

Teaching for Student Success on the CAPT: Writing Across the Disciplines and Reading For Information

Part I: Introducing Critical Thinking, Reading and Writing Through Current Events

USING NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS

Using newspapers and periodicals as tools to develop an interdisciplinary approach to studies is effective and timely. Through the use of lessons on the media and the use of current events in the social studies curriculum, students can engage in critical thinking and reading. Newspapers and magazines as well as television and the Internet are invaluable resources for students to become aware that there is more than one point of view on an issue and to gain experience in evaluating opinions on an issue.

INTRODUCTORY LESSON ON THE MEDIA

In collaborative groups of no more than four, students brains storm on the following:

- § What is the media?
- § What does it include?
- § What is the purpose of the media?
- § Why does it exist?

Each group should report out on their ideas. Then have students read from the handout, *How to Detect Media Bias and Propaganda* and compare their ideas with those in the handout. Students may use **Guided Reading - How to Detect Media Bias and Propaganda** to direct their reading.

Assessment (this may be done in pairs or group as homework):

Choose one of the three major networks, CBS, NBC, or ABC, and watch the evening news every day for a week. While watching, write down the topic of each news story, the amount of time spent on the story, and an assessment of the story's content and the issues it raises. Read a daily newspaper such as *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post* for the same days. Compare the television and newspaper coverage of the same stories. Analyze the differences between these media in terms of how the stories are presented, depth of coverage, and issue orientation. Evaluate how the print media and the broadcast media might differ in their influence on public opinion.

Students will read the handout *Propaganda Student Handout*. They will then revisit their analysis of the media and define which propaganda techniques their news sources used in the presentation of the topic. Student may use the graphic organizer titled *Propaganda Techniques Analysis*.

CURRENT EVENTS ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment 1-

Using the handout, *Current Events Analysis*, it is suggested that students present current events analysis once in the 8-day cycle using the hour period. This may be done in written form or as a presentation. It is recommended that you use the following curricular concepts, themes and topics when assigning current event topics to students.

Course Concepts

Western Civilization

Quarter 1 – citizenship, cultural diffusion, ethnocentrism, institutions (family, religion, economy, politics, education), democracy, and geographical determinism.

Quarter 2 – capitalism, warfare and diplomacy, (family, religion, economy, politics, education), religious conflict, popular culture, role and status of women, and role of technology, science and medicine.

Quarter 3 – middle class values, rationalism, role and status of women, scientific advancement, (family, religion, economy, politics, education), intolerance and racism.

Quarter 4 – role and status of children, racism and anti-Semitism, liberalism, conservatism, radicalism, intolerance, freedom, modernity, civil liberties, civil rights, and role and status of women.

United States History

Quarter 1 – equality, freedom, crisis and resolution, nation building, republicanism, protest and patriotism, Puritan ethic, and diversity.

Quarter 2 – protest and patriotism, urbanization, immigration, crisis and resolution, expansionism, sectionalism, popular culture, reform, and intolerance.

Quarter 3 – economic transformation, political evolution, isolationism and intervention, intolerance.

Quarter 4 – reform, diversity, intolerance, racism, protest and patriotism, consumerism, modern democratic values, internationalism, popular culture, changing cultural values, civil liberties, and civil rights.

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Assignment 2-

Compare and contrast how the news is reported in print and on television. Choose a newsworthy event. Find one article from a news magazine such as *Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News and World Report* or the *Economist*. Find an article on the same event from the alternative press (see the list in the handout, ***How to Detect Media Bias and Propaganda***). Compare and contrast the way in which the event is reported. Then compare and contrast to the way the event is reported on Cable TV (CNN or FOX). In your analysis make sure you address the propaganda techniques used as well as an assessment of reliability. See if you can find an article on this event in the international news. Are there any similarities? What accounts for the similarities? Are there any differences? What accounts for the differences?

Using the CAPT format, write an essay on the event or issue and take a position.

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Assignment 3-

Campaign Advertising. See lesson on Campaign Advertising from the University of Virginia for Politics.

Assignment 4-

History of Scandals and Negative Campaigns. See lesson on History of Scandals and Negative Campaigns from the University of Virginia for Politics.

Assignment 5-

Students read five or six news articles on local, national, or international issues reflecting the course themes, concepts or topics. Students write their initial understanding of the problem as described in their articles.

Part II: Writing Across the Disciplines Handbook and Sample CAPT Practices

Part II contains full CAPT practices as well as a list of resources for generating CAPT-like writing assessments.

Websites

- Issues and Controversies @Facts.com

Full-text reference database that supplies articles containing objective analysis and opposing points of view on current and controversial topics from 1995 to current. Includes chronologies, illustrations, maps, tables, sidebars, daily newspapers, news and opinion magazines, government reports, and news databases.

