

Unit Title	Investigating Issues in Local Communities
Unit Length	8- 50 minute periods.
Grade Level(s)/Subject(s)	12/English Language Arts or Composition
Unit Overview	<p>This unit focuses on underreported stories, investigative journalism, and writing for a specific target audience. The pedagogical vision is that students and the instructor jointly shape the learning of students through close readings, connecting the readings to writing skills, and composing articles for students' local newspapers. Students will learn what underreported stories are, why they matter, and how to write a story that matters in their local community. The scope and sequence will mirror the vision in that students will engage in pre-reading, reading, and post reading activities along with the writing process.</p> <p>Essential questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the underreported issues in our communities? What is misunderstood about the issues facing students in our communities?</li> <li>2. How do you compose and share a story that communicates an underreported story to a target audience?</li> <li>3. How can storytelling make complex issues relevant and inspire actions?</li> <li>4. How are issues in our own communities connected to issues faced by communities in other parts of the world?</li> <li>5. How do you determine if something is true?</li> </ol> <p>Students draw conclusions from a school-wide survey about a topic they view as underreported in their community. Students will then research and write their own articles about the topic they select. During the writing process, they are identifying and interviewing stakeholders. The goal is then to submit the articles to the local newspaper for possible publication. This unit has students' skills moving from reader to writer. They started by annotating news articles (noticing positives/negatives, questions they had, identifying author's purpose, target audience, what prompted the writing of the story, and what the claim was). They must apply this analysis to their own writing.</p>
Objectives & Outcomes	<p>Students will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compose a news article strategically for a variety of audiences and contexts, both within and outside the school by...</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Coordinating, negotiating, and experimenting with various aspects of composing news articles- such as genre, content, conventions, style, language, organization, appeals, media, timing, and design- for diverse rhetorical effects tailored to the given audience purpose, and situation</li> <li>● Work strategically with complex information in order to generate and support inquiry by             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Gathering, evaluating, and making purposeful use of primary and secondary materials appropriate for the writing goals, audience, genre, and context</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Standards	<p><a href="#">CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2</a>: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.</p> <p><a href="#">CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2.B</a>: Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.</p> <p><a href="#">CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2.C</a>: Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.</p> <p><a href="#">CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2.D</a>: Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.</p> <p><a href="#">CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2.E</a>: Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.</p> <p><a href="#">CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2.F</a>: Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).</p>
Unit Resources	<p><b>Pulitzer Center Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">“Addiction Ravaged My Family and Tribe. I’m Fighting to Get Them Back.” by Justin Maxon and Judith Surber for <i>The New York Times</i></a></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Pulitzer Center video, “What are Under-Reported Stories?”</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Journalist Visit from Pulitzer Center</a></li> <li>• Optional: <a href="#">How To Find Under-Reported Stories   Journalism Skillbuilder</a> video from the Pulitzer Center.</li> </ul> <p><b>Teaching Materials:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handout: Double Entry Journal for Analyzing News Articles [<a href="#">.pdf</a>][<a href="#">.docx</a>]</li> <li>• Sentence Stems [<a href="#">.pdf</a>][<a href="#">.docx</a>]</li> <li>• <a href="#">Sample Annotation of Article for audience, situation, purpose, claim, and connections.</a></li> <li>• Summative Performance Task Rubric [<a href="#">.pdf</a>][<a href="#">.docx</a>]</li> <li>• <a href="#">Project Zero’s Step In, Step Out, Step Back thinking routine</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Sample Survey Questions</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Sample Survey Results</a></li> </ul>
Performance Task(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students will evaluate an article through annotations and discussion to determine why it is considered an underreported story. Students will make connections to their own community and what they observe based on their personal experiences. This article will serve as an exemplar for students to model their own research after for the summative assessment.</li> <li>2. Students will be tasked with investigating their own topic or issue based on observations and wonderings of their own community. Students will create a cycle of inquiry in which they craft a research question that will be part of a survey. The survey will consist of one question per student in the class, each dealing with a different topic. The survey will be taken by each student in the school. The data collected from the survey will guide students in writing their own articles to be published in the local newspaper to spread awareness of the issue directly to community members. Students will then research and write an article about their selected topic that integrates details they learn from the survey and details from their own research.</li> </ol> <p>If/when student articles are published, a social media campaign will be developed through the school’s Instagram and Facebook accounts to promote the writing and suggested solutions to each topic. This will broaden the target audience of the original writing to include those that don’t have access to the local newspaper or the ability to read English.</p>

