BELL-RINGER: Trust no one

Project the *Bell-ringer* slide (2) onto the screen. Ask the students to respond in writing to the following statement:

"You cannot trust the news so don't bother."

## BEFORE: Stand and declare

NOTE: Refer to the Stand and Declare activity in the first lesson on page 18 for directions on how to facilitate the activity.

Project the *Stand and Declare* slide (3) onto the screen. Do a Stand and Declare activity using the statement from the bell-ringer:

"You cannot trust the news so don't bother."

## DURING: Empowering ourselves to be critical news consumers

Have the class discuss the difference between being cynical and being critical. Have the students discuss why it is important to be critical news consumers instead of cynical news consumers. Ideas for discussion include:

- Someone who is critical is thoughtful, inquisitive, judicious evaluation and careful judgment, open-minded and informed by evidence, and analytical.
- Someone who is cynical is distrustful, pessimistic, disparaging, negative, and contemptuous.

*Project the Ways to be Critical News Consumers* slide (4) onto the screen. Have the students get into pairs or groups of three and create a list of ways they can empower themselves to be critical news consumers. Have them share their ideas with the class.

*Project the 10 Ways to Empower Yourself* slide (5) onto the screen. Distribute the *10 Ways You Can Empower Yourself to Be a Critical News Consumer* handout. Ask the students to put a check mark next to tips they come up with in their groups and a star they didn't come up with in the groups.

## AFTER Raising awareness

Project the *Raising Awareness* slide (6) onto the screen and ask the students, "How can you share what you have learned with others?" Have them brainstorm ideas. (Their ideas may include a social media campaign, making a flier, hanging posters around the building, presenting to teachers, etc.) Depending on your allotted time, this activity can be as small as making posters that represent the 10 ways to be a critical news consumer or as a big as designing and leading a workshop. In any case, the goal is to have students share their knowledge with others.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## **Student Handout:** 10 Ways You Can Empower Yourself to Be a Critical News Consumer

There is a difference between being cynical and being critical. Being cynical is unproductive because you are disengaged and passive. Being critical empowers you to challenge and question what you read and watch.

Below are some actions you can take to empower yourself.

1. Be active, not passive, when you consume news. Ask questions. Don't believe everything you read, see, and hear.
2. Learn about the political and economic interests of the news outlets you frequent. Find out whether they have an ideological leaning, who owns them, and what else they own. Be on the lookout for bias.
3. Pay attention to language. Loaded language can sneak in and shape your understanding of an event or a person.
4. Pay attention to images. Photos and videos can wordlessly shape our views and impact our emotions.
5. Visit multiple sources to verify a story.
6. Look for sourcing within a story. Is it varied? Thorough? Reliable?
7. Remember to distinguish between news and commentary. News should be objective.
8. Remember that you do not need to have an opinion on everything. People like to discuss the latest "news" item. It is okay to withhold your opinion if you don't know much about it.
9. Seek out alternative news sources such as non-profit news, community based news, etc.
10. Teach others these tools.

# Unit 2

After becoming critical consumers, the next logical step is for students to be able to leverage the news media to bring about change on issues that they care about. This section offers a host of project options that take varying degrees of time to complete. Teachers should consider time and resources when guiding student choices in this section. Whether students are creating their own media messages through PSA's or social media campaigns, or circulating a petition regarding the coverage of an issue by a particular news outlet, students should end this section with an understanding that they have power to influence the reporting of news.

# LESSON: Identifying Issues

**Overview:**
In this section, students will apply their news literacy skills around an issue they care about. Students will identify that issue through this lesson.

## Student Objectives:

- Envision a well-functioning community/city/society
- Identify a social issue that is important to them
- Examine news media coverage of the issue

## Assessment:

- *Our Issues in the News* handout

## Materials:

- LCD projector
- *Identifying Issues* PowerPoint document (slides 1-6)
- Newspapers from the past few weeks (one classroom set) or computers with Internet
- Our *Issues in the News* handout

## Common Core State Standards

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.1**
Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.7**
Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

**NOTE:** If you are integrating *News. Voice. Power.* with either the *Issues to Action* or the *Democracy in Action* curricula, you will not need to do this lesson as your students should have chosen their issue(s) already.

## PREPARATION

If you plan to have your students use newspapers instead of computers with Internet for the *Our Issues in the News* handout, gather newspapers from the past few weeks so that you have a classroom set. You may want to remove the comics, sports, and advertising sections.

Set up the LCD projector, project the *Lesson Title* slide (1) onto the screen, and gather the newspapers and handouts.

# **LESSON:** Identifying Issues

## BELL-RINGER: I dream a community/city/country/world

Project the *Bell-ringer* slide (2) onto the screen. Have the students respond to the following prompt: Imagine a world (or community, city, or country) the way you would want it to be.

- What would it look like?
- How would people act?
- What would it be like?

You may write and/or draw (with descriptive captions) your ideal community.

**NOTE:** You may want to allow more time than usual for this bell-ringer.

## BEFORE: Identifying obstacles

Have the students share their vision with a partner. Project the *What are the Obstacles?* slide (3) onto the screen.

Have the partners brainstorm what obstacles are preventing their vision from happening. For example, if they dream of safe neighborhoods, gang violence might be an obstacle. Or, if they dream of a city without homelessness, lack of affordable housing might be an obstacle.

## DURING: Our issues in the news

Project the *Obstacle = Issue* slide (4) onto the screen. Tell the students that their obstacles can also be called issues. Project the *Choose Your Issue?* slide (5) onto the screen and have individual students choose the one issue about which they feel most strongly.

Provide each student with a newspaper from the past few weeks or have the students use the Internet. Have the students conduct an extensive search of the quantity and quality of news coverage on the issue they selected and complete the *Our Issues in the News* handout. Once they have completed the questions for their newspaper edition, have them look at another edition and repeat the steps.

## LESSON: Identifying Issues

### AFTER: Taking stock

Project the *Our Issues in the News* slide (6) onto the screen. Have the students synthesize their findings from the *Our Issues in the News* handout by writing short responses to the following prompts:

- Do you feel like your issue gets enough coverage in the news?
- How is your issue covered? (e.g., What is emphasized? What is left out?)
- Is there consistency in coverage across news sources?
- What stories are not being told? Why is it important that they be told?

### HOMEWORK: Letters to the editor

Project the *Letters to the Editor* slide (7) onto the screen. Explain to the students that they will choose one of the newspapers they read today in class and write a letter to the editor describing the paper's coverage (or lack of coverage) of the issue they care about. Remind the students to reference the article or editorial they are responding to, state a position/make a point, and be brief.

Schedule time for revisions in the following days and then have your students submit their letters to the newspaper online or via post.

**NOTE:** Before moving on to the "Developing a News Media Action Plan" lesson, decide if you want students to work individually, in pairs, or in small groups. The "Developing a News Media Action Plan" lesson is prepared for groups but can easily be modified for individual actions.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Our Issues in the News

**Directions:**

1. Describe the issue you selected and briefly explain why it is important to you.
2. Search your newspaper edition for any articles that relate to the issue you selected.
3. Read the articles that relate to your issue.
4. Complete the first question box below.
5. Look at another edition and repeat steps 2–4.

**My issue is:**

**It is important to me because:**

| **NEWSPAPER 1** | **Date:** |
|---|---|
| **Are there any articles about your issue in this newspaper?** | ○ **Yes** ○ **No** |
| **If there is, what are they about?** | |
| **Are the articles positive, negative, accurate, and/or thorough?** | |
| **What sections are they in?** | |
| **How long are they?** | |

Look at another edition and repeat steps 2–4.

| **NEWSPAPER 2** | **Date:** |
|---|---|
| **Are there any articles about your issue in this newspaper?** | ○ **Yes** ○ **No** |
| **If there is, what are they about?** | |
| **Are the articles positive, negative, accurate, and/or thorough?** | |
| **What sections are they in?** | |
| **How long are they?** | |

Look at another edition and repeat steps 2–4.

| **NEWSPAPER 3** | **Date:** |
|---|---|
| **Are there any articles about your issue in this newspaper?** | ○ **Yes** ○ **No** |
| **If there is, what are they about?** | |
| **Are the articles positive, negative, accurate, and/or thorough?** | |
| **What sections are they in?** | |
| **How long are they?** | |

# LESSON: Creating a Media Campaign

**Overview:**
Being critical consumers of news media is only part of the story. Students should also see themselves as news creators and activists in the news media realm. What follows is an extensive compilation of handouts and guides to support students as they design and execute their media campaigns.

**Objectives:**
- Create their own news media
- Collaborate with peers to complete a project
- Utilize technology to accomplish goals
- Leverage traditional and new news media outlets

**Materials:**
- *Personal Democracy Manifesto* (http://bit.ly/1iv6zAf)
- Varies: handouts, computer access, video access
- Possible *News Media Actions* handout

**Assessments:**
- Varies but every student will complete an action project

**CCSS:**

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.2**
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.4**
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.6**
Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1**
Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.2**
Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.5**
Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

**NOTE:** If you are integrating this curriculum with either Mikva's *Issues to Action* or *Democracy in Action* curricula, we encourage your students to do action #10 as their action—get coverage of an event or action.

