

I DON'T THINK SO!

grade 7
pre-visit activity - 90 minutes
SOCIAL STUDIES

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and evaluate websites to determine the accuracy of information and images.
- Students will compare and contrast information found on two websites using a Venn diagram.
- Students will work as a class to prepare a rubric.

MATERIALS

- Access to the Internet

PROCEDURE

1. Tell students that their field trip to CNN is coming soon. Explain that CNN is a media company that brings information to people about what is going on in the world.
2. Explain to students that when using today's technology to search for reliable information, it is not always easy to determine if the information provided is true or not. Ask students to list some places where inaccurate information might be found. (Internet, television, friends, etc.) Ask students what sources they use to get reliable, factual information.
3. Ask students to choose one current event that is happening today that has political overtones, such as an issue the President or members of Congress support that has opposition. You may wish to brainstorm with your class what some of these issues might be and list them on the board.
4. Ask students to get into groups of two and use the Internet to research this issue. Students should take notes on the information found on each site and document the source. Ask students to find as many "opinions presented as facts" as possible on the issue. Ask students to mark with a star any site that appears to be based on opinion rather than actual facts. Go over with the class



SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS

SS7RC1

Students will enhance reading in all curriculum areas by:

- a. Reading in all curriculum areas.
- c. Building vocabulary knowledge.
- d. Establishing context.

M. S. BUSINESS & COMPUTER SCIENCE STANDARDS

MSBCS-BCSII-10

The student will demonstrate an understanding of ethics and potential dangers related to the use of the Internet.

- b. Evaluate websites to determine the accuracy of information and images.

LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS

ELA7LSV1

The student participates in student-to-teacher, student-to-student and group verbal interactions. The student:

- b. Asks relevant questions.
- e. Displays appropriate turn-taking behaviors.
- g. Offers own opinion forcefully without domineering.



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SOCIAL STUDIES

PROCEDURE (CON'T)

“markers” found within text that could signify opinion rather than facts. (Inflammatory language, one-sided arguments, opinions expressed on a personal blog, etc.) Discuss what efforts appear to demonstrate that the subject is being analyzed and communicated impartially. (The writers are interviewing people from opposing sides of the issue to compare information, they appear to have used a form of fact checking, etc.) When finished, ask students to determine the percentage of Internet articles that appeared to be opinion rather than fact. Discuss with students the perils of using only the Internet for information. Discuss strategies used by the writers to get people to believe the information.

5. Ask students to use the information they have found to prepare a Venn diagram concerning one source of information from the Internet that the student has determined to be accurate and compare/contrast it to another site in which the facts appear to have been distorted. Discuss the diagrams and how people or groups try to form/sway public opinion.
6. Discuss with students the value of having news sources that are as impartial as possible and strive to give citizens the facts rather than personal opinion. Ask students to discuss why impartial information is preferable to reading/hearing only personal opinions presented as facts. (Personal opinions are formed without necessarily having access to all of the facts.)
7. Together with your class, form a rubric on the board that would be useful for students to use when viewing information on the Internet, television or in the newspapers that would show which sources are the most impartial and which are the most partial.



L.A. STANDARDS (CON'T)

ELA7LSV2

The student listens to and views various forms of text and media in order to gather and share information, persuade others, and express and understand ideas. The student will select and critically analyze messages using rubrics as assessment tools.

Critical Component: When responding to visual and oral texts and media (e.g. television, radio, film productions, and electronic media). The student:

- a. Analyzes the effect on the viewer of image, text, and sound in electronic journalism.
- b. Identifies the techniques used to achieve the effects studies in each instance.



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SOCIAL STUDIES

CLOSING

One way news organizations such as CNN try to ensure impartial reporting is to use different types of fact checking. During political elections, for example, citizens need reliable information to make voting decisions. To help citizens evaluate the claims made by the candidates and their campaign teams about key issues, news staff will research and report facts from many sources concerning those issues.

ASSESSMENT

Assess the Venn diagram to see if students are able to discern facts from opinions in text.

Assess students' ability to work together to complete the task.

