A daily news broadcast for High School and Middle School students now under development by MacNeil/Lehrer Productions
Segment 1:
“Newspapers in the Digital Age”
Language Arts Curriculum

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Dear Educator,

the.New online video reports for the.Gov provide middle and high school students with a valuable exercise in social studies and language arts with this 6:50 minute video report on the “Newspapers in the Digital Age” at www.pbs.org/newshour/thenews/thegov Correspondent, Antonio Neves explores the changes in the newspaper business, how stories are covered and delivered and the changes in economic models to secure their existence. Lessons for social studies and language arts are available to support this video in the “For Educators” section of the website. All videos and curricula have been informed by the.New instructional design that can be found on the website www.pbs.org/newshour/thenews. The curriculum includes content-based standards, discussion questions, student activities, vocabulary and primary reference sources. A complete transcript of each video report includes time codes to assist in isolating specific segments of the video and to augment the instruction of media literacy and multimedia production. All of this material is presented as options to fit teachers’ instructional needs.

References to Larry Bell’s “The 12 Powerful Words” are highlighted in bold in the lesson plans and in the “thought starter” questions on the home page and educator’s page, and in the transcript (to denote where they are used in the video segment).

We have also added general topics to correlate to the lessons and video as well as concept based standards with conceptual lens and enduring understanding.

We welcome our partners at the Omaha Public Schools who have joined the.New in the second year of a special pilot project. We have also developed a new authoring tool for students called YOU.edit which gives students an online tool to remix the content of the.New reports, so they can create their own multimedia presentations. This editing tool can be found by clicking on the YOU.edit button on the home page of the website. Currently used with our OPS teacher consultants it is password protected so that it can serve as a viable educational asset that allows classroom teachers to assign multimedia projects within the security and content safety of the.New website.

Answers to student “thought starter” questions listed below the video.
#1. Readership is down and advertising revenue, based on this number, is also down.
#2. Newspapers are redesigning their print and online content in tandem to be more efficient and attractive to readers. This synergy improves journalism, adds to local coverage, and brings more relevant news to more people.
#3. Micro-news focuses on news at the local and even neighborhood level.

Sincerely,

Karen W. Jaffe
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Newspapers in the Digital Age
This lesson was designed to support the News video “Journalism in Transition” The video can be found online at [www.pbs.org/newshour/thenews/thegov](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/thenews/thegov)

**Omaha Public Schools Standards**

**Grades 7-12**

**Reading**
Students will extract and construct meaning using prior knowledge, applying text information, and perspective.

4. Summarize, analyze, and synthesize informational text using main idea and supporting details

10. Generate and/or answer literal, inferential, critical, and interpretive questions, analyzing prior knowledge, information from the text and additional sources, to support answers

11. Select text for a particular purpose (e.g., understand, interpret, enjoy, solve problems, form an opinion, answer a specific question, discover models for own writing)

15. Respond to text verbally, in writing, or artistically

**Conceptual Lens: Transformations**

**Enduring Understanding:** Expanding the role of technology can help change the course of economic models that are in crisis

**Writing**
Students will write for a variety of purposes and audiences in multiple genres.

1. Write in a variety of genres, considering purpose (e.g., inform, entertain, persuade, instruct)

**Key Concepts:**

**Subject Area:** English/Language Arts

**Key Concepts:**
In this lesson, students will **analyze** the changes that print media sources have undergone in the past several years, and **describe** how the influx of Internet sources has affected traditional print media. In addition, students will use their knowledge to **predict** how the face of journalism will change in the future.

Because students must **evaluate** whether Internet news sources can be considered valid and reliable, they will also review what makes a source credible according to previous journalism standards. Students will also look at a specific scenario and **formulate** an argument as to whether the scenario violates journalists’ First Amendment rights.

**Key Objectives:**
Students will:

- **Analyze** the changes that print media sources have undergone in the past several years.
- **Describe** how the influx of Internet sources has affected traditional print media.
- **Predict** how the face of journalism will change in the future.
- **Evaluate** whether specific Internet sources can be considered valid and reliable.
- **Formulate** an argument about a journalist’s First Amendment rights.
Omaha Public Schools Standards
http://www.ops.org/District/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=Hbqyrrg2ydM%3d&tabid=912&mid=2006

Grades 7-12
Speaking and Listening
Students will develop and apply speaking skills to communicate key ideas in a variety of situations.

1. Communicate ideas and information in a manner appropriate for the purpose and setting

2. Demonstrate and adjust speaking techniques for a variety of purposes and situations

Students will develop, apply and refine active listening skills across a variety of situations.

