



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2006 Volume III: Postwar America: 1945-1963

Tapestry: Weaving Language Arts and Social Studies into a Cohesive Whole

Curriculum Unit 06.03.06
by Mary Lou Narowski

Rationale

I am privileged to be teaching seventh and eighth grade Language Arts, as well as science, at John S. Martinez Elementary School in New Haven, Connecticut. Teaching in an urban setting is both rewarding and challenging, sometimes even sprinkled with a good deal of frustration. Many of the students at John S. Martinez come to school rich with heritage and a sense of community but often lack fundamental skills and a wide variety of life experiences. Demographically, my students fall into two dominant categories: Black and Hispanic, with one White student and two Islanders. Seven students are bilingual. Fortunately, attendance is not a major issue. As the Language Arts curriculum is heavily entrenched with social studies themes and issues, the postwar American era offers me a wealth of primary and secondary source material from which I can draw. My students are truly fascinated by stories from "back in the day", as they so often refer to it, and having materials that show them the complexities of this era will be invaluable to me as a teacher. Discovering materials that show the historical connections between then and now will enable me to help them fill in the gaps with rich materials from my youth. The students will observe first hand social comparisons that developed during this time and watch as technology advanced and changed the world. It will provide me with choice and allow me to reminisce about "the good old days". I know I will be vested but how do I get my students to do the same?

To be an effective teacher who engages her students requires the gathering and use of as much information as possible. Pedagogy, teaching methodology, abounds, but what is appropriate for *my* class? Awareness of their limited exposure to life outside the "hood", an understanding of the different types of intelligences and their implications for instruction as put forth by Gardner, an understanding of time management in terms of curriculum development and implementation, and the ability to align a curriculum to the state standards with the graduated questioning of Bloom's Taxonomy are but some of the tools necessary as I sit down to consider how to teach my students. Knowing who my students are as learners, knowing what skills are in place and which ones need introduction or work is also essential. Having hands on, creative activities that immerse students into the subject, where they feel part of something, coupled with the use of technology, is also paramount.

After planning a unit in great detail, a teacher experiences a sense of freedom in the classroom. Having a

complete outline with exact lessons, stated standards to be covered, and creative exercises for enrichment, allows for a teacher's personality to be used as a wonderful teaching resource in the classroom. Everything is planned and organized. The teacher can relax. This often overlooked resource can turn a good teacher into a great one. Preparing a unit with such precision compels a teacher to take a close look at the complete picture while helping to avoid many mistakes that happen without such planning. It also focuses the teacher's attention on the needs of individual students in the class.

One of the glaring enigmas in today's educational climate, though, is the fact that our students live in a ten second, sound bite world. Getting my students to learn to read, to take time to read, and, finally, to enjoy reading with understanding poses a real dilemma and uneasiness. Since many of my students have not been read to at an early age or have not heard the English language spoken at home, how can I expect them to read novels or anything that I might assign? I believe the answer is to engage them in small steps. What better way to accomplish this than through the use of articles from the internet, individual chapters from a variety of sources as well as the newspaper. A newspaper is readily available in their lives and getting them actively involved in current reading will open the world to them exposing them to a myriad of issues from a variety of view points.

To this end, my unit will require that each student become a newspaper editor, reporter, and writer. It will result in each student choosing a specific year within the Postwar America timeframe and creating a special edition newspaper entitled, "The Year in Review, 19 __". My decision to have *each* student complete a specific year alleviates certain issues that often arise. "My partner is out and I can't work alone" or "I've done all the work yet he/she is getting as much credit as I am". These enabling excuses will be eliminated. Their finished newspaper will contain international, national, and local news, an editorial page, complete with letters to the editor, an editorial comment, and a political satire, relevant pictures, obituaries, weather, horoscopes, comics, a book review, fashion, weddings, sports, advertisements, special interest section, classifieds, financial section, and any other additions that the class lists as a result of a brainstorming session. My students will learn the layout skills necessary to create a "true to life and time" newspaper. Using *The Complete Newspaper Resource Book*, my students will investigate what a good newspaper contains, what kinds of articles appear on the front page, the criteria of a good newspaper article, and even complete a scavenger hunt. As the unit progresses, my class will develop an on-going journalistic vocabulary that is specific to understanding a newspaper. Knowing that an editorial article is written differently than a headline story and the responsibilities of each, I will bring the students to discover these differences by using the materials I hope to gather as I complete the seminar. Not knowing that facts differ from opinions is one of the weaknesses I have observed in working with this age group. Getting my students to appreciate what makes a story news worthy, what accuracy and appropriateness of headlines means, what is meant by unbiased reporting, and how the newspaper is divided up will be on our agenda. It is my hope that field trips to our local news centers can be arranged. The finished projects will, perhaps, be displayed throughout the school or in some other creative way, perhaps having an assembly where the entire school can go "back in time".

It is my hope that my students will not only develop writing skills for a variety of expository situations but they will also begin a dialogue on important issues dealing with social and political changes from 1945 to the present. Understanding how a wartime climate led to one of seeking individual prosperity, how the civil rights movement took hold and gained momentum, how women became discontented and sought refuge in the workplace, how the cold war with Russia spurred on technological advantages, how music went from the Andrew Sisters to Elvis and Rock and Roll, to The Beatles and now to rap and hip hop, will hopefully begin a discussion that will lead my students to search for more information thus improving not only their literacy and writing skills but also their understanding of important historical issues that shaped our world.

