

Vote and Voice: A Pandemic Photojournalism Series

Unit plan by Cortnie Belser

Lesson 0: I can use descriptive language to describe photojournalism.	
Launch:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Display image of quote “A picture is worth a thousand words.” 2. Have students write or discuss: What does this statement mean to you? Why do you agree or disagree?
Mini-Lesson:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is photojournalism? How to describe a photo <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Begin with a thinking web or K-W-L chart to assess what students know about “journalism.” b. Have students jot down the following definition of “photojournalism:” <i>Photojournalism is the process of using photography as the main method of storytelling.</i> 2. Explain that photojournalists use the following four types of photos: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Portrait: Images of people b. Landscape: Images that capture a place c. Action: Images of people doing things d. Detail: Images that share an object, or a close-up of a place 3. Display a journalist’s photo from a story relevant to the unit . <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. This article, “Homeless People in Rural America Struggle to Find Help,” includes photography that can be used to peak students’ interest in underreported stories of the pandemic and a model caption. 4. Ask students to consider the following questions as they describe a photo: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What stands out? b. What do you see? c. What is happening? <p>For scaffolding and students with modifications, begin instruction by revisiting nouns, verbs, adjectives, and word banks that will support their analyses of the images.</p>
Worktime:	N/A- Students will have written notes, participate in discussion, and/or follow along on a student handout.
Asynchronous Work:	<p>Students can complete this photojournalism pop quiz at any point during the unit.</p> <p>Debrief Discussion with Students: “How do photos help journalists tell a story?”</p>

Note to Teachers:

After Lesson 0 above, you may introduce the first [Pandemic Photo Walk Guide](#) at the time that makes the most sense for you and your students. Slides 1-2 explain the project. Slides 3-4 will be used in lesson 1 as an example. Students will use the remaining slides to structure their final project submissions.

It is recommended that students review these instructions before continuing with lessons 1-3. You may assign this final photo walk as a 1-2 week deadline, with formal and informal accountability check-ins with students as necessary.

Lesson 1: I can utilize photojournalism tools to capture photos of the pandemic

Launch:

Describe an image that comes to mind when you consider the pandemic.

1. Ask students to describe images that come to mind when they think about the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Jot down notes from student discussions and encourage students to build on each other's ideas.
3. Prompt students to consider how the pandemic will be captured through their lenses and told to others in the future. Add new vocabulary surfaced during their discussions to your list of vocabulary introduced in the first session.

Mini-Lesson:

Capturing the pandemic through photojournalism

1. Students will review how to describe a photo by analyzing an exemplar model in the [Pandemic Walk Guide](#) (slides 3-4).
 - a. *Tip for Teachers:* For the first walk guide, students are building their skills to take quality photos, a focused subject, and a clear description to accompany 3 photos.
2. Spend a considerable amount of time reviewing the exemplar model. Annotate with students the exemplar responses as they analyze the Walmart Covid-19 sign image. The description questions below were directly adapted from Pulitzer's lesson on photo captioning [here](#).
 - Who/what is in the photo?
 - What is happening in the image?
 - Where the photo was taken?
 - Describe the photo in 2 concise complete sentences.
3. Guide students in analyzing the planning for the photos in slide 4. The annotation of the exemplar description offers students a guide for the vocabulary of descriptive language they can use in their captions, as well as ways for writing captions in complete sentences.

