



Public Opinion and News Reporting

Different Viewpoints, Changing Perspectives

Grade: Adaptable for 7-12

Overview

Our impression of events is often influenced by how they are reported in the media. Students will read articles with different viewpoints and analyze authors' intentions. They will participate in a range of discussions to express their initial reactions to and analyses of the articles. Moving on from discussions, the lesson can demonstrate issues of perspective by allowing students to reflect on their own reactions as well as the factual information presented in the articles.

Oregon Common Core State Standards

Language Arts Standards: See below of a full list of applicable standards.

- CCSS.ELA.RH.6-8.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- CCSS.ELA.RH.6-8.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
- CCSS.ELA.RH.6-8.5 Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).
- CCSS.ELA.RH.6-8.6 Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).
- CCSS.ELA.RH.6-8.8 Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.
- CCSS.ELA.WHST.6-8.8 Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
- CCSS.ELA.SL.6-8.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade-level topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- CCSS.ELA.SL.6-8.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence in a way that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and that organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Social Studies Standards: See below for a full list of applicable standards.

- Historical Thinking 6.9: Differentiate between fact and interpretation in historical accounts and explain the meaning of historical passages by identifying who was involved, what happened, where it happened, and relating them to outcomes that followed and gaps in the historical record.
- Historical Thinking 6.10: Identify issues related to a historical event in the Americas and give basic arguments for and against that issue utilizing the perspectives, interests and values of those involved.
- Social Science Analysis 6.22: Gather, interpret, document, and use information from multiple sources, distinguishing facts from opinion and recognizing points of view.

Materials

- Access to the Internet
- [Historic Oregon Newspapers](#) website
- Article research activity sheet (optional)
- Compare/contrast activity sheet (optional)
- Copies of articles (optional)

Lesson

- *Introduction:* Students will analyze media and its different portrayals of the same event. Start a class discussion to reflect on recent news event(s) that have caused controversy.
- Some discussion questions to consider:
 - Can the students think of any news stories that strongly divide public opinion?
 - Have any been reported in different ways, depending on which television channels you watch or magazines you read?
 - Can they think of examples where they formed a certain opinion on a news event, only to change their minds later, when more information came to light in the media?
- *Build background knowledge:* Introduce Cincinnatus Heine Miller, more commonly known as Joaquin Miller. He was a poet from the nineteenth century, known for his colorful and controversial poetry. You may wish to read a detailed biography about Miller on [Wikipedia](#) to provide students with more background information.
 - Known as the “Poet of the Sierras,” “Byron of the Rockies,” and “Bard of Oregon,” Miller became a celebrity throughout the United States and England. He was an associate of such enduring literary figures as Ambrose Bierce and Brett Hart. However, it could be argued that Miller’s fame came more from the popular image he created for himself—frontiersman, outdoorsman—than the quality of his work. Even in his own day, he was controversial. Bierce once called him “the greatest liar this country has ever produced.”
- *Lesson activity:* Have students read different newspaper stories about Miller—each giving a distinct view of the famous poet.
 - Perform this activity as a group discussion.
 - Pass out the activity sheet and discuss the requirements.

- Read the articles together and fill out activity sheet, modeling when necessary.
- You may wish to fill out a compare/contrast sheet for students to clearly illustrate the different viewpoints.
- Encourage students to write down reactions and notes for further analysis and class discussion.
- *Discussion:* As the activity sheet is filled out together, discuss and analyze what the students are reading, focusing on perspectives and viewpoints.
- Some discussion questions to consider:
 - How does this article view Miller as a poet? How do you know?
 - Do you think the author feels positively or negatively about Miller? Why?
 - Which article do you believe more? Why?
 - What are some examples of the articles that make you think so?
- *Transition:* Introduce the topic of football. This is the same activity, except students will have a chance to perform the activity independently.
- *Background knowledge:* Give students information about the points of view between East and West during football times.
 - Many years ago, an Oregon college football team made its first January trip to Pasadena, California, for the postseason game that would be called the “Rose Bowl.” In the early days, it was commonly believed that a better, more competitive brand of college sports was played at universities in the East. College stars from the East dominated the end-of-season All-Star team. When teams from the East and West competed on the field, the Eastern team was always regarded as the prohibitive favorite. Such was the case when the University of Oregon faced off against the University of Pennsylvania in 1917.
 - **For more background on the big game, read [this article on the ODNP Blog](#).**
 - Study of the reportage and commentary on this game in the sports pages of historic newspapers from around the country will reveal to students that the so-called “East Coast Bias” in sports reporting is nothing new!
- *Lesson activity:* Break students into groups or partnerships.
 - Pass out the activity sheet and discuss the requirements.
 - Assign articles to each group or partnership.
 - Encourage students to write notes, reactions, and examples as they read.
- *Discussion:* Bring students together to discuss their findings. Before beginning the discussion, read all the articles as a class.
- Some discussion questions to consider:
 - What was the point of view of your article’s author?
 - How do you know?
 - What were your initial reactions to the article?
 - Do you agree or disagree with the author?
 - What examples made you agree or disagree with the author?
- *Compare/contrast activity:* Students will compare and contrast the news articles they have just analyzed.
 - You may wish to perform this activity as a class, or have students perform this activity within their groups or partnerships, and then bring them together for a class discussion.
 - You may give students the option to choose the articles, or you may assign the whole class the same two articles.
 - Monitor students and provide support when necessary.