This site may be accessed through <http://www.wilton.k12.ct.us/whs/lib/>, click on Databases, click on Issues and [Controversies@Facts.com](http://www.wilton.k12.ct.us/whs/lib/Issues_and_Controversies@Facts.com), enter username (wiltonhs) and password (warriors).

Web Sites: debates of current issues, historical background on the issues
Accessible through Wilton High School Library website

- www.2facts.com/ICOF/issues-home-feature.asp

Facts.com, Issues & Controversies: “in depth investigations of today’s top issues”
Pro and con articles, source documents, photos, charts
Covers recent issues and provides an extensive data base concerning other issues

- <http://library2.cqpress.com/cqresearcher/index.php>

C Q Researcher:

Features a “Current Report” and includes “Recent Reports” of current issues

- www.procon.org

"Promoting informed citizenship by presenting controversial issues in a simple, non-partisan pro/con format," also includes background information on the issues

Part III: Reading Across the Disciplines Handbook and Critical Literacy

The most current handbook published by the State of Connecticut may be found in the teacher resources section. These are easily adapted to daily reading assignments. Full CAPT practices in Reading for Information are included. Finally, Part III contains a section on remodeling social studies lessons for critical literacy and for success on CAPT.

MODEL OF CRITICAL READING

Four Resources model of critical literacy

Critical literacy advocates Allen Luke and Peter Freebody developed a four-part paradigm for reading that encourages different levels of critical literacy. Luke and Freebody's model can be used with any sort of text: essays, opinion columns in the newspaper, government documents, political speeches, and advertisements. In fact, critical literacy advocates commonly recommend that teachers bring into the curriculum and scrutinize items from popular culture and not limit classroom texts to canonical works. (Temple, Charles, "Critical Thinking and Critical Literacy," Thinking Classroom – A Journal of the International Reading Association, Volume 6, Number 2, April 2005.)

LUKE AND FREEBODY'S MODEL OF CRITICAL READING

<p>Coding Practices: Developing resources as a cod breaker: How do I crack this text? What are its patterns and conventions? How do the sounds and marks relate, singly and in combination?</p>	<p>Pragmatic practices: Developing resources as a text user: How do the uses of this text shape its composition? What do I do with this text, here and now? What will others do with it? What are my options and alternatives?</p>
<p>Text-meaning practices: developing resources as a text participant: How do the ideas presented in the text string together? What cultural resources can be brought to bear on the text? What are the cultural meanings and possible readings that can be constructed for this text?</p>	<p>Critical practices: What kind of person, with what interests and values, could both read and write this naively and unproblematically? What is the text trying to do to me? In whose interests? Which positions, voices, and interests are at play? Which are silent or absent?</p>

GUIDE FOR USING BLOOM'S TAXONOMY TO INCREASE READING COMPREHENSION

BLOOM'S THINKING LEVELS	SAMPLE QUESTIONS/TASKS
Knowledge:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What does (vocab word) mean? (<u>define</u>) ▶ Can you <u>describe</u> the setting or historical context? ▶ <u>Identify</u> the main characters/historical characters. ▶ <u>Sequence</u> the main events. ▶ <u>Tell</u> what happened in the story, event or the text.
Comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What happened? (<u>conclude</u>) ▶ <u>Discuss</u> the role of ____. ▶ <u>Interpret</u> the following quote. ▶ What will happen next? (<u>predict</u>) ▶ <u>Restate</u> the theme/concept in your own words. ▶ <u>Summarize</u> the story/chapter/events.
Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ How does the theme/idea <u>apply</u> to you? ▶ If you change the setting/historical context to modern times, what would it look like? (<u>Draw</u> an illustration) ▶ <u>Interview</u> one of the characters/eyewitness. ▶ <u>Use</u> the concept/theme to write a new story.
Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Why did the character/historical character choose to act or react in a certain way? (<u>analyze</u>) ▶ <u>Compare and contrast</u> two or more (e.g. themes, actions, characters, interpretations of historical events or characters) ▶ <u>Diagram</u> character relationships/relationships of historical events. ▶ <u>Relate</u> character traits to actions/character traits to historical events/social, economic, political conditions to people or events. ▶ Why is setting/historical context important? (<u>research</u>)
Synthesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ <u>Compose</u> a song related to the theme or historical concept. ▶ <u>Develop</u> a new theory about the event. ▶ <u>Organize</u> a group/club to support the concept/theme. <u>Plan</u> the agenda for the meeting ▶ Place yourself in the shoes of a historical character. What would you have done? How would you have acted? (<u>pretend</u>) <u>Rewrite</u> the ending to the historical situation.
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Why is the ending of the article (or other type of text) effective? (<u>appraise</u>) ▶ <u>Evaluate</u> the author's/writer's/historian's work as a book review. ▶ <u>Justify</u> the main character/historical character's decision. ▶ Is the author's/writer's/historian's work realistic/reliable/

valuable? Prove it.

- ▶ Rank historical characters in order of importance. Rate each one for their contributions to civilization/history.