

REFLECTING ON NEWS

So far this month in the Teacher’s Corner, students have learned about characteristics of high-quality news, conducted individual observations of different news sources, and shared findings with classmates. Students also looked for common issues and concerns about content across different news sources.

This week, students will use the lists of common issues they created in their number groups to create posters. The posters will communicate the key issues and questions that came up across different news sources in group discussions. Then, students will participate in a gallery walk and class discussion.

GALLERY WALK AND REFLECTION

Time: 30 minutes to give instructions and have number groups create posters. 15 minutes for the gallery walk. 10-15 minutes for a follow-up discussion.

Goals: To communicate and write in English while working in groups to create posters. To read in English while participating in the gallery walk. To speak and listen in English during a class discussion. To reflect on positive and negative aspects of reporting by news sources.

Materials:

- Students’ notebooks containing lists from previous activities.
- Pencils
- Markers
- Chart paper or poster paper
- Tape or another means of displaying posters
- Chalk or whiteboard markers
- Device for keeping time

Preparation:

1. In order to provide students with a model of what is expected during the poster-making activity, create an example poster. The poster should contain common issues noted during the news media observations such as specific topics that are often covered, topics that receive very little

news reporting, identification of sources, portrayal of certain groups of people, etc. To add interest, include visuals or illustrations.

Procedure:

1. Begin by telling students that they will create a poster with their number groups. Share your example poster, and ask students to name some of the issues they see represented.
2. Tell students, “Today you will work in your number groups and use the list you created during the jigsaw activity to make a poster. Your poster should contain the most common issues or questions your group found across different news sources. Be sure to include all of the items on your list. Add illustrations or other visuals to make the poster more interesting. You will have 20 minutes to work together on this task. Make sure that everyone is participating and sharing the work.”
3. Set the timer for 20 minutes. Move around the room and monitor each group’s progress. Answer any questions or clarify information as needed, and ensure that all groups are on track with the task.
4. When the timer goes off, have students direct their attention back to you. Supply students with tape to hang posters, or display the posters by laying them on tables or desks so that they can easily be seen. Next to each poster, place a blank piece of poster or chart paper for students to write comments.
5. Distribute a marker to each student, if you have enough, or tell students to use their pencils. Say, “You will now participate in a gallery walk. During this activity, you will walk around the room, read each poster, and reflect on the ideas you see. Next to each poster is a blank page for you to write any response you may have. You can write down something you agree with or that you also observed during your media observations. You can write something that you disagree with, or even a question that you think of. There is no right or wrong response and you do not have to sign your name. Be sure that you visit each poster in the room and write a comment. You will have fifteen minutes to visit all of the posters.”
6. Set a timer for fifteen minutes. During this time, you can participate in the gallery walk yourself by adding comments at each poster. Remind students that since they are reading and reflecting, they should not be talking during the activity.
7. When the timer goes off, have students stop where they are in the room. Give instructions by saying, “Now you should take a moment to read the comments on the poster that your group made. Without talking, return to your poster and you will have a few minutes to read the

comments and responses left by your classmates. When you have finished, please return to your own desk.”

8. Provide students a few minutes to read the comments left on their posters. Set a timer if desired.
9. Once everyone has returned to their seats, ask students to open their notebooks. Tell students they will have three minutes to list the top five issues they saw from all of the posters in the room. Set the timer for three minutes.
10. When time is up ask, “Who can share one issue or question they noticed from today’s gallery walk?” Allow students time to respond. You can record the list on the board as students share ideas.
11. Once everyone has had a chance to contribute and you have a list, ask students to get into pairs or groups of three. Write the questions below on the board. Tell students they will have ten minutes to respond to the questions as a group and write answers in their individual notebooks:
 - a. What do you think are the top three concerns our class observed in different news sources? Compare your ideas and agree on three concerns.
 - b. What questions should a person ask when taking in news from any source? Write three to five questions.
 - c. Do you believe it is important for people to think critically about the news? Why or why not?
12. When time is up, confirm that all groups have completed the task. Once everyone is finished, ask students to volunteer to share their responses to each of the questions. Students can respond to each other’s ideas by agreeing, disagreeing, or elaborating.
13. Conclude the discussion and remind students that when they are reading, watching, or otherwise consuming the news, they should think about the questions they wrote in step 11.

Possible Extensions:

1. Have students write a personal reflection essay on the third question in step 11. They can submit the paper for a grade.
2. Plan a class debate about the third question in step 11. Half of the class can take the position that it is not important for people to think critically about the news, while the other half adopts the position that it is important. Have students develop their arguments and participate in a structured debate.
3. Students can create a public service announcement about how to think critically about the news media. This can be a skit, a commercial recorded with a mobile device, an infographic, or any

other format your students would like to work in or think would be effective. Have students perform or present their products to the class.

Thinking critically about the news we consume is not an easy skill to teach and it takes time to develop. However, the activities presented in this month's Teacher's Corner are a good starting point to help students discover why close examination of news reports is important. Once your students become familiar with the concepts addressed in this month's activities, you can incorporate media literacy throughout the school year. The more students have a chance to apply this type of thinking, the more likely they will be to use it independently in their own lives.