

Illustrating Our Community: Analyzing and Crafting Illustrated News Stories
Unit plan by Ena Dallas

Lesson 1

Warm-up (15 minutes):

Each student will visually describe their neighborhoods in 1 minute or less. Listeners will envision what the speaker is describing. Students will describe:

- What colors stand out to you?
- What are prominent landmarks?
- Are there people on the street?
 - If so, what are they doing?
- What else can you tell us?

Activity (20 minutes):

In small groups (for virtual learning, in break-out rooms), students will read illustrated news stories and respond to reflection questions. These illustrated news stories are part of *Mission Local's* hyperlocal coverage of COVID-19's impact on the Mission District in San Francisco, supported by the Pulitzer Center. Each small group should read one of the following stories:

- [Kimberly: A Young Woman's Isolation](#)
- [Kimberly's Story, Part II: Life in the Mission as the Pandemic Rages on](#)
- [The Latino Task Force Emerges to Take on COVID-19](#)
- [Casa Guadalupe: Checking Out During the Pandemic](#)
- [A Mother Gets Covid, Her Son Gets Surgery.](#)

While reading, students should think about and then discuss the following questions:

- How could you describe this story to someone else?
 - What is the topic, and what justice issues does it center?
 - Whose voices are included?
- How do the illustrations add meaning to the news story? Use specific examples from the illustrations you looked at.
- What effect does the use of illustrations have on your interpretation of the story?
- How would you describe the mood or tone of the illustrations?
 - How does that tone compare to the overall tone of the story?
- What is the difference between using illustrations to tell a story and using photographs?
 - What types of stories might be better served by photos?
 - What types of stories might be better served by illustrations?
- What do you learn about the Mission District from these stories?
 - What do you learn about the neighborhood from the text and reporting?
 - What do you learn about the neighborhood from the illustrations?
- Think back to your class's descriptions of the neighborhoods you live in.

- What images stand out to you from this sharing session?
- What image(s) might you choose to share if you were illustrating a news story about what it's like to live in your neighborhood(s)?

Sharing work (15 minutes):

Students come back together as a whole class. Each group should give a synopsis of the news story they explored, then answer the first question above: How do the illustrations add meaning to the news story?

Facilitator note: While students share their synopses, project the illustrations for the story their group explored.

Time permitting, students discuss their responses to the remaining questions as a whole class, and consider how their answers compare to those of their classmates.

Work to be done before next class:

1. Visit www.pulitzercenter.org/reporting and find a news story that interests you.
2. Turn in the link to the story and a brief synopsis in your own words before next class.
3. Choose a moment in the story that stands out to you visually. Make a sketch of an image envisioning that moment to show next class.

Lesson 2

Warm-up (20 minutes):

1. Students share out: What is the synopsis of the story you chose? Tell the story in 1 minute or less, using your own words.
2. Students present the sketch they drew after giving their synopsis.
3. Class will interpret the meaning of the sketch by writing down and then sharing:
 - What do you **see**?
 - What do you **think** about that?
 - What does it make you **wonder**?
 - (Credit for this thinking routine: [Project Zero](#))
4. After every student has presented, share as a class:
 - What images stood out to you, and why?
 - What techniques or ideas from your classmates might you want to try incorporating into your own illustrations in the future?

Activity (15 minutes):**Version 1. If your school has a student newspaper...**

1. Each student chooses a different story in the upcoming issue of the school newspaper.
2. Students read the news story to themselves and visualize the story as they read it, taking notes on what they see in their minds as they read the story.
3. Students review their notes and make note of what images are the most vivid in their minds as they were reading. They should prepare to share the image that is the most vivid or exciting to them with the class.

Version 2. If your school does not have a student newspaper...

1. Students choose a second story from the Pulitzer Center archives at www.pulitzercenter.org to practice visualizing under-reported global issues, **OR** students choose a recent story from their local newspaper to practice visualizing issues in their community.
2. Students read the news story to themselves and visualize the story as they read it, taking notes on what they see in their minds as they read the story.
3. Students review their notes and make note of what images are the most vivid in their minds as they were reading. They should prepare to share the image that is the most vivid or exciting to them with the class.

Sharing work:

Each student shares the moment in the story that stood out to them most vividly during their reading / visualization. They will explain what image they plan to draw.

While students share their image ideas, the class will listen closely, eyes up on the speaker, then offer to extend the speaker's ideas on the image the speaker plans to draw.

Work to be done before next class:

1. Draw the image or images you envisioned before the next class, incorporating class feedback as much as possible.
2. Be prepared to share your image during the next class.
3. Next class, we will begin using illustration and journalism skills to tell stories about justice issues in our community, school, and/or personal lives. Read "[Lily's Story: My Day.](#)" an illustrated story by a high school student in the Mission District for *The Mission District*, for some inspiration. While you explore the story, consider:
 - How has your life during the pandemic been similar to and different from Lily's?
 - How do you think other people's lives in your community have been similar to and different from Lily's life during the pandemic?
 - What images stand out to you from Lily's illustrations, and why?