1. Apply listening skills needed for multiple situations and modalities (e.g., video, audio, distance, one-to-one, group)

2. Listen and ask probing questions to elicit information

3. Listen to analyze, and evaluate message, purpose, and perspective of information being communicated

Students will research, summarize, and communicate information in a variety of media and formats (textual, visual, and digital)

5. While reading, listening, and viewing, evaluate the message for bias, Commercialism and hidden agendas (e.g., produce placement, television ad, radio ad, movie, body image, sexism)

6. Gather and share information and opinions as a result of communication with others (e.g., video/audio chat, interview, pod cast, multimedia presentations

Key Vocabulary:

- **Blog (aka “Weblog”):** an online diary; a personal chronological log of thoughts published on a Web page
- **Credibility:** believable; trustworthy
- **Digital News:** news that is available in electronic form; readable and manipulated by computer.
- **Ethics:** a system of moral principles
- **First Amendment:** an amendment to the U.S. Constitution, ratified in 1791 as part of the Bill of Rights, prohibiting Congress from interfering with freedom of religion, speech, assembly, or petition. The government can only restrict these freedoms if they prove to be destructive.
- **Journalism:** the occupation of reporting, writing, editing, photographing, or broadcasting news or of conducting any news organization as a business
- **Print Media:** a medium that disseminates printed matter

Source: (http://dictionary.reference.com/)
Lesson Topics:
- Journalism
- Internet
- Ethics
- First Amendment

Time Frame: 4-5 class periods, with presentation of speeches

Materials:
- “Journalism in Transition”
  [www.pbs.org/newshour/thenews/thegov](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/thenews/thegov)
- Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics (a PDF version of the file is available at: [http://www.spj.org/pdf/ethicscode.pdf](http://www.spj.org/pdf/ethicscode.pdf))
- Handout #1: Speech Guidelines – First Amendment Rights for Journalists
- Online resources
- Paper, pens, and pencils

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McRel
Level III (Grades 6-8)

Media

**Standard 10. Understands the characteristics and components of the media.**

1. Knows characteristics of a wide range of media (e.g., television news favors messages that are immediate and visual, news photographs favor messages with an emotional component)

2. Understands the different purposes of various media (e.g., to provide entertainment or information, to persuade, to transmit culture, to focus attention on an issue).

7. Understands influences on the construction of media messages and images (e.g., the historical period or place in which they were made; laws that govern mass media, such as truth in advertising; the socio-cultural background of the target audience; financial factors such as sponsorship; cause-and-effect relationships between mass media coverage and public opinion trends).
Background:

When the popularity of the Internet grew in the 1990s, the editors and owners of newspapers and other traditional print media sources (such as magazines) were not too worried that the Internet would usurp their power as the go-to news source for the average person. In the past few years, as phones have become Internet-capable and laptops have accompanied the average reader everywhere, the Internet has become a competitor for print media. According to New York Times reporter Eric Pfanner, readership for daily newspapers has fallen 27% from 1998 to 2008, and fewer than half of Americans read print newspapers (Pfanner). Since so many people can get their news for free online, they are less willing to pay for a paper newspaper that is often behind in reporting the most recent news.

Because readership has lowered, many large newspaper companies are suffering the consequences of the smaller revenue. Since 2007, *The Kentucky Post*, *The Cincinnati Post*, and *The Tucson Tribune*, among others, have stopped their publications. In an effort to avoid bankruptcy, *The Los Angeles Times* cut over 200 jobs, 150 of which came from editorial staff positions. The newspaper also decided to restructure its pages so that there would be 15% fewer pages published each week. In possibly the most stunning news to date for the newspaper industry, the second most-read U.S. newspaper, *USA Today*, announced a massive restructuring process in which the majority of its emphasis will be put on the digital news section of the company and 9% of the workforce will be fired.

Many news sources, such as *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* and *The Christian Science Monitor* are following the same suit as *USA Today* in that they are focusing more of their efforts on digital media rather than print media. Within those news sites, reporters have blogs and places designed for people to participate (such as from Facebook or Twitter). Because the blogs are so opinion-based,
yet readership for them is incredibly high, **credibility** has become an issue in the journalism community.

Because personal opinions mix with facts when journalists use social media sites such as Twitter, their opinions can be mistaken as truth by their readers. For example, *Washington Post* sports columnist Mike Wise recently posted a tweet that falsely stated that Pittsburg Steelers quarterback would be suspended for five games. Though Wise was supposedly providing false information to show how fast misinformation can spread online, he suffered the consequences by being suspended himself. Though journalists are allowed to use social media sites such as Twitter, and many journalists have blogs of their own, news that comes from these less-than-reputable sources are taken as seriously as the news that is found in newspapers.

