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Learn to Use the News

Why Use Media in the Classroom?

Media is a fantastic tool to enhance your classroom lessons. It's inexpensive—often even free. It's the way to keep lessons current in our ever-changing world. And since your students are bombarded by media messages every day, they need your help and guidance in sorting out and understanding the news. Our goal in this guide is to help you teach your students how to evaluate and use the media to become independent readers, critical thinkers, and informed citizens. And we want to offer background and ideas to make your job just a little easier.

You'll find plenty of **talking** points in each chapter of this book, as well as opinions from **working** journalists, teachers, and media experts. You'll also find reproducible work sheets to use with your students with various units on media.

Don't be afraid to use the news. Newspapers, magazines, television reports, and media Web sites will only strengthen your lessons in each subject area, and your students will be better able to explore and understand the world around them once they know how to use the news media, too.

"The way I look at it, we really are functioning in an environment of almost information overload," says Dr. Kim Piper-Aiken, a professor at Michigan State University's school of journalism.

What can you as a teacher do with that overload? Plug right into it and help your students learn to use the news as informed consumers.

Elementary school is a perfect time to start.

Says Piper-Aiken, "At the university level, we still encounter students who are not media literate. I think we need to start in elementary and middle school and get students to engage in news consumption, whether it's newspapers, radio, or television."

Another reason to use media is that it reaches all **kinds** of learners, including those who need lessons beyond the textbook. Piper-Aiken points out that studies have shown that "only a small percentage of students learn effectively through the traditional textbook format." She feels strongly that teachers should reach out to all kinds of learners, including those who think visually or are tactile—hands-on—learners.

A choice of media allows students to explore a subject independently and in greater depth, in ways that match their learning styles. Says Piper-Aiken, "We know now to use other sources of material to reach all **kinds** of learners."

You'll want to teach your students how to navigate through a wide variety of news sources, showing them how to use newspaper and magazine indexes and tables of contents, just as you would teach them how to navigate Web sites on the Internet. By integrating materials from the media into your daily lessons, you'll enhance the subject matter.

Media literacy needn't be a separate subject to teach. Once your students have learned the basics of using media, they'll be ready to use it for help in social studies, math, geography, science, and language arts lessons. And don't forget about international media. It's a passport to greater global understanding. Use the news and you'll be using materials across your curriculum that engage students, making them better readers, writers, and **thinkers**. ☺

Lesson Notes and Activity Materials



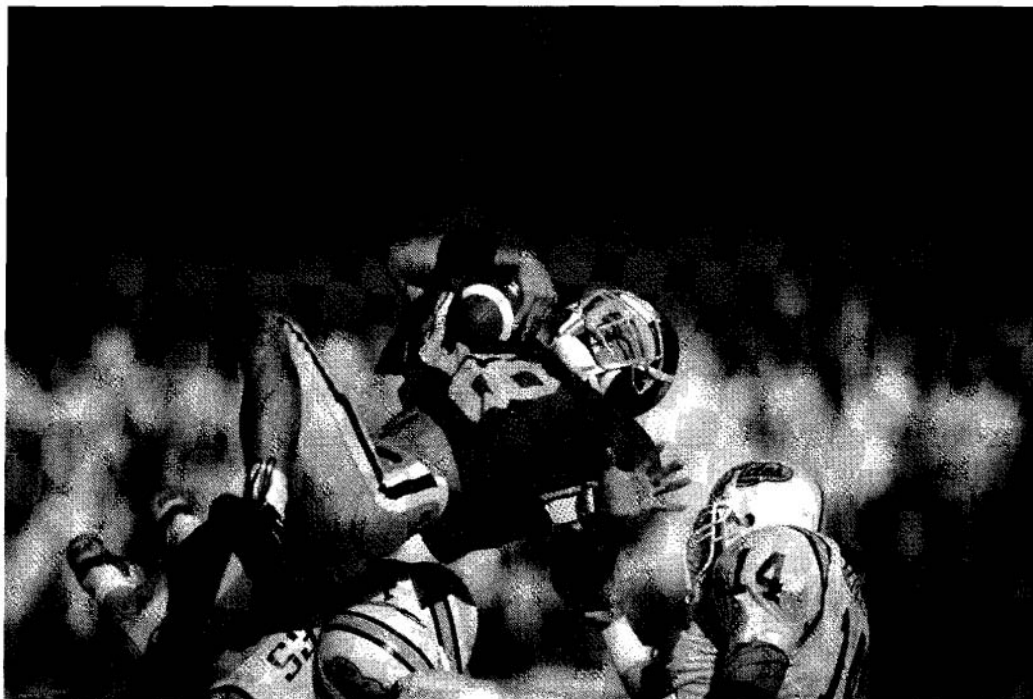
- Scissors for cutting out articles
- Recent news magazines such as Time, Newsweek, Time for Kids, or others suitable for your students
- Internet access for individual or group work
- The activity "News and You" (p. 7) is a good weekend assignment so students have enough time to poll the number of people required.



Be a Sports Columnist

Sportswriters try to cover games fairly. But if they write opinion columns, they are allowed to give their thoughts on games or events. Watch your favorite college or professional team play on TV. In the space

below, take notes. On the back of this page, write an opinion of the game—either how the team played, how they were coached, or both. Be sure to back up your opinion with some examples from your notes.



Sport

Teams playing

Do you have a favorite of the two teams?

If so, which team?

As you watch, notice decisions coaches or players make. Decide if each was a good decision or a bad decision.

Eyewitness Accounts

An eyewitness account often adds credibility and interest to a news story. When you interview someone about an event, it is important to collect all of the

important information about his or her experience. Use this organizer to gather the information from an eyewitness to an event using these details.