Informally assess your students' ability to construct a workable rubric as a class lesson.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Pre-select the articles you would like your ELL learners to use and print them for student use. If students are not English-proficient you may choose to highlight important information for them.

GIFTED CONNECTION

Ask your gifted students to find and read a number of "urban legends" that are known to be false. Ask them to evaluate what makes these urban legends convincing and to consider why people believe them without checking their authenticity. Ask students to write a short paper on urban legends and their origins.



I BECAME A JOURNALIST BECAUSE....



grade 7
pre-visit activity - 90 minutes

LANGUAGE ARTS

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read or view transcripts from CNN anchors and get into groups to orally discuss and answer questions about the information.
- Students will write an organized paper about what it is that they do well, and why it is that they are good at this particular thing.

MATERIALS

- Anchor transcripts: Robin Meade and Kyra Phillips.

PROCEDURE

1. Remind students that their field trip to CNN is coming soon. In order to help students become more familiar with what a news anchor does, and to determine what the characteristics of an effective anchor are they will be reading/viewing interviews given by two CNN anchors. If students view the material, a transcript should also be given for reference during the assignment.
2. Ask students to read/view the transcripts of Robin Meade and Kyra Phillips. **Worksheets #3 & 4 >>**
3. Once students have completed reading/viewing the information, ask them to discuss the following questions in small groups:
 - a. ***In what ways are the two stories the same/ different?***
 - b. ***How is broadcasting the news different from 50 years ago?***
 - c. ***In your opinion, what makes a good journalist? Why?***
 - d. Have students go through the interviews and make a list of questions that they think might have been asked to elicit the answers given by the anchors. Use context clues within the answers to determine the questions.
 - e. Ask students to consider a hobby, sport, school activity or something else they do well.

LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS

ELA7LSV1

The student participates in student-to-student, student-to-teacher, and group verbal interactions. The student:

- b. Asks relevant questions.
- c. Responds to questions with appropriate information.
- e. Displays appropriate turn-taking behaviors.
- h. Responds appropriately to comments and questions.
- i. Gives reasons in support of opinions expressed.

ELA7R1

The student demonstrates comprehension and shows evidence of a warranted and responsible explanation of a variety of literary and informational texts.

Critical Component: For informational texts, the student reads and comprehends in order to develop understanding and expertise and produces evidence of reading that:

- a. Analyzes common textual features to obtain information.
- b. Identifies and uses knowledge of common graphic features to draw conclusions and make judgments.

ELA7RC2

The student participates in discussions related to curricular learning in all subject areas.

The student: >>

I BECAME A JOURNALIST BECAUSE....



grade 7
pre-visit activity - 90 minutes

LANGUAGE ARTS

PROCEDURE (CON'T)

- f. Ask students to write their own one-page “interview” transcript about the thing they have identified that they do well. They should write this in the form found in the anchor transcripts. In writing the “interview,” students should ask and answer the same types of questions they determined might have been asked of the anchors.
- g. Ask students to get into groups and read their transcripts to each other.
- h. Ask students to consider what makes one person good at one thing, and another good at something else. Ask students to think about how this information might help them in identifying potential careers for consideration.

CLOSING

If the students have seen either of the two CNN anchors they studied today, ask them how the traits they learned were important to the anchor in today’s assignment are apparent in their work. Ask students to keep their ears open to other information about anchors and correspondents gained during their CNN tour.

GIFTED CONNECTION

Ask students to do further in-depth research on how broadcasting has changed over the last 50 years. Ask students to present the information they have gained in an interesting manner to the class.

ASSESSMENT

1. Assess the transcript prepared by students.
2. Informally assess the students’ ability to work together and complete a task.

L.A. STANDARDS (CON'T)

ELA7RC2 >>

b. Responds to a variety of texts in multiple modes of discourse.

ELA7RC4

The student establishes a context for information acquired by reading across subject areas:

a. Explores life experiences related to subject area content.

