

Lines and Leads

Trustee: Craig Flournoy

Subject: Civic Education, English/ESL, Journalism

Topic: Social Studies (News/Print Media)

Grade Level: 9-12

Time: 90 minutes



[View how this lesson fits the 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](#).
- Student Worksheets ([Word](#), [PDF](#))
- 10-12 newspaper or magazine articles with the lead-in parts blacked out. ATTENTION: Keep a clean copy for yourself.
- Lesson Plan ([Word](#), [PDF](#))

Learning Objectives:

Students will

1. make a distinction between the different parts of a new article;
2. identify keywords and phrases of a short news story;
3. write lead-in paragraphs; and
4. evaluate strengths and weaknesses of various composition and stylistic choices.

PRE-VIEWING (10-15 minutes)

1. Ask students what part of the newspaper they usually read and how they decide which part to read. Elicit 2-3 responses.
2. On the board, write the following words: a title, a headline, a punch line, a lead. Ask students to define and/or explain the difference between them.
3. Ask students if newspaper headlines make them want to read the whole story. Elicit 2-3 examples of recent headlines/events. Ask students if they have ever come across a mismatch between a newspaper headline and the story.
4. Distribute **WORKSHEET 1**. Instruct students to match headlines and short excerpts from news articles. For advanced groups, set a time limit (60-90 sec). Alternatively, you may cut each excerpt and headline apart separately, pass them out to students, and have students move to match the headlines and excerpts. Check the answers and ask the students to go back to excerpt and underline words and phrases that helped them decide on the match.
5. On the board, write 2-3 titles of the articles featured in the video. Ask the class to predict what the story is going to be about. Elicit 2-3 responses.

NOTE: The camera captures seven different articles published by Craig Flounoy and his co-author. For this activity we recommend using the following three: "Neglect in the Providence Project," "US Has Refused to Enforce Housing Laws," and "White Projects Have Better Services, Amenities."

VIEWING & DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

1. As a class, watch Craig Flounoy's video, which can be accessed at www.americantrusteesproject.org. If you have difficulties accessing the videos, please visit our [Media Help page](#).
2. Ask the students if any of their predictions were correct.

APPLICATION (45-50 minutes)

1. Ask the students how they would start an article on the topic of segregated housing. Brainstorm ideas. Distribute **WORKSHEET 2**, and go over it paying attention to examples that have not surfaced during the brainstorm session. Discuss if and how different leads may shift the focus of the story.
2. Ask students which leads they see more often and which ones are rare, which ones they prefer and which ones turn off their interest rather than promote it.
3. Re-organize the class into small groups of 2-3 and tell the groups that they are going to practice creating a good lead for various articles. Distribute articles with lead-in parts blacked out. Allow time for students to read their articles, discuss the type of lead-in to use, and complete their writing.

Note: You may distribute the same article to several groups instructing each group to write for a specific audience and /or publication: school newspaper, youth magazine, a national weekly, etc.

4. Ask volunteers from each group to read aloud their lead-in parts.
5. If time permits, compare students' work with what was originally published. Discuss strengths and weakness of choices.

ASSESSMENT

Students may be assessed on:

1. completion of WORKSHEET 1; and
2. writing skills.