	<p>4. Review the remaining slides in the walk guide. Answer student questions and concerns regarding the walk guide. Remind students of the expectation of this project assignment and that it requires multiple parts of planning and possibly adult support to be successful. Encourage students to walk or bike in socially distant peer groups.</p>
Asynchronous Work	<p>If there's additional time, it is always beneficial to have students view photos and their descriptions, and to evaluate the quality using the photojournalism and proofreading checklists on slides 8, 10, and 12 of the walk guide.</p> <p>Additional photojournalism models relevant to the pandemic can be found in the Center-supported project, Portraits of a Pandemic.</p> <p>Students should complete their first photo walk during this week.</p>
Debrief Discussion with Students	<p>What is an important detail you need to plan for to be successful on the Pandemic Photo Walk Guide?</p>

Lesson 2: I can identify the central idea and key supporting details of underreported stories.	
Launch:	<p>Reflect on the Pandemic Photo Walk.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students discuss their experiences with the pandemic walk in lesson 1 using the following questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What was it like? b. What did you notice? c. What stuck with you? d. How was it to describe the photos? e. Anything you would add or change for your Election Photo Walk? f. <i>Note: If you are not implementing a photo walk yet, please use the first mini-lesson question below as your launch.</i>
Mini-Lesson:	<p>Central Ideas of Underreported Stories</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Open a discussion with students on the following question: "What is something that you think is important, but that you don't see much about in the news?" 2. Record students' answers in one color using a platform that is visible to all students. 3. Switch to another color and ask students, "what topics do you typically see in the news?"

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Note for students the juxtaposition of what they care about and what is often in the news. 5. After this discussion, transition students to the document, Central Ideas of Underreported Stories. Here is an alternative assignment for students with disabilities or various class levels here. <i>(Students have guided notes in the slideshows above. They should make their own copies of the slides to capture their news.)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On slides 2-3, students will be introduced to the Pulitzer Center video, “What are underreported stories?” <i>Note: Some parent restrictions or Chromebooks may not permit Pulitzer videos. Contact education@pulitzercenter.org for an mp4 version of the videos.</i> ● After watching the video on slide 2, review that an under-reported story is a newsworthy story that does not get enough attention in the news. ● Teachers should emphasize as best to students that underreported stories are already newsworthy. The video suggests why they are not getting as much attention. Students will jot at three ideas for why stories go underreported on the document.
<p>Synchronous Work:</p>	<p>In this lesson, we use the article, “After Hurricanes, It’s Harder Than Ever for Lake Charles’ Black Residents To Cast a Ballot” to define the central idea of underreported stories in context.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. First, show the slide with just the headline (slide 4) and have students make a prediction. 2. Then, read the article together (slides 5-7), and annotate for the author’s key details - reasons, facts, descriptions, and examples. 3. The next slide (8) has students drag-and-drop the correct key details to support the central idea given. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Central Idea: Although Lake Charles residents have experienced impact from natural disasters on top of Covid-19, local leaders continue to combat potential voting challenges. ● Key details: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. But she [Tasha Guidry] also remembers what happened three years ago: A city council seat was decided by a single vote. 2. The group has provided gas cards to hurricane evacuees so they can travel home to cast their ballot. 3. The Civic Center has had an average of 2,100 early voters a day since Oct. 16.

	<p><i>Tip for teachers: Common student misconceptions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusing the main subject with the central idea (just because the article mentions Tasha Guidry’s leadership, she is not the only one to support the writer’s point) • Central idea is not a one sentence summary about the article, but a sentence that explains the writer’s main point.
<p>Asynchronous Work/Debrief with Students:</p>	<p>Guide students in a discussion using the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is this an under-reported story? Use the central idea and key details to support your reasoning. • How does the photo support the central idea for the story? • Why do you think the journalist chose to include a photo in this story?

<p>Lesson 3: I can identify the central ideas of underreported stories on a topic in voting.</p>	
<p>Launch:</p>	<p>Define news in your own words using the following discussion questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do you get most of your news? 2. What are examples of stories you see on the news? About the pandemic? About the election? <p>If these questions or discussions have already occurred, you may do a photo analysis like the one from lesson 1 or an alternative launch.</p>
<p>Mini-Lesson:</p>	<p>Research Topics in Voting</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will review the Topics in Voting reading (slide 11) and research for the week. 2. Students will choose 1 NewsELA article from each topic below to capture key details and the central idea using the graphic organizer in slide 19. Students will be responsible for utilizing this research to justify their proposal (slide 21) on which topic in voting for their photojournalism portfolio. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Voter Suppression in the 21st Century (slide 12) b. Covid’s Impact on Voting (slide 14) c. Misinformation and Media in Voting (slide 16) d. Youth Voices in Voting (slide 18) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note: Students will need a NewsELA account to view some of the articles, but other sites with underreported news at student reading levels are encouraged.