Assessment/Evaluation	<p><b>Formative Assessment Tool: Doubly Entry Journal for a News Article</b> [<a href="#">.pdf</a>][<a href="#">.docx</a>] This assessment asks students to identify 12 quotes from the news article analyzed in this unit, and then to connect to each quote using one of 12 prompts.</p> <p><b>Summative Performance Task Rubric</b> [<a href="#">.pdf</a>][<a href="#">.docx</a>] This rubric evaluates students' final writing assignments using three categories: Establishment of Purpose/Focus and Organization, Development: Language and Elaboration of Evidence, and Conventions</p>
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## UNIT PACING / DAILY LESSONS AND RESOURCES

Pacing	Focus text(s) / resource(s) for today's lesson	Lesson Materials	Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)	Lesson / Activities
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Week 1</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Students evaluate their engagement with news, define “underreported stories,” evaluate how news stories are composed for specific audiences, and then define underreported topics they want to research and report on in their communities.</p>				
Day 1	<p><a href="#">Pulitzer Center video, “What are Under-Reported Stories?”</a></p> <p><a href="#">Article: “Addiction Ravaged My Family and Tribe. I’m Fighting To Get Them Back”</a> by Justin Maxon and Judith Surber for <i>The New York Times</i></p>	<p>Video player &amp; screen</p> <p>Laptops/student computers</p> <p>Printed copies of article</p>	<p>What is an underreported story?</p> <p>Why are underreported stories important?</p>	<p><b>BUILDING BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE:</b> Begin by asking students where they get their news from. Ask if they use news sources, social media, and/or news sources via social media. Have students discuss what they define as newsworthy and who they think gets to decide what is reported on. Then ask about students to determine what an underreported story is. They can write a definition and give an example. Next, introduce students to the <a href="#">Pulitzer Center website and mission</a>.</p> <p>Introduce the definition of underreported stories by watching the video, “What are underreported stories?” Discuss with students and ask students to identify elements of underreported stories.</p> <p>Possible questions may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After watching this video, what are some underreported issues in our community?</li> <li>• Whose voices are often not included in our local news?</li> <li>• Why do you think some groups are overlooked as compared to others?</li> <li>• How can the narrative be expanded? The following are potential answers: Stories that...</li> </ul>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evaluate the root causes, historical context, and/or lasting human impacts of pressing issues?</li><li>• Elevate voices that have been historically marginalized?</li><li>• Analyze how systemic issues are interconnected?</li><li>• Make complex issues relevant and inspire action?</li></ul> <p>Introduce concepts of <b>purpose, audience, claim, and situation</b>. Write on the board one word at a time and have students take notes. Students typically can identify purpose as to explain, persuade, and entertain. Help them move to the next levels and delineate the intricacies of writing. <b>Purpose</b> may include (and by no means limited to): analyze, evaluate, reflect, educate, synthesize, compare, inform, argue. Students should connect what teachers often ask them to do in their own writing and apply it to the purposes of other writers.</p> <p>Next, write ‘<b>audience</b>’ on the board. Use online advertisements to help students understand how images, like writing, are often targeted towards specific groups of people. I like to remind students that a joke, written in English, is not meant for my three-year-old daughter who can’t read yet. So the target audience is almost never ‘everyone.’ Students should be able to figure out the various categories that comprise different subsets of target audiences based on age, education, gender, religion, geography, language, citizenship, race, nationality, sexuality etc.</p> <p><b>Claim</b> is the one aspect that students should know, but if they don’t, simply review the definition or find</p>
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				<p>examples within articles from the Pulitzer Center's website.</p> <p><b>Situation</b> is one students tend to struggle with the most as they often confuse it with the writer's purpose. In regards to underreported stories, have students think about what prompts a person to write. Maybe they observe an injustice, experience a natural disaster, or are assigned an essay in class. Each of these are examples of situations.</p> <p>Have students investigate the Pulitzer Center website and various articles. The purpose of this is for students to freely explore the website without explicit instruction. They are to get a sense of the variety of stories shared, the use of images and words to create content, and what the Pulitzer Center stands for.</p> <p>Before reading, have students view the images and make predictions in the article "<i>Addiction Ravaged My Family and Tribe. I'm Fighting to Get them Back.</i>" Using whole group instruction, have students read the entire article, "<i>Addiction Ravaged My Family and Tribe. I'm Fighting to Get them Back.</i>" <a href="#">Use See Think Wonder visible thinking strategy</a> to discuss the article.</p>
Day 2	<a href="#">Article: "Addiction Ravaged My Family and Tribe. I'm Fighting To Get Them Back"</a> by Justin Maxon and Judith Surber for <i>The New York Times</i>	Document camera  Printed copies of article  Highlighters	How can you make thinking visible?  How does language delineate a target audience?	<p><b>PRE-READING AND READING:</b> Using a document camera or other strategy for projecting the article, model for students how to annotate the article "<i>Addiction Ravaged My Family and Tribe. I'm Fighting To Get Them Back</i>" focusing on the author's <b>purpose</b>, <b>target audience</b>, <b>claim</b>, and <b>situation</b> for writing.</p>