Historical Background

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt envisioned the world living in peace and prosperity. The country had endured a depression and Roosevelt set the "New Deal" in place to alleviate the hard times but in 1941, America entered into war with the Axis powers. The military was expanded, enlisting women as well as men, factories were retooled to produce wartime products such as guns and munitions, and rationing was started. Government controls on food, rent, and clothing were put in place. There was a sense of focus and resolve throughout the country. On December 7, 1941 America was attacked by the Japanese at Pearl Harbor. Thus began our fight. Germany controlled most of Europe. Along with our allies, England and France, America defeated the Germans and Italians in Africa. The Russians defeated the Nazi army in Stalingrad and forced them back into Germany. America used bases in England to win back England and also free France at Normandy. Finally Russia and the Allies joined forces to defeat Hitler in 1945. On August 6, 1945, America dropped the A-bomb on the city of Hiroshima and three days later on Nagasaki. On August 14, 1945, Japan formally surrendered and the war was over. The United Nations was formed to encourage world peace. America was ecstatic.

As our service men and women returned from war, families were growing. We quickly realized that housing was needed for these families. Money saved from wartime jobs allowed people to move to "the suburbs". Women were encouraged to become domestic again. The federal government subsidized housing with low interest loans. New industries and new products were being developed. Cars allowed for a new sense of freedom. The middle class was exploding. The suburbs were a safe environment to raise a family and, at first, there was a sense of security and pride. Soon women felt left behind. Women were supposed to "doll up" for their men when they came home from work. The image of women was of the family nurturer, one who stays home and happily raises her family. Sex was not to be spoken of and women were branded if they became pregnant out of wedlock. Kinsey exposed much about the sexual habits of America. Women became frustrated and finally went back to work. Salaries began going up, kids had disposable income so they became targets of advertising, and music and dance exposed an undercurrent of rebellion.

As all this was happening the cold war with Russia went into full swing. The fear of losing this war led our country to develop the H-bomb and the expectation for positive use of nuclear power was immense. Fear led to our race to the moon. This fear also led to the Age of McCarthyism where paranoia and anxiety over radical take over of the government shackled the nation. Jobs were lost and lives were ruined at the hint that you were a member of the Communist party. This obsession fizzled out as we began collaboration with Russia in the area of science and technology.

Finally there was the fight for civil rights among the blacks in our nation. Plessy established the concept of "Separate but Equal". It was just not good enough. After decades of silently enduring second-class citizenship, blacks in the late 1940s and early 1950s began to challenge the injustices they faced on a daily basis. The earliest school segregation cases demanded that the Supreme Court re-examine the "separate but equal" and the murder of fourteen-year-old Emmett Till had a tremendous impact on blacks in both the North and the South. Although segregation in public facilities other than schools was rarely questioned during this time period, blacks were slowly gaining the resolve to finally stand up to Jim Crow. Rosa Parks and *Brown v the Board of Education* were the turning points in the slow rise to equality for all people.

Objectives

1. analyze how individuals or groups are presented in the news and assess the accuracy and influence of these representation
2. understand media representation of social, political, and cultural issues
3. appreciate how an understanding of another era in time helps to have a clearer vision of today's world
4. develop an historical perspective and appreciation of post World War II America
5. understand journalistic terms and vocabulary
6. understand the structure of news articles leading to production and publication of written work
7. analyze and assess information and ideas gathered from various sources
8. develop keyboarding skills
9. develop peer editing and proof reading skills
10. understand the 5 W's that are presented in the lead
11. recognize the different presentations of persuasive writing
12. appreciate the tension that exists between freedom of expression and individual rights to privacy
13. understand the editorial process

Underlying Teacher Resources and Needed Understandings

A Balanced Curriculum Model

The City of New Haven has adopted a curriculum development model called A Balanced Curriculum by Dr. David Squires. I have used this model in my classroom and have written curriculum for the State of Louisiana using this model and found it very effective in addressing the state standards. A brief overview of this process

is relevant to the understanding of this unit. This process is unique in that it affords teachers and administrators a systematic and collaborative avenue to incorporate national, state, and local standards and tests, textbooks and other resources, teacher's individual strengths and knowledge with student's abilities and needs. They must decide what skills, standards, and strategies will be addressed and used to maximize student achievement and school performance. After these decisions are made, stakeholders must balance, coordinate and align the chosen curriculum. Not only does this curriculum align itself with standards and assessments but it also provides teacher a very flexible framework from which to teach. Significant tasks are chosen collaboratively with both the student's needs and teacher's creative juice in mind. Finally it provides a clear and precise roadmap using exact instructional timeframes for teachers to follow.

A Balanced Curriculum utilizes Dr. James Comer's Six Developmental Pathways and three guiding principles as an organizing framework. These pathways include the physical, psychological, linguistic, social, ethical, and cognitive doorways of student learning. Use of these principles and pathways strengthens home-to-school connections, student progress along these pathways, literary skills, and teamwork and collegiality. Celebration of successes and achievements is a must.

5 Steps of a Balanced Curriculum

Generate Units: This process asks schools to come to a consensus about what is most important to teach, assess, and evaluate. Teachers are actively involved in the process not just told what curriculum to teach. It is site-based development. Their curriculum must be divided into units with beginning and end dates. Everyone agrees to teach the content of the designed unit.