ELA7W1

The student produces writing that establishes an appropriate organizational structure, sets a context and engages the reader, maintains a coherent focus throughout, and provides a satisfying closure. The student:

a. Selects a focus, an organizational structure and a point of view based on purpose, genre expectations, audience, length, and format requirements.

b. Writes texts of a length appropriate to address the topic or tell the story.

c. Uses traditional structures for conveying information.

d. Uses appropriate structures to ensure coherence.

e. Supports statements and claims with anecdotes, descriptions, facts and statistics, and specific examples.

TRANSCRIPT

grade 7
LANGUAGE ARTS
worksheet 3-A



Robin Meade Speaks

I remember I was a senior in high school and they had one of those aptitude tests when they say you're good at this, you're good at that. And mine came back and it said, "You're good at the written word, conversation, word comprehension. It was all about words and conversation and things where you're on stage in front of a lot of people. And then it said, "What do you want to do with your life?" And there was no multiple choice. And I was, like, "I don't know!" I'm not joking when I say I looked over at my little neighbor's paper, who had a similar answer - and this isn't cheating because it wasn't like a test we were graded on and scored on - and she wrote down that she wanted to be a news anchor! And I thought, what a great idea! It played into my strengths - I'm natural asking questions and showing empathy for people. So that's how it all began,

To me, a good news story has one of a few elements that stick out in my mind. Number one - a good news story has to be interesting. So if it's interesting, that means it's told well. And it can be ANYTHING as long as it's interesting to you, the viewer. To me, a news story has to be impacting - in other words, it has to mean something to YOU.

One of the most important elements about a good news story to me is about the human emotion.

You know, I've worked in newsrooms before where it's all about the number of homes that were damaged, or the amount of dollars that were lost. And there in the midst of this tornado is a FAMILY, a family whose life will never be the same. Their stuff is gone. They're going to wake up in the morning and live it. It's not a number. It's their life.

Technology has become a part of the fabric of the way we do the news for you, the audience. The news, I think, is a two-way street now. When I was growing up, the anchor was this voice, this stuffed-shirt person and that was fine for then. But now, we have the technology so that you can reach us immediately. So, not only does that help us with breaking news but it lets us know what you're thinking, what you're caring about, your reaction. Just like we say at HLN, "We give you the news; you give us your views." Maybe it's about how you feel about this pageant controversy, or how you feel about this sports team and steroids. That's what matters and that gets to us through the technology. You're going to text me and I'm going to read it and voila! You're part of the news story. We immediately make it a two-way street thanks to those little gadgets that we didn't use to have. How cool is that?

Robin's bio: http://www.cnn.com/CNN/anchors_reporters/meade.robin.html >>

TRANSCRIPT

grade 7
LANGUAGE ARTS
worksheet 4-A



KYRA PHILLIPS SPEAKS

Believe it or not I knew I wanted to be a reporter. When I entered elementary school, I got this idea to start a newspaper and I told my principal that I wanted to do it and he was all for it. So I tried to figure out who would be the best first interview. And I knew that my friend in theater class - her dad was a piano tuner - and I remembered that she mentioned to me that he tuned Dr. Seuss' piano in La Jolla, California (I grew up in San Diego). So I thought, okay, that would be the perfect first interview because I always loved Dr. Seuss.

So I said, "Hey, can I come home with you one day and maybe I can find his phone number and call him up?" So she brings me home to her house after drama class one day and I started looking through her dad's Rolodex. And I was looking for Dr. Seuss. And she said, "No, no, no. I think his name is something else... Like Theodore Something -Geesel, Geisel." And I said okay, let's look for that. And so I was thumbing through the Rolodex and boom, sure enough, there it was. Of course, I always knew him as Dr. Seuss I didn't know his actual name. So I wrote down his phone number. And I called him up and explained who I was, what I was wanting to do, and if I could interview him for the first interview for the

newspaper. And I remember there was silence on the other end of the phone - "Who is this? How did you get my number?" And I was just honest with him and explained the whole situation. And believe it or not, he ended giving me, oh, I think maybe five or 10 minutes, max. So that was my very first interview. And I was hooked from that moment on.

I also knew I wanted to be a reporter because I loved to write. And I loved to experiment. And I kept it all in a book, in folders. And through the years I just started working on my skills more and more until finally in elementary school I had the idea to start a newspaper.