	Handout: Double Entry Journal [.pdf][.docx]	Printed copies of Double Entry Journal	What is misunderstood about the issues facing students in our communities?	<p>After demonstrating, allow students time to work on their own to finish their annotations.</p> <p>Once students have had enough time to complete their annotations, introduce the Double Entry Journal assignment: On the left hand side, students will select significant quotes from the article. On the right hand side, students need to respond to the selected quote with one of several prompts in the assignment instructions that demonstrate how students are connecting to the article. These responses must relate to the topics students have learned about from the “underreported stories” video or the <b>four bolded topics</b> listed prior in this paragraph.</p>
Day 3	<p><a href="#">Article: “Addiction Ravaged My Family and Tribe. I’m Fighting To Get Them Back”</a> by Justin Maxon and Judith Surber for <i>The New York Times</i></p> <p>Handout: Double Entry Journal [.pdf][.docx]</p> <p>Sentence Stems [.pdf][.docx]</p> <p><a href="#">Sample Annotation of Article for audience, situation, purpose, claim, and connections.</a></p>	<p>Printed copies of article</p> <p>Printed copies of Double Entry Journal</p> <p>Note cards</p>	<p>What are the underreported issues in our community?</p> <p>How do you determine the author’s purpose?</p>	<p><b>DISCUSSION AND CONNECTING READING TO WRITING:</b> Using small groups, or a rotating fishbowl, have students discuss their annotations and Double Entry Journal from the prior lesson. Students must use text-based evidence to identify <b>audience, claim, situation, and purpose</b>. Students may disagree, but they must support their thinking with quotes from the article.</p> <p>Provide students with stems if needed. Examples include...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I think the target audience for this article is _____ because of how it says, ‘_____’.”</li> <li>• The author’s purpose for writing this article is to _____. This is supported in the article when it states, ‘_____’.</li> </ul>

	<p>Summative Performance Task Rubric [<a href="#">.pdf</a>][<a href="#">.docx</a>]</p> <p>Optional: <a href="#">How To Find Under-Reported Stories   Journalism Skillbuilder</a> video from the Pulitzer Center.</p>			<p>After the discussion, have students identify an issue in their own community that they would like to learn more about. Next, introduce students to their performance task and share the rubric that will be used to evaluate their final stories.</p> <p>Option: If students need support identifying an issue and story, introduce them to the video <a href="#">How To Find Under-Reported Stories   Journalism Skillbuilder</a> from the Pulitzer Center.</p> <p>Once students have a topic, they need to create a possible research question on an underreported story in their community. Start with having students make an observation or a 'Why' question. For example, if your community has graffiti, gang violence, high teen pregnancy rates, cultural differences in values, etc. students can wonder why ____ about that issue. Have them write their questions on a note card and turn in these questions at the end of the period. The teacher will then review and offer feedback on students' story ideas.</p>
Day 4	<p><a href="#">Project Zero's Step In, Step Out, Step Back thinking routine</a></p> <p><a href="#">Sample Survey Questions</a></p> <p><a href="#">Sample Survey Results</a></p>	<p>Note cards from prior lesson</p> <p>Screen/computer to cast questions</p> <p>Survey data</p> <p>Paper/pencil or virtual document to</p>	How are issues in our own communities connected to issues faced by communities in other parts of the world?	<p>RESEARCH AND PREPARING TO WRITE: As a whole class, review each inquiry based question (1 per student). Review the language and ensure it aligns with what each student is trying to learn. If students need support identifying a research question, share the Sample Survey questions as an example.</p> <p>Create a single survey using these research questions. After getting administrative permission, distribute these surveys throughout your building, district, or</p>