Decide on Significant Tasks: Significant tasks are designed to use 60% of the unit's instructional time. Significant tasks incorporate activities that align with state and district standards. These tasks should take into account the different styles of student learning and the different interests of both teacher and student. A good tool to use during this step is Gardner's List of Intelligences. Incorporating tasks with interest in each of these areas would ensure interest by all students. Keeping in mind the desired outcomes in terms of assessments would help in the alignment process.

Align the Significant Tasks with Standards and Standardized Tests: Once the significant tasks are written, they are plugged into the program's on line site and are matched to the state standards in the content area, Bloom's Taxonomy, the Connecticut Mastery Test, Connecticut Character Education, and the International Reading Association /National Council of Teacher's of English. Once this is done, teachers and administrators can then return to the unit task area where any can re-examine and modify the tasks to cover any standards that have not been addressed.

Develop Format and Content Assessment Aligned to Significant Tasks, Standards and Standardized Assessments: A format assessment provides students with practice on the actual format of the state's standardized tests. Practice using the exact format enhances student outcomes on these tests. Content assessments help teachers determine how well the information was delivered during the significant tasks. It can help determine how well students performed on these significant tasks and standards aligned with these tasks. They can help determine what skills need to be addressed during the next unit.

Insure the Balanced Curriculum is Taught, Assessed, Managed, and Improved: This step helps teachers and administrators review, assess, and plan for improvement. Collaboration and instructional planning is conducted and records kept so improvements can be made for next year. This process builds the school capacity to improve the curriculum, instruction, assessment and the outcomes for all students.

Gardner's Nine Intelligences

To ensure that all students are reached in an optimal way, I find it very helpful to use Gardner's identified nine intelligences. These are the paths to children's learning that teachers can address in their classrooms right now. These, coupled with Comer's Pathways, are extremely important tools that must be incorporated into planning in order to engage all children in the learning process. They are:

Visual/Spatial - learning visually and organizing ideas spatially. Students must see concepts in action in order to understand them. They have the ability to "see" things in one's mind in planning to create a product or solve a problem

Verbal/Linguistic - learning through the spoken and written word. This intelligence was always valued in the traditional classroom and in traditional assessments of intelligence and achievement.

Mathematical/logical - learning through reasoning and problem solving. This is also highly valued in the traditional classroom, where students were asked to adapt to logically sequenced delivery of instruction.

Bodily/Kinesthetic - learning through interaction with one's environment. This intelligence is not the domain of "overly active" learners. It promotes understanding through concrete experience.

Musical/Rhythmic - learning through patterns, rhythms and music. This includes not only auditory learning, but the identification of patterns through all the senses.

Intrapersonal - learning through feelings, values and attitudes. This is a decidedly affective component of learning through which students place value on what they learn and take ownership for their learning.

Interpersonal - learning through interaction with others. Not the domain of children who are simply "talkative" or "overly social." This intelligence promotes collaboration and working cooperatively with others.

Naturalist - learning through classification, categories and hierarchies. The naturalist intelligence picks up on subtle differences in meaning. It is not simply the study of nature; it can be used in all areas of study..

Existential - learning by seeing the "big picture": "Why are we here?" "What is my role in the world?" "What is my place in my family, school and community?" This intelligence seeks connections to real world understandings and applications of new learning.

Bloom's Taxonomy and Critical Thinking Skills Questions

Another important concept to integrate into the learning process is the use of Bloom's Critical Thinking Skills Questions. This graduated series of questions and activities range from straightforward knowledge responses to higher order thinking questions and exercises. The following chart provides a clear picture of questions that guide student thought but also potential activities and assessment products that use the creativity and ingenuity of Gardner's nine intelligences.

Knowledge

(table available in print form)

Comprehension

(table available in print form)

Application

(table available in print form)

Analysis

(table available in print form)

Synthesis

(table available in print form)

Evaluation

(table available in print form)

Introductory Information

This unit will be divided into 10 significant tasks as its length spans several months. These tasks will correspond to the different aspects of production of their newspaper: an understanding of what it takes to build a front page, designing an advertisement, conceptualizing a cartoon, understanding the stock market, etc. It will also include an historic overview of the time period 1945-1965. At the outset, each student will be issued a floppy disk, a folder, and a journal for note-taking, thoughts, ideas, and reflections. On the disk students will save all materials developed as they complete each significant task. The journal will be used to document ideas by hand in class. The final assessment will be a layout of an actual newspaper using all stories, information, and designs as it relates to their assigned year.

Significant Tasks

Task One - Introduction of Unit (Days 1-2)

Activity: Students will begin by viewing samples of newspapers from the time period as well as those from today, contrasting such things as content, layout, types of ads, and different features. They will be asked to discuss what stories make it into the newspaper, reasons why others are excluded, and whether they believe news reporters have freedom of choice without regard to consequences. At this point the students will be introduced to the first amendment and asked to write down their interpretation of what it means in terms of newspaper journalism.

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

First Amendment

Activity: To discover the meaning of the public's right to free speech and access to information through the press, my students will divide into 5 groups. Each group will choose a special interest group to represent, such as The President, welfare recipients, minority groups, anti-abortion groups, abortion rights groups, union executives, political terrorists, environmental protection groups, teacher's unions -- choose groups currently in the news. Give students copies of one newspaper and ask them to censor the paper, cutting out all articles, photos, editorials, headlines, display ads, and comics that might present a negative image of their interest. Have students put them on a poster board. A discussion of the following questions might be used and recorded in their journals.