I love my job because I wake up everyday and I never know what's going to happen - I never know whether there's going to be breaking news or there's going to be some type of amazing story I'm going to get to tell. I mean, every single day I come in with this wonderment, and curiosity, and excitement. And I know I'm going to leave a better person, a smarter person - maybe a more inspired person. And I look for that. I don't always just wait on the day. I look for it, as well. And it just gives me a reason to wake up and come into work and know that I'm going to do something unique.

Kyra's bio: http://www.cnn.com/CNN/anchors_reporters/phillips.kyra.html >>

WITNESS TO WAR



grade 7
post-visit activity - two 90 minute sessions
SOCIAL STUDIES

OBJECTIVES

- The student will investigate the U.S. presence in the Persian Gulf conflict through the experiences of CNN correspondents and other journalists as reported in Time Magazine during the Gulf War.
- Students will conduct an organized debate.

MATERIALS

- Print out **Worksheet #1** >> Article in Time Magazine: “Press Coverage: Volleys on the Information Front” <http://www.time.com/time/printout/0,8816,972261,00.html> >>
- Print out **Worksheet #2** >> Article on how to conduct a debate and go through it with your students so they will understand a debate format.

PROCEDURE

1. Ask students if they have ever been in an argument that was being judged for its effectiveness. Tell students that the assignment today will do just that.
2. Pass out **Worksheet #2** >> “Conducting a Debate”
3. Go through the rules of a debate with your students.
4. Ask students to form debate teams in groups of three. As pairs of teams (6 students) conduct their debate, other students will act as the audience. You, as the teacher, or a chosen group of students will act as the judge.
5. Pass out the attached article about the press coverage in Iraq during Desert Storm.
6. The issue for debate is: Should government have the right to censor the press during times of war?
7. Assign teams to one side of the argument or the other.
8. Allow teams 60 minutes to read the two attachments and to map out their debate. Remind students to use information found within the two handouts to help them.
9. Present debates.

SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS

SH7H2

The student will analyze continuity and change in Southwest Asia (Middle East) leading to the 21st century.

d. Explain U.S. presence and interest in Southwest Asia: include the Persian Gulf conflict and invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq.

SS7RC1

Students will enhance reading in all curriculum areas by:

- a. Reading in all curriculum areas.
- c. Building vocabulary knowledge.
- d. Establishing context.



WITNESS TO WAR



grade 7
post-visit activity - two 90 minute sessions
SOCIAL STUDIES

CLOSING

After all debates are presented, conduct a class discussion about the choices journalists must make when trying to get news out of countries that impose strict censorship. Ask students what they would have done if they were reporters assigned to report on a war from within enemy territory. Ask students to think back to their field trip to CNN. The job of news journalists is to find important stories throughout the world to present to viewers. Discuss difficulties journalists often face in getting impartial and accurate news to citizens of the world.

ASSESSMENT

1. Assess the ability of students to work in groups and present an acceptable debate.
2. Informally assess the ability of students to think through and orally discuss difficult choices journalists must make.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

English language learners may have difficulty in the debate process if their English skills are limited. You may choose to have these students help in information gathering and time keeping. They might also serve as judges, as the argument would need to be clear and well-planned for full comprehension.

LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS

ELA7LSV1

The student participates in student-to-teacher, student-to-student, and group verbal interactions. The student:

- b. Asks relevant questions.
- c. Responds to questions with appropriate information.
- e. Displays appropriate turn-taking behaviors.
- f. Actively solicits another person's comments or opinions.
- g. Offers own opinion forcefully without domineering.
- h. Responds appropriately to comments and questions.
- j. Gives reasons in support of opinions expressed.
- k. Clarifies, illustrates, or expands on a response when asked to do so.





Monday, Feb. 04, 1991

Press Coverage: Volleys on the Information Front

By Richard Zoglin; Stanley W. Cloud/Washington, Dick Thompson/Dhahran and William Tynan/New York

The briefing was lengthy, packed with information and as candid as any the Bush Administration had yet given on the gulf war. But when General Colin Powell trotted out the visual aids last week, things got a bit fuzzy. One chart, showing the decline in Iraqi radar activity under allied bombing, was virtually devoid of numbers. Still, said Powell, the gist was accurate. "Trust me," he said. "Trust me."