Worktime:	Ask students what topic area some previous reporting examples explored in the unit would fall into. <i>Example: Hurricanes in Lake Charles (Covid's Impact on Voting)</i> . Also, note that NewsELA offers students more examples of underreported news.
Asynchronous Work:	<p>In addition to the NewsELA articles, students will analyze national and global photojournalism in each of the topics in voting.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Students analyze at least one story from one of the following Pulitzer Center-supported reporting projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voter Suppression in the 21st Century Covid's Impact on Voting Misinformation and Media in Voting Youth Voices in Voting Students describe the image they chose to click on, and consider the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How did the photo influence your decision to choose the article? What is the article's central idea? How does it connect to the photos included? <p>*Note this asynchronous activity will continue or be further taught during next class sessions.</p>
Debrief Discussion with Students:	Describe an image that comes to mind when you consider topics in voting from your own community. Where in the city or community might you be able to go to photograph this imagined visual?

Note to Teachers:

After Lesson 3, you may introduce a [second photo walk, which in this unit series is focused on the 2020 Election](#). Since students are now more familiar with the photo walk protocol, you shouldn't need to spend considerable time introducing the photo walk guide. Therefore, it is not included as a distinctive lesson. It is recommended to continue ongoing lessons (4-5) as students continue their election week photo guide and further research their topic in voting from lesson 3.

Lesson 4: I can capture different perspectives of photos to tell underreported stories.

Launch:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ask students to consider the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What are the top three things a person needs to know about what is happening in the world this week? How did you learn about these issues?
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Spend 2-3 minutes sharing out highlights from student responses. If possible, allow students to share themselves. 3. Explain that this week, students will complete their second photojournalism walk. This week is their Election Week Walk and the guide is here
Mini-Lesson:	<p>How to Tell Underreported Stories with Photography - as adapted from Pulitzer's lesson here.</p> <p>This will guide students to consider how they will take photos during Election Week, and how they will choose their final portfolio images.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have students review the definition of underreported stories in their class notes (slide 2): "An under-reported story is a news story that doesn't get as much attention in the news." 2. Discuss ways that students' pandemic photo walk images represent underreported stories or news.
Worktime:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students watch the Pulitzer Center video Journalist's Toolbox - Photography here independently, and note the following tips from the video. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Plan and research your story in advance b. Make connections with the people and places you want to photograph—ask questions and get to know people and places c. Compose interesting photos with a clear message or emotional content d. Choose, or put together, images that tell the story you want to tell 2. Next, ask students to respond to 2-3 of the following questions. <i>I would divide these questions amongst 2 or 3 groups, so that students can share different perspectives.</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What questions can you ask yourself as you're planning the story you want to tell? b. What under-reported stories did Albarenga and Elian investigate? Why? c. When Elian and Albarenga begin their photography journeys, they don't start by taking photos. How do they begin their process and why? d. What are some questions that they ask their subjects before taking pictures? e. What is a portrait? Why did Elian choose to take portraits for her project? f. Albarenga says that photojournalists have a great "responsibility"—what does he mean by that? g. According to Albarenga and Elian, what are some ways that you