1. What are the reasons your group used for censoring material? Would you like to maintain this right to censor? Is it important? Why?
2. What problems do you see in allowing censorship?
3. What mistakes does a newspaper make and can they be prevented?
4. Should censorship be allowed?
5. How does a particular group get coverage?
6. Should a newspaper be restrained from publishing facts or opinions?
7. Who benefits from freedom of the press?
8. Should the press act as a watchdog?
9. What do the words, "an informed source said...", "The White House announced..." really mean?

In addition, a general discussion on such topics as the function of a newspaper and its responsibilities, what the terms libel and the right to know mean, how a right to a fair trial might compete with the public's right to know, and what is meant by protection of sources and censorship. This information is summed up succinctly on pages 142-143 of *The Complete Newspaper Resource Book* by Jane Lamb. This overview will set the tone for their final assessment. These terms will begin a word wall in the classroom.

Task Two: Reading of Chapter "Public Opinion and Mass Media" (Days 3-8)

In order to gain an understanding of the relationship among the American public, mass media, and the government, my students will need to understand the complexities of this association. Before having my

students begin considering what will be written in their final newspapers, I want them to be acutely aware of the implications of what actually goes into their work. Because newspapers, and now mass media, have such a powerful link to the American people and the way they see our world, my students must be equipped to realize the power that such a bond holds. They must also become aware of the ability the press has in setting public policy.

Activity: The newspaper's function is to keep the American public accurately informed about the world around them, but what, exactly, is the truth and from whose eyes. This task will help the students explore these issues. By reading Chapter Eight in *American Government* by Stephen Sansone and Ethel Wood, my students will acquire an understanding of the ethical underpinnings of the media and how these ideologies help influence political attitudes. Observing how several newspapers present the same story will bring home the message about how powerful words really are. Which newspapers do not use a story that is given prominence in others? Are some stories placed on inside pages while others appear on the front page? Why? Does each version emphasize the same details? Journal entries on vocabulary and personal reflections will be required. Questions essential to comprehension might be:

1. What generalizations can be made about the six agents of political socialization? (Family, Gender, Religion, Education, Race and Ethnicity, and Region)
2. How does the media reflect and influence public opinion?
3. What influence does mass media have on politics and what does that mean for Americans?

These reflected questions should be recorded in their journals.

Activity: As a result of reading this chapter, I would show my students the film *Absence of Malice*, with Paul Newman and Sally Fields. They will see first hand how the media can influence the public's perception of an issue. This film is a dramatic probe into the issue of journalistic ethics.

Activity: The final piece of Task Two will be to watch the video, *Headline Stories of the 20th Century*, making note in their journals of such things as word choice, sensationalism, and implied messaging. The students will also listen to the *Marshall McLuhan: The World is a Global Village* and, *McLuhan Predicts 'World Connectivity'* clips about the power of the media to change perception.

Task Three: The Criteria for a Good Newspaper and a Discussion of Bias (Days 9-11)

"The theory of the free press is that the full truth is not revealed in one account but emerges through free reporting and discussion. The central point is not fairness nor accuracy, but **freedom**, which makes others possible."

Eric Severeid, one of America's most respected journalists, spoke these words during an address at Indiana University in 1978. He claimed that the greatest fault in news reporting is not bias, but haste. By beginning this task with this comment, I hope to engage my students in a discussion of what are the criteria for a good

newspaper. It will be important to note that running a newspaper is a business and, as such, owners like to present the news according to their own experiences and best interests.

Activity: Having students understand, through observation of several news sources, that the truth will emerge or at least a more balanced perspective will surface, is a fundamental reality that takes time and patience. I will have my students:

1. Find the same story in several papers. And observe the difference in treatment. Are staff reporters used or do the stories come from wire services. Why? What is the style and quality of the writing? Is there slanting by selection of facts? Is this sinister? Is it bias? What is bias? (Journal entry)
2. Have students compare the editorial pages. Make note of differences. What are the implications? (Journal entry)
3. Have students compare the ratio of news to advertising. (It is considered financially unhealthy to drop below 50% advertising). What is the ratio of hard news to other feature material? What is the ratio of wire service to staff reporting? (Wire service usually means a low operating budget) Ask students what they think each of these mean. (Journal entry)
4. When considering the headlines, are there negative, positive, or neutral words used? Does the headline story reflect the editor's point of view? What does this mean? How would you know?
5. Have students follow an on-going story in several news papers. Does Severeid's comment hold true?

After these exercises are completed have students compile a list of criteria for a good newspaper in their journals. Lamb suggests that some of these might be:

- Kinds of stories chosen - sense of news value
- Adequate and concise coverage of important news
- Dependency on wire service use versus staff reporters
- Unbiased reporting and editing
- Amount of news compared to the amount of advertising
- Responsible editorial commenting
- Accuracy and appropriateness of headlines
- Fair and balanced reporting
- Variety and balance of contents

Task Four: The Front Page and Writing a News Story (Days 12- 17)

This task will acquaint my students to the terminology of a front page: skyline, flag, ears, border, screamer (banner, streamer), headline, dateline, hanger, box, refer, kicker cutline (caption), Cut (photo, pic, pix), and index. It will help students visualize and understand the layout of the front page and also allow students to understand the serious, factual nature of the hard stories on page one. One of the key elements to the lead story is the summary lead where students need to identify the 5 W's plus H of the story.

