

Political and Social Change through News Coverage

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News Literacy Summer Institute 2010

Lesson # 1

Essential Questions:

What impact can words and images have on political and social change?
Why do journalists risk their lives and reputations in search for the truth?

Objectives:

- Discuss what students believe to be a journalist's job.
- Evaluate a section of a newspaper article in groups to learn about what happened when a journalist wants to publish and inform the public about the Ukrainian famine during the early 1930s.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the information being offered in the article.
- Work in groups to come to a conclusion about what the three main ideas in their paragraphs are.

News Literacy Skill/Skills To Be Incorporated:

- Journalists' primary mission is to inform the public.
- Journalists act as the watchdogs for the public to make sure the news is being exposed or revealed.
- Journalism's first obligation is to the truth.
- Journalists have to verify their facts.
- Ukrainian famine was kept from the public, even after reporter, Gareth Jones, keeps a diary of his observations in the Ukraine.

Introducing and Motivating the Lesson:

- The students will look at a comedic picture of a dog, and are asked to answer the following questions:
 - 1) What is the job of a watchdog?
 - 2) What do journalists and watchdogs have in common?
- The students will write down their answers and the teacher will ask some of the students to give their answers to the questions.

Lesson Development/Pivotal Questions:

- Refer the students to the jigsaw activity page and the graphic organizer.
 - The students will be required to read their paragraphs and then answer the two questions in their portion of the graphic organizer.
 - Write down the three most important facts that you gathered from your reading on your section of the graphic organizer.
 - In your group's opinion, what is the MOST important fact that the class should know about?
 - After the students complete the group work, each group will inform the rest of the class their findings, while the teacher will fill it in on a chart on the board so the rest of the class can fill in graphic organizer.
 - Later questions that will be posed to students to come to the conclusion about what a journalists job ultimately is:
 - What was Jones trying to do by writing the diary about his observations in the Ukraine?
 - What risks was he making by trying to publish the story?

Summarizing the Lesson:

- In your opinion, what is a journalist's ultimate job?
- Why is a journalist's job important?

Lesson Extensions and Connections/Possible Homework Assignments:

- Reserve time in the computer lab or reserve laptops for in the classroom and have students go to the Committee to Protect Journalists website. Have students do some research on the website to find journalists who died on the job.
 - Assessment: Have students create their own diary entries posing as a journalist they chose from the website. The students should write at least 2 entries in the journal with the following requirements: Date for the journal entry is required, and at least 10 sentences demonstrating the fears, observations of the journalist.
 - Extra credit will be given to those students who draw pictures, or put something in their diary entries that will further the observations of the journalist who they have chosen.

- Have students watch the Youtube video of journalist Anderson Cooper talking and reacting to Senator Mary Landrieu of Louisiana (during Hurricane Katrina) in an interview.
 - Questions to ask students after watching the video
 - What is Anderson Cooper’s reaction to the Senator’s comments?
 - Is his reaction changing throughout the interview with the Senator?
 - What kind of reactions are you getting after having watched this video clip?
 - Do you think Cooper is right in his anger? Why or why not?
 - What is Cooper trying to show the general public watching this interview?
- Students will be given a sheet of possible journalist stories they can investigate on their own time. Their mission is to try and find the truth. After they conduct interviews and gather eyewitness accounts they will write a 1 page paper on how they gathered their information, and how they tried to search for the truth.
 - Possible journalist stories will be tailored to their needs, what is taking place in the school environment at the time, or breaking news stories in their communities that might be relevant.
 - Examples: Homecoming court, Pep Rally events, Upcoming sports games, concerts, plays, or other school functions etc.

New York State Social Studies Standards:

- Standard 1: World History
- Standard 3: Geography
- Standard 4: Economics
- Standard 5: Civics, Citizenship, and Government

New York State English/Language Arts Standards:

- Standard 1: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.
- Standard 3: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.
- Standard 4: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for social interaction.

Lesson Extensions and Connections Attachments:

- Class set of laptops
- PowerPoint
- Notebook Paper for diary entries
- Youtube video (source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eVPlcY4YA-0&feature=related>)