	<p>can make your images look more interesting?</p> <p>h. What questions do Elian and Albarenga mention that you can ask yourself to help brainstorm stories to tell in your own home? Make a list.</p>
Asynchronous Work:	<p>Students will explore one of the following three stories. This could be assigned for small group, homework, extra credit, etc:</p> <p>"The Globalization of AFROPUNK" by Melissa Bunni Elian, "Seeds of Resistance" by Pablo Albarenga, or "Portraits of a Pandemic" by Errin Haines and David Maialetti</p> <p>Students should consider the following questions for all stories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How does the journalist capture themes and ideas central to their story? 2. What photography techniques does the journalist employ to capture dynamic images? 3. Is the journalist successful in capturing their story? <p>Additionally, there are questions specific to each reporting project that can be found on the lesson plan and given to students.</p>
Debrief Discussion for Students:	<p>Guide students in a discussion using the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is an underreported story related to Topics in Voting? (slide 20) Who can you speak with to get perspective or voice during your Election Photo Walk to better understand under-reported stories in your community?

<p>Lesson 5: I can analyze the importance of photography in underreported stories of topics in voting.</p>	
Launch:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Share an image from a Pulitzer Center-supported news story for all students to observe. I used the cover image from "The Latino Task Force Emerges to Take on COVID-19" by Lydia Chavez for Mission Local. 2. Share with students: Imagine this image pops up on your social media. On a scale from 1-5, how likely are you to click to read the story? 1 = I'm not interested at all to 5 = I will definitely click. Why? 3. Analyze the image. Be sure to include the full caption. Ask students to consider if their interest in the image has changed after looking closely at the image and caption.
Mini-Lesson:	<p>Underreported Stories of Topics in Voting</p> <p>Ask students to consider the impact photography has on establishing interest in the writing of a story. Next, ask students to consider the role of captions in</p>

	<p>better outlining the story an image is ideally communicating. Remind students that they should think about the roles that photos and captions play as they prepare their final portfolios. They can practice evaluating the impact of images and captions using the following activity:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Display a practice photo to discuss along with students. (<i>We used another image from the story above</i>) Have it relate to an overarching theme of the course, unit, or interests of the students. 2. Guide students in practicing a 3-2-1 analysis of the photo <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 3 Observations: What do you see? ● 2 Questions: What do you want to know based on the photo? ● 1 Prediction: What is the story about? Answer the 5 Ws and consider why is this news? 3. Guide students in an analysis of the story, and how the text from the story helps them understand more context for the images. 4. Ask students to identify the main idea for the text and evaluate how well the images from the article capture the main idea. 5. Finally, support students in analyzing how techniques used in the writing and photojournalism of this story could support their final projects.
<p>Asynchronous Work:</p>	<p>Students will now explore 2 images from other articles in the collection of Topics in Voting and complete the 3-2-1 protocol as they analyze the images.</p> <p>Here are the 4 Pulitzer Reporting search engines: Voter Suppression in the 21st Century Covid's Impact on Voting Misinformation and Media in Voting Youth Voices in Voting</p> <p>3 Observations: What do you see? 2 Questions: What do you want to know based on the photo? 1 Prediction: What is the story about? Answer the 5 Ws and consider why is this news?</p> <p>Students will then read the articles connected to the images they selected and evaluate what new information they learn from the text. They will also evaluate how the images support the central idea of the text.</p>
<p>Debrief Discussion for Students:</p>	<p>Guide students in a discussion using the following question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How do images and captions a writer's central idea?

Note to Teachers:

The final lesson of the unit synthesizes the instructional outlines of the final performance tasks. By this point, students will have completed the two photo walks and it will be evident which students need the alternative performance task 2 writing option. It is encouraged for students with at least 1 strong photo walk, especially if it's their election week, to complete the portfolio instead of the letter. Here is a quick [Google form for students to select their choice](#) and an [accountability tracker](#) of final tasks. Please use teacher discretion as necessary.

Lesson 6: I can outline, draft, edit, and revise my photojournalism portfolio or persuasive letter.