That could be the battle cry from an emerging theater in the gulf conflict: the information front. Despite the deluge of words and pictures, analysis and speculation, pouring forth on TV and in print, the supply of reliable, objective information about the war's progress has been scant. Most of the dribs that have been released are coming from -- or have been carefully screened by -- Pentagon officials or their coalition equivalents. Inevitably, frustration with that eye-dropper approach has been on the rise, particularly among correspondents trying to cover the action. For others, less concerned with that friction than with monitoring the progress of the war, a pair of crucial questions came to the fore: Are they being told enough about what is happening on the battlefield? And can they trust what they are being told?

Disgruntlement among the press was roiling all week. Press briefings in Saudi Arabia grew testy, as tight-lipped officers evaded questions as simple as what the weather was like over Iraq. Pentagon spokesman Pete Williams was fending off more attacks than an Iraqi supply depot. "There is a beast of war out there, an elephant we're trying to describe," said a frustrated Forrest Sawyer on ABC's Nightline. "Based on the information we're given, we're about at the toenail range." Pentagon briefings, meanwhile, churned out sterile numbers (1,000 sorties a day, 80% of them successful) and confusing generalizations (Saddam's communications network was cut; then it wasn't).

Powell's relatively forthcoming press conference was a response to the demand for better information. But it did not stem the complaints of reporters in the field. Hampered by a pool arrangement that restricts them largely to specified trips arranged by military officials, correspondents grew restless -- and possibly reckless. Late in the week, a vehicle belonging to CBS-TV correspondent Bob Simon and three colleagues was found abandoned near the Saudi-Kuwaiti border. Their whereabouts was still not known by the weekend, but they had apparently struck out on their own -- something allowed but discouraged under Pentagon rules -- to try to find out more about what was going on.

What is going on? Despite the saturation news coverage, Americans remain ignorant of countless details

about the gulf operation, from the exact targets being hit in Iraq to the morale among U.S. troops on the front lines -- wherever those might be. Part of the problem, of course, is the nature of the war thus far. Most of it is taking place in the skies over Iraq, territory that is inaccessible to reporters. Confusion has also resulted from a mix of Pentagon obfuscation and reporters' unfamiliarity with military jargon and many technical details. It took nearly a week, for example, for the press to learn the definition of such terms as air superiority and the 80% success rate attributed to allied-bombing sorties.

All of this is exacerbated by the delicate problem facing journalists in any war: how to communicate events fairly and accurately without revealing confidential military information. The problem has been made even tougher by the advent of live, satellite-fed TV communication. While U.S. viewers are watching air-raided alerts and Scud attacks as they happen, so are the Iraqis, via CNN. One ill-advised sentence or too revealing a picture could put troops in danger.

Reporters acknowledge, and always have, that restrictions are necessary in wartime. They voluntarily adhered to security guidelines for press coverage during the Vietnam War. Yet they are now feeling the heavy hand of the Pentagon in a more direct fashion. In Vietnam reporters were free to travel almost anywhere they wanted in areas under nominal U.S. control. With the restrictive gulf pool system, military escorts stand by while a limited number of journalists conduct their interviews. Pentagon officials insist that the pools are intended to help reporters gain access and to avoid the nightmare of more than 700 journalists all trying to reach the front lines at once. "Having reporters running around would overwhelm the battlefield," says Colonel Bill Mulvey, director of the military's Joint Information Bureau in Dhahran.

Logistics, though, is hardly the military's main concern. All press reports from the gulf must be passed by military censors, who look for taboo details such as troop locations or hints of future operations. Their ostensible aim is to protect the lives of American servicemen, a goal no journalist would decry. But complaints are growing about the arbitrary and dilatory way in which the censors are operating. When ABC News wanted to report that the pilot had been rescued from a downed F-14, military censors refused to allow the plane to be identified. Reason: the F-14 carries a two-man crew, and the Iraqis would know to look for the other member. "That sounded perfectly reasonable to us," says Richard Kaplan, coordinator of ABC's coverage in Saudi Arabia. "Then 20 minutes later they have a briefing, and the briefer says, 'An F-14 was shot down, and we picked up one of the pilots.' "

Similarly a report from New York Times correspondent Malcolm Browne that U.S. warplanes had hit an Iraqi nuclear installation was held up for two days while censors wrangled over wording. By the time his story was cleared, the Pentagon had announced the same news.

