Newsroom

Trustee: Craig Flournoy
Subject: Civic Education, Government, Media Studies
Topic: Journalism
Grade Level: 9-12
Time: 45 minutes

View how this 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.

- News Strips (MS Word, PDF)

- Download Lesson Plan: (MS Word, PDF)

Learning Objectives:

Students will

1) simulate a newsroom
2) prepare and offer a presentation
3) edit and synthesize information

PREVIEWING (5 minutes)

1. Start the activity by asking the group what they know about news production. Who's involved in creating the news? If they're stumped, you might ask them about who is on TV? Who decides what stories are selected for the news?

2. Elicit responses about the role each individual plays in news production.

3. As the class generates a list of newsroom staff but be sure that they touch on reporters, editors and anchors.

VIEWING AND DISCUSSION (10-15 minutes)

1. Tell the students that they are going to view a short documentary about an investigative journalist from the Dallas Morning News. As a class, watch the Craig Flournoy video, which can be accessed online at www.americantrusteesproject.org. If you have difficulties accessing the videos, please visit our Media Help page.

2. The Craig Flournoy piece describes journalism from the reporter's angle. Tell your students that you're going to explore what's behind the making of the news.

3. Ask the class if all of the news is produced by their local station. How do local news reporters find out about stories? Try to elicit a response about the newswire or Associated Press. If there's no prior knowledge, you may describe that the news is often produced by other agencies.

APPLICATION (30-45 minutes)

1. Tell the group that they are going to simulate a newsroom in action.

2. Divide the class into teams of 3-5 students, each with a particular role to play (1-2 reporters, 1-2 editors, and 1 anchor). Make sure everyone is clear on their role because once the game gets started the students will have to act fast. Depending on class composition, the teacher may need to assign roles.
   NOTE: **Reporters** will work to arrange the arriving news clips into stories.
   Editors will create text to be aired. **Anchors** will read the edited news on the air.

3. Instruct the teams that they will be producing a **one-minute**, "on air" news broadcast. Explain that to make it feel realistic teams will have only 10 minutes to prepare. Tell the class that you will be acting as the news wire. They are not expected to include all of the news stories.
   NOTE: If you're feeling ambitious, you may try to track down a camcorder/digital recorder to capture the news broadcast. A particularly diligent student can act as camera operator.

4. Distribute SECTION ONE of the NEWS STRIPS. Allow 7-8 minutes for the groups to edit and work with their news clippings.

5. After the 7-8 minutes has elapsed, distribute SECTION TWO of the NEWS STRIPS. Give students 2 minutes to work with the new clips.

6. Distribute SECTION THREE of the NEWS STRIPS. Give students one minute to work with the last clip.

7. Announce that its time to go "on air." The designated anchorman will now present a one minute broadcast. Keep a close eye on the time. You may want to designate a student timekeeper.

8. Debrief teams by asking how they made their editorial decisions regarding what should go "on air." What wasn't included and why? Why were the broadcasts different? What does this tell us about news production? Ask the students about how they handled the last news clip? How did they incorporate it or did they?

9. As a class, discuss the "take-away" point of the activity.

ASSESSMENT

Students will be assessed on:

1. their presentations and/or editing skills (depending on group role);

2. and discussion.