- *Debrief/discussion*: Bring students together to discuss their findings, especially if the students have done the activity within their groups or partnerships.
- Some debrief/discussion questions to consider:
 - How does reporting something as simple as a sporting event vary between different news sources?
 - What was your initial reaction?
 - Which article do you believe the most? Why?
 - What were some examples that convinced you?

Compare and Contrast Activity Sheet

1. Fill in the background information: Name and article titles.
2. Reread articles if necessary, highlighting important information.
3. Compare and contrast. Write down how the articles' viewpoints are similar or different.

1st Article Notes

Similarities

2nd Article Notes

List of Resources: Joaquin Miller

- ["Joaquin Miller Writes on Oregon for the *Chicago Times*," from *Jacksonville Oregon Sentinel*, September 25, 1886.](#)
 - In this article, he coins a nickname that would become popular: the "Emerald Land." This piece was reprinted in papers back East, helping form Oregon's national image.
- ["For Joaquin Miller Day," from *Morning Oregonian*, July 16, 1905.](#)
 - The famous poet is given a reception and a day in his honor during the Lewis & Clark Exposition.
 - Contrast this with the often scathing coverage of Miller in the *New Northwest*:
- For example, ["Such Is Fame," published August 18, 1871](#) (article begins at top of column 4), and the [untitled item beginning "Mrs. Minnie Myrtle Miller..." \(near the bottom of column 3\) published January 17, 1873.](#) This paper, dedicated to suffrage and women's issues, presents a very different image of the famous poet!

List of Resources: Football

- ["Penn Is Favored to Win Struggle," from *Washington Times*, January 1, 1917.](#)
 - Preview of the big game; University of Pennsylvania favored 2-1 over the University of Oregon.
- ["At the New Year Football Game," from *Evening Public Ledger*, January 10, 1917.](#)
 - A photograph from the game; other photos on the page provide context of American life and other news events in 1916.
- ["Pennsylvania Defeated: Oregon Overwhelms Easterners," from *Evening Herald*, January 2, 1917.](#)
 - Results of the game as reported in an Oregon paper.
- ["Oregon Defeats Pennsylvania," from *Ontario Argus*, January 11, 1917.](#)
 - More Oregon coverage.
- ["West Happy Over Game," and "Western Team Shows East Something About Football," from *Tacoma Times*, January 12, 1917.](#)
 - Newspaper from Washington takes particular glee in Penn's defeat. Another photo from the game is published with the January 12 story.
- ["Athletics," from *Bend Bulletin*, January 18, 1917.](#)
 - Fascinating early editorial on the positive effects of athletic victory on "community success and development." Cites University of Oregon's defeat of Penn: "That football victory attracted more national press comment than a small earthquake."
- ["Penn Team Was Not Physically Fit for Battle with Team of Oregon Caliber," from *Evening Public Ledger*, January 2, 1917.](#)
 - For comparison, examine these reports of the game from the University of Pennsylvania's home city.

List of applicable Language Arts Standards for Grades 9-12

Grades 9-10

- CCSS.ELA.RH.9-10.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
- CCSS.ELA.RH.9-10.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
- CCSS.ELA.RH.9-10.5 Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.
- CCSS.ELA.RH.9-10.6 Compare the point of view of two or more authors in how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.
- CCSS.ELA.RH.9-10.8 Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claim.
- CCSS.ELA.RH.9-10.9 Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.
- CCSS.ELA.WHST.9-10.8 Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
- CCSS.ELA.SL.9-10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- CCSS.ELA.SL.9-10.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically so that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

Grade 11-12

- CCSS.ELA.RH.11-12.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support the analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.
- CCSS.ELA.RH.11-12.6 Evaluate author's differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the author's claims, reasoning, and evidence.
- CCSS.ELA.RH.11-12.8 Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.
- CCSS.ELA.RH.11-12.9 Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.
- CCSS.ELA.WHST.11-12.8 Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the specific task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into

the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.

- CCSS.ELA.SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- CCSS.ELA.SL.11-12.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, so that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

Continued list of applicable Social Science standards

- Social Science Analysis 7.24: Analyze current and historical sources (e.g., artifacts, eyewitness account, letters and diaries, real or simulated historical sites, charts, graphs, diagrams, and written texts) for accuracy and point of view while forming questions.
- Social Science Analysis 7.25: Analyze evidence from multiple sources, including those with conflicting information.
- Historical Thinking 8.8: Evaluate information from a variety of sources and perspectives.
- Social Science Analysis 8.25: Critique data for point of view, historical context, distortion, or propaganda and relevance.
- Social Science Analysis 8.26: Examine a controversial event, issue, or problem from more than one perspective.
- Social Science Analysis HS.58: Gather, analyze, use, and document information from various sources, distinguishing facts, opinions, inferences, biases, stereotypes, and persuasive appeals.
- Social Science Analysis HS.60: Analyze an event, issue, problem, or phenomenon from varied or opposing perspectives or points of view.
- Social Science Analysis HS.62: Propose, compare, and judge multiple responses, alternatives, or solutions to issues or problems; reach an informed, defensible, supported conclusion.
- Social Science Analysis HS.63: Engage in informed and respectful deliberation and discussion of issues, events, and ideas.