The military scrutiny is not only slowing the flow of information; it is also making it difficult for the public to assess the war. Forcing reporters into supervised pools, for example, reduces the chance that candid opinions or negative news about the war will be reported. "If combat boots are wearing out, as they did in Vietnam, or weapons are not working, somebody has to be there to report it," says ABC correspondent Morton Dean. "If we're not there, who is going to do it?"

Elsewhere in the gulf, the press is operating under other tough restrictions. Israel has long required that all material relating to military security be subject to censorship. Revealing such details as the exact location of Scud missile hits is forbidden. (The information could theoretically be used by the Iraqis to improve their targeting.) After a Scud attack in Tel Aviv, NBC correspondent Martin Fletcher broadcast prematurely that there were casualties; Israeli authorities retaliated by cutting NBC's satellite link. NBC anchorman Tom Brokaw had to apologize on air for the inadvertent violation before the line was restored. "We apologized for telling the truth," said NBC News president Michael Gartner later. "And that really grates on you."

The few dispatches from Iraq itself have posed unique problems. CNN's Peter % Arnett, the last American correspondent left in Baghdad, has been filing reports via satellite with the approval of Iraqi censors. Fears that his dispatches are being used for propaganda purposes surged last week, when Arnett reported that allied bombs had hit a plant that manufactured infant formula. U.S. officials insist that it produced biological weapons.

CNN executives defend the airing of Arnett's reports so long as they are clearly identified as Iraqi approved. "The alternative," says executive vice president Ed Turner, "is to pack up and leave, and then there is no one there at all." CNN, along with NBC and CBS, also aired footage of American POWs making pro-Iraqi statements, apparently under duress. ABC refused to broadcast the statements, noting that its policy is to avoid using anything said by hostages that "furthers the aims of those holding them."

The dearth of uncensored, firsthand information about the war is forcing the press -- especially television -- to focus on the few parts of the story reporters can witness. The TV networks have continued (though with less frequency) to break in with live shots of reporters under Scud missile attack in Israel and Saudi Arabia. Some correspondents learned the hard way the pitfalls of that approach. For many viewers, the week's most memorable moment came not when General Powell unveiled his diagrams of damaged Iraqi targets but when CNN's Charles Jaco scrambled for his gas mask on the air in Saudi Arabia, in the erroneous belief that he had whiffed poison gas during an alert in Dhahran.

For all the miscues, the immediacy of television coverage has continued to overshadow the efforts of daily print journalism. But newspapers are catching up, running important pieces of reporting and analysis, like a story in the New York Times revealing that pro-Saddam sentiment is growing in Egypt. Times executive editor Max Frankel maintains that the major unexplored story of the war lies inside Iraq: "That's the heart of the war, not some Scud missile landing on a correspondent's hotel roof."

Some veteran journalists, particularly those who remember the adversarial days of Vietnam, lament the meekness with which the press seems to have acceded to the Pentagon's control of the war story. The public, however, does not appear to have much sympathy for that view -- at least not yet. "In a war, people are apt to feel that the press is being too pushy and that it ought to be less intrusive, more 'on the team,'" says Marvin Kalb, a former CBS and NBC diplomatic correspondent who heads the Barone Center at Harvard. "I think that's a perfectly natural human reaction." But if the war starts to take a troubling turn, another natural reaction may set in: a demand to know why more was not revealed sooner.



