

Voices from the Margins:
The Plight of Meat Packing Plant Workers
(1900-present)
 Unit plan by Dr. Cleopatra Warren

Lesson One: The role of journalists in covering underreported impacts of major events throughout history	
Warm-up:	<p>The role of journalists in documenting the under-reported impacts of important moments in history</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will review what they know and what questions they have about journalism. 2. Students will review the video embedded in the Pulitzer Center's lesson <i>Interview Techniques for Telling Under-reported Stories</i> below to evaluate the role that interviews play in reporting stories. 3. Then, students will complete a short 5-7 minute interview with a partner about their personal COVID-19 experiences. <p><u>Lesson Plan:</u> https://pulitzercenter.org/builder/lesson/interview-techniques-telling-under-reported-stories-28585</p>
Introducing the lesson:	<p>The role of journalism in investigating U.S. meatpacking plants in the early 20th century.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teacher will explain that during the early 20th century, investigative journalists sought to shed light on the issues impacting meat packing plant workers. Journalists who sought to bring attention to these issues were referred to as muckrakers. 2. The teacher will identify the muckrakers including Ida Tarbell, Jacob Riis, Upton Sinclair, and Lincoln Steffens. 3. The teacher will explain that Upton Sinclair wrote the novel The Jungle to expose the work conditions of the meat-packing industry.
Engaging with Critical	<p>Reviewing ways to critically analyze texts (fiction and nonfiction)</p>

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Literacy:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teacher explains that students will be asked to critically analyze several texts as part of this unit. Next, the teacher guides students in a review of how to use questions to critically engage with texts. 2. The following activity from the Teaching Tolerance lesson “Creating Questions to Engage Critically with Texts” is a good starting point for talking about critical literacy. <i>Move into this discussion gradually; be sure your students understand the process.</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Select a Perspectives central text. Here are suggested texts from Teaching Tolerance. Here are suggested texts from the Pulitzer Center that focus on underreported impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic b. Read the central text aloud while students follow along. c. Define bias and stereotype in age-appropriate terms. d. Ask students questions such as... <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. What is the main idea of the text? ii. Who is the main character? iii. What is the main character’s gender identity (including animal characters)? iv. Who is the narrator? Are there characters that have a different point of view than the narrator? How do you know? v. Which groups of people are represented? vi. Which groups of people are not represented? vii. What is the connection between character X and character Y? How are they similar or different? viii. How do characters X and Y respond to character Z? What do you think the author is trying to tell you about a group of people or about an individual? ix. Do you agree or disagree with what the author is representing? Why or why not? e. Provide opportunities for students to examine read-aloud texts for biases. Below are examples from the lesson by Teaching Tolerance of how to discuss biases in texts. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Linguistic bias: Look for culturally loaded terms (e.g., “black sheep,” “that’s so gay,” “that’s ghetto”) and sexist language (fireman instead of firefighter).
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. Stereotyping: Examine storylines and illustrations for ethnic, gender, socioeconomic, religious, ability and cultural stereotypes (e.g., “What do the families in our texts look like?”). iii. Invisibility: Examine texts to determine if there is a systematic exclusion of races, family types, socioeconomic class or cultures. iv. Imbalance: Examine textbooks and classroom materials to determine if there is a balanced presentation of different groups. (e.g., “Is only one group of people present?” or “What role are men in this text playing? What role are women playing?”) v. Unreality: Examine texts to determine if sensitive or controversial issues (such as such as slavery, discrimination, prejudice, social movements, homelessness or immigration) are glossed over with inaccurate or incomplete information. <p style="text-align: center;">f. Encourage students to create questions about the text while they read or encounter other media.</p>
Practice:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students identify a second text from the links above and practice forming questions that support their critical engagement with the text. 2. Students identify a news story outside of class, and practice forming questions that support their critical engagement with the text.

<p>Lesson 2: Critically analyzing journalistic and literary coverage of the meat-packing industry throughout history</p>	
Warm-up	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce students to the idea that all historical reasoning is an attempt to figure something out: to settle some QUESTION or to solve some PROBLEM. (<i>For more language about the role of critical thinking in historical reasoning, click here to visit a resource from criticalthinking.org</i>) 2. Guide students in a discussion about the following questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What historical questions are you trying to answer?

	<p>b. Are there other ways to think about the question?</p>
<p>Introducing the lesson</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teacher will use the interactive slideshow below from <i>The Jungle</i> by Upton Sinclair, and the accompanying video link from PBS, to introduce the context of the book. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. https://www.visitthecapitol.gov/exhibitions/artifact/jungle-upton-sinclair-1906 b. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OuukM9OY-is 2. Students will use the See-Think-Wonder strategy to view the slideshow and video clip above using the following questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What do you see? What details stand out? b. What do you think is going on? What makes you say that? c. What does this make you wonder? What broader questions does this image raise for you? At this stage, elicit observations, not interpretations. 3. The teacher introduces how the conditions addressed in <i>The Jungle</i> are similar to the conditions many workers are faced with during the COVID-19 pandemic.
<p>Collaborative peer engagement with Upton Sinclair’s “The Jungle”</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will use descriptive details and informational text from Upton Sinclair’s <i>The Jungle</i> to capture and convey the experiences of meat plant workers. 2. With a partner in breakout rooms (virtual) or groups, students will read the passage below aloud and complete the Library of Congress’ Analyzing Books and Other Printed Texts handout to note their observations, and questions as they read. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Passage PDF 3. After reading, students will discuss the following questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. What details stood out from the passages? ii. What evidence of bias is present in the text? iii. What underreported story/stories are highlighted by the passage about the experience of workers in meat-packing factories
<p>Collaborative peer engagement</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will then use the “History Frame” story-mapping handout from Reading Quest to evaluate two of the following

