



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 Secondary 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: Canadian and World Studies, English

Materials

- Newspapers
- Computers and internet

Specific Expectations and Learning Goals

Students will:

- Recognize that a single event could generate more than one news story.
- Learn about point of view.
- Take a critical look at media sources.
- Participate in active class discussions.
- Perform independent research on significant historical events.
- Write an analytical paragraph from a specific point of view.

Knowledge and Understanding

1. Headlines in the News (estimated time: 30 minutes)
 - a. Find some headlines in today's newspaper or on the internet and cut them out.
 - b. Distribute the headlines among the class and give them a few minutes to think about the meaning of each headline.
 - c. Ask students to read their headlines aloud and give an explanation of what they think the article in question concerns.
 - d. After explaining their own opinion of the article, pass out the text and give the students a chance to see if their predictions were correct. Ask:
 - i. Before you read the text, did you form your own opinion about what it was going to be about and the direction it was going to take?
 - ii. How did this impact your opinion while reading the article?
 - e. Once the students have done this, ask them to search for three other articles on the same topic and ask them to answer the following questions:
 - i. How is the information presented in each news article?

- ii. Is there a difference in the information presented in each article? What are these differences?
 - iii. What is the cause of these differences?
 - iv. Which article had the most impact on you?
 - v. Do you agree with one article more than the others? Why?
 - vi. Do you disagree with one article more than the others? Why?
- f. Explain to the students that a single event can generate more than one news story and that it is important to keep this in mind when reading about news stories or researching.

Thinking

1. Read Global Voices Column independently (estimated time: 15 minutes)
 - a. Reflection:
 - i. Ask students to record point form notes in response to the article.
 - ii. Ask students to record five questions that they are unsure of from their initial reading of the article.
 - iii. Make sure that students do not record a plot summary; instead, ask that they address new things that they learned and questions that they have.
2. Media Literacy (estimated time: 10 minutes)
 - a. Ask each student to perform an OPVL on the Global Voice column.
 - i. Origin: what is the source of this column?
 - ii. Purpose: why was this column written?
 - iii. Value: what are the facts and statistics in this column that give it value?
 - iv. Limitations: what perspective is the column written from, does this cause limitations?
 - b. When this is complete, bring the class back together and discuss student answers.

Communication

1. Lady Gaga (estimated time 30 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. Explain to the students that they are going to write a short paragraph analyzing Lady Gaga and her impact on society and pop culture from either the perspective of the older generation or the perspective of the younger generation.
 - c. Ask students to choose which perspective they would like to write from and allow them class time to complete their paragraph.
 - d. When their paragraph is complete ask the students to partner up with someone who wrote from the opposite perspective. Have them compare their viewpoints.
 - e. Following this discussion, bring the class back together and encourage a class discussion around these differing perspectives and how a viewpoint can affect a piece of work.

Application

1. Research Assignment (estimated time: take home assignment)
 - a. In the column it states that young people have been proving themselves for decades and that adults should have a little more faith in the younger generation. Following this, three different events of which youth were at the forefront are mentioned. These events are:
 - i. Gandhi's protest marches
 - ii. The Soweto Uprising against South African apartheid
 - iii. Tiananmen Square
 - b. Ask student to select one of these options and research the event and the role that youth played.

- c. Students' findings can be compiled in a PowerPoint presentation, essay or written reflection.

Additional Resources

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

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