Lesson 3

Warm-up (10 minutes):

Students write reflections, and then share out about what they wrote based on the following prompt:

- What stories are most urgent to be reported by our newspaper, right now, by us, for our readers? (This could be your student newspaper if your school has one, or your local newspaper if not)
- What issues are going *under-reported* in our school or community?
 - What issues aren't getting the attention they deserve?
 - This can be a positive or a negative situation that should be amplified!
 - Option: Watch [this video](#) for an introduction to what under-reported stories are, and how to find them.
- How could you turn the **issue** you identified into a **news story**?
 - What specific event(s) have occurred as a result of this issue?
 - Who is this issue affecting specifically, and how?
 - When sharing stories about other people who are not public figures, please use fictitious names, like the journalists at *Mission Local* did in the illustrated stories from lesson 1.
- What would be your intention in publishing this story? How could telling this story contribute to justice in our school or community?

Activity (30 minutes):

Students share out their ideas for stories based on the opening prompts.

- Speaker will tell the story in as much detail as possible.
- Listeners will prepare to share the following with the speaker.
 - When you said ____, I imagined an image of _____
 - For us to report on this story, we will need to get more information on _____.

Reflection (10 minutes):

The class votes on which 3-5 news stories they will work together to write and illustrate.

Each student will be put on a team to develop the story. Students will volunteer for or be assigned a role, including one or more of the following tasks:

- **Interviewer:** Identifying, contacting, and interviewing people to do research on and get quotes for the story.
 - Resource for interviewers: [Interview tips](#)
- **Researcher:** Conducting any necessary Internet research to better understand, for example, the historical, political, economic, and cultural context of the issue.
- **Writer:** Writing the news story individually or collaboratively.
- **Illustrator:** Illustrating this story with drawings or painting.
- **Editor:** Fact-checking, proofreading, and helping with revisions.

Work to be done before next class:

1. Researchers should complete their investigations before the next class.
2. Writers and interviewers should work together to develop questions and conduct

- interviews with at least three people before the next class.
3. Illustrators and editors should work together to decide on what images they will use to amplify the story, and what medium they wish to use (drawing, painting, etc.).

Lesson 4

Warm-up (10 minutes):

Each student group will share the following:

- What have you learned about your story since the last class?
- What medium will you use for your illustrations, and why?
- What images will you amplify?
- What do you hope will be the impact of your story on our school and/or community?
 - How will the content of your story contribute to justice?
 - How will the style of your story (writing and images) contribute to justice?

Activity (30 minutes):

In their predetermined groups, students will work on the following:

- Writers and researchers complete the first draft of their stories' text.
- Illustrators create illustrations for their stories.
- Editors support writers, researchers, and illustrators by asking them questions, suggesting ideas, and giving feedback on work in progress.

Sharing work (10 minutes):

Students give each other feedback on the refinement of aesthetic components and coherence in the story.

1. Each student group answers the following questions about their own projects:

- What is your story about? What justice issue(s) does it focus on?
- Who did you talk to for your story, and what research did you do?
- What is the aesthetic approach of your story? (What medium is your group using? How would you describe the style you are using and emotions you are trying to evoke?)
- Share representative images and passages from your story.

2. Students answer the following questions about other groups' stories, based on the presentation, images, and passages they share.

- What images and word choice stand out to you?
- What is exciting, interesting, or well-done about this story?
- What questions do you have about the story and the research that went into it?

- Where is there room for growth in the writing and illustration of this story?

Work to be done before next class:

- Groups should work together to incorporate peer feedback and complete the writing and illustration of their stories by the end of the next class.
- The teacher and editor will give detailed feedback on the written story as a formative assessment.
- The teacher and editor will meet during office hours with the illustrator to give feedback and suggestions on the illustrations.

Lesson 5

Warm-up (10 minutes):

Students share out 1-5 words:

- To be successful in class today, I need_____.

Activity (30 minutes):

In groups, students work on the following:

- Completing the final draft of their stories.
- Integrating notes from the editor and/or teacher.
- Creating illustrations.

Sharing work (10 minutes):

Students give each other feedback on the refinement of aesthetic components and coherence in the story. Students will interpret the intention of the news article and illustrations through the following thinking frame:

- I interpret the meaning of this article to be _____.
- I think the creators care about _____.

If your school does not have a student newspaper where these stories can be published, students are encouraged to publish their stories by creating a digital zine, posting them on the school's website, emailing education@pulitzercenter.org, or finding another way to share them with their school, community, and the world.