

UNIT OVERVIEW

Unit Length	About 5 weeks on a block schedule (meeting 2-3 times a week for 90 minutes)
Grade Level(s)/Subject(s)	High school
Unit Overview	<p>Authentic inquiry leads to deeper learning. Too often, students research or investigate topics or situations that matter to them and only to them. In this unit, students will engage with questions that allow for a deeper understanding of the contexts that drive underreported stories and their impact on individuals across the globe. Students will cultivate empathy for others and explore and later employ storytelling and research skills to explore topics that matter to them.</p> <p>In their final projects, students will cover local underreported stories, following one person’s narrative, but presenting their story in a larger context. The project is a challenge for students to tell a story without imposing their personal worldview.</p> <p>To help students find unreported or underreported stories, they will find someone who has an experience related to one of these questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When did you have to change a long-held belief? 2. When did you realize injustice exists? 3. When did you learn something important about your past? 4. When was it difficult or unsafe for you to live somewhere? 5. When did you realize there were environmental problems? 6. When did you develop a new relationship with food or something else? 7. When did you break with tradition? 8. When did you do something you once thought of as impossible? <p>In this unit, students develop the cognitive skills of writing and research as well as the non-cognitive aspect of social skills in interviewing. Students will employ one of the eight questions to tell their own story and</p>

	<p>then cover someone else’s story. As a result of the unit, students will produce TWO pieces of journalism that engage with any of the eight focus questions listed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A self-profile 2. A profile of someone else
<p>Objectives & Outcomes</p>	<p>Students will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Describe and cite examples of how writing and reporting evoke empathy ● Leverage strong storytelling skills to evoke empathy in their journalism ● Employ social skills to initiate and develop a meaningful conversation ● Demonstrate mastery of audio-editing software to produce an audio piece
<p>Standards</p>	<p>CC.11-12.R.L.5 Craft and Structure: Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.</p> <p>CC.11-12.W.2.b Text Types and Purposes: 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>CC.11-12.W.7 Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.</p> <p>CC.11-12.W.6 Production and Distribution of Writing: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.</p>
<p>Unit Resources</p>	<p>Interviews Journalist Toolbox, The Pulitzer Center (9:05)</p> <p>"Why They Broke With Hindu Nationalism: Four Former Zealots Speak Out," by Priyadarshini Sen from Faith Metamorphosis in Hindu Nationalists for Religion News Service</p>

	<p><u>“Fanaticism Is All About Aggression’: One Man’s Journey From a Hindu Nationalist to a Humanist Country” by Priyadarshini Sen from <i>Faith Metamorphosis in Hindu Nationalists for The World</i></u></p> <p><u>“In the Midwest, State Oversight Has Forced Some Employers To Provide Better Housing to Migrant Farmworkers. But Regulations Remain Spotty” by Sky Chadde and Johnathan Hettinger from <i>Farmworkers Housing in America for Investigate Midwest</i></u></p> <p><u>“Thousands of Migrant Workers Died in Qatar’s Extreme Heat. The World Cup Forced a Reckoning,” by Aryn Baker and Ed Kashi from <i>Too Hot for Work: How Qatar Offers Lessons for the Economy of a Heating Planet for TIME</i></u></p> <p><u>“The Untold Story of Black Cowboys in America: How One Florida Farmer Made History,” by Ashonti Ford for <i>Spectrum Bay News</i></u></p> <p><u>“After the Fire: Bronx Residents Return to Building That Burned,” by Ngozi Cole from <i>How a Deadly Fire Exposed Housing Injustice in New York for Shelterforce</i></u></p> <p><u>“Ensenada, Last in Line for Colorado River Water, Is Facing the Worst of the West’s Drought,” by MacKenzie Elmer and Vicente Calderón from <i>The Tijuana Estuary for Voice of San Diego</i></u></p> <p><u>“‘Finger-Licking Good’ Insects Could be the Future of Food,” by Chris Arsenault from <i>Inside Guyana’s Struggle To Avoid the Resource Curse for Aljazeera</i></u></p> <p><u>“Short on community health workers, a county trains teens as youth ambassadors,” by Emily Fang for <i>NPR Interviews Journalist Toolbox, The Pulitzer Center</i></u></p> <p>Performance Task & Interview Transcript [.pdf][.docx]</p>
<p>Performance Task(s)</p>	<p>Formative Task: Students will choose one of the focus questions to cover their own stories in a self-profile resulting in a written or audio piece.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A self-interview

2. A self-profile in written and audio form (audio is optional but needed if students will create audio texts for the performance task)

Educator note: I used this unit plan with a new group of students at the beginning of the semester. The self-profile that students write is a good way to have students introduce themselves to you without the typical personal essay approach.