CONDUCTING A DEBATE

A *debate* is a *discussion* or *structured contest* about an issue or a resolution. A formal debate involves two sides: one supporting a resolution and one opposing it. Such a debate is bound by rules previously agreed upon. Debates may be judged in order to declare a winning side. Debates, in one form or another, are commonly used in democratic societies to explore and resolve issues and problems. Decisions at a board meeting, public hearing, legislative assembly, or local organization are often reached through discussion and debate. Indeed, any discussion of a resolution is a form of debate, which may or may not follow formal rules (such as Robert's Rules of Order). In the context of a classroom, the topic for debate will be guided by the knowledge, skill, and value outcomes in the curriculum.



Structure For Debate

A formal debate usually involves three groups: *one supporting a resolution* (affirmative team), *one opposing the resolution* (opposing team), and *those who are judging* the quality of the evidence and arguments and the performance in the debate.

The affirmative and opposing teams usually consist of three members each, while the judging may be done by the teacher, a small group of students, or the class as a whole. In addition to the three specific groups, there may be an audience made up of class members not involved in the formal debate. A specific resolution is developed and rules for the debate are established.

Debate Preparation:

- Develop the resolution to be debated.
- Organize the teams.
- Establish the rules of the debate, including timelines.
- Research the topic and prepare logical arguments.
- Gather supporting evidence and examples for position taken.
- Anticipate counter arguments and prepare rebuttals.
- Team members plan order and content of speaking in debate.
- Prepare room for debate.
- Establish expectations, if any, for assessment of debate.

Conducting Debate:

Debate opens with the affirmative team (the team that supports the resolution) presenting their arguments, followed by a member of the opposing team. This pattern is repeated for the second speaker in each team. Finally, each team gets an opportunity for rebutting the arguments of the opponent. Speakers should speak slowly and clearly. The judges and members of the audience should be taking notes

as the debate proceeds. A typical sequence for debate, with suggested timelines, is as follows:

- The first speaker on the affirmative team presents arguments in support of the resolution. (5 – 10 minutes)
- The first speaker on the opposing team presents arguments opposing the resolution. (5 – 10 minutes)
- The second speaker on the affirmative team presents further arguments in support of the resolution, identifies areas of conflict, and answers questions that may have been raised by the opposition speaker. (5 – 10 minutes)
- The second speaker on the opposing team presents further arguments against the resolution, identifies further areas of conflict, and answers questions that may have been raised by the previous affirmative speaker. (5 – 10 minutes)
- The rules may include a short recess for teams to prepare their rebuttals. (5 minutes)
- The opposing team begins with the rebuttal, attempting to defend the opposing arguments and to defeat the supporting arguments without adding any new information. (3 – 5 minutes)
- First rebuttal of the affirmative team (3 – 5 minutes)
- Each team gets a second rebuttal for closing statements with the affirmative team having the last opportunity to speak. (3 – 5 minutes each)
- There cannot be any interruptions. Speakers must wait their turns. The teacher may need to enforce the rules.

Post-debate Discussion and Assessment

When the formal debate is finished, allow time for debriefing and discussion. Members of the audience should be given an opportunity to ask questions and to contribute their own thoughts and opinions on the arguments presented. Members of the debate teams may also wish to reflect on their performance and seek feedback from the audience, including the teacher. If some form of assessment was part of the debate plan, it would be conducted at this time.

Assessment could be conducted by the teacher, the judging team, or the entire class.

BLOGGING AWAY!

grade 7
post-visit activity - 60 minutes
LANGUAGE ARTS



LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS

ELA7C1

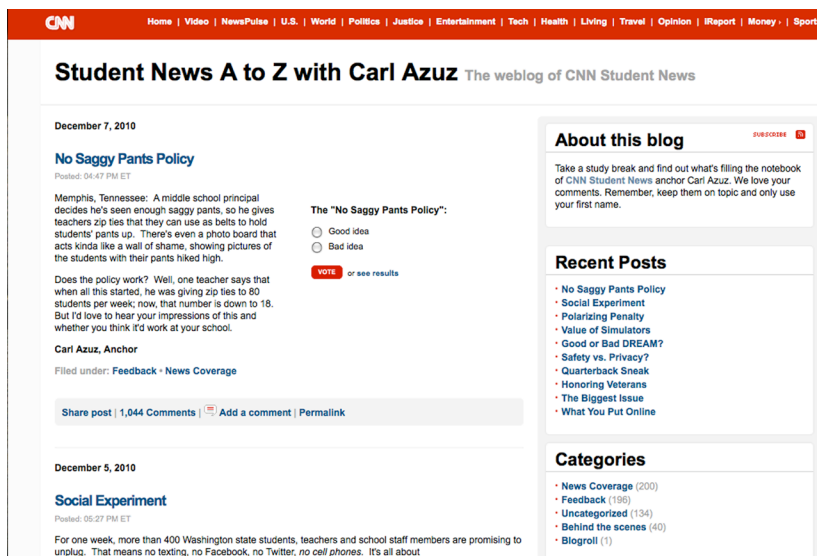
The student demonstrates understanding and control of the rules of the English language, realizing that usage involves the appropriate application of conventions and grammar in both written and spoken formats. The student:

