



Lesson 1 of 6

Primary (grades 4 – 6)
Can also be adapted for grades 6, 7, 8.
Social Studies
English Language Arts

Respecting
Diversity

Preventing
Prejudice

Living
Respectfully

Unit 5: Current Events Scavenger Hunt–Linking the Classroom and the World

Contributor Chelsea Rutkowski, M Ed, International Development/Global Education, Edmonton Alberta, Edmonton Public Schools

Unit Plan Objective

This unit will encourage students to develop a sense of world events and issues. Media awareness will be introduced with a focus on understanding the role played by the media in influencing students' attitudes and perceptions about developing nations and development issues. Areas of the world that are experiencing continual and episodic difficulties will be highlighted. The involvement of Canada through CIDA activities will also be highlighted. Students will share their knowledge with their peers.

Time

This unit comprises six lessons. It will take 18 hours to complete, depending on the extension activities chosen. It is recommended that this unit be taught on a weekly basis (one lesson each week for five weeks) as each lesson covers a two-to-three hour block of time.

Lesson 1: Looking at the World through Our Lens

Objective

Students will become familiarized with the issues and challenges surrounding representation of other countries and cultures by the media. This includes the concepts of how perceptions can be distorted and how stereotypes work in order to understand the role of the news media in the construction of images of developing countries. This lesson has been adapted from UNICEF Canada's "Media Literacy for Development & Children's Rights" for young people. This lesson, found on the Media Awareness Network (see Supplemental Resources for website), has been copyright-cleared for classroom use.

Time

This lesson will cover approximately two to three hours of class time; it is recommended that the lesson be completed over an afternoon or back-to-back classes if possible.

✂ Materials

- Two copies of the same day's newspaper, enough for each small group
- Media materials: variety of newspapers and magazines, travel catalogues, development/relief agency flyers (UNICEF Canada)
- Student Handout "Choosing and Editing Photos"
- Large sheets of blank paper
- Journals
- Material for poster displays (poster board, markers and so on.)

Getting Started

Knowledge Now

- As a class, brainstorm and list sources of news. Survey the class to find out where most people get their news.
 - Why do you think this is the case?
 - What news sources do you think are the most reliable?
 - Which are the least reliable?
 - Where do you think the media gets their information?
 - Do you believe that the media has other reasons to report the news besides just sharing information?
- Lead the students in a discussion on bias in the media.
 - Bias is a one-sided view, which a person may have because of some reason or motivation to see things in a certain way. For example, if two people had a fight in the schoolyard, each one would report the incident according to his/her point of view. Other people who saw the fight might also have a certain bias or point of view when they tell the story, depending on the experience they brought to the fight, and their feelings about the people involved in the fight.

Engaging Interest

- Divide the students into groups so that each group has one section of that day's paper. Each group will need two copies of their section so they can clip the articles on both sides of the page. Ask the students to cut out each article and advertisement in their section of the paper, and divide the articles and advertisements into groups: national news, international news, developing countries, advertisements and entertainment.
- When all the groups are finished separating the articles and advertisements in their paper, share observations.
 - What do you notice about the categories? Is there more local news than international news?
 - How much of the paper is advertisements?
 - How are development issues portrayed—or not?
 - What kind of news is lacking that the students would like to know about?
 - Why do you think it is not in the paper?
- Ask students to comment on these questions in their journal, and if time permits, engage in a pair-share activity.