Performance Task:

So many meaningful stories go underreported in students' communities. For this project, students will find someone in their community who has a story related to one of the essential questions. Through thoughtful interviewing, students will initiate and develop a conversation about the person's underreported story. The interview will result in two forms of coverage:

1. **Audio recording of the interview.** Students will use their smartphones to record the conversation.

Educator note: While this unit uses [Soundtrap](#), a resource available to the teacher who created this unit, this unit can be carried out with students' smartphones using sound editing apps that students probably use already.

2. **A written article.** Students will use an article from the Pulitzer Center website as a mentor text.
 - a. First, they will write a narrative of based on the interview of the person's experience
 - b. Second, they will add research to expand the reporting and significance
3. **An audio version of the written article (optional):** Students can do this in one of two ways
 - a. Students simply read the article after the research has been added to the narrative
 - b. Students audio produce the piece. They read all the parts EXCEPT where the person is quoted. Students should insert the person's voice from the audio recording of the interview.

Some things to consider:

1. Students should show the person they interviewed the final piece before it's made public and ask for their permission to make it public.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none">2. When creating audio pieces, students like to add music right. <i>Sound Trap</i> does include music that is available for projects like this. Students should NOT use music that is not licensed for use in projects like this. Just because it's a school assignment does not mean students can use any music they want.3. Students can incorporate the person's voice from the interview in the audio piece OR they can just read the quotes by the person themselves.4. There should be an outro in the audio piece. Something like, "This profile was written for (<i>school's name</i>) journalism class with (<i>teacher name</i>)." <p><u>Resources:</u> Students will use the Performance Task & Interview Transcript [.pdf][.docx] to plan both the self-profile and the performance task</p> <p>Student Examples: Can I Ask You Something? A 2023 Journalism Project with the Pulitzer Center</p>
Assessment/Evaluation	<p>Students will have multiple opportunities to read, analyze, and reflect on the Pulitzer stories. They will examine the writing for its content, structure, and rhetorical impact.</p> <p>These are the three significant assignments with rubrics outlined in the Performance Task & Interview Transcript [.pdf][.docx]:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The self-profile2. Comprehension and analysis of the mentor text3. The profile in written and audio form

UNIT PACING / DAILY LESSONS AND RESOURCES

Week 1

(2-3 90-minute classes)

Lesson Objectives & Learning Standards

Students will...

- Leverage essential questions and free writing to drive personal inquiry
- Analyze how journalists use interviews to explore topics

Learning Standards

[CC.11-12.W.7](#) Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

Lesson Materials & Resources

[Interviews | Journalist Toolbox, The Pulitzer Center](#)

[“Interview Techniques for Telling Underreported Stories,” from *The Journalist’s Toolbox*, The Pulitzer Center](#)

Performance Task & Interview Transcript [[.pdf](#)][[.docx](#)]

Lesson / Activities

Lesson Steps:

1. **Introduce the self-profile assignment.** Using the Performance Task & Interview Transcript [[.pdf](#)][[.docx](#)], students will take time to reflect and interview themselves to see how they dealt with one of the unit’s questions. They will produce an article in the third person about themselves.
2. **Self-Reflection Gallery Walk:** Write out the questions listed below on paper and post them around the room so students can view them and

answer them privately on paper..

- When did you have to change a long-held belief?
- When did you realize injustice exists?
- When did you learn something important about your past?
- When was it difficult or unsafe for you to live somewhere?
- When did you realize there were environmental problems?
- When did you develop a new relationship with food or something else?
- When did you break with tradition?
- When did you do something you once thought of as impossible?

3. **Freewrite:** Students can answer a few of these questions more extensively and then see which they think would be the most meaningful one for them to transform into a profile piece. Ultimately, students should choose one question they are most interested in employing to drive their learning for the rest of the unit.
4. **Interviewing skills:** Students will watch [Interviews | Journalist Toolbox, The Pulitzer Center](#) to help them conduct interviews.