- a. Identifies and writes simple, compound, complex and compound-complex sentences correctly, punctuating properly, avoiding fragments and run-ons, adding or deleting modifiers, combining or revising sentences.
- c. Uses standard subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement.
- d. Identifies and uses verb tenses consistently.
- e. Demonstrates correct usage of comparative and superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs.

ELA7R1

The student demonstrates comprehension and shows evidence of a warranted and responsible explanation of a variety of literary and informational texts.

Critical Component: For informational texts, the student reads and comprehends in order to develop understanding and expertise and produces evidence of reading that: ➤ ➤



OBJECTIVES

- Students will use the writing process to write a blog concerning an opinion about a current issue.

MATERIALS

- Access to the Internet

PROCEDURE

1. Ask students to go to:
[>>](http://www.cnn.com/studentnews/)
2. Ask students to go to “BLOG FROM A TO Z” on the right-hand side of the site. Ask students to become familiar with the site and to take part in the polls located there, if they wish. Students also have the opportunity to read comments by other students, and may even want to share their own post.
3. Ask students to choose one article to focus upon that is of particular interest. Further research on the article may be done before proceeding to the next step.
4. Ask students to click on “ADD A COMMENT”
A box will pop up for students to write in and add their opinion.

BLOGGING AWAY!

grade 7
post-visit activity - 60 minutes
LANGUAGE ARTS



PROCEDURE (CON'T)

5. Before students submit their comments, tell students you will be checking their submission for writing quality and spelling. Students should use the writing process to assure that their comments are grammatically correct and make sense. Once submitted, each comment is checked by CNN for appropriateness before adding it to the website. Remind students that due to the large quantity of comments, not all will be posted.

CLOSING

Ask students if any of them have e-mailed or written their congressmen or local representatives to give their opinions about issues. Democracies depend on informed citizens to help lead and guide their elected representatives in the decision-making process. It is the responsibility of news organizations such as CNN to help citizens get the information they need in the most impartial manner possible. Discuss with students the importance of civility and correct language skills when contacting representatives.

GIFTED CONNECTION

Ask gifted students to research a current political topic relevant to your community. Ask students to evaluate different approaches for solving the problem. Students will then write a letter and give their opinion about solutions to the problem as though they were going to send it to an elected official.

ASSESSMENT

1. Informally assess the comments submitted by students.
2. If you have required your class to gather more information on their topic before writing their comments, assess how well this new information was incorporated into their comments.

L.A. STANDARDS (CON'T)

ELA7R1 >>

- a. Analyzes common textual features to obtain information.
- e. Identified evidence used to support an argument.

ELA7RC2

The student participates in discussions related to curricular learning in all subject areas. The student:

- b. Responds to a variety of texts in multiple modes of discourse.

ELA7W1

The student produces writing that establishes an appropriate organizational structure, sets a context and engages the reader, maintains a coherent focus throughout, and provides a satisfying closure. The student:

- a. Selects a focus, an organizational structure, and a point of view based on purpose, genre expectations, audience, length and format requirements.
- b. Writes texts of a length appropriate to address the topic or tell the story.
- c. Uses traditional structures for conveying information.
- d. Uses appropriate structure to ensure coherence.
- e. Supports statements and claims with anecdotes, descriptions, facts and statistics and specific examples.