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**McRel**  
**Level III (Grades 6-8)**  
**Writing**  
**Standard 2. Uses the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing**

1. Uses precise and descriptive language that clarifies and enhances ideas and supports different purposes (e.g., to stimulate the imagination of the reader, to translate concepts into simpler or more easily understood terms, to achieve a specific tone, to explain concepts in literature)
2. Uses paragraph form in writing (e.g., arranges paragraphs into a logical progression, uses clincher or closing sentences)
3. Uses a variety of techniques to provide supporting detail (e.g., analogies; anecdotes; restatements; paraphrases; examples; comparisons; visual aids, such as tables, graphs, and pictures)
4. Organizes ideas to achieve cohesion in writing
5. Conveys individual voice, tone, and point of view in writing

**Level IV (Grades 9-12)**  
**Writing**  
**Standard 2. Uses the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing.**

1. Uses precise and descriptive language that clarifies and enhances ideas and supports different purposes (e.g., to stimulate the imagination of the reader, to translate concepts into simpler or more easily understood terms, to achieve a specific tone, to explain concepts in literature)
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3. Uses a variety of techniques to provide supporting detail (e.g., analogies; anecdotes; restatements; paraphrases; examples; comparisons; visual aids, such as tables, graphs, and pictures)
4. Organizes ideas to achieve cohesion in writing
5. Conveys individual voice, tone, and point of view in writing.

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Because of journalists’ **First Amendment** rights, they may state what they would like in their tweets and blogs, but they are usually held to a higher standard than the average reader who creates a blog. According to the Society of Professional Journalists’ Code of Ethics, journalists should “seek truth and report it,” “minimize harm,” “act independently,” and “be accountable.” Unlike
other ethical codes, the SPJ’s Code of Ethics is not mandatory for journalists because the First Amendment prevents people from being restricted in what they can say.

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http://www.mcrel.org/
Level III (Grades 6-8)
Writing
Standard 4. Gathers and uses information for research purposes.

2. Uses a variety of resource materials to gather information for research topics (e.g., magazines, newspapers, dictionaries, schedules, journals, surveys, globes, atlases, almanacs, websites, databases, podcasts)

Level IV (Grades 9-12)
Writing
Standard 4. Gathers and uses information for research purposes.

2. Uses a variety of print and electronic sources to gather information for research topics (e.g., news sources such as magazines, radio, television, and newspapers; government publications and microfiche; library databases; field studies; speeches; technical documents; periodicals; Internet sources, such as websites, podcasts, blogs, and electronic bulletin boards)

5. Synthesizes information from multiple research studies to draw conclusions that go beyond those found in any of the individual studies

LESSON PLAN

1. Have students create a K-W-L chart. As a class, discuss what the students already know about the changing face of journalism, and the consequences of the influx of Internet news sources. Have students individually fill out what they would like to know about the journalism crisis. Using the K-W-L chart as a capture sheet, have students take notes in the “L” section of the chart as they watch the.News video. After they have finished watching the video, have a class discussion in which the students analyze:

a. How print media has changed due to the advent of the Internet.
b. Whether they believe journalism is more or less reliable with the influx of Internet sources. Discuss more modern news sources, such as blogs or Twitter accounts.

2. Have the students write a letter to the editor of their favorite newspaper in which they predict what the future of print media journalism will be.
3. Give each student a copy of both the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics and the Society of Professional Journalists frequently asked questions about Code of Ethics. Place an overhead of the Bill of Rights (specifically the First Amendment) up so that all of the students can see it. Go through the Society of Professional Journalists’ Code of Ethics, and read the Society of Professional Journalists’ frequently asked questions about the Code of Ethics. Have the students work in pairs to discuss a journalist’s responsibility to the public, and how that does or does not conflict with the journalist’s First Amendment rights. Then have each pair explain their reasoning to the class.

4. Give each student a copy of the following New York Times article: “Washington Post Suspends Columnist for Twitter Hoax”. As a class, read the article and discuss journalist Mike Wise’s actions and the consequences he must face as a journalist. In small groups, have students describe whether Mike Wise’s punishment was fair given the standards of modern journalism. Make sure each student qualifies his argument with the Society of Professional Journalists’ Code of Ethics. Each group should present their results to the class.

After the students discuss whether Mike Wise received a fair punishment, give each student a copy of Washington Post ombudsman Andrew Alexander’s article on the issue (“The toll of Mike Wise's false tweet on Ben Roethlisberger”). Within their small groups, have the groups create a t-chart in which they compare their group discussion with the discussion listed within the ombudsman’s article.