		share with instructor		<p>grade level. Students will use the data collected in their articles to better support their reporting for their community. Questions students may consider after reviewing the survey feedback include...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What other news or research coverage is there on the issue I have identified?</li> <li>2. Based on the survey feedback, what perspectives do I need to have represented in my article?</li> <li>3. Who could I interview to better understand these perspectives?</li> <li>4. What conclusions might readers draw from this information?</li> <li>5. What do I want to see changed (action taken) by readers?</li> </ol> <p>This activity must be completed outside of the classroom.</p> <p>Students will conduct their interviews with a source connected to the issue. Have students brainstorm 3-5 possible people they could interview, and 3-4 questions to ask. Once this is completed, students can start compiling this information into a draft story plan. Utilize the Step In, Step Out, Step Back thinking routine once students have a draft to find what information, or whose voice is still missing.</p>
Day 5	<a href="#">Journalist Visit from Pulitzer Center</a>	<p>Student laptops/computers</p> <p>Headphone/mic sets</p>	How do you compose and share a story that communicates an underreported story to a target audience?	JOURNALIST VISIT: Contact the <a href="#">Pulitzer Center</a> in advance to schedule a virtual call with a journalist familiar with students' chosen topics or someone who can share about investigating underreported stories.

		Note cards	How can storytelling make complex issues relevant and inspire actions?	<p>Have students read and discuss works from the journalist prior to the call.</p> <p>Have students prepare questions based on their selected topics or research questions that matter in their community while also having a global dialogue. Students can prepare these questions and workshop them with the journalist or use the guidance from the journalist to help write their questions after the virtual visit.</p> <p>Have students write an exit ticket stating 2-3 things they learned from the visit and 1 question they still have about the journalist or about underreported stories.</p>
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Pacing	Focus text(s) / resource(s) for today's lesson	Lesson Materials	Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)	Lesson / Activities
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Week 2</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Students identify and research underreported topics, and then compose and revise news articles reflecting their research.</p>				
Day 1	<a href="#">Project Zero's Step In, Step Out, Step Back thinking routine</a>	Student computers/laptops	<p>How are issues in our own communities connected to issues faced by communities in other parts of the world?</p> <p>How do you determine if something is true?</p>	<p><b>RESEARCH GATHERING &amp; WRITING:</b> Students will then be given time to research and compose their story drafts. Have students use the information gathered from their survey results to write their first drafts. Use <a href="#">Project Zero's Step In, Step Out, Step Back thinking routine</a> to encourage students to include their own thinking in the story as well. This will help students to reflect on the information collected from their research interview and incorporate their own ideas in their papers.</p> <p>If you need to give students time on computers, have them hand draft their papers prior to the typing day to maximize their time. If students have access to technology outside of the school, you could require them to complete a draft on their own time, as your planning permits.</p>
Day 2	Peer Review Checklist <a href="#">[.pdf]</a> <a href="#">[.docx]</a> Summative Performance Task Rubric <a href="#">[.pdf]</a> <a href="#">[.docx]</a>	Printed copies of drafts  Printed copies of	Objective: To engage in a structured peer review and evaluation. Students will work through various steps of the	<b>PEER REVIEW:</b> Students will now conduct a more direct peer review in which they are partnered together to provide feedback on one another's papers. Students need to have their

		<p>rubric</p> <p>Highlighters</p>	<p>writing process by viewing the composition of others and aligning it with the rubric.</p>	<p>peer review checklists and copies of the final rubric out to review and score each other's drafts. They will write an explanation providing evidence from the paper about how the evidence from the article they are reviewing demonstrates each specific category on the rubric. This can be done on a separate piece of notebook paper. Once this is complete, students will provide verbal feedback to one another on each of the scoring components. Students will be able to ask clarifying questions or get help on the areas they are weakest in. Use the peer review checklist if needed.</p>
Day 3	<p>Summative Performance Task Rubric [<a href="#">.pdf</a>][<a href="#">.docx</a>]</p>	<p>Student computers/laptops</p>	<p>How can underreported stories inspire change at a local level?</p> <p>How do journalists disseminate their findings to those that would benefit most from the story?</p>	<p><b>CREATOR'S REFLECTION &amp; ADAPTATION:</b> Students will now reflect on their learning process by writing 2 paragraphs, or recording a 1 minute video, explaining their experience with this assignment. They should include reflection on the choices they made with their paper/project and areas they felt they excelled/struggled. They can include an argument for the grade they have earned by quoting the rubric and providing examples from their paper to support their argument. The creator's reflection may or may not be scored, that is your choice. They can also include a reflection of what they hope will be the impact from their community engaging with their story.</p> <p>If you wish to extend this unit further, you can revisit Day 4, 6, and 7 to alter the target audience from a literate, English speaking</p>

				audience, to an illiterate or non-English speaking viewership/listenership. Instead of having students write, they could create a podcast recording or social media campaign using videos in another language to share the same information, but in a different manner. This would still align with all aspects of this unit, but extend the CCSS students would be demonstrating.
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