Activity: Using an overhead projector, show students a sample **front page** paper. Explain the buzz words used by the newspaper staff. Next pass out copies of the front page of the day's local newspaper. Have students identify the key elements of a front page using the overhead model as a guide. Continuing to use the actual front page, have students identified the 5 W's:- Who, What, Where, When, and Why of the lead story. Explain that H -- How- might also be included. Next, to provide reinforcement and practice, give them three other sample leads and have them identify the 5 W's, perhaps as a homework assignment.

Explain the **Inverted Pyramid** , where the most important facts are presented first, lesser important details are listed next, and finally least important details are included at the end. It must be noted that these stories are factual and not opinions. Opinions are left to the editorial page.

Activity: A third item to be mentioned in this task will be to discuss the **Headlines** . It is important to make the students aware of the fact that a headline is not a title but a concise summary of the story that follows. It contains a subject and a verb but no auxiliary pronouns, conjunctions, or articles. Present students with samples of lead stories. Have them write headlines that are appropriate. It will be wise to take note of the different fonts and font sizes during these exercises. Clarity and accurate reflection should be upheld, though stylistic variations should be noted. Add all new terms to the word wall.

Activity: Finally, it is at this point that the students will receive an initial timeline of historic events occurring between 1945 and 1965. After studying the timeline for interest, students will be asked to choose what year they will investigate and complete their final project. Using *The Present Cycle, The Era of Super Power America (1945-1965)*, students will receive an overview of this period in history. They will begin researching their chosen year for headline stories of national and international interest, recording in their journals facts that fit into the 5W's and H categories. This research should be limited to important headline stories that occurred during the exact year that the student has chosen for his/her newspaper. Students should write their headline stories based on their use of the 5W's, H, and their editorial decisions as to what is the most important news of the year. A quick reminder of their exercise on censorship and free press would be in order. These should be saved on their disks.

Task Five: The Editorial Page (Days 17-27)

In stark contrast to the front page, is the **editorial page**. This is the only page where opinions are openly expressed. Students may argue that article and word choice of feature news stories obviously reflects someone's opinion but it is only on the editorial page that a reader can look for arguments openly expressed. The best papers offer readers a wide variety of opinions and viewpoints, using an interesting variety of subjects all of which must be substantiated. These articles are referred to as the opinion of the "editorial staff," and "we". Students must understand that the "we" mentioned on these pages is the publisher, the editor, or staff writers specifically hired to write these opinions. These opinions represent the business sense of the owners of the paper.

Activity: What goes on the editorial page?- editorials, regular columns by established writers, both nationally syndicated as well as local, guest editorials by writers not on staff, letters to the editor, and national and local editorial cartoons. To ensure that students have an understanding of these, they should locate examples in the local paper. It could be set up as a scavenger hunt. Their homework assignment would be to keep track of the types of stories that appear on these pages for one week, observing and noting such things as: what topics are covered, in what forms, and by whom? This should be entered in their journals. With the results of this information, students should be asked some of the following questions:

1. What is the subject of the editorial? Where did the story first appear?
2. What position does the writer take in regard to the topic?
3. What are his/her supporting reasons? Does he/she offer arguments for the opposing side of the issue?
4. Does he/she repeat his opinion? Where and what effect does it have?
5. Is research, interviewing, personal observation, or out of the blue reasoning used as information for his/her argument?
6. Does the writer get his point across?
7. Does it give information, explanation, or direction on the issue?
8. Does it stimulate you to think or motivate you to act on the topic?
9. Does it appeal to your emotion or reason? Through what means?

Activity: While reading Chapters 3 and 4 in the book, *The Fifties a Women's Oral History*, and several of the stories from *Women's Magazines 1940-1960* pages 63-189, have students develop a pro/con argument using a graphic organizing sheet on a women's issue of the day i.e. marriage, education, employment. Next have students review writing strategies found in editorials, such as, examples, comparisons, and contrast. Discuss how to use these in presenting an opinion. Point out examples using sample editorials. Have students write their editorial. Editorial Advice:

1. If you criticize, make constructive suggestions. If you praise, don't go overboard and undermine your credibility.
2. "Tell them what you are going to say; say it; tell them what you've said."

Activity: Have the students write a political editorial about a political issue of their year. Help the students understand that these editorials were sometimes very heated and offered controversy for its readers. Samples of these controversial articles should be presented. Be sure to have students suggest reasons for offering different political outlooks on the editorial page. Students could also compare an editorial to a column on the same topic, allowing them to observe the different style and approaches each writer took to address the topic. (To be saved on their disk.)

Activity: Using the same topic, have the students write a letter to the editor expressing their point of view on the topic. Remind them that it is a letter of persuasion and as such they must present reasons for their argument in an attempt to convince, complain, defend, or persuade. Using the overhead, show two sample letters to the editor, one that is well written and one that is ineffective. This modeling might go a long way in helping students understand how to write such a letter. Post the effective ones written by the class after they have shared them. Remind students that letters to the editor must be signed because the paper can be sued. (To be saved on their disk)

Activity: Political Satire is usually found in the cartoons on the editorial page. Lamb describes the basic principle of satire as ridicule, either cruel or bitter, that points out human folly or vice, to bring about awareness or reform. Through the use of examples have students try to come to some of the following understandings:

1. What is the topic of the cartoon?
2. How does the cartoonist feel about the topic?
3. Is it presented literally or metaphorically?
4. If literally, how does the reader understand who the cartoonist is describing?
5. If metaphorically, what do the various elements symbolize/
6. Does the cartoonist use exaggeration, humor, irony, or stereotyping as a device to get his point across?
7. What are the different forms of irony used; verbal irony (what is said and what is meant), dramatic irony (what the artists says or believes and what the reader knows to be true, and irony of situation (what is expected and what is actually true).

