

News Coverage of the 1932 Election

Written By: Catherine Bean - Mamaroneck High School – New Rochelle, NY
News Literacy Summer Institute – 2010

Essential Question: What impact can words and images have on political and social change?

Aim: How do individuals find and use information to make choices?

Instructional Objectives:

Students will be able to

- Locate information (main idea and supporting details) in newspaper resources and secondary resources
- Use reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts
- Make informed decisions

News Literacy Skills:

The ability to deconstruct news articles, with special emphasis on:

- Summarizing the main points of the article
- Evidence supporting the main points
- Reliability of sources
- Context

Introducing and motivating the lesson:

1. Students will view the youtube video– Brother, Can you spare a Dime?

<http://www.bing.com/videos/watch/video/brother-can-you-spare-a-dime/0440e8ae83a3948a2bdc0440e8ae83a3948a2bdc-165717803932?q=brother%20can%20you%20spare%20a%20dime&FORM=VIRE1>

(This was written in 1932 and recorded by Bing Crosby. This is accompanied by pictures.)

2. Students will brainstorm what they know about this time period, citing evidence from the words and pictures. Students will write these comments on chart paper, under the heading 1930s.

Lesson Development:

1. Students will be given a handout (secondary source) that gives some facts and figures about this time period – early 1930's. Students, working in groups, will summarize this article and note details. (Handout #1)

2. Each group will share their work and add comments to chart paper. Students will identify 3 problems that country is facing at this time. Teacher will explain that this is the beginning of a time period called The Great Depression.
3. Students will be given excerpts from several news articles from NY Times Archives. Students, working in small groups, will deconstruct the passages and fill out a template with comments. (Handout #2)
4. After deconstructing, teacher will explain that Herbert Hoover is running for re-election as President and Franklin Roosevelt is opposing him. Looking back at the three problems identified on the board, teacher will ask students to identify actions that each candidate has taken (or plans to take) to deal with these concerns.
5. Students will write a paragraph that explains who they would vote for, if they had lived at that time, with evidence to support their choices.

Lesson Extension and Connections:

1. Look at editorial cartoons from this time period. Students will be able to identify the subject and point of view from a political cartoon. Students will be able to interpret examples of symbolism and how they contribute to the overall message of the political cartoon. (Herblock's presidents: <http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/swann/herblock/presidents.html> and (not this time period, but good: Smithsonian exhibition: <http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/running-for-office/>)
2. Look at articles from presidential campaign between Obama and McCain. Which ones give reliable information?
3. What are some economic problems that US is facing today? Do you see any similarities?

NY Social Studies Standards that are met in this lesson:

Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States and New York.

Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the necessity for the roles, rights, and responsibilities of citizenship, including avenues of participation.

Handout #1:

Depression of the 1930s

The economic depression that beset the United States and other countries in the 1930s was unique in its magnitude and its consequences. At the depth of the depression, in 1933, one American worker in every four was out of a job. In other countries unemployment ranged between 15% and 25% of the labor force. The great industrial slump continued throughout the 1930s, shaking the foundations of Western capitalism

By 1930 the slump was apparent, but few people expected it to persist; previous financial panics and depressions had reversed in a year or two. The usual forces of economic expansion had vanished, however. Technology had eliminated more industrial jobs than it had created; the supply of goods continued to exceed demand; the world market system was basically unsound. The high tariffs of the Smoot-Hawley Act (1930) exacerbated the downturn. As business failures increased and unemployment soared—and as people with dwindling incomes nonetheless had to pay their creditors—it was apparent that the United States was in the grip of economic breakdown. (Most European countries were hit even harder, because they had not yet fully recovered from the ravages of World War I.)

The deepening depression essentially coincided with the term in office (1929–33) of President Herbert Hoover. The stark statistics scarcely convey the distress of the millions who lost jobs, savings, and homes. From 1930 to 1933 industrial stocks lost 80% of their value. In the four years from 1929 to 1932 approximately 11,000 U.S. banks failed (44% of the 1929 total), and about \$2 billion in deposits evaporated. The gross national product (GNP), which for years had grown at an average annual rate of 3.5%, declined at a rate of over 10% annually, on average, from 1929 to 1932. Agricultural distress was intense: farm prices fell by 53% from 1929 to 1932. The depression brought a deflation not only of incomes but of hope

Francis S. Pierce

How to cite this article:

MLA (Modern Language Association) style:

Pierce, Francis S. "Depression of the 1930s." *Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia*. 2010. *Grolier Online*. 19 July 2010 <<http://gme.grolier.com/article?assetid=0083460-0>>.

Bottom of Form

Handout #2

Is this a reliable news article?

Summarize the main points of the article:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Evidence supporting main points (direct or indirect?):

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Reliability of sources (named, authoritative, independent better than self-interested, verify, not biased)

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Context (are their facts that provide meaning, significance or background?)

- _____
- _____
- _____

Further Lessons and Resources:

Essential Question: What impact can words and images have on political and social change?

Aim: Why do journalists risk their lives and reputations in search of the truth?

