



Yale-New Haven
Teachers Institute®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2010 Volume I: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Consumer Culture

Gridiron Consumers: The Billion-Dollar Ascent of Football in America

Guide for Curriculum Unit 10.01.06
by John K. Laub

The National Football League generates well over \$8 billion in revenue annually and has its own cable television network. Why do fans continue to devote so much money and time to supporting and rooting for their favorite football teams? After World War II, two cultural transformations television and consumerism intersected to catapult football to the top of the sports industry. This unit offers students an opportunity to appreciate the impact on themselves as consumers of the dynamic involving sports, technology, big business, and the federal government. The NFL has dominated the sports industry during the past fifty years by marketing, branding, programming, and promoting its athletes and the game through shrewd decisions by its owners and commissioners. All lessons are designed and presented in order to examine and answer the following essential question: How have gridiron industrialists, marketing mavericks, competitive coaches, college athletic departments, the federal government and fanatical fans embraced amateur and professional football and kindled a multi-billion-dollar consumer culture in the United States?

(Developed for History Through Film, grade 12; recommended for History Elective and History Through Film, grades 11-12)

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