# **LESSON:** Creating a Media Campaign

## PREPARATION

Prep for the first day includes making copies of the *Personal Democracy Manifesto* (http://bit.ly/1iv6zAf). You may choose to delete the final two paragraphs of the document.

You have a few key decisions to make before embarking on the action phase of the curriculum.

1. How much time are you allotting for this step?
2. What technology do you have available?
3. Is the whole class working on the same issue, are groups working on the same issue, or are students working individually?

The answers to those questions will help dictate the action choices available to you. Modify the *Possible News Media Actions* handout to align with your choices.

We have provided informational, planning, and reflection handouts that will help guide you and your students throughout the process.

# **LESSON:** Creating a Media Campaign

## BELL-RINGER: Media for the people

Distribute a copy of the *Personal Democracy Manifesto* to each student and read aloud (you can omit the final two paragraphs). Encourage the readers to read dramatically and with feeling! After the manifesto is read once aloud, have students re-read silently and write comments and reactions to at least three points in the margins. Allow time to discuss the manifesto.

## BEFORE: Brainstorm

Explain to the class that writing letters to the editor is just one way to leverage the media around an issue that they care about. Have them work with a partner to list other ways they can use news media around the issue that they care about.

Have students share their ideas and post on the board. Distribute the Possible *News Media Actions* handout and have students read the options aloud.

## DURING: Planning

Students should organize into their action groups and begin strategizing and planning what action they would like to take. Create the parameters for the action phase based on the size of the class, the technology available, and the time available. Use the Action Plan and Weekly Group Accountability forms provided on pages 88 and 90 to help your students plan.

## AFTER Actions, presentations and reflection

Allow the students an opportunity to share their work with their peers and reflect on their work.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Possible News Media Actions

| Action | You might want to choose this action | Approximate length of time to complete |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Pitch a story idea about your issue to a journalist | • When you feel like the news media is not covering your issue completely or there is a story they are not telling. | 2–5 days |
| 2. Create a PSA about your issue | • When the issue you care about does not get enough exposure or there are things people don't know about it.<br>• When you have access to technology to create and ways to distribute the PSA (places to show it). | 4–5 days |
| 3. Create a social media campaign to raise awareness about an issue | • When the issue you care about does not get enough exposure or there are things people don't know about it.<br>• When you have access to technology. | Varies; should spend a few days developing a plan and materials and then continue the campaign over time |
| 4. Create a blog on your issue | • When the issue you care about does not get enough exposure or there are things people don't know about it.<br>• When you have access to technology.<br>• When you want to connect with others who care about your issue, ideally to take action. | 1–2 weeks to create; should update it regularly (at least a few times a month) |
| 5. Create a documentary on your issue | • When the issue you care about does not get enough exposure or there are things people don't know about it.<br>• When you have access to technology to create the documentary and ways to distribute it (places to show it). | One month minimum; could take a whole semester or year depending on the level |

  

## Student Handout: Possible News Media Actions

| Action | You might want to choose this action | Approximate length of time to complete |
|---|---|---|
| 6. Create a petition targeting a news media outlet's coverage of an issue | • When you are unhappy with how a news media outlet is covering an issue and you want to let them know. | 1–2 days to create the petition, 2–5 days to push it out |
| 7. Crowdsourcing—create a space for others to add content (neighborhood portals) | • When you feel like there are stories not being told by mainstream media, you can create your own website/blog/Facebook page/Twitter account and solicit contributions from members of the community. | 1–2 weeks to create the online space, regular maintenance to keep it up |
| 8. Curate what is out there through Storify | • When there is good content out on the Web and you want to curate it to tell a particular story. | 3–5 days |
| 9. Join an existing media campaign | • When there is a group or coalition that is already working on a media- related issue that you care about. For example, when there are a number of groups protesting FCC rules governing media consolidation. | Varies depending on campaign and level of engagement |
| 10. Get coverage of an event or action* | • When you are taking action on your issue and want media coverage of the event. | 3–5 days to create press release or media advisory, contact press, and practice your talking points |
| | | |

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Action Plan

**GOAL:**

**Action Step:** **Date done by:**

**How does this action step help us get closer to accomplishing our goal?**

**TASK:** **WHO:** **Date done by:**

**Action Step:** **Date done by:**

**How does this action step help us get closer to accomplishing our goal?**

**TASK:** **WHO:** **Date done by:**

**Student Handout: SAMPLE Action Plan**

GOAL: Ensure that all students at our school, beginning with the class of 2012, receive two semesters' worth of sex education their freshman year.

Action Step: Learn about sex education and how it's been implemented at other schools — Date done by: 2/10

How does this action step help us get closer to accomplishing our goal?

By learning what other schools have done, we can choose the best curriculum and strategies for getting it implemented

| TASK: | WHO: | Date done by: |
|---|---|---|
| 1. look up schools that have had sex ed | Alisha, Devin | 1/30 |
| 2. research organizations that deal with sex education and invite them to partner up | Roberto | 2/5 |

Action Step: Get administrators' approval for sex ed course — Date done by: 3/15

How does this action step help us get closer to accomplishing our goal?

| TASK: | WHO: | Date done by: |
|---|---|---|
| 1. circulate petition to show administrators the level of support for sex ed | Damien, Maria | 2/5 |

  

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Weekly Group Accountability Form

**Group Members:**

**Week of:**

| Tasks (The To-Do List) List one task per box. | Student(s) Assigned to Task | Deadline for Task | Daily Progress Recorded in Fields Below | Out-of-Class Work? | Done? (Initial) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | M | | |
| | | | Tu | | |
| | | | W | | |
| | | | Th | | |
| | | | F | | |
| | | | M | | |
| | | | Tu | | |
| | | | W | | |
| | | | Th | | |
| | | | F | | |

# Action 1: Pitch a story idea about your issue to a journalist

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Pitch a Story to a Journalist

Leveraging the press is a powerful way to get your work and your message out to a large audience. It can be hard to get your story picked up by a journalist, but if there is a good story and you target the right journalist, you might have some luck. Below are suggestions for getting the press to cover an issue.

Find the right journalist. You can target someone at a newspaper, radio, TV, or online news outlet. What matters is that you find the right person to target. Find someone who covers your issue and/or has covered stories in the past that you think were good.

Contact the journalist (look up their contact info online) and make a personal connection—mention an article or piece they did recently that you enjoyed. Compliment their work. Then make your pitch.

In order to make your pitch effective, it is best if you provide a frame for the journalists. Here are ideas on how to frame your story.

- Make it news—Reporters are only interested in current events, not old news. If your story is not new, find a fresh angle that makes it "unprecedented," "groundbreaking," or "the first ever."
- Trend—Reporters are interested in trends. In the news business, "three is a trend." Find at least three examples to support your assertion that a new trend is emerging.
- Localize a national story—A convenient news hook is to take a national story and emphasize its local impact or to take a local story and stress the city, state, regional, or national implications.
- Highlight dramatic human interest—Compelling personal stories work. Include the stories of real people such as their challenges and victories.
- Utilize controversy—Very simply, controversy sells and reporters love it.
- Use a calendar hook—Frame your story to capture something coming up on the calendar—"the tenth anniversary of ____," "back to school," "Mother's Day," etc.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Pitch a Story to a Journalist Prep Sheet

**After conducting some research, the reporter I want to pitch the story to is:**

**He/she is a good target for our story because:**

**The story I want to pitch is:**

**This story provides a unique angle that would be interesting to a reporter because:**

**The specific frame I will use to pitch the story is:**

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Contacting a Reporter

Contact reporters via e-mail and phone. Reporters are super busy!

### Preparing for the Call:

- If you are trying to speak to someone specific, make sure you know the gender of the person you are trying to call and the proper pronunciation of his or her name.
- Find a quiet place to make the call where you won't be interrupted.
- Fill out the Phone Form before calling.

### During the Call:

- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Introduce yourself and where you are from.
- Briefly explain the purpose of your call.
- If the person you want to talk to is not available to talk, find out when a better time would be to call him or her back. Write down the time he or she suggests. If you get a voicemail recording, leave a detailed message and your contact information.
- Be polite.
- Feel free to ask the person to whom you are speaking to repeat himself/herself or clarify any answers you don't understand.

### After the Call:

- Follow up. If you told the person you were going to do something, do it.
- Write a thank-you note if you feel like the people you spoke to really went out of their way to help you (for example, if they talked to you for a long time, mailed you a packet of information, etc.).