Lesson 1 Description:

- Ukrainian Famine in the 1930s and the Role of a Journalist
- Students will learn the struggles of Gareth Jones, a journalist in the Ukraine during the 1930s. Through a jigsaw activity and class discussions, students will draw conclusions about the primary function of a journalist.

News Literacy Skills To Be Incorporated:

- Journalists' primary mission is to inform the public/Find the truth/Act as watchdogs/Verification

Aim: How does the press play the role of a watchdog for our society?

Lesson 2 Description:

- The Scottsboro Trials and the Role of the Press
- In this lesson, students will deconstruct a *New York Times* article from 1933 on the testimony of Victoria Price, the chief accuser in the case. Students will focus on news drivers, news vs. opinion, and begin to look at source evaluation and bias. The lesson will highlight how the press plays the role of watchdog in our society, which often results in social change.

News Literacy Skills To Be Incorporated:

- News Drivers/News vs. Opinion/Source Evaluation/Bias

Aim: How do individuals find and use information to influence political change?

Lesson 3 Description:

- The Economic Conditions of the United States during the 1932 Election
- Students uncover details about the economic condition of United States in 1930s by reading newspaper excerpts, which helped to decide the election between Hoover and FDR. Students will deconstruct the newspaper excerpts and then choose whom they would vote for in a mock election. They will provide evidence for their choice.

News Literacy Skills To Be Incorporated:

- Deconstruct News Articles/Summarizing the main points/Evidence supporting the main points/Reliability of Sources/Context

Aim: What impact can words and images have on public opinion?

Lesson 4 Description:

- Migrant Farmers in California during the Dust Bowl
- As part of a literature unit, news literacy techniques will be embedded in order to expand students' ability to understand the context of the time period of the 1930's as it is related to both Karen Hesse's Out of the Dust, and John Steinbeck's Grapes of Wrath. Students will read, critique, and evaluate news articles and photographs to gain an appreciation for the struggles of the migrant worker and the economic impact caused by their migration. The concept of how public opinion is influenced by the news will be evaluated. Additionally, students will debate the concept, "can journalists be reliable and unbiased eyewitnesses to historic events?"

News Literacy Skills To Be Incorporated:

- Power of Images/News Literacy DNA/News Drivers/Journalists' Primary Mission to Inform/Understanding Context/Critical Analysis

McCain, Obama campaign hard in final stretch

Updated 10/27/2008 12:54 AM

By David Jackson, USA TODAY

CEDAR FALLS, Iowa — Republican John McCain dismissed national polls and said Sunday that he is gaining ground on rival Barack Obama, while the Democratic nominee urged supporters in a key Western state to vote early.

In a small gym here at University of Northern Iowa, McCain told about 2,000 supporters that "the pundits, as usual, have written us off — just like they've done before." McCain, describing himself as an underdog, is down an average of about 8 percentage points nationwide and by double digits in Iowa, according to polls compiled by RealClearPolitics.com. Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., a close McCain adviser, said internal campaign polls show McCain down about 3 points nationally.

"I'm kind of old-fashioned about these things," said McCain, who rallied to capture the GOP nomination. "I prefer to let the voters weigh in." Obama, meanwhile, drew 100,000 people to an outdoor rally in Denver, in a state that has twice voted for President Bush. The Colorado crowd roared when Obama asked how many completed ballots since early voting began last week. "That's what I'm talking about!" he said. "No point in waiting in lines if you don't have to. You know who you're gonna vote for. Go to the polls."

The campaign entered its final full week exactly 41 years after McCain, a Navy pilot in the Vietnam War, was shot down in Hanoi. He spent the next 5½ years in a North Vietnamese prison camp.

Graham said in an interview in Waterloo, Iowa, that McCain has been a good closer throughout his career and has faced bigger challenges than this presidential campaign. "Forty-one years ago, he was worse off than he is today," said Graham.

McCain focused mostly on economic issues in his Iowa speeches, arguing that Obama and Democratic allies in Congress would raise taxes, increase federal spending and lose the war in Iraq. He briefly mentioned his years in captivity during a Zanesville, Ohio event, saying "that's where I really learned to love America."

Appearing earlier Sunday on NBC's *Meet The Press*, McCain also sought to distance himself from politically unpopular Bush by noting that he has criticized the administration for higher federal spending, its initial handling of the Iraq war and for its slow response to global warming. A new *Congressional Quarterly* study shows McCain voted with Bush 90% of the time.

"I've stood up against my party — not just President Bush, but others," McCain said on NBC. "And I've got the scars to prove it."

In Denver, Obama emphasized the similarities between McCain and Bush, particularly on economic policies that he said led to the current global financial crisis. "At this rate, the question isn't just, 'are you better off than you were four years ago,' " Obama said. "It's, 'are you better off than you were four weeks ago?'"

Teresa Martin, 51, an English teacher in Cedar Falls, said she believes McCain's emphasis on "less government and more local control" will prevail. "I like his conservative values," she said. "There's still a chance — I think it will be close."

Chris Nelson, an Obama supporter who attended McCain's event here, said the GOP nominee's forecast of a late election night is optimistic.

1. Is this a reliable news article? Use sheet to "deconstruct news article."

2. Who would you have voted for, based on evidence from this article?