5. Give each student a copy of Handout #4 (Speech Guidelines – First Amendment Rights for Journalists). Have students spend class time researching and creating their speeches. They should formulate an argument to the following questions:
1. With the advent of social media sites like Twitter and Facebook, is it fair to hold modern journalists to the same ethical standards that print media journalists have held for many years? (In other words, should they be as responsible for what they state on the social media sites as for what they state in more traditional media sources?)

2. Should the journalists’ First Amendment rights continue to protect them from standards to which other professionals must adhere?

**Note to Teacher:** Students should use modern news media sources (print or online) to find their research. Sources can include *The Washington Post* ([www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)), *The New York Times* ([www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)), and *USA Today* ([www.usatoday.com](http://www.usatoday.com)); as well as *PBS NewsHour* ([www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org)).

**Note to Teacher – Modification for Middle School Students:** If this assignment proves too challenging for middle school students, the assignment can be modified so that the students only have to answer one of the questions listed above.

**Extension Assignment:**

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**Level IV (Grades 9-12) Reading Standard 7. Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts**

1. Uses reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of informational texts (e.g., textbooks, biographical sketches, letters, diaries, directions, procedures, magazines, essays, primary source historical documents, editorials, news stories, periodicals, catalogs, job-related materials, schedules, speeches, memoranda, public documents, maps)

3. Summarizes and paraphrases complex, implicit hierarchic structures in informational texts, including the relationships among the concepts and details in those structures

4. Uses a variety of criteria to evaluate the clarity and accuracy of information (e.g., author’s bias, use of persuasive strategies, consistency, clarity of purpose, effectiveness of organizational pattern, logic of arguments, reasoning, expertise of author, propaganda techniques, authenticity, appeal to friendly or hostile audience, faulty modes of persuasion)

5. Uses text features and elements to support inferences and generalizations about information (e.g., vocabulary, structure, evidence, expository structure, format, use of language, arguments used)

Students can take their speeches and write a more extensive 3-5 argumentative essay that answers the questions in greater depth.

**Assessment:**
Teachers should use the following rubric to evaluate the students’ speeches:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pitch</td>
<td>Pitch was often used and it conveyed emotions appropriately.</td>
<td>Pitch was often used but the emotion it conveyed sometimes did not fit the content.</td>
<td>Pitch was rarely used OR the emotion it conveyed often did not fit the content.</td>
<td>Pitch was not used to convey emotion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>Student is able to accurately answer almost all questions posed by classmates about the topic.</td>
<td>Student is able to accurately answer most questions posed by classmates about the topic.</td>
<td>Student is able to accurately answer a few questions posed by classmates about the topic.</td>
<td>Student is unable to accurately answer questions posed by classmates about the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparedness</td>
<td>Student is completely prepared and has obviously rehearsed.</td>
<td>Student seems pretty prepared but might have needed a couple more rehearsals.</td>
<td>The student is somewhat prepared, but it is clear that rehearsal was lacking.</td>
<td>Student does not seem at all prepared to present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time-Limit</td>
<td>Presentation is 3-5 minutes long.</td>
<td>Presentation is 2-3 minutes long.</td>
<td>Presentation is 1-2 minutes long.</td>
<td>Presentation is less than 1 minute OR more than 5 minutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stays on Topic</td>
<td>Stays on topic all (100%) of the time.</td>
<td>Stays on topic most (99-90%) of the time.</td>
<td>Stays on topic some (89%-75%) of the time.</td>
<td>It was hard to tell what the topic was.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posture and Eye Contact</td>
<td>Stands up straight, looks relaxed and confident. Establishes eye contact with everyone in the room during the presentation.</td>
<td>Stands up straight and establishes eye contact with everyone in the room during the presentation.</td>
<td>Sometimes stands up straight and establishes eye contact.</td>
<td>Slouches and/or does not look at people during the presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume</td>
<td>Volume is loud enough to be heard by all audience members throughout the presentation.</td>
<td>Volume is loud enough to be heard by all audience members at least 90% of the time.</td>
<td>Volume is loud enough to be heard by all audience members at least 80% of the time.</td>
<td>Volume often too soft to be heard by all audience members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Shows a full understanding of the topic.</td>
<td>Shows a good understanding of the topic.</td>
<td>Shows a good understanding of parts of the topic.</td>
<td>Does not seem to understand the topic very well.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grade: ________/32
Comments:
Level III (Grades 6-8)
Listening and Speaking