<p>Launch:</p>	<p>Describe a photo from your walk series collection that stands out to you. What makes it pop? Who else will find it interesting? What message do you hope to share through the photo?</p> <p>Since students must record their cover letter or artist statement on Flipgrid, this could be done during the launch as a practice.</p>
<p>Introducing Performance Task 1</p>	<p>Introduce students to the Final Photojournalism Portfolio Guide, which outlines how they will complete their final projects. The final project will ask students to produce the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 3-5 images that communicate an under-reported story 2. An photojournalism portfolio title page (see slide # 1) 3. A cover letter (artist statement) introducing the purpose of your exhibition 4. A descriptive 2 sentence photo caption for each photo 5. Use at least 3 Vocab Bank words correctly in captions and cover letter 6. A gallery of other photos of the photowalks 7. A video or audio recording of your cover letter <p>The following mini-lessons are guides to support students during their final photojournalism portfolio and possible writing extension activities. Here is an example of a resource guide of exemplar captions, cover letter sentence skeletons, and other materials to support students.</p>
<p>Mini-Lesson 1:</p>	<p>Writing Captions and Titles for Photojournalism on Topics in Voting</p> <p>The following are criteria for dynamic captions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A description of the physical objects or people in the photograph 2. Information that gives context to the moment captured in the photograph 3. The name of the photographer 4. The country or location in which the photo was taken 5. The year that the photo was taken <p>These tips were introduced in a Pulitzer Center lesson on curation and captioning that can be found here.</p>

Mini-Lesson 2	<p>Cover Letter Artist Statement</p> <p>Here is a general outline for the cover letter artist statement for their photojournalism portfolio:</p> <p>Paragraph 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction and experience of photojournalism walks • Title and background to your exhibition • Writer’s Central Idea: What is the main story your photos tell together? <p>Paragraph 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title of each image • What type of photojournalism shot is the image? • Why did you choose this type of photo to tell the story? • How does each image relate to your topic in voting and overall story? <p>Paragraph 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflections on photojournalism portfolio • What was it like to take your photos, choose the final ones, and create titles and captions? • What story are you sharing with your audience? Does your portfolio represent underreported stories?
Performance Task 2: Persuasive Letter Campaign	<p>Introduce students to the Election Letter Writing Campaign guide that overviews possible audience choices and formatting expectations for letter writing.</p>
Mini-Lesson 3:	<p>Letter Writing Format and Selecting Audiences</p> <p>Review the main components of a formal letter with students. This can be done using your own instructional materials. Most students will need a brainstorming session to address how to identify audiences. Students can consider the following questions to consider an audience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who has been discussed or relevant to your topic in voting? • Who has answers or a responsibility to your topic in voting? • Why should this audience care about what you have to say? • How will your writing tone differ between audiences?
Mini-Lesson 2:	<p>Research and Draft Letters</p> <p>Here is a general outline of the letter (Slide 5): Here is a sentence skeleton outline for a grade-level essay.</p> <p>Introduction:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide greeting (Hello, etc.) ● Introduce yourself ● Explain why you're writing this letter ● Writer's Central Idea: What is the central idea of your letter? What is the main point you want to make? <p>Body Paragraph:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide information about your central idea ● Provide examples and evidence of Key Details <p>Conclusion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reflect on learning about the elections this trimester to your audience 2. What is your call to action for the person reading your letter? What should the person do after reading your letter? 3. Provide salutation (Sincerely, etc.)
Performance Task 3:	<p>Final Project Virtual Gallery Viewing Guide (one project completed by each student):</p> <p>Introduce students to the Election 2020 Virtual Gallery Viewing Guide that they will use to review peers' portfolios and letters. This can be the final assignment of the unit.</p>

Student Examples:

1. [Here are photo stories by students from City Neighbors Charter School in Baltimore, MD that were created as part of the Pandemic Photo Walk performance task.](#)
2. [Here are photo stories by students from City Neighbors Charter School in Baltimore, MD that were created as part of the Election Photo Walk performance task.](#)
3. [Here are examples of notes from students at City Neighbors Charter School in Baltimore, MD for lesson 3 \(Topics in Voting\)](#)
4. [Here are examples of final projects from students at City Neighbors Charter School in Baltimore, MD](#)