<p>with reporting</p>	<p><i>Pulitzer Center</i>-supported articles from the <i>Midwest Center for Investigative Reporting</i>, <i>Mississippi Center for Investigative Reporting</i>, and <i>PBS Newshour</i> on the conditions faced by frontline meat plant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. “Arkansas Poultry Plants Are Struggling With COVID-19. Hispanic Workers Are Facing the Worst of It.” b. “Meatpacking Workers Say Attendance Policy Forces Them To Work With Potential COVID-19 Symptoms” c. As Union Leaders Call for Slower Line Speeds, COVID-19 Spreads in Mississippi Poultry Plants d. Meat Plant Closures Trickle Down to Grain Production <p>2. <i>Teachers note:</i> Students can also evaluate bias in these texts using the following resource from Teaching Tolerance: https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/teaching-strategies/exploring-texts-through-read-alouds/whos-telling-it</p> <p>3. Next, student groups will use this Compare and Contrast graphic organizer from readwritethink.org to compare and contrast experiences of workers in meat-packing plants in <i>The Jungle</i> and during the COVID-19 pandemic (1900-present).</p>
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<p>Lesson 3: Connecting to underreported stories in our communities</p>	
<p>Warm-up</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students reflect on the stories they hear about often in the news, and the stories they think are missing from the news.
<p>Introducing the lesson</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students review the videos from the following Pulitzer Center lesson plan, “How to find and analyze underreported stories” to evaluate the difference between breaking news stories and underreported stories: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. https://pulitzercenter.org/builder/lesson/how-find-and-analyze-underreported-stories-critical-thinking-text-analysis-and 2. Students apply what they learned from the resources above to evaluate how the stories they have been exploring throughout the unit reflect underreported narratives. 3. Next, students write short constructed responses describing stories connected to under-reported issues in their communities.
<p>Independent Practice</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will select a news article from the following resource list: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. https://www.propublica.org/article/emails-reveal-chaos-among-meatpacking-companies-fought-health-agencies-over-covid-19-outbreak-s-in-their-plants

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/27/health/meat-processing-plants-coronavirus-intl/index.html c. https://news.trust.org/item/20200612121508-ftbpr d. https://www.greenbaypressgazette.com/story/money/2020/05/06/covid-19-meat-industry-consumer-demand-large-scale-production-worker-safety/3048935001/ e. https://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/arkansas-poultry-plants-are-struggling-covid-19-hispanic-workers-are-facing-worst-it f. https://pulitzercenter.org/projects/covid-19-agriculture-workers-and-our-food-system g. https://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/union-leaders-call-slower-lines-peeds-covid-19-spreads-mississippi-poultry-plants h. https://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/meat-plant-closures-trickle-down-grain-production i. https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jun/22/poor-conditions-in-meat-plants-fuel-covid-19-outbreaks-say-unions <p>2. After reading, students will use the following questions to analyze the story they selected. Students will write their responses on a separate sheet of paper.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. What details stood out to you from the story the journalist reported? Use these details to write a 3-5 sentence summary of the story. b. Why do you think this qualifies as an under-reported story? • Why is this story important? What connections can you make between this story, and issues/people/places in your own community? <p>3. Using details from the documents, articles, and discussions related to the stories above, students will create Flip Grid news casts (narration and visuals) to report on their learning throughout the unit.</p>
<p>Closure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will respond to the following question using the Graffiti Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. What are under-reported stories, and why are they important? 2. For students participating digitally, you can use Jamboard or Padlet.
<p>Evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The following rubric can be used and modified to assess student’s Flipgrid presentations.

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| | <p>a. https://www.everettsd.org/cms/lib/WA01920133/Centricity/Domain/1343/Flipgrid%20assessment%20rubric.rtf</p> |
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Additional Resources for this unit:

1. Resources on how to identify under-reported stories:
<https://pulitzercenter.org/builder/lesson/how-find-and-analyze-underreported-stories-critical-thinking-text-analysis-and>
2. Resources on how to teach descriptive writing:
<https://pulitzercenter.org/builder/lesson/how-describe-places-tell-under-reported-stories-drafting-editing-28201>
3. Example of a student-created film about the textiles industry:
<https://pulitzercenter.org/blog/newsarts-program-weaving-connections-film>
4. Resources from Teaching Tolerance on critical literacy:
 - a. <https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/teaching-strategies/exploring-texts-through-read-alouds/creating-questions-to>
 - b. <https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/teaching-strategies/exploring-texts-through-read-alouds/whos-telling-it>
5. Additional graphic organizers and resources are embedded within the PDF.

Student Examples

Below are examples from high school students at Coretta Scott King Young Women's Leadership Academy in Atlanta, GA who participated in the unit in fall 2020:

- a. [Responses to the See-Think-Wonder activity from Lesson 1](#)
- b. [Responses to article analyses in Lesson 2](#)
- c. Downloadable folder of [Flipgrid news stories created by students during Lesson 3](#)
- d. [Example Flipgrid response from a student](#)
- e. [Graffiti wall evaluation from Lesson 3](#)