

It's All in the Head(lines)

Trustee: Craig Flournoy

Subject: Civic Education, Government, Journalism

Topic: Media (Print News)

Grade Level: 6-8

Time: 45 minutes



[View how this lesson fits state standards](#)

[View Craig Flournoy's video](#) or [read the transcript](#)

Materials:

- Computer with internet access, external speakers, and a LCD projector OR access to a computer lab with Internet access and headphones for each student
- Updated Media Player recommended. [Download QuickTime](#). Problems playing? [Check our Media Help page](#).
- Copies of various newspapers (3 different newspapers for a group of 3-4 students)
- Worksheets ([Word](#), [PDF](#))
- Lesson Plans ([Word](#), [PDF](#))

Learning Objectives:

Students will

1. analyze the content of printed news;
2. distinguish between news of various scope; and
3. predict the main points of a news story.

PRE-VIEWING (15 minutes)

1. Before the class, ask each student to bring a copy of a newspaper that either they or their families read. Make sure that you have enough copies (3 different papers for a group of 3-4 students) and enough variety in the collection.

2. Prepare the headline slips by cutting up a printout of **WORKSHEET 1** and putting them in an envelope. Feel free to add or delete to the list of headlines.

3. In class, ask students what newspapers they or their family read and how they read articles. Do they read every word printed? How do they decide what part of the newspaper to read and/or skim? Ask if headlines ever make them want to read the material. Elicit 2-3 examples of recent headlines/events.

4. Organize the class in small groups of 3-4 students. Tell the groups that they are going to test their predicting skills. Let a volunteer from each group reach into the envelope with headline slips and draw one slip. Allow groups 1-2 minutes to predict what kind of story would be associated with the headline they pulled. Encourage the students to expand their answers by filling in the gaps in the following format: Who? – Did what? – Where? – Why? - To what effect? Quickly go around the class eliciting the predictions from groups.

5. As the groups finish their mini-presentations, put the slips on the board (alternatively – if available – project all of them from the **WORKSHEET** for the class to see). Ask the class which

story (stories) they see as likely to mobilize the readers to take actions. Are these actions likely to be personal or civic in nature?

6. Tell the class that they are going to view a story of an investigative journalist dedicated to making a difference in people's lives by drawing public attention to social ills. Instruct the students to try and capture the headlines of the news talked about in the video.

VIEWING & DISCUSSION (10-15 minutes)

1. As a class, watch Craig Fournoy's video. The video can be accessed online at www.americantrusteesproject.org. If you have difficulties accessing the videos, please visit our [Media Help page](#).

2. Ask the students to share their notes about the headlines. Ask if they noticed whether the stories were on the front pages of the newspapers. Ask the groups to consider the following question:

- What difference does the placement of a story in the newspaper make?

NOTE: The paper and the online editions of the same paper vary in content; additionally, the latter does not have a front/back concern that the former deals with.

APPLICATION (15-20 minutes)

1. As a class, investigate newspapers read by students and their families. Distribute **WORKSHEET 2** and sets of newspapers to the small groups of 3-4 students. Instruct the groups to fill in the worksheets and prepare a short presentation comparing their selection of newspapers.

2. As the groups are getting ready to present their findings, encourage them to structure presentations around the following questions:

- Do the newspapers differ in their scope?
- Are the newspapers different in the perspective from which they present the news?
- Do the newspapers present alternative viewpoints?
- What audiences & purposes does each of the newspapers address?

3. Bring the class together to discuss the consequences of (not) hearing alternative perspectives on the news.

4. Wrap-up a discussion by emphasizing the need for a variety of perspectives in the news and for the need for responsible citizens to hear and engage with the opposing views.

ASSESSMENT

Students may be assessed on:

1. completion of **WORKSHEET 2**; and
2. presentation skills.