Have students either draw their own cartoon of an issue that was current during their year or find one that they especially enjoy. This should be kept in the journal folder for use when they construct their paper.

Task Six: Sports (Days 28-32)

For sports fans, sports are exciting. Action headlines and thrilling stories are what make for a good sports story so fresh, original use of language is a must for the sport's writer. Grabbing the reader's attention through

language is essential. There are many kinds of sports story that appear on the sport's page: the straight news story, a personal interview, personality profiles, prediction, scoreboards, and photos. Each one of these offers the reader a different angle on the story.

Activity: In order to help students understand the language of sports, it is important to have them read several articles written about a sporting event. Copies of sports pages from the 40's, 50's, and 60's will offer this kind of specialized writing form. Modeling this on an overhead projector, students can point out all words that are essential to the sports in the story and those that might actually take away from it. It is worth noting that often the headlines do not even mention the name of the sport. The verbs in sports stories are often extremely significant. By listing these action words in one column and their translation in a second, students will be able to identify the exaggerated words in a story. Students can also listen to ESPN as a way to identify the language of sports. A personal contact at ESPN, Johnny Sweet, can explain how he writes his sports clips.

In writing a sports story students must remember to describe who played, who won, the important plays, the weakness and strengths of each team, the star players, the weather, and the crowd. It may be worthwhile to use the inverted pyramid, with the most important facts of the game or event being mentioned first and the lesser ones trailing at the end. It is also important to remember that some sports writers are opinion writers, sometimes blatantly opinionated. They stick their necks out to arouse the reader in hopes of getting letters written to the editor about their story. Their viewpoint is often controversial.

Sports-minded students truly enjoy reading the scoreboard. This format contains all the latest scores as well as a variety of other information about players, team stats, and such. Some scoreboards are exhaustive while others just present basic information. Sports enthusiasts love to look at these charts to follow all the latest information on their teams.

Activity: It will be the student's job to write a four-to-five paragraph **Viewpoint** story on one sports story from their designated year. They will also have to obtain copies of sports stories, scoreboards, and lead stories off the internet from the specific year to include in their newspaper.

Task Seven: The Comics (Days 33-37)

This section deals with a page that most students turn to fairly early on when they open a newspaper. In order to get a sense of how observant they are when it comes to the comics, students should complete the following activity from Lamb's *Newspaper Resource Book*.

Activity: Without using a newspaper, ask students to answer the following T-F questionnaire. Have students discuss their answers.

1. ____ Comic strips can show action.
2. ____ All comics are meant to be funny.
3. ____ Comic strips are silent.
4. ____ Comic characters never grow old.
5. ____ Comic strips are always divided into frames of equal size.
6. ____ Comic strip characters don't look like real people.
7. ____ Comic strips are seldom about the real world.
8. ____ What the characters say is always in balloons.
9. ____ Comic strips can improve your vocabulary.

10. ____ All comic stories tell a self-contained story.
11. ____ Cartoons on the comic pages are not all in strip form
12. ____ Comic strips use "camera angle" like movies and TV.

Answers:

T (puffs of smoke=speed, stars=heavy blow); F; F, (thud, crash) F; F; F; F; F; T; F; T; T

Are comics relevant to a newspaper? Why were and are they included at all in the newspaper? These questions are the basis of the first day's lessons on the comics.

Activity: Using the internet, students should look up the history of comics in the news, hopefully finding out that comics increased sales, spoke to non-English speaking immigrants, provided social commentary, ridiculed national politics, and had the power to entertain and draw readers in. Students should then look up comics that were available during their designated years. *Pogo* is an excellent example that can be used.

Activity: Have students develop their own comic using information gained about their time period and the comics of the day. Using examples found online students must decide what will be in their comics. Students should also copy other comics from the internet to be used in their paper. The following blank comic strip can be used for such a purpose.

(table available in print form)

Task Eight: Advertising (Days 38-45)

Many people believe newspapers exist to run ads using news as fillers. In fact, most newspapers try to maintain an average of 60% ads to 40% editorial material. It is, of course, advertising sales that pay the cost of the newspaper, from salaries to printing and even the profits for the shareholders. Advertising also serves the business community informing the public about their products and services. Circulation is another important aspect of advertising because the more readers the paper serves, the more products are potentially sold and the more money the owners have to invest in their newspaper.

There are three kinds of advertising: **general ads**, where national companies design ads to tell the readers about their products and try to convince them to buy the product or service. Magazine ads are much more

slick than newspaper ads; **retail (or display) ads**, where local merchants and service companies try to show readers about the products and services important to their lives using graphic art designs and illustrations; and finally, **classified ads**, which is a marketplace for private individuals and small businesses to cheaply sell unwanted items and some services.

Activity: Before having my students consider what ads they might want to create, I would have them read several chapters from *Populuxe* by Thomas Hine. This book provides a narrative about influx of creative and must have products that emerged during this time period. Having them read and view the many inventions as well as the attitudes about such products will hopefully give my students insight into the *tsunami* of products that came onto the market at this time. Creating a product board of these items will, I'm sure, be a big hit.

Activity: Providing opportunities for my students to view ads from these years

will be necessary and fun. Having them view these on the overhead projector, my class will list what information is found in a general ad, a retail ad, and the classifieds, using the following graphic organizer.

