



LESSON PLAN

Level: Grades 7 to 10

About the Author: This unit was adapted from lessons created by Rosalind Ross, David Halliday and John Crocker of the Durham Board of Education in *The AML Anthology* (1990), produced by the Association for Media Literacy.

Definitions and Comments about the News

Overview

In this lesson, students debate the question "what is news?" and analyze and assess their own personal news sources.

Learning Outcomes

Students will demonstrate:

- an understanding about what constitutes "news"
- an awareness of the multiple sources of news
- an awareness of their own news sources

Preparation and Materials

- *Definition of News*
- *Personal News Sources*

Procedure

Ask students to arrive at a definition of "news." Write a series of these student suggestions on the blackboard.

Read and discuss *Definition of News* in class. There will be some duplication of the students' suggestions, but this can be beneficial and serve as reinforcement.

Distribute *Personal News Sources*, and have student's work privately to complete it in class.

Discuss the various sources of news used by your students. (Less obvious news sources may include posters, bulletin boards, P.A. announcements, "word of mouth," mail etc.) Ask students to consider the following questions:

- Which of these is your primary news source?
- Which of these is the most accurate?
- Which of these is the most entertaining?
- Why do people provide the news?
- Why are people interested in receiving news?
- Does anyone control the news?



Definition of News

Dictionary of Canadian English

- Something told as having just happened: information about something that has just happened or will soon happen.
- A report of a current happening or happenings in a newspaper, on television, radio, etc

Random House Dictionary

- A report of a current event.
- A report on current events in a newspaper or on radio or television.
- Such reports taken collectively.

American Heritage Dictionary

- Recent events and happenings.
- A report about recent events.
- New information.

Globe Modern Dictionary

- A report of events as given each day by newspaper, radio, etc.
- Information which was not known before.

Oxford Shorter Dictionary

- New things, novelties (1565).
- Tidings, new information of recent events; new occurrences as a subject of report or talk.
- A newspaper.

Comments About the News

- *Sophocles*: Nobody likes the man who brings bad news.
- *Milton* (1671): Suspense in news is torture.
- *Churchill* (1898): It is better to be making the news than taking it; to be an actor than a critic.
- Motto of the *New York Times*: All the news that's fit to print
- *John Bogart* (1918): When a dog bites a man, that is not news, because it happens so often. But if a man bites a dog, that is news.
- Anon: It is a newspaper's duty to print the news and raise hell.



Personal News Sources

Name _____

Estimate as closely as possible the percentage of information from each of the following sources:

	% Radio	% TV	% Newspapers and Magazines	% Conversation	Other
World News	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
National News	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Local or Community News	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
School News	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
News About Family & Friends	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other: Describe	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