### Sending an E-mail:

- Introduce yourself at the beginning of your e-mail and explain the purpose of your e-mail.
- If possible, compliment the reporter on something he or she did that you thought was particularly good or his or her work in general (for example, you might write, "I am reaching out to you because of your fair and evenhanded reporting of the school crisis").
- Provide your e-mail as well as a phone number so the reporter knows how to reach you.
- Set up a timeline (for example, you might write, "I would love to talk with you further about this story by the end of this week").
- Thank the reporter for his or her time and consideration and let the reporter know you will be following up with a phone call.

## Student Handout: Phone Form

1. Introduce yourself.

**Your name:** **Your group:**

Your group's contact information (in case someone asks):

**Phone:** **E-mail:**

**Briefly explain why you are calling. If you are trying to set an appointment, write the possible times here.**

2. Ask if he or she can help you.

**His/her name:** **His/her job:**

If not, who else can help you?

**Name:** **Phone number:**

3. Ask your questions.

**Question 1:**

**Question 1 Answer:**

**Question 2:**

**Question 2 Answer:**

**Question 3:**

**Question 3 Answer:**

**Question 4:**

**Question 4 Answer:**

4. Write down your next steps.

5. Thank the person!!!

# Action 2: Create a PSA about your issue

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Create a PSA

- Choose one main idea for your message.
- Determine what you want your audience to do. This call to action can be almost anything. It can be spelled out or implied; just make sure that your message is clear.
- Determine your target audience. Are you targeting parents, teens, teachers, or some other social group? Consider their needs and preferences, as well as the things that might turn them off. They are the ones you want to rally to act.
- Grab your audience's attention—use visual effects, emotions, humor, or surprise to connect to your target audience. Positive messages tend to yield better results than negative or scary messages.
- You only have a short amount of time to convince your audience—be clear and stay on message.
- Statistics and references can add to a PSA. Conduct some research to find the most up-to-date and accurate information about your topic.
- Use music when possible. Most popular songs are copyrighted; therefore, in most cases, you may not use them in a video without first obtaining permission from the artist. Instead, search for "license-free music" or "creative commons music" online to find songs that you can use freely and legally as long as you abide by the conditions established by the artists. YouTube also has a small library of free songs that you may use in your video even if you don't post it to YouTube. http://bit.ly/1jtympT
- Create a script and keep your script to a few simple statements.
- Use the *Create Your Own PSA: Storyboard* handout to map out the scenes in your PSA.
- Develop a strategy to get your PSA viewed by as many people as possible. Contact your local cable access network station, contact local network affiliates, show it at events in school and in the community, and post it online to YouTube or Vimeo.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: PSAs

A PSA is a short (30–60 seconds) video or print ad created to persuade an audience to take an action. PSAs can create awareness, show the importance of a problem or issue, convey information, or promote a behavioral change.

Watch a few sample PSAs at www.adcouncil.org and www.lwvil.org/voter-video-minutes.html. Fill in the table below.

| What is the title of the PSA? | What was the message? | Who was the target audience? | Was it effective? |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Create Your Own PSA: Storyboard

First, consider what the viewer will see and sketch it in the scene sketch boxes. Second, plan what the viewer will hear and write it in scene audio boxes.

| Scene 1: | Scene 2: | Scene 3: |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

| Scene 4: | Scene 5: | Scene 6: |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

# Action 3: Create a social media campaign to raise awareness about an issue

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Create a Social Media Campaign

Social media can be a powerful way to share news and communicate a story without going through traditional news channels. Unlike writing a newspaper article or producing a news broadcast, anyone can tweet, post, or blog. The key to effectively utilizing the power of social media is to get your message to as many people as possible and have a clear call to action. Read the article at http://n.pr/1njbLPr and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Kony 2012 campaign. What can you learn from that social media campaign?

All social media campaigns should be multi-faceted and employ more than one strategy. No matter what social media forms you use, update your messages regularly.

Different demographics tend to use different forms of social media. The social media you use may depend on who your target audience is. The table below outlines the strengths and limitations of different forms of social media. Before you design your social media campaign, consider the information provided. (Social media platforms rise and fall in their popularity. The table below is not meant to be an exhaustive list of all social media options, but rather an overview of some very popular ones at the time of publication.)

| Type of social media | You might use it: |
|---|---|
| Twitter | When your message can be told in 140 characters or less; you want to send a message to specific people or organizations; you want to tap into existing Twitter networks and/or you want to start an online conversation. |
| Facebook | When you want to create an ongoing presence as opposed to a one-shot message; you want to gather supporters; and/or you want to post relevant information including links and photos. |
| YouTube | When you have the time and technology to create a powerful video that captures people's attention and might go viral. |
| Instagram | When you have powerful or unique photos to share. For example, if you are fighting for more funding for schools, photos of the poor conditions in your school could be an effective way to get that message across. |
| Visuals (e.g., and memes) | When you have a message that could be conveyed visually. While visual representations are not a social media form, they are powerful social media tools. Infographics visually simplify information or data, memes use a popular image with minimal text, and Storify and Prezis tell a story using images and text. |

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Developing our Social Media Strategy

View the Prezi on creating an effective social media campaign at http://bit.ly/1gTI5Hh and fill in the strategy sheet below.

**1. What are your social media goals?**

**2. Which social media will you use? Why?**

**If you use Instagram....**
What images will you use? What will your tag be?

**If you use Twitter ...**
What information will you share? (Remember your tweets must be 140 characters or less.)
What hashtags will you use?

**If you use Facebook ...**
What information will you share? Who do you want to see this?

**If you use YouTube ...**
What information will you share? What tags will you use?
What title will you use? What description will you use?

**If you use another form ...**
What information will you share?

**3. How will you measure success? What are your specific goals for your social media campaign?**

I will post _____ times in _____ days/weeks.

I will have _____ followers/retweets/shares by _____ .

Other metric: _____ .

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Going Viral

Everyone that creates a social campaign wants his or her work to go viral. Although there is no one way to create viral content, there are some tips we can learn from past successes.

### Key Words

The words you use, especially in your headlines, can make a big difference.

- Personalizing your message has a big impact. The words "you" and "your" are consistently found in top viral content (e.g., "10 things about childhood obesity you need to know").
- Using a question to frame your message can help it gain clicks and viewers. For example, writing "Why isn't it safe to walk home from school?" might be more effective than "It isn't safe to walk home from school."
- Superlatives like "the most" or the "the best" are also effective in grabbing viewers' attention (e.g., "The best reasons to stay in school").
- "How to" is an effective attention grabber (e.g., "How to avoid fights at school"). Similarly, posting a "beginner's guide" to something also tends to draw a lot of traffic.

### Other Useful Tips

Using video and infographics and including a reference to video in your headline is a great way to draw viewers.

- Make the most of current events by connecting your headline to news and newsmakers.
- Try to tap into people's curiosity.
- Emotional appeals are highly effective with positive emotional messaging being significantly more effective than negative messaging.
- Call the reader to action with direct action words.
- Make bold claims.
- Sound like a human, not a robot.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Twitter

Twitter is a very popular and easy-to-use form of social media. Twitter allows you to link to photos, videos, and other online sites. The power of Twitter is in the seemingly unlimited potential of having your tweets retweeted. In addition, you can also tweet directly at someone. Like Instagram and other forms of social media, tagging is a powerful tool for you to use in gaining an audience. Below are some tips for using Twitter.

- **140 characters is not much**—Use your characters carefully. Use tinyurl to shorten long website links.
- **Be specific with your tags**—Tags that are too broad don't work because the tag is cluttered with thousands of photos. For example, #violence is probably too broad. #youthviolence, #chicagoviolence, or #gangviolence might be more effective.
- **But not too specific**—If you create a tag that only you use, others will never find you!
- **Be relevant**—You want your tweet to stand out and connect with the people most like you. Relevant tags will help you attract new followers who will take a genuine interest in your posts and continue liking and commenting on your posts over time.
- **Newsjack**—One way to be relevant is to newsjack—adapt a news story to connect to your issue/topic.
- **Be observant**—Pay attention to similar photos and look at their hashtags. Stay current with the tags others are using.
- **Research**—Search for hashtags and key words related to your issue and follow people who seem to be interested in your issue.
- **Stay away from texting language** such as LOL, U, B4 and the like. You are trying to get a message across and want to be taken seriously. Keep the texting language for personal messages.
- **Tweet often**—It makes a difference.
- **Retweet**—One way to get people to follow you is to retweet their tweets or respond to their tweets.
- **Links**—Use your tweets to link to other useful content.
- **Engage others**—Ask questions and respond to others.
- **Be human**—Be friendly.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Creating a Twitter Storm

The power of Twitter is in your ability to create a message that gets retweeted widely. Use this form to practice developing effective tweets. Fill in the following boxes with as many tweets as you can think of under that category. Remember, tweets are a maximum of 140 characters.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Informative**<br>Sharing new information to raise awareness | **Provocative**<br>A controversial statement that will stir a reaction |
| **Open-Ended**<br>Posing a question and asking others to respond | **Conversational**<br>Tweeting directly at someone to spur a conversation |
| **Which two reporters or influential people on Twitter will you target with your tweets about your issue?** | |
| **1.** | **2.** |

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Facebook

With over 1 billion users, Facebook can be a powerful tool for networking. (See an infographic of Facebook's stats at http://bit.ly/1h9o0XO.)