Learning Activities

- Where do you most often see pictures of people in developing countries? What do these images usually show? Read the following quote to your class:
 - "What really hurts me sometimes in doing famine stories is this drive to find a baby that is even skinnier than the last one you've filmed. I was in Mozambique and I found myself at about three in the morning sitting up still awake and on my mind was the fact that I hadn't got a picture that I thought was going to interest my editors. In other words the child I had shot six hours earlier on film wasn't skinny enough and that is a rather sick way to look at it—but you are forced into that. It's a problem when the only way in which you can get Third World reporting on the air is through disasters. It's like a drug; you need bigger and bigger quotas, bigger and bigger portions of it to interest the public and interest the editors." —TV Journalist
- Discuss students' responses to the reporting of humanitarian disasters in developing countries (as well as crises such as New Orleans).
 - Why do these kinds of images interest the editors?
 - Do you think they generate concern among the public?
 - What are the dangers and problems of this kind of reporting?
 - Do you think that there are other ways of reporting on developing countries that would interest people and promote more positive views?
- Cut and photocopy the handout, "Choosing and Editing Photos". Divide the class into small groups. Give a photo section (not the full picture or caption) to each small group of students, and have them paste this photo in the middle of a blank sheet of paper. Invite the groups to imagine what's going on in their photo, and invent a context that gives the picture meaning. Students can:
 - write a caption, monologue or article about what is happening;
 - draw arrows to parts of the photo with written questions and interpretations about what is happening around the cropped image; and
 - draw in the missing parts around the photo.
- As a class, examine the full picture handout that includes the description of the boy and/or woman. Discuss how closely the groups' interpretations matched the meaning of the whole photo.
 - What caused us to look at the photo in this way?
 - Why do you think editors crop and otherwise change the photos they use with news stories?
 - How do you think this affects our views?

Assessment/Analysis

Spread the media materials around the classroom. In their small groups, students can peruse newspapers and magazines for photographic images of developing countries. The world news and travel sections are most likely to contain photos. With their groups, students discuss and record in their journals:

- How well does the photo grab your attention?

- How did the photo affect you? When you first looked at the photo, what did you think was going on?
- How does the photo relate to the story?
- What would you think was going on if you only looked at the photo, but did not read the article? Can the photo tell you what is really going on?
- What impression does the photo give of the country and its people? Do you think it is realistic?
- Are the people in the photo like you?
- What important information might be missing?
- What might be happening outside the frame of the photo, in the surrounding area?
- What questions do you have that are unanswered about what is being depicted?

Application

- Groups decide whether they will represent a travel company or a development/relief agency, and design a poster, flyer, brochure or ad page for a campaign using one or more of the photos, creating text to go with it. They might employ photo-altering techniques, such as cropping, rotation or shading. (Note: The teacher may wish to spend time reviewing these techniques before students engage in this activity).

After each group presents its piece to the class (and each student keeps a copy of the piece in their journals), discuss:

- Why did you choose that photo? Why did you reject other photos?
- What image does the photo convey about developing countries? Is the rich diversity of life represented?
- How did what you wrote represent or misrepresent the photo?
- What techniques did you use to alter the photo? How did this change the image represented by the photo?
- How do you think people might have been seen differently if the photo was the only source of information?
- How can people gain a balanced view of life in developing countries?

Note: The teacher may wish to alter the *language* of the questions to ensure understanding by students.

Activities for Extension and/or Integration

- Students collect different newspapers (local, national, and so on.) from other (developing) countries. Newspapers from various countries can be accessed at www.onlinenewspapers.com. Students can compare the different types of articles and advertisements with written analysis in their journals.

Subject and Level Learner Outcomes for Subject and Level

Grade 4 Social Studies

Students will:

4.S.1 develop skills of critical thinking and creative thinking

- evaluate significant local and current affairs, distinguishing between fact and opinion
- critically evaluate ideas, information and positions from multiple perspectives
- re-evaluate opinions to broaden understanding of a topic or an issue

4.S.9 develop skills of media literacy:

- compare information on the same issue or topic from print media, television, photographs and the Internet
- examine diverse perspectives regarding an issue presented in the media

Grade 5 Social Studies

Students will:

5.S.1 develop skills of critical thinking and creative thinking

- critically evaluate ideas, information and positions from multiple perspectives
- re-evaluate personal opinions to broaden understanding of a topic or an issue
- generate original ideas or strategies in situations of individual and group activities

5.S.9 develop skills of media literacy:

- examine how various people might interpret a media message differently
- examine diverse perspectives regarding an issue presented in the media

Grade 6 Social Studies

Students will:

6.S.1 develop skills of critical thinking and creative thinking

- assess significant local and current affairs from a variety of sources, with a focus on examining bias and distinguishing fact from opinion
- critically evaluate ideas, information and positions
- re-evaluate personal opinions to broaden understanding of a topic or an issue

6.S.9 develop skills of media literacy:

