



Global Voices Information Sheet

The Media and the Message



Courtesy of Free The Children

The Study

- A study out of Ohio State University grouped participants into age brackets of 18 to 30 and 50 to 65.
- Each participant read from a computerized magazine with different stories and was asked to click on the ones he/she found most interesting.
- There were different headlines. Some were positive, "Visitation rights gained after daring protest: Demonstration at 100 feet high a success." Others were negative, "Visitation rights denied despite daring protest: Demonstration at 100 feet high in vain."
- The older group tended to choose the stories that portrayed young people negatively.
- The younger group didn't have a preference for negative or positive, but did choose stories that featured people their own age.
- After the exercise, the administrators issued a questionnaire measuring self-esteem. Young people did not record a boost or drop to self-esteem. But, the older groups tended to record higher confidence after reading negative stories about young people.

Media Literacy

- Objectivity – Most articles in the newspaper aim to be objective. This means the writer is not influenced by personal feelings or prejudice.
- Point-of-View – This is the narrative voice or the lens through which the writer views the story. The narrator may not express an opinion, but their perspective might be different from another person. It's important to consider this when reading certain articles.
- Bias – This is a strong inclination or a preconceived opinion towards something. A bias or opinion is usually present in a column or editorial. It should not be present in a general news article.

Key Terms

- **apartheid** – Formerly in South Africa, a rigid policy of segregation of the nonwhite population
- **apathy** – absence or suppression of passion, emotion, or excitement
- **generation** - the entire body of individuals born and living at about the same time
- **media** - the means of communication, as radio and television, newspapers, and magazines, that reach or influence people widely
- **protest** – an expression or declaration of objection, disapproval, or dissent, often in opposition to something a person is powerless to prevent or avoid

Global Voices Elementary Educator Resources

Note to Educators:

The following activities are designed to stimulate a current events discussion. Generative in nature, these questions can be a launching point for additional assignments or research projects. Teachers are encouraged to adapt these activities to meet the contextual needs of their classroom.

In some cases, reading the article with students may be appropriate, coupled with reviewing the information sheet to further explore the concepts and contexts being discussed. From here, teachers can select from the questions provided below. Activities are structured to introduce students to the issues, then allow them to explore and apply their learnings. Extension and conclusion activities are included to challenge students and finally, encourage them to reflect on the issues at hand.

Ontario curriculum connections charts for grades 6 to 12 are included on the Global Voices homepage, www.thestar.com/globalvoices.

Since these activities are designed as discussions rather than formal lessons, assessment strategies are not included.

Themes and Course Connections

- Point of view, media, media literacy, news, bias, generational differences
- Course Connections: Social Studies and Language

Materials

- Newspapers or electronic newspapers
- Paper
- Computers and internet

Specific Expectations and Learning Goals

Students will:

- Explore the different parts of a newspaper.
- Learn about point of view.
- Discover how point of view can influence writing.
- Take a critical look at media sources.
- Participate in active class discussions.

Knowledge and Understanding

1. Newspaper Scavenger Hunt (estimated time: 20 minutes)
 - a. Divide the class into small groups and distribute a newspaper to each, give them five minutes to browse through the newspapers.
 - b. Introduce the scavenger hunt by giving your students a list of items in the newspaper that you would like them to find. Here are some examples:
 - i. A headline for a story from another country.
 - ii. An advertisement for a car you would like your parents to buy.
 - iii. A photograph of a local event.
 - iv. The start time for a movie you would like to see.
 - v. A word on the front page you don't know the meaning of.
 - vi. A funny cartoon.
 - vii. A letter to the editor.
 - viii. An article about a current event.

- ix. An article about the city you live in.
 - x. A headline from a column about someone your own age.
 - xi. A headline from a column about someone older than you.
 - xii. A headline from a column about someone your parent's age.
 - xiii. A headline from a column about someone your grandparent's age.
 - c. When the groups have completed their scavenger hunt, bring the students back together for a discussion on newspapers. Ask:
 - i. What topics do you see in newspapers?
 - ii. Why do people read newspapers?
 - iii. What kind of information do you look for when you read a newspaper? What about your parents? Your grandparents?
 - iv. Do you believe everything you read in the newspaper?
2. Learning about Point of View through Music (estimated time: 15 minutes)
- a. Divide the class into pairs and ask the students to choose one of their favorite songs.
(Teacher Note: you may want to provide a list of class appropriate songs for students to choose from)
 - b. Ask groups to record the lyrics to their song.
(Teacher Note: allow students to look up the lyrics if they are unsure)
 - c. Ask students to look for the bias of the artist by reading the lyrics and examining what ideas, beliefs, feelings, etc. are displayed by the artist. Ask:
 - i. What might be the bias, point of view, or intent of the writer of this song?
 - d. Once this is complete, instruct students to compare the bias of the artist with the "non-mentioned" other side in the song (for example, if the artist is singing about a lost love, what might be the bias of the other person who the artist is singing about).
 - e. Promote a class discussion around the topic of bias, ask:
 - i. What is point of view?
 - ii. How does point of view influence writing?
 - iii. How does point of view influence a reader?

Thinking:

1. Read the Global Voices Column as a class (estimated time: 10 minutes)
 - a. Discussion
 - i. Ask the class to work together to retell the events of the column in their own words.
 - ii. Ask students to explain how they felt while the column was being read. Did they feel sad? Why? Did they feel angry? Did they feel hopeful? Why?
2. Point of View (estimated time: 10 minutes)
 - a. In the Global Voices column two perspectives are addressed: the perspective of the adult generation and the perspective of the younger generation.
 - b. Divide the class into partners, ask one partner to represent the older generation and ask the other partner to represent the younger generation.
 - c. Based on the contents of the article, ask the partners to debate their side and why they feel the way they do.
 - d. Bring the class back together and discuss the different points of view and how this can create bias.

Communication:

1. Media Literacy (estimated time: 15 minutes)
 - a. On a piece of paper ask each student to write the heading Apathy Column at the top of the page. Underneath the heading, have them create a chart with two columns across and five rows down.

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- b. In the first column, have them write the following questions:
 - i. What is the title of this column?
 - ii. Who is the author?
 - iii. What is the purpose of the column?
 - iv. What statistics or facts are listed in the column?
 - v. Are their biases or obvious points of view?
 - c. Have the students revisit the Global Voices column and fill in the chart answering the above questions.
 - d. Discuss the student's charts as a class. Address the reasons why it is important to understand the source and potential bias of a website of print resource offering news information. Explain that just because a source has a bias doesn't mean it does not have value. One of the traditional purposes of publications is to express opinions and attempt to convince readers of their validity. Explain that this is why it's important for each of them to form their own opinion while reading publications instead of agreeing with everything.

Application:

1. Learning from the Older Generation (Estimated time: take home assignment)
 - a. The students were exposed to two points of view in the Global Voices column, that of the older generation and the younger generation. Explain to the students that it is important for them to take all points of view into account in any situation.
 - b. Ask each student to develop a set of interview questions that they would like to ask someone in the older generation.
 - c. When their questions are complete bring the class back together. Have the class share their ideas in order to produce a master list of questions that can be used in their project.
 - d. On their own time, ask the students to interview someone older than them and write a summary of their interview.

Additional Resources:

The Toronto Star <http://www.thestar.com/>

The Vancouver Sun <http://www.vancouversun.com/>