Standard 8. Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes

1. Plays a variety of roles in group discussions (e.g., critical listener, discussion leader, facilitator)

2. Asks questions to seek elaboration and clarification of ideas

6. Makes oral presentations to the class (e.g., uses notes and outlines; uses organizational pattern that includes preview, introduction, body, transitions, conclusion; uses a clear point of view; uses evidence and arguments to support opinions; uses visual media)

7. Uses appropriate verbal and nonverbal techniques for oral presentations (e.g., inflection/modulation of voice, tempo, word choice, grammar, feeling, expression, tone, volume, enunciation, physical gestures, body movement, eye contact, posture)

10. Understands elements of persuasion and appeal in spoken texts (e.g., purpose and impact of pace, volume, tone, stress, music; images and ideas conveyed by vocabulary)

Resources:

- Editor & Publisher coverage, http://www.editorandpublisher.com/Headlines/philly-newspapers-sale-unlikely-to-close-today-62604-.aspx
Activity Designer:

Christine Denny is a high school English teacher in Silver Spring, MD.

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http://www.mcrel.org/
Level IV (Grades 9-12)
Listening and Speaking
Standard 8. Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes

1. Uses criteria to evaluate own and others’ effectiveness in group discussions and formal presentations (e.g., accuracy, relevance, and organization of information; clarity of delivery; relationships among purpose, audience, and content; types of arguments used; effectiveness of own contributions)

2. Asks questions as a way to broaden and enrich classroom discussions

4. Adjusts message wording and delivery to particular audiences and for particular purposes (e.g., to defend a position, to entertain, to inform, to persuade)

5. Makes formal presentations to the class (e.g., includes definitions for clarity; supports main ideas using anecdotes, examples, statistics, analogies, and other evidence; uses visual aids or technology, such as transparencies, slides, electronic media; cites information sources)

9. Understands influences on language use (e.g., political beliefs, positions of social power, culture)
Handout #1: Speech Guidelines – First Amendment Rights for Journalists

Directions: In a well-formed 3-5 minute speech (written and verbal), formulate an argument that answers the following two questions:

1. With the advent of social media sites like Twitter and Facebook, is it fair to hold modern journalists to the same ethical standards that print media journalists have held for many years? (In other words, should they be as responsible for what they state on the social media sites as for what they state in more traditional media sources?)
2. Should the journalists’ First Amendment rights continue to protect them from standards to which other professionals must adhere?

You will need to find at least three sources that support your argument, and include those sources in the speech. You may use The New York Times article that we used in class as one of your sources.

When you have written your speech, switch with a classmate and complete the Peer Editing Checklist listed below:

Peer Editing - Speeches

Annotate your peer’s speech identifying the following:

✓ The attention getter. Could it be made better?
✓ Adequate background information on the topic.
✓ A thesis that includes a definite argument.
✓ Topic sentences in each paragraph that contain transitions and a subtopic that directly relates to the thesis.
✓ Closing sentences sum up main points in paragraphs and link to the next paragraph.
✓ Correct citation is used where appropriate.
✓ The conclusion contains a topic sentence, main arguments, and an effective call to action.
✓ Is the essay persuasive? Do they provide enough support to adequately back their argument? What would make it better?
✓ Correct grammar and diction are used.
✓ Sentences and paragraphs flow together.
The Partnership for 21st Century Skills
http://www.21stcenturyskills.org

Think Creatively
- Use a wide range of idea creation techniques (such as brainstorming)
- Create new and worthwhile ideas (both incremental and radical concepts)
- Elaborate, refine, analyze and evaluate their own ideas in order to improve and maximize creative efforts

Work Creatively with Others
- Develop, implement and communicate new ideas to others effectively

Reason Effectively
- Use various types of reasoning (inductive, deductive, etc.) as appropriate to the situation

Use Systems Thinking
- Analyze how parts of a whole interact with each other to produce overall outcomes in complex systems

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills

Make Judgments and Decisions
- Effectively analyze and evaluate evidence, arguments, claims and beliefs
- Analyze and evaluate major alternative points of view
- Synthesize and make connections between information and arguments
- Interpret information and draw conclusions based on the best analysis

Communicate Clearly
- Articulate thoughts and ideas effectively using oral, written and nonverbal communication skills in a variety of forms and contexts
- Listen effectively to decipher meaning, including knowledge, values, attitudes and intentions
- Use communication for a range of purposes (e.g. to inform, instruct, motivate and persuade)

Collaborate with Others
- Demonstrate ability to work effectively and respectfully with diverse teams

Access and Evaluate Information
- Access information efficiently (time) and effectively (sources)