Many people are wary of Facebook, its privacy settings, and how it owns your information and shares it with others. For information about this, go to http://bit.ly/1j9RKbq.

If you decide to create a Facebook page, you will probably want to create a group. If the purpose is to reach as many people as possible, you should keep your group public. Read how to open a group page at http://on.fb.me/1mZRJbg.

**Once you have created your page, you should consider the following:**

- What images do you want on your page (e.g., your profile picture and other images)?
- Will members be allowed to post material or simply comment on posted material?
- Who will moderate comments? We recommend you establish clear guidelines and post them regarding what is acceptable on the page.
- How will you recruit members and get likes on your page? You can recruit through Facebook as well as other social media like Twitter and Instagram.
- Posting regularly is important in order to stay in people's news feeds.
- Use the About section to fully and clearly explain the purpose of your group and the Facebook page.
- You can promote events in the Events tab.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: YouTube

Everyone seems to have a video up on YouTube these days. In fact, 100 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every minute! Posting on YouTube is only part of the action—you need to drive viewers to your video. Here are some tips to drive traffic to your video.

### Create a video worth watching

- Keep it short (1–2 minutes tops) and hook the viewer in the first 10 seconds. Most people don't have a lot of time to invest in watching your video and with so many options, you need to catch viewers early or you'll lose them.
- Keep the video pace moving by editing out long delays and pauses.
- Add music. Emotionally stirring music (happy or serious) can be very powerful and improve the look and feel of your homemade video production. Most popular songs are copyrighted; therefore, in most cases, you may not use them in a video without first obtaining permission from the artist. Instead, search for "license-free music" or "creative commons music" online to find songs that you can use freely and legally as long as you abide by the conditions established by the artists. YouTube also has a small library of free songs that you may use in your video even if you don't post it to YouTube. http://bit.ly/1jtympT

Include the necessary information for action including Twitter handles, Facebook pages, and blog addresses. If there is a call to action, put it up in text clearly and concisely so viewers know what to do.

### Optimize the Google search engine

- **Title**—Include keywords related to your video's content in the title. (Refer to the *Going Viral* handout for more tips on language.)
- **Description**—Describe your video using at least 2–3 keywords (also found in your title) that adequately represent what your video is about.
- **Tags**—Just as you would tag your blogs, highlight those common keywords you utilized in your title and description.
- **Closed Captions**—By including captions or subtitles, your video becomes more accessible to others. Not only will this help increase your audience base, but you are also adding to your search engine optimization rankings by associating your keywords and terms with your video.
- **Annotations**—Use annotations to link to other YouTube videos.

### Share the YouTube link widely

Putting the video up on YouTube is only the start. You need to push it out to people through Facebook, e-mail, Twitter, Tumblr, etc.

### Post at the right time

Stay away from posting your video on a Friday afternoon or a weekend. Mornings are good and Tuesday is a heavy consumption day.

### Comments

If your video has a lot of comments, it will rise higher in the rankings. There is nothing wrong with you commenting on your own video. Some people like to create a controversy in the comment section to draw more viewers in.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Instagram

Instagram falls somewhere between creating compelling visuals (since it is image and video based) and Twitter (since you can tag with short text). Like other visuals, Instagram uses the power of images to send a message. It is free and easy to start an Instagram account. Like all social media, the power is in pushing out your image to as many followers as possible.

Like Twitter, Instagram uses hashtags. Some things to consider with hashtags:

- **Be specific**—Tags that are too broad don't work because the tag is cluttered with thousands of photos. For example, #violence is probably too broad. #youthviolence, #chicagoviolence, or #gangviolence might be more effective.
- **But not too specific**—If you create a tag that only you use, others will never find you!
- **Be relevant**—You want your photo to stand out and connect with the people most like you. Relevant tags will help you attract new followers who will take a genuine interest in your photos and continue liking and commenting on your photos over time.
- **Newsjack**—One way to be relevant is to newsjack—adapt a news story to connect to your issue/topic.
- **Be observant**—Pay attention to similar photos and look at their hashtags. Stay current with the tags others are using.
- **Have fun with Instagram's themes and memes**, like #throwbackthursday.
- **Stay away from texting language** such as LOL, U, B4 and the like. You are trying to get a message across and want to be taken seriously. Keep the texting language for personal messages.
- **Be consistent**—It is helpful if you can post often and consistently.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Creating Compelling Visuals

Since a picture is worth a thousand words, creating compelling visuals and infographics can be a powerful way to reach your audience.

### Memes

Memes are fast to make and easily tweeted and posted. There are numerous websites that make creating a meme a cinch, including http://bit.ly/1nfMZRd and http://bit.ly/1jVOBHG.

### Remember:

- Find the right expression to convey. Make sure your visuals match the sentiment you're trying to portray. While humor can be very effective, if your topic is serious, using a silly image may seem inappropriate or disrespectful.
- Keep it short. Too much text on your image ruins the meme.

### Infographics

Infographics are simple, visual resources that tell a story. They are captivating and appealing and have very few words. Just as the name implies, they are *graphic representations of information.*

You can view examples of infographics at http://bit.ly/1lVTm9o and http://bit.ly/1nhyHyD.

### As you can see, infographics contain several key elements:

- Images and symbols
- Short statements
- Telling of a story through categories and short glances
- Should be clear with minimal confusion

### When you are ready to make a digital infographic online:

- Decide what you want others to know about your issue.
- Do your research and make sure your data is accurate and up-to-date.
- Go to an online infographic maker tool like http://bit.ly/1nre93x or http://bit.ly/1sVU46X and create your infographic.
- Get your infographic out there through Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, and other social media.

# Action 4: Create a blog on your issue

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Blogs and Tumblr

Blogs and Tumblr allow you to create an online location or "landing space" to aggregate all your content in one stable place. You still want to use other forms of social media to send people to your blog or Tumblr account. Blogs and Tumblr also have the advantage of having fewer space restrictions for posting content.

There are lots of free and easy sites you can use to create a blog, including Edublogs, Blogger, Weebly, Yola, and Webs. Tumblr is considered a microblog and has the advantage of being part of an online sharing network.

For an example of a youth-developed blog around the issue of teen health, check out Mikva's Teen Health Council blog at http://bit.ly/1jEqHGy.

**Some basic blogging tips are:**

- **Link** your blog to other forms of social media like Twitter and Facebook. Different people feel comfortable using different forms of social media; therefore, you can expand your reach by having a presence in multiple places.
- **Update,** update, update! No one will follow your blog if your posts are old. Set a regular schedule and keep to it.
- **Encourage comments.** The best way to engage viewers is to have them engage with your content. Go to similar-themed blogs and comment on them, including a link to your blog.
- **Looks matter.** Make the blog pleasing to look at and easy to navigate. If it is hard to follow a story or find information, you will lose readers.

Another way to use a blog is as a clearinghouse of information—more like a conventional website that a storytelling center. Because there are free blog sites, if you are interested in creating a more formal website for your issue, this might be a good option for you.

# Action 5: Create a documentary on your issue

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Create a Documentary

Even if it is short, creating a documentary is a long-term project. You cannot be effective if you don't dedicate enough time to complete it. If you would like to work with video but don't have the equipment or time to invest, we recommend creating a short YouTube video or a PSA. If you decide to engage in documentary filmmaking, the following websites provide great tips to guide your experience:

- http://bit.ly/1j9WD4n
- http://bit.ly/Qbwm9Y
- http://slidesha.re/1ijdYXY

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Create Your Own Documentary: Storyboard

First, consider what the viewer will see and sketch it in the scene sketch boxes. Second, plan what the viewer will hear and write it in scene audio boxes.

| Scene 1: | Scene 2: | Scene 3: |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

| Scene 4: | Scene 5: | Scene 6: |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

# Action 6: Create a petition targeting a news media outlet's coverage of an issue

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Create a Petition

A petition is a way to demonstrate a position to your target (in this case, a media outlet) and show that lots of people feel the same way. Here are some tips for developing a good petition.

### Writing the Petition

- **Give your petition a clear and simple title.** The title should state what you want.
- **Know exactly who you are going to give the petition to.** The petition won't work unless you give the petition to a person or organization that can make the change you want.
- **Identify the problem on the petition.** Make sure you clearly explain the issue you are concerned about so both the people who are signing the petition and your target understand.
- **Write a request on the petition!** This is very important. Clearly identify what you want. Otherwise, your target can very easily ignore your petition.
- **Include your group's name and contact information on the petition.** This is useful so that the target will know who to contact if he/she has questions about the petition. Also, if you give the petition to anyone outside of the group to collect signatures, it will help them know what to do with the completed petition.
- **Make sure the petition includes a place for the signers to leave their contact information.**
- **Number the signature lines for easy totaling if using a paper petition.**
- **Every page should be a separate petition if using a paper petition.** This way, many people can get signatures at the same time.