Educator note: For further instruction around developing interview skills, implement the [Interview Techniques for Telling Under-reported Stories](#) lesson plan

Week 2

(2-3 90-minute classes)

Lesson Objectives

Students will...

- Read a global underreported news story
- Analyze the structure of a news story
- Predict interview questions employed to capture the perspective of an interview subject
- Cite text from an underreported news story
- Interview members of their community
- Craft a profile about themselves engaging one of the core essential questions

Learning Standards

[CC.11-12.R.L.5](#) Craft and Structure: Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

Lesson Materials & Resources

Performance Task & Interview Transcript [[.pdf](#)][[.docx](#)]

["Why They Broke With Hindu Nationalism: Four Former Zealots Speak Out," by Priyadarshini Sen from *Faith Metamorphosis in Hindu Nationalists for Religion News Service*](#)

["Fanaticism Is All About Aggression': One Man's Journey From a Hindu Nationalist to a Humanist Country" by Priyadarshini Sen from *Faith Metamorphosis in Hindu Nationalists for The World*](#)

["In the Midwest, State Oversight Has Forced Some Employers To Provide Better Housing to Migrant Farmworkers. But Regulations Remain Spotty" by Sky Chadde and Johnathan Hettinger from *Farmworkers Housing in America for Investigate Midwest*](#)

["Thousands of Migrant Workers Died in Qatar's Extreme Heat. The World Cup Forced a Reckoning," by Aryn Baker and Ed Kashi from *Too Hot for Work: How Qatar Offers Lessons for the Economy of a Heating Planet for TIME*](#)

["The Untold Story of Black Cowboys in America: How One Florida Farmer Made History," by Ashonti Ford for *Spectrum Bay News*](#)

["After the Fire: Bronx Residents Return to Building That Burned," by Ngozi Cole from *How a Deadly Fire Exposed Housing Injustice in New York for Shelterforce*](#)

["Ensenada, Last in Line for Colorado River Water, Is Facing the Worst of the West's Drought," by MacKenzie Elmer and Vicente Calderón from *The Tijuana Estuary for Voice of San Diego*](#)

["'Finger-Licking Good' Insects Could be the Future of Food," by Chris Arsenault from *Inside Guyana's Struggle To Avoid the Resource Curse for Aljazeera*](#)

Lesson / Activities

Lesson Steps:

1. **Analyze mentor text.** Students will read one of the Pulitzer Center-supported articles that align with the question they are exploring.
 - When did you have to change a long-held belief?
 - ["Why They Broke With Hindu Nationalism: Four Former Zealots Speak Out," by Priyadarshini Sen for *Religion News Service*](#)
 - ["'Fanaticism Is All About Aggression': One Man's Journey From a Hindu Nationalist to a Humanist Country" by Priyadarshini Sen for *The World*](#)
 - When did you realize injustice exists?
 - ["In the Midwest, State Oversight Has Forced Some Employers To Provide Better Housing to Migrant Farmworkers. But Regulations Remain Spotty" by Sky Chadde and Johnathan Hettinger for *Investigate Midwest*](#)
 - ["Thousands of Migrant Workers Died in Qatar's Extreme Heat. The World Cup Forced a Reckoning," by Aryn Baker and Ed Kashi for *TIME*](#)
 - When did you learn something important about your past
 - ["The Untold Story of Black Cowboys in America: How One Florida Farmer Made History," by Ashonti Ford for *Spectrum Bay News*](#)
 - When was it difficult or unsafe for you to live somewhere?
 - ["After the Fire: Bronx Residents Return to Building That Burned," by Ngozi Cole for *Shelterforce*](#)
 - When did you realize there were environmental problems?
 - ["Ensenada, Last in Line for Colorado River Water, Is Facing the Worst of the West's Drought," by MacKenzie Elmer and Vicente Calderón for *Voice of San Diego*](#)
 - When did you develop a new relationship with food or something else?
 - ["'Finger-Licking Good' Insects Could be the Future of Food," by Chris Arsenault for *Aljazeera*](#)
 - When did you break with tradition? (See articles for #1 above)