- detect bias present in the media
- examine and assess diverse perspectives regarding an issue presented in the media
- analyze significant current affairs

Grade 4 English Language Arts

1.1 Discover and Explore

Express ideas and develop understanding

- compare new ideas, information and experience to prior knowledge and experiences
- ask questions, paraphrase and discuss to explore ideas and understand new concepts
- discuss and compare the ways similar topics are developed in different forms of oral, print and other media texts

1.2 Clarify and Extend

Consider the ideas of others

- identify other perspectives by exploring a variety of ideas, opinions, responses and oral, print and other media texts

2.2 Respond to Texts

Construct meaning from texts

- develop own opinions based on ideas encountered in oral, print and other media texts

5.1 Respect Others and Strengthen Community

Appreciate diversity

- describe similarities and differences between personal experiences and the experiences of people or characters from various cultures portrayed in oral, print and other media texts

Grade 5 English Language Arts

1.1 Discover and Explore

Express ideas and develop understanding

- use appropriate prior knowledge and experiences to make sense of new ideas and information
- read, write, represent and talk to explore personal understandings of new ideas and information
- use own experiences as a basis for exploring and expressing opinions and understanding
- select from provided forms of oral, print and other media texts those that best organize ideas and information and develop understanding of topics

1.2 Clarify and Extend

Consider the ideas of others

- seek the viewpoints of others to build on personal responses and understanding

2.2 Respond to Texts

Construct meaning from texts

- support own interpretations of oral, print and other media texts, using evidence from personal experiences and the texts

5.1 Respect Others and Strengthen Community

Appreciate diversity

- discuss personal understanding of the lives of people or characters in various communities, cultural traditions, places and times portrayed in oral, print and other media texts

Grade 6 English Language Arts

1.3 Discover and Explore

Express ideas and develop understanding

- use prior experiences with oral, print and other media texts to choose new texts that meet learning needs and interests
- read, write, represent and talk to explore and explain connections between prior knowledge and new information in oral, print and other media texts
- experiment with a variety of forms of oral, print and other media texts to discover those best suited for exploring, organizing and sharing ideas, information and experiences

1.2 Clarify and Extend

Consider the ideas of others

- select from the ideas and observations of others to expand personal understanding

2.2 Respond to Texts

Construct meaning from texts

- comment on the credibility of events in oral, print and other media texts, using evidence from personal experiences and the texts

5.1 Respect Others and Strengthen Community

Relate texts to culture

- identify ways in which oral, print and other media texts from diverse cultures and communities explore similar ideas

Safe and Caring Topics and Concepts

Living Respectfully

- Examining ways that injustice affects people
- Respecting and appreciating others' ideas, insights, solutions and contributions

Respecting Diversity and Preventing Prejudice

- Respecting different points of view builds community and helps to prevent or resolve conflict
- Studying different cultures, religions and lifestyles in society and in the school

Teaching Strategies

Go to www.sacsc.ca	Cooperative Learning	Inquiry Learning	Direct Instruction
Click on Resources, Strategies for strategy descriptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem solving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual imagery techniques

Generalization and Transfer	Peer Teaching	Empathy/Affective Education	General Teaching Activities/Ideas
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journaling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorming • Visual display

Supplementary Resources

- Media Awareness Network (www.media-awareness.ca): A website full of interesting and age-appropriate activities for your classroom, copyright-cleared for classroom use.
- Jo Cool or Jo Fool (www.media-awareness.ca/english/games/jocool_jofool/): This interactive online module takes students through a CyberTour of 12 mock Websites to test their savvy surfing skills. Jo Cool or Jo Fool is also accompanied by an extensive Teacher's Guide that contains background information for teachers, and questions and classroom activities for students, about online issues such as marketing, privacy, safety, responsible Internet use and authenticating information.
- Don't Buy It! (<http://pbskids.org/dontbuyit/>): A PBS site for the understanding of media. It also has a teachers' section with cross-curricular lessons and resources.

Choosing and Editing Photos



CAPTION: A Guatemalan woman holds her infant daughter and displays her diploma recognizing her participation in a UNICEF-assisted workshop on social administration.



Caption: Five-year-old Zeki is measured at a health checkup at a UNICEF-assisted health centre in Iraq.