### Getting Signatures

- **You can do your petition online** through websites like www.change.org or www.ipetitions.org. Use all your online networks to reach as many supporters as you can.
- **Or you can do a paper petition.** If you are concerned about limited access to the Internet or prefer to have face-to-face contact, you can do a paper petition. Either way, you need to be able to tell people about what you are doing quickly and clearly.
- **If you are doing paper petitions,** go to an area with a lot of foot traffic (e.g., the mall, supermarket, school yard) and ask people if they have a minute to talk. Be polite and smile, even if someone doesn't agree with what you are doing.
- **Let people make up their own minds.**
- **Bring clipboards or a book** to make it easy for people to sign the petition, especially if you are going to be outside. Be sure to also bring a pen.
- **Be safe!** Don't go door to door in your neighborhood unless you know your neighbors. If you want to get signatures at a public transit station or other public venue, make sure you go with a friend or adult when it is still daylight.
- **Don't forge any signatures!** It is dishonest and illegal.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Sample Petition

Stop the negative stereotyping of youth!

We, the undersigned, are deeply concerned about the representation of youth in your newspaper. We find very few positive articles about young people and an abundance of negative articles. This misrepresentation has a highly detrimental effect on the treatment of young people in society. We demand you create a youth advisory board comprised of 14–18-year-olds to research this issue further and make recommendations to your company on how to best solve the problem.

| | NAME | ADDRESS | E-MAIL | SIGNATURE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | | | | |
| 2. | | | | |
| 3. | | | | |
| 4. | | | | |
| 5. | | | | |
| 6. | | | | |
| 7. | | | | |
| 8. | | | | |
| 9. | | | | |
| 10. | | | | |
| 11. | | | | |
| 12. | | | | |
| 13. | | | | |
| 14. | | | | |
| 15. | | | | |

Positive Representation of Youth (PROY) Proycampaign@gmail.com

# Action 7: Crowdsourcing – create a space for others to add content (neighborhood portals)

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Crowdsourcing

You can use the crowdsourcing approach (i.e., soliciting ideas and content from the community) to produce your own news media outlet related to your issues. Crowdsourcing allows you to leverage many voices when reporting events. You can essentially use any format available—blogs, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, etc. Different examples of crowdsourcing news sites are http://bit.ly/ReImI8, http://bit.ly/1lF2Oua, and http://bit.ly/1h9ypCZ.

Below are some basic tips on how to make your effort successful.

- **Create a clear focus for the site.** The more focused the topic, the easier it will be to decide what content is appropriate and what is not.
- **Solicit contributions far and wide.** Promote the opportunity to as many different groups and individuals as you can. The strength of your site will depend on the strength of your contributions.
- **Develop a policy on fact checking.** Will you post all contributions? How will you check for accuracy?
- **Develop a policy on controversial, partisan, and opinionated content.** Are you reporting or editorializing?
- **Develop a policy on moderating comments.** Having a format where comments need to be approved before they are posted (many blogs have that feature) allows you to avoid inappropriate or incendiary comments. you are using Facebook, you can only delete comments AFTER they have been posted.

# Action 8: Curate what is out there through Storify

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Storify

Storify is a social media service that allows you to create multimedia timelines that tell stories using a combination of photos, tweets, and other forms of content gathered across the web. In this sense, you don't have to create your own content (although you can); you can act as a collector of issue-related information. In creating the "story," you can choose what to include and the narrative or perspective.

**How to get started:**

- Review Storify's guided tour at http://bit.ly/1j8hD6I.
- Read "How to Curate Conversations on Storify" at http://bit.ly/1jElBdm.

**Tips:**

- **Curate**—Don't include every little piece of information in your Storify. Instead, make choices to collate or summarize a conversation without simply recreating it.
- **Stage**—Curating material for a Storify involves taking a position, because you are deciding what should and should not be included; however, it is also important to make that position transparent and to offer some (even if minimal) introduction to the materials you are collecting.
- **Direct**—Storify allows you to insert comments in the thread as it unfolds, so go ahead and add your own commentary.
- **Promote**—Like all forms of social media, it is only powerful if you get people to view it. Drive traffic to your Storify though Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.
- **Engage**—Allow viewers to engage with your Storify by responding using multiple forms of social media.

For an example of how students used Storify around the Trayvon Martin case, go to http://bit.ly/1k6chhv.

# Action 9: Join an existing campaign



  

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Join an Existing Campaign

Have you ever heard the saying, "there's no need to reinvent the wheel?" Well, it's true. Why start from scratch if there are people out there already working on your issue. Join them!

The first thing you need to do is some research to find out who is working on your issue and what exactly are they doing. A Google search might yield some basic results but you will probably need to make some phone calls as well.

Remember to stay true to your goals and what you are hoping to accomplish. You will often find groups working on your issue that have a slightly different perspective than you do. You can join them to offer support as an ally. But if what they are doing is not really what you care about, be careful about getting swept up into their work. They may work hard to recruit you to their cause.

Be wary of being tokenized or becoming "window dressing" for someone else's campaign. Adult groups are often very excited to have youth involved but aren't always sensitive to the fact that youth can lead. Avoid being the token "young person" in someone else's campaign. Make it clear that if you are participating, you want some say in the campaign. You should feel like you have control over your voice in the process.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Researching Other Groups

Sometimes the best way to find out what other groups are doing is to simply call them or send them an e-mail (or both).

### Preparing for the Call:

- Find a quiet place to make the call where you won't be interrupted.
- If you are trying to speak to someone specific, make sure you know the gender of the person you are trying to call and the proper pronunciation of his or her name.
- Fill out the Phone Form before calling.

### During the Call:

- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Introduce yourself and where you are from.
- Briefly explain the purpose of your call.
- If the person you want to talk to is not available to talk, find out when a better time would be to call him or her back. Write down the time he or she suggests. If you get a voicemail recording, leave a detailed message and your contact information.
- Be polite. A big part of what you are doing on this call is building a relationship, so be friendly and open.
- Feel free to ask the person to repeat himself or herself or to clarify any answers you don't understand.

### After the Call:

- Follow up. If you told the person you were going to do something, do it.
- Write a thank-you note if you felt like the person you spoke with really went out of their way to help you (for example, if they talked to you for a long time, mailed you a packet of information, etc.).

### Sending an E-mail:

- Introduce yourself at the beginning of your e-mail and explain the purpose of your e-mail.
- Provide your e-mail address as well as a phone number so they know how to reach you.
- Set up a timeline (for example, you might write, "I would love to talk with you further about this story by the end of this week").
- Thank them for their time and consideration and let them know you will following up with a phone call.

**NAME:** _____ **DATE:** _____

## Student Handout: Phone Form

1. Introduce yourself.

**Your name:** **Your group:**

Your group's contact information (in case someone asks):

**Phone:** **E-mail:**

**Briefly explain why you are calling. If you are trying to set an appointment, write the possible times here.**

2. Ask if he or she can help you.

**His/her name:** **His/her job:**

If not, who else can help you?

**Name:** **Phone number:**

3. Ask your questions.

**Question 1:**

**Question 1 Answer:**

**Question 2:**

**Question 2 Answer:**

**Question 3:**

**Question 3 Answer:**

**Question 4:**

**Question 4 Answer:**

4. Write down your next steps.

5. Thank the person!!!

# Action 10: Get coverage of an event or action

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: For ITA/DIA Classes: Getting Press on an Action You Are Doing

Leveraging existing press is a powerful way to get your work and your message out to a large audience. It can be hard to get your story picked up by a journalist, but if there is a good story and you target the right journalist, you might have some luck. Below are suggestions for getting the press to cover an action you are doing.

Find the right journalist. You can target someone at a newspaper, radio station, TV station, or online news outlet. What matters is that you find the right person to target. Find someone who covers your issue and/or has covered stories in the past that you think were good. Look up the journalist's contact information online.

When you contact the journalist, make a personal connection (e.g., mention an article or piece he or she did recently that you enjoyed), compliment his or her work, and then make your pitch.

In order to make your pitch effective, provide a frame for the journalists. Here are ideas on how to frame your story.

- **Make it news**—Reporters are only interested in current events, not old news. If your story is not new, find a fresh angle that makes it "unprecedented," "groundbreaking," or "first ever?"
- **Trend**—Reporters are interested in trends. In the news business "three is a trend." Find at least three examples to support your assertion that a new trend is emerging.
- **Localize a national story**—A convenient news hook is to take a nationally breaking story and emphasize its local impact or to take a local story and stress the city, state, regional, or national implications.
- **Dramatic human interest**—Compelling personal stories work. Include the stories of real people, their challenges and victories.
- **Controversy**—Very simply, controversy sells and reporters love it.
- **Calendar hook**—Frame your story to capture something coming up on the calendar—"the tenth anniversary of ____," "back to school," "Mother's Day," etc.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Getting the Media Hooked

Journalists want good stories to cover. Use this handout to lay out a compelling story that they would want to cover.