General Ads Retail Ads Classified Ads

With this information I will have the students prepare Classified Ads for something they want to sell, for Position Wanted, for property for sale, and perhaps even Lost and Found. I will then have them try to design and ad for a "new" product on the market, having them keep in mind what our ads looked like on the overhead. Finally I will have them prepare an ad for a local service being offered. All of these ads will be saved on their disk as well as in their folder.

Task Nine: Financial Section

This area of the paper might present the most trouble for my students. Without getting into a long winded study of the stock market, my students might have a hard time understanding the business section. Instead, I would simply ask my students to find a page from the stock market of their year and reprint it. It might be a recommendation to at least explain the highs, lows, and selling price per share.

It will be important to give my class some basic background of the financial climate of the country. For example, during this time period, people starting borrowing money for new homes, cars, and new items for their homes. Veterans returning from the war needed housing. The suburbs became the place to live. Levittown sprang up and people quickly flocked to buy homes there. Showing some pictures of these developments might help.

Activity: At the website www.hud.gov/offices/adm/about/admguides/history.cfm, my students will read a brief history of the government's response to this very basic need of housing. Using www.boomerweb.net/ppc/search.php?str=fifties my students can look at some of the items such as clothes, home furnishing, *records*, and cars, to name just a few, that dazzled the common person and started America's thirst for material possessions. *Populuxe* can also be used for this purpose. These sites will help to understand people's financial positions at the time. The stock market crashed just twenty years earlier, yet the mood of the country was booming. They might do well to try to write a piece about opening a new business in town; a record store or a little corner grocery market.

Task Ten: Special Sections (Days 45 - 47)

The last section of concentration will be the special interest areas of the paper. Here the students can have

fun making up a weather forecast, obituary, and horoscopes. These are areas that they already read daily.

Activity: The final two pieces to be written are those that deal with homemaking tips and gardening. Here again they can have some fun but research from past sections on home products might help to bring focus to their work. The food section always included recipes for special occasions. In thinking about gardening, the student must be reminded that single family homes were now being occupied by many more people, so people now had to plant grass and gardens. "The lawn" was a thing of great pride to these new home owners and, as such, they needed advice on how to plant and care for their lawns.

Word List

(table available in print form)

Final Assessment

The students will be given newspaper size paper to assemble all their pieces into a four page newspaper incorporating the Front Page, the Editorial Page, The Financial Page, and the Special Interest Page. It will be the student's editorial decision as to the placement of the articles. If a written assessment, in keeping with state standards and Bloom's is required, the chart above offers great question stems to use. Any activities mentioned there can also be used in addition to or in place of the activities offered in this unit.

Appendix A- Content and Performance Goals and Standards

One of the most important goals of the Language Arts program is for students to learn to read and write so as to decipher meaning of the written, visual, and oral texts used in the classroom and in life. They should be able to read and respond to questioning, communicate ideas clearly, and apply strategies that enhance the fluency and proficiency of their language so as to become life long learners. These are the stated goals of the Connecticut Language Arts Program. Newspapers provide a daily view of the world, a tool vital in the education of all people, young and old. Comprehensive awareness of the nuisances of a newspaper is essential in their quest for understanding the many issues that will affect their lives. These goals provide the framework for such learning. The unit I present contains exercises in the following areas:

Content Standard One -- Reading and Responding

1. generate questions before, during, and after reading, writing , listening and

viewing.

2. reflect on the text to make judgments about its meaning and quality
3. select and apply efficient and effective word recognition strategies, including contextual clues, phonics, and structural analysis.
4. make inferences about ideas implicit in narrative, expository, persuasive, and poetic texts
5. interact with others in creating, interpreting, and evaluating written, oral, and visual texts.

Content Standard Two -- Producing Texts

1. engage in writing, speaking, and developing visual texts through frequent

reflection, reevaluation, and revision.

2. gather, select, organize, and analyze information from primary and secondary

sources

Content Standard Three - Applying English Conventions

1. proofread and edit for grammar, spelling, punctuation and capitalization.
2. develop fluency and competency in the English language arts by using and building upon the strengths of the learner's language and culture.

Content Standard Four -- Exploring and Responding to Texts.

1. examine the ways readers and writers are influenced by individual, social, cultural, and historical context.
2. recognize literary conventions and devices and understand how they convey meaning
3. demonstrating an understanding that literature represents, recreates, shapes and explores human experience through language and imagination.

Technology-safely and effectively uses resources, processes, concepts, and tools of technology.

On a **word level**, students will understand layers of meaning. On a **sentence level**, students will integrate information, references, and quotes. On a **reading level** students will understand the editor's and reporter's written word, their point of view and editorial devices, as well as visual messages found in advertisements. On a **writing level**, students will use expository writing, persuasive essay, and editorial form to present an effective argument using balanced analysis and citing textual evidence. Finally, on a **speaking and listening level**, students will use language to present their final products to the class.

Annotated Bibliography - Resources for Teachers and Students

Adams, James Truslow. *Album of American History* . Consolidated Book Publishers, Chicago, Illinois 1959.

Pictorial and brief essay on historical events of this time.

Gaffney, Timothy R. *Secret Spy Satellites: America's Eyes in Space*. Enslow Publishers, Inc. Berkeley Heights, NJ. 2006

A window into the United States Satellite program with pictures.

Hakim, Joy. *A History of US: All the People*. Oxford University Press, New York, NY 2003.