**What have we done?**
Write a brief summary about what your group is doing.

**What is the hook?**
Write down a few reasons that make your story stand out. How is it more than good people doing good things? What makes it unique or interesting?

**How do we want to frame it?**
Write your spin on the story. What is your point of view on the story? How do you want your story represented? What do you want the media to say?

  

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Media Planning Packet: General Tips

### Who gets the press release?

- Look up who has covered similar issues for each media outlet you will contact. For example, if your issue is school-related, search on the web for all of the newspapers and TV stations and write the name of the reporter who has covered school issues. Find their direct fax number and/or e-mail address so you can send him or her a copy of your press release.
- Contact an individual reporter whenever possible.

### How do we get the press to cover us?

- Call a reporter before you send anything. Ask whether he or she prefers a fax or an e-mail.
- Fax/e-mail a media advisory three to five days before your event.
- Fax/e-mail a press release the day before or the morning of your event.
- Media advisory vs. press release
  - A media advisory is essentially an invitation to the press. It covers the basics about your event in a very specific format. *See the Media Advisory sample*
  - A press release is a short news story. It should be written the way you would like to see it appear in a newspaper. Sometimes newspapers will lift your words straight from the press release if they write an article on your story.
- After you fax or e-mail the press, follow up with phone calls.
- For media advisories and press releases, call to make sure they received what you sent them.

### What do we do before the press arrives?

- Have a clear message.
- Designate class spokespeople who will conduct interviews with the media if they call or show up to an event. Make sure these spokespeople have a clear notion of what the class's message is.For example:
  - If you are meeting with decision makers, avoid embarrassing them – it is unlikely they will be open to working with you if you make them look bad in the press.
  - Know exactly what you are asking for and be able to say it concisely and specifically.
  - Know your key facts beforehand. Memorize them.
  - Think of possible questions reporters will ask and come up with answers.

### What do we do when the press shows up?

- Give them a press packet. This is a folder that should contain your group's contact information and key information that you would like them to read later, including a one-page summary of what you've done so far on the issue and one or two pages that give the highlights of your research. It should also include any other press materials: a copy of your press release, brief biographies of any notable speakers, and photographs, charts, or pamphlets relevant to your issue.
- Look neat and professional.
- Be confident and energetic as a public speaker—you can speak in a conversational tone, but remember that this isn't a conversation and avoid slang.
- Be honest—don't lie to reporters just to make your story sound better.
- Remember to tie in personal stories to your issue.
- Respond with key messages/sound bites—Don't just answer their questions, repeat your main points.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Our Media Outlets

Use the chart below to keep track of media contacts.

### PRINT MEDIA

| NAME OF OUTLET | GENERAL INFO | NAME OF KEY REPORTER | REPORTER'S CONTACT INFO |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Major newspaper:** | WEB:<br>PHONE: | | E-MAIL:<br>PHONE:<br>FAX: |
| **Free weekly:** | WEB:<br>PHONE: | | E-MAIL:<br>PHONE:<br>FAX: |
| **Neighborhood paper:** | WEB:<br>PHONE: | | E-MAIL:<br>PHONE:<br>FAX: |

### RADIO

| NAME OF OUTLET | GENERAL INFO | NAME OF KEY REPORTER | REPORTER'S CONTACT INFO |
|---|---|---|---|
| | WEB:<br>PHONE: | | E-MAIL:<br>PHONE:<br>FAX: |
| | WEB:<br>PHONE: | | E-MAIL:<br>PHONE:<br>FAX: |
| | WEB:<br>PHONE: | | E-MAIL:<br>PHONE:<br>FAX: |

## Student Handout: Our Media Outlets

Use the chart below to keep track of media contacts.

### TELEVISION

| NAME OF OUTLET | GENERAL INFO | NAME OF KEY REPORTER | REPORTER'S CONTACT INFO |
|---|---|---|---|
| | WEB:<br>PHONE: | | E-MAIL:<br>PHONE:<br>FAX: |
| | WEB:<br>PHONE: | | E-MAIL:<br>PHONE:<br>FAX: |
| | WEB:<br>PHONE: | | E-MAIL:<br>PHONE:<br>FAX: |
| | WEB:<br>PHONE: | | E-MAIL:<br>PHONE:<br>FAX: |

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: How to Write a Press Release

A press release is a formal way of telling the media about something they might want to cover. Press releases follow this general format.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**
Day, Month Date, Year

**CONTACT:**
Firstname Lastname
(xxx) xxx-xxxx

---

**HEADLINE**
**(Be creative. One sentence. Use proper capitalization—every word should be capitalized except for short words like for, of, it, the, a, an, from.)**

CITY, STATE—Begin your introductory paragraph here. (Grab their attention here. A strong introductory paragraph should cover who, what, when, where, why, and how.)

Put the body of your press release here. Expand on the information provided in your introductory paragraph. Include quotes from important people involved in your story and from experts on the subject when possible. The body of your press release should contain more than one paragraph. The final paragraph should restate and summarize the key points of your news release.

Include a short background on the organization involved in the action or event right here.

-30-

(The -30- is the official way to signal the end of the press release.)

Here are some tips for how to fill out that basic outline to make a solid press release that will get noticed:

### Write your own newspaper article

In some cases, if a newspaper is interested in the story, they'll print parts of it exactly as you wrote them! Therefore, think about what you would like to see in the newspaper. This means you should make your press release look and "sound" like a newspaper article.

### Start strong

Your headline and introductory paragraph should grab your readers' attention and give the most important basic details such as who, what, where, when, why and how.

### Pick your angle

Why would a newspaper or radio station be interested in your story? Tie your news to current events. Making this connection is called an "angle." For example, a newspaper might not write about sex education on a normal day, but they probably would if the president just recently made a big speech about it. If you can make a connection like that, work it into a quote, your headline, or somewhere else in a body paragraph. Where did they do this in the Advocates for Youth press release?

**Here is a sample press release:**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**
Tuesday, February 24, 2004

**CONTACT:**
Bob Barker
(202) 419-3420

---

**NEW DATA ON STDs IN AMERICANS UNDER 25 HIGHLIGHT NEED FOR HONEST SEX ED, FRANK TALK**

*Youth Panel Urges Bush Administration to "Get Real" About Sex Education*

WASHINGTON, DC—Citing new STD data and recommendations released today by a blue ribbon panel of experts and youth educators, James Wagoner, President of Advocates for Youth, praised the call for comprehensive, science-based sex education that encourages abstinence and teaches about condoms.

"With STDs, the stakes are just too high to talk only about abstinence," said Wagoner. "Over 27 million people between the ages of 15–24 have had sex, and they need all the facts—including medically accurate information on condoms—to protect their health."

A new report—*Our Voices, Our Lives, Our Futures*—released today by the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill contains the first national estimates on new infections among Americans ages 15–24 for eight major STDs: chlamydia, genital herpes, gonorrhea, hepatitis B, HIV/AIDS, HPV, syphilis, and trichomoniasis. It also outlines strategies that can help to stem the STD epidemic in the U.S., drawing on the latest research as well as the experiences of those who will be most affected—youth.

"The most important thing to realize is this: we've got to get real about sex to deal with STDs," said Shawn Carney, 17, a member of the youth panel. "Abstinence is, of course, the only 100 percent effective prevention strategy. But with 70 percent of young people having sex by the age of 18, we need to hear about more than abstinence. We need to know how to prevent STDs when we do have sex later in life.

"Sex education—whether from a parent or a teacher—isn't about abstinence or contraception. It's about both," said Miriam Szatrowski, 24, a member of the youth panel. "We need to embrace a realistic approach to sex education that includes information about abstinence and condoms because—together—they are our best defense against STDs."

Advocates for Youth is a national, nonprofit organization that creates programs and supports policies that help young people make safe, responsible decisions about their sexual and reproductive health.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Media Advisory Sample

Here's an example of what a media advisory should look like. Be sure to include your group's name and your class contact information in bold print below the words "Media Advisory."

**FOREFRONT MEDIA ADVISORY**
**For more information, please contact Jack Jones at 312-555-5555.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Who:** | A group of six Curie High School students who are part of the Forefront Leadership Program. |
| **What:** | A public forum with a panel of guest speakers to discuss the importance of Comprehensive Sex Education for all high school students. The teens will urge State Senator Antonio Munoz, other lawmakers, and voters to support Senate Bill 457, which would provide grants to schools and community organizations to use comprehensive sex education curricula.<br><br>The students will also be speaking to parents and students to emphasize the importance of this issue and what the federal and state government has failed to do to help schools receive a good sexual education. |
| **Where:** | "El Valor" at 1951 W. 19th St (Corner of 19th and Damen)<br>312-997-2030 |
| **When:** | Tuesday, May 31st from 5:00–6:30 p.m. |
| **Speakers:** | Anabel Arguello, Anelle Camacho, Yessenia Cervantes, Mayra Preciado,<br>Mariel Vega—Forefront Students, Curie High School<br>Dr. Stacey Lindau, Department of OB/GYN, University of Chicago Hospital<br>State Representative William Delgado, 3rd District<br>Angelica Aguilar, teen mother |

**Background**

The Forefront Leadership Program is a leadership training and civic action class at Curie High School. These six students have been working closely with the Illinois Campaign for Responsible Sex Education, a joint project of the Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health and Planned Parenthood/ Chicago Area.