An overview of post war America discussing such topics as women's rights, civil rights, and the cold war.

Harvey, Brett. *The Fifties, A Women's Oral History*. Harper Collins Publishers. New York, N.Y. 1993.

Women speak up in revealing first-person accounts about an era in our history when their voices were mostly silent. These are dramatic stories of women toeing-the-line or breaking the rules at a time when the consequences were enormous.

Hine, Thomas. *Populuxe*. Alfred A Knopf. New York, NY.1986.

A running narrative with pictures of America's obsession with purchasing all that was new and flashy.

Isaacs, Sally. *America in the Time of Franklin Delano Roosevelt 1929-1948*. Heinemann Library, Chicago, Illinois 2006. Uses the life of Franklin D Roosevelt as a reference to examine the history of the

United States from 1929-1948.

Isaacs, Sally. *America in the Time of Martin Luther King 1948-1976* . Heinemann Library, Chicago, Illinois 2000.

As the country is on its way to celebrating its 200th birthday, its frontier stretches to the moon. Meanwhile, African Americans and other minorities struggle to have the opportunities and rights promised in the U.S.Constitution. This book describes in detail the lives of Martin Luther King Jr., the Kennedy's, and ordinary Americans who made the nation what it is today.

Jones, Rebecca. *The President Has Been Shot* . Dutton's Children's Book. New York, NY. 1996.

Nothing stuns the country like the death of its leader. Four U.S. presidents have been killed in office, and attempts have been made on six other presidents' lives. These events are covered in a highly readable style, with fascinating details about the assailants and

the attacks, straightforward presentation of conspiracy theories, and abundant use of prints and photographs from newspapers and magazines.

Lamb, Jane. *The Complete Newspaper Resource Book*. Weston Walch Publisher, 1985.

All aspects of newspaper understanding: formatting, writing articles, ads, etc.

Sansone, Stephen and Wood, Ethel. *American Government*. Houghton Mifflin Co. Wilmington, Ma. 2000.

A complete course book of American Government.

Walker, Nancy, A. *Women's Magazines 1940-1960*. Bedford/St. Martin's, Boston, Ma. 1998

A clear introduction to an undeniably influential cultural phenomena, mass circulation magazines aimed at housewives. Topics such as women in the workplace, motherhood and marriage, fashion and beauty tips are covered.

Websites

www.ancestry.com

General information

<http://www.ardemgaz.com/prev/central/>

The Central High Crisis: Little Rock 1957 (Little Rock Newspapers, Inc.)

www.boomerweb.net/ppc/search.php?str=fifties

All that was cool about the era

www.comicstripfancom.

Comic strips of the time period

www.fashion-era.com/fifties_photo.htm

Sample fashions ads

<http://dept.english.upenn.edu/~afilreis/50s/home.html>

American Culture: The Literature and Culture of the American 1950 (Al Filreis, Univ. of Pennsylvania)

www.greatnewspaperad.com/print_ad_sample.htm

Sample product ads

www.historychannel.com/bdh/bdh.jsp?month

This day in history

www.hud.gov/offices/adm/about/admguides/history.cfm

History of home loans

www.infoplease.com/year/19

List of important events of the year

www.kclibrary.nhmccd.edu/decade40.htm

General information about decade

<http://www.lib.usm.edu/~spcol/crda/oh/index.html>

Civil Rights in Mississippi Digital Archive (Univ. Southern Miss. Center for Oral History)

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/swann/herblock/>

Herblock's History: Political Cartoons from the Crash to the Millennium

www.media-awareness.ca/english/resources/lesson/secondary/broad

Lesson plans- writing news articles

www.memory.loc.gov/learn/features/timeline/postwar/postwar.htm

Overview/ Arts/ Entertainment

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ccmphtml/colahome.html>

Fifty Years of Coca-Cola Television Advertisements American Memory, Lib of Congress

http://movies.nytimes.com/ref/movies/reviews/years/rev_year_1945/index.html

Movie reviews

www.nhc.rtp.nc.us8080/serve/twenty/tkeyinfo/trelwn.2.htm

Religion in Post War II America

www.paperboynews.com.paper.advertising.ad.ad.advertisement

<http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/>

The Martin Luther King Jr. Papers

<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?category=4>

Document Library

www.usmapandbook.com/history/america2.htm

6 Video set \$39.95 QV3095 Headline Stories of the 20th Century

<http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/reHIST604/>

Civil Rights in U.S. and Virginia History (Virginia Center for Digital History)

<http://www.webcorp.com/civilrights/index.html>

Voices of the Civil Rights Era (Webcorp)

Films

Absence of Malice, Dir. Sidney Pollack, Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 1981 (1hour 57minutes).

While investigating the death of a local union leader, an ambitious young reporter (Sally Field as Megan) becomes involved in a dangerous triangle of love, deceit, and national espionage.

Headline Stories of the 20th Century, Questar, Inc., 2000 (8 hours)

Featuring actual newsreel footage including feature stories on WWII, the JFK assassination, the Elvis Presley and Marilyn Monroe crazes, and more. Feel the drama the happiness, the shock, and the sorrow felt by the people who lived through these events in history.

Mississippi Burning, Dir. Alan Parker, Orion Pictures, 1988 (127 minutes)

Two FBI agents with wildly different styles arrive in Mississippi to investigate the disappearance of some civil rights activists.

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

©2019 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University

For terms of use visit <https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/terms>