Senate Bill 457 provides opportunities for local schools and community groups to arm adolescents with the information, assistance, skills and support they need to enable them to make responsible decisions about their sexuality, health and well being.

The bill would provide funding for all instruction that is age-appropriate and medically accurate, and teaches abstinence as well as information on prevention, sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Practice Your Talking Points

Before being interviewed by a reporter about your groups' work, complete the following:

**Describe the group.**
**Who are you? What you are working for? How did you get started? Why are you doing this?**

**What are you trying to accomplish here today?**

**What is your big picture/vision? What would you ultimately like to see happen?**

# LESSON: Evaluate and Reflect on the Process

**Overview:**
It is important to reflect on successes and challenges after taking action. This lesson will guide students through a thoughtful reflection process.

**Student Objectives:**

- Determine, as a class, what did and did not work and what steps could be taken in the future
- Analyze their personal roles in the project and your experience

**Materials:**

- *Reflection/Evaluation* handout

**Evaluation**

- *Reflection/Evaluation* handout

**Common Core State Standards**

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1**

## BELL-RINGER: Group evaluation

Have students respond to the questions on the *Reflection/Evaluation* handout.

## BEFORE: Small group discussions

Divide the class into groups of four and have students share their responses from the bell-ringer.

## DURING: Whole class discussion

Have the entire class share their ideas.

## AFTER: Lessons Learned

Have students write a short paragraph to a future student summarizing the key lessons they learned through this process.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

## Student Handout: Reflection/Evaluation

**1. Were we successful in achieving our goal(s)? How do we know? What evidence do we have that our ideas will be, or were, put into effect?**

**2. What worked with the action(s) we took? What was successful?**

**3. What could have been improved upon? How could we have made our action more effective?**

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

**4. Did we make a good choice in our goal? Our strategy? Could we have chosen a different action to take? Why?**

**5. How did I personally contribute to the project? What part of my contribution am I most proud of?**

**6. What have I learned about the ability of everyday people to leverage the news media around an issue that they care about?**

**7. What have I learned about my own power (think about skills, knowledge, and attitudes as a result of participating in this project—how have they changed)?**

## Unit 1

### Lesson 2: Why News Matters

1. "Embarrassingly Stupid Americans, the Video!" LiveLeak.com. 6 July 2010. Jay Leno interviews people on the street about history. http://bit.ly/1kFLt56 (Start at 3:20. End at 6:27.)
2. Romano, Andrew. "How Ignorant Are Americans?" Newsweek.com. Newsweek, 20 Mar. 2011. This article discusses sources and implications of Americans' political ignorance. http://bit.ly/1fJRFeE
3. "Mikva Challenge 2010 Campaign Kick-Off Video." Vimeo. 2010. In their 2010 campaign kick-off video, Mikva Challenge's Elections in Action, highlights the candidates competing in the Gubernatorial and Senatorial races, and asks people on the street what they know about politics. http://bit.ly/1kOOQbA (Start at 2:04. End at 3:15.)
4. "Why We Need to Teach Geography.mov." YouTube. YouTube, 14 Aug. 2011. Jay Leno interviews people on the street about geography. http://bit.ly/1iQLaY6 (Start at 3:34. End at 5:14.)

### Lesson 3: With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility

1. Rosin, Hanna. "American Murder Mystery." The Atlantic. Atlantic Media Company, 01 July 2008. This monthly journal makes its articles available online for free at www.theatlantic.com. One provocative and relevant article is "American Murder Mystery." http://bit.ly/RhIZkL
2. "Bill Moyers Journal: Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement." PBS. PBS, 30 Apr. 2010. The Journal also travels to Iowa where one group, Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement (CCI), has been helping ordinary citizens fight for change for more than three decades. http://to.pbs.org/1kPHlAX
3. "Bill Moyers Journal: Transcripts." Transcripts and video clips of this PBS show's reports. PBS. http://to.pbs.org/1nZqWxf
4. "Exposé: America's Investigative Reports." PBS. This PBS show covers the work of investigative journalists and offers full episodes. http://to.pbs.org/1fKi0te
5. "Paul Lewis: Crowdsourcing the News."" TED.com. Apr. 2011. "When every cellphone can record video and take pictures, everyone is a potential news source. Reporter Paul Lewis tells two stories that show us the future of investigative journalism. http://bit.ly/1q7DCUY
6. "Investigative Reporting." The Pulitzer Prizes. This website lists the Pulitzer Prize finalists for Investigative reporting since 1980. http://bit.ly/1rWa48f
7. "Our Investigations." ProPublica: Journalism in the Public Interest. ProPublica investigates journalism in the public interest. This site lists their most recent articles. http://bit.ly/1scrLCv
8. "The Atlantic Monthly." This monthly journal makes its articles available online for free. The Atlantic. Atlantic Media Company. http://bit.ly/RlHYYI
9. "The Center for Investigative Reporting." The Center for Investigative Reporting aims to expose injustices that otherwise remain hidden from the public eye. http://bit.ly/RlHGkw
10. "The New Yorker." The weekly magazine frequently breaks top news stories. Articles published since 2001 can be accessed for free. http://nyr.kr/1uqVytf
11. "The Weekly Standard." A conservative weekly that offers occasional investigative articles for free online. http://tws.io/StQypo

### Lesson 4: News Media Bias


1. Matthews, Dylan. "Everything You Need to Know about the Fairness Doctrine in One Post." Washington Post. The Washington Post, 23 Aug. 2011. This article describes what the Fairness Doctrine was, how it came to be, and how it was ended. http://wapo.st/1mvNsyg
2. "FAIR." FAIR: Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting. FAIR provides information about media bias to advocate for greater media diversity and prevent marginalization of the public interest, minority and dissenting viewpoints. http://bit.ly/1mvJDVI
3. "NewsBusters | Exposing Liberal Media Bias." NewsBusters | Exposing Liberal Media Bias. NewsBusters is a project of the Media Research Center, and works to document, expose, and neutralize liberal biases in the media. http://bit.ly/1kPH3u6
4. "*Outfoxed*: Rupert Murdoch's War on Journalism." YouTube. YouTube, 11 July 2011. *Outfoxed* examines how media empires, led by Rupert Murdoch's Fox News, have been running a "race to the bottom" in television news. This film provides an in-depth look at Fox News and the dangers of ever- enlarging corporations taking control of the public's right to know. http://bit.ly/1lSl3jl
5. Cassino, Daniel, and Peter Woolley. "Some News Leaves People Knowing Less." Fairleigh Dickinson University's Public Mind Poll, 21 Nov. 2011. This article describes the results of a poll that found that some news sources leave viewers with less information than others. http://bit.ly/1q7BVXz
6. Kelley, Michael. "Study: Watching Fox News Makes You Less Informed Than Watching No News." Slate Magazine. The Slate Group, 2012. This article describes a study that found that viewers of some media outlets, like Fox News and MSNBC, are less informed than people who do not watch the news. http://slate.me/Rrnii6
7. Mirani, Leo. "Turns out Twitter Is Even More Politically Polarized than You Thought." Quartz. 20 Feb. 2014. Different political groups talk about politics differently within groups, and rarely talk to each other about the issues. http://bit.ly/1kMb631


### Lesson 7: Fact Checking in the Digital Age


1. "10 Fake Photos of Hurricane Sandy." The Week. 30 Oct. 2012. Photoshopped images of Hurricane Sandy. http://bit.ly/1iiIPze
2. Jones, Tim. "Dewey Defeats Truman."" Chicagotribune.com. Chicago Tribune, 3 Nov. 1948. The Chicago Tribune reports the wrong winner of the 1948 Presidential Election. http://bit.ly/1rVJLix
3. "Just the Facts: Fact Checking in the Digital Age." FactCheck.org: A Project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center. Fact checks political ads, debates, speeches, interviews and news releases to increase public knowledge and understanding. http://bit.ly/1mvMKNb
4. "Snopes.com: Urban Legends Reference Pages." Internet reference source for urban legends, folklore, myths, rumors, and misinformation. http://bit.ly/1jvaYb9
5. "Tourist Guy [2001]." Worlds Famous Photos. 5 Apr. 2007. Photoshopped image of a tourist on 9/11. http://bit.ly/1lSnjHe

### Lesson 8: The Business of the News


1. "Bill Moyers: How Big Money & Big Media Undermine Democracy." BillMoyers.com. Moyers & Company, 8 Nov. 2013. John Nichols and Robert McChesney say the money and media complex is sabotaging our elections. http://bit.ly/1iel1kw
2. Price, Daniel. "Fake TV News: Video News Releases | PR Watch." Fake TV News: Video News Releases | PR Watch. The Center for Media and Democracy, 16 Mar. 2006. Comprehensive list of fake TV news interviews. http://bit.ly/1q7hVV8
3. "The Daily Show Investigates Investigative Journalism." MediaChannel.org. Media Channel, 3 Feb. 2013. Daily show interviews investigative reporter Kaj Larsen, who lost his job at CNN when they eliminated the investigative unit. http://bit.ly/1nj2Tai
4. Churnalism US is a web tool and browser extension that lets visitors know when news articles may have similarities with press releases and other sources. http://bit.ly/1ky1I6M


### Lesson 9: Media Consolidation


1. "Media Consolidation." Free Press. How media consolidation impacts news coverage. http://bit.ly/StRN87
2. "Media Moguls." MediaChannel.org. Infographic showing the major media companies. http://bit.ly/1rVMYP8
3. "Resources." Columbia Journalism Review. Guide to what major media companies own. http://bit.ly/1kFs97P
4. Martinez-Moncada, Diego. "The Illusion of Choice [infographic]."" Daily Infographic: A New Infographic Everyday. Daily Infographic, 15 Jan. 2012. Media consolidation infographic. http://bit.ly/1lS3Wy8
5. "What Does Media Consolidation Look Like?" BillMoyers.com. Moyers & Company, 22 Oct. 2013. Interactive map that shows how four major news companies have acquired smaller news stations since 1996. http://bit.ly/1j2UXJY


### Lesson 10: From Headlines to Hashtags: How and Where People are getting Their News


1. Austen, Ben. "Public Enemies: Social Media Is Fueling Gang Wars in Chicago | Underwire | WIRED." Wired.com. Conde Nast Digital, 17 Sept. 2013. This article shows how social media fuels gang activity in Chicago. http://wrd.cm/1lSoLJE
2. Carpenter-Arévalo, Matthew. "Is the Internet Making Us More Democratic?" TNW Network All Stories. The Next Web, Inc. How the ease of communication via the internet provides larger-than-ever space for collective expression. http://tnw.co/1ijfx3z
3. Carr, David. "Two Guys Made a Web Site, and This Is What They Got." Media Decoder. New York Times, 9 July 2012. Upworthy uses social media and a user friendly interface to promote hard news stories. http://nyti.ms/1lYxry9
4. Caumont, Andrea. "12 Trends Shaping Digital News." Pew Research Center. 16 Oct. 2013. Describes 12 trends that shape digital news, like viewing news on mobile devices and the role of social media. http://bit.ly/1iQLNRv
5. Hoffman, David. ""Citizens: The New Fourth Estate."" The Huffington Post. TheHuffingtonPost.com, 10 Sept. 2013. Increased availability of information and ease of communication has empowered citizens to oversee their elected officials' acts. http://tnw.co/1ijfx3z

6. Holcomb, Jesse, Jeffrey Gottifried, and Amy Mitchell. "News Use Across Social Media Platforms." Pew Research Centers Journalism Project RSS. 14 Nov. 2013. How news is viewed across different social media websites. http://bit.ly/1nZtUlB
7. "National Survey: The Personal News Cycle." NORC.org. National Opinion Research Center, 17 Mar. 2014. Survey shows that the nature of a news story, rather than factors like age or ideology, shapes where people go to learn about events. http://bit.ly/1lSqazP
8. "New Media Models Disrupt Traditional Journalism."" PBS. PBS, 2 Feb. 2014. Video about how new media impacts traditional journalism. http://to.pbs.org/Q6Us5x
9. "Overview | State of the Media."" State of the News Media 2013. Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism. State of the News Media 2013 includes the role of social media and advertisers in news media coverage. http://bit.ly/1okcZYl
10. "Personal Democracy Forum." Personal Democracy Media. Realizing the role of the internet on news media, this site organizes the conversation around politics and technology to open up the process and engage as many people as possible. http://bit.ly/1lSqfnp
11. "State of the News Media." Pew Research Centers Journalism Project RSS. Fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping American politics. http://bit.ly/1mvNeCU
12. Washeck, Angela. "Rushkoff's 'Generation Like' Explores Space Where Social Media, Teens, Brands Merge." MediaShift. PBS, 19 Feb. 2014. Explores the relationship between corporate brands and young people on social media. http://to.pbs.org/1jAFmRu

### Lesson 11: Being a Critical News Media Consumer

1. "Markham Nolan: How to Separate Fact and Fiction Online." TED.com. Nov. 2012. At the TEDSalon in London, Markham Nolan shares the investigative techniques he and his team use to verify information in real-time, to let you know if that Statue of Liberty image has been doctored or if that video leaked from Syria is legitimate. http://bit.ly/1nZstn8

## Miscellaneous News Literacy Links

1. Postman, Neil, and Steve Powers. "How to Watch TV News." New York, NY: Penguin, 2008. This book examines the problems with relying only on television news through topics such as influences from advertisers and celebrity news coverage over hard news stories. Order here: http://amzn.to/1kDDJ2i
2. "Minimum Wage Equals Major Controversy." PBS. PBS news site targeted to high school students. This particular article talks about the minimum wage debate. http://to.pbs.org/1ioEAlS
3. "PAGE ONE: Inside The New York Times." TakePart. PAGE ONE chronicles the transformation of the media industry at a time when the Internet is replacing newspapers as the public's main source of information. http://bit.ly/StOygT
4. "Rich Media, Poor Democracy (2003)." Films For Action. 22 Feb. 2011. This documentary examines how corporations and big business media have produced a system that is high in sensationalism and low in information, and discusses what this new media means for our democracy. http://bit.ly/1iVvQ6I
5. "The Daily Show: Hari Sreenivasan."" The Daily Show. 1 Jan. 2014. "PBS NewsHour Weekend" anchor Hari Sreenivasan describes the differences between PBS's mission and that of 24-hour cable news. http://on.cc.com/1fKgWpl

## Unit 2


1. Manfull, Aaron. "4 Tips from Poynter to Increase Facebook Page Engagement." JEADigitalMediaorg. Digital Media Resource, 27 Jan. 2012. Tips to increase Facebook page engagement. http://bit.ly/1mvSO8D
2. Lee, Kevan. "Here Are the Most Popular Words Used in Viral Headlines." TNW Network All Stories RSS. The Next Web, Inc., Mar. 2014. This article discusses how the titles of viral posts make these articles popular and widely shared. http://tnw.co/1ur5cfD
3. "How to Communicate with Journalists." FAIR: Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting. Tips on how to talk to journalists, including how to write an op-ed and how to meet with news management. http://bit.ly/1iXx9YI
4. Greenblatt, Alan. "Joseph Kony Is Back In The News. Do Teenagers Still Care?" NPR. This article discusses how a popular news story attracts much less attention two years later. http://n.pr/1njbLPr
5. "Media Breaker." LAMPlatoon. The LAMP. Media Breaker gives students an opportunity to interact with advertisements and news reports that they do not agree with by critically thinking about the social impacts of a video. http://bit.ly/1iVDPAI
6. "Media Event Quick Contacts." List of media outlet contacts for Chicago. http://bit.ly/RrElAE
7. "Sound Cloud: Share Your Sounds." SoundCloud is a leading social sound platform that lets anyone create and upload music and other audio to share anywhere on the internet. http://bit.ly/1ijmvpd
8. Harmon, Michelle. "The New York Times Learning Network Offers a Real-life Editorial Opportunity."" JEADigitalMediaorg. Digital Media Resource, 26 Feb. 2014. Website for students to write editorials that can potentially be published in the New York Times' The Learning Network. http://bit.ly/Q6ZUW7
9. Bazelon, Emily. "The Online Avengers." The New York Times. The New York Times, 18 Jan. 2014. Are antibullying activists the saviors of the Internet, or just a different kind of curse? Online activism it's potentials and its perils. http://nyti.ms/1lYDfaQ
10. Jaffe, Eric. "These Scientists Studied Why Internet Stories Go Viral. You Won't Believe What They Found | Co.Design | Business + Design."" Fastcodesign.com. Fast Company & Inc., 3 Jan. 2014. The most consumed news stories are the ones that evoke powerful emotions. http://bit.ly/1ur4v61
11. Rasgorshek, Matt. "VIDEO 101: Video Interview Tips." JEADigitalMediaorg. Digital Media Resource, 4 Mar. 2014. Tips for how to conduct a video interview. http://bit.ly/StYNBR
12. "What kind of changemaker are you?" Quiz for students to take that describes different types of changemakers. http://www.bit.ly/Changemaker