- When did you do something you once thought of as impossible? (This is a question students are probably more familiar with).
2. **Learning experience 1: analyzing structure.** Students should divide the text into the beginning, middle, and end and highlight phrases or sentences the writer uses to transition from section to section.
 - a. For the beginning, students should look for:
 - The conflict
 - Information that shows the urgency or importance of this
 - Who is involved in the situation
 - b. For the middle, students should look for:
 - How did the conflict begin
 - What happened before the current situation
 - How has this situation gotten worse
 - c. For the end, students should look for:
 - What might be some consequences
 - How might this situation get more complicated
 - What does someone hope for
 3. **Learning experience 2: interviewing.** Students will infer the questions the journalist had to ask in order to get the information for that section. What did the journalist have to ask to get this information?
 4. **Learning experience 3: quoting.** Students should highlight direct quotes that appear in the article so they can see how to appropriately place quotes in their own article.
 5. **Homework: survey.** While they are working on the Self-Profile in class, students should spend time outside of class talking to people by asking, “Can I ask you something? Do you have a life experience that connects to one of these questions?” They can show them the 8 questions. The goal here is to have them find a couple of people who would be willing to be interviewed about their life experiences.
 6. **Writing self-profile:** Students will then write their own profile of themselves using the Performance Task & Interview Transcript (pages 1 & 2) and following the example of the mentor text. Students should use the following sequence outlined in the transcript:
 - a. Select the question from the self-reflection gallery walk that they’d like to use as the focus for their self profile and write a pitch
 - b. Complete the self-interview
 - c. Complete the transcription
 - d. Write the self-profile
 - e. Complete a peer review. Students should read each other’s drafts and ask questions about anything that is not clear or something that they want to learn more about.

Week 3
(2-3 90-minute classes)

Lesson Objectives & Standards

Students will...

- Record and share their personal profiles
- Select a community member to interview
- Analyze peer profiles and offer constructive feedback
- Craft a persuasive composition about an interview subject

Learning Standards

[CC.11-12.W.6](#) Production and Distribution of Writing: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

Lesson Materials & Resources

Performance Task & Interview Transcript [[.pdf](#)][[.docx](#)]

Personal smartphone or recording device

Lesson / Activities

Lesson Steps:

1. **Record Self-Profile:** Each student should audio record his/her/their self profile and make sure to add a headline, publication date, and byline. The goal here is to have students produce an audio recording that people can listen to, even if it's not perfect.
2. **Share Self-Profiles:** After students upload their audio recordings to Google Drive or Google Classroom, they should exchange the written pieces and take turns listening to each other's self-profiles.
 - a. Each listener will write a response describing:
 - What the self-profile made them think, feel, consider, or re-consider.
 - Any questions that go unanswered or that they wonder about after listening.
3. **Pitch:** By the end of the week, each student should have found someone they are eager to interview who has given permission to be

interviewed and recorded.

- a. Using the Performance Task & Interview Transcript (pgs 3 & 4), students should submit a pitch that summarizes:
 - The interview subject's story
 - Why the story matters to them
 - Why it should matter to the school community.

Week 4 & 5
(2 - 3 90-minute classes)

Lesson Objectives & Standards

Students will...

- Analyze reporting that includes an audio recording and a transcript
- Craft interview questions
- Conduct an interview
- Identify issues discussed by an interview subject to drive further inquiry
- Incorporate citations gathered through research to support a local underreported story
- Edit audio and

Learning Standards

[CC.11-12.W.2.b](#) Text Types and Purposes: 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.

[CC.11-12.W.7](#) Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CC.11-12.W.6 Production and Distribution of Writing: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

Lesson Materials & Resources

Performance Task & Interview Transcript [[.pdf](#)][[.docx](#)]

[Interviews | Journalist Toolbox](#). The Pulitzer Center

[“Short on community health workers, a county trains teens as youth ambassadors,” by Emily Fang for NPR](#)

Personal smart phone or recording device

Lesson / Activities

Lesson Steps:

1. **Develop interview questions** Students will craft interview questions to generate a 10-15 minute conversation with the person who agreed to be interviewed and audio recorded.
2. **Mentor text for the audio piece:** Students will listen to the audio and read the transcript from [“Short on community health workers, a county trains teens as youth ambassadors,” by Emily Fang for NPR](#) to guide them in the creation of their profile. Clicking on the headline will take them to the written version of the piece that includes photos.
 - a. **Learning experience 1: structure.** Students will divide the text into beginning, middle and end.
 - i. For the beginning, students should look for:
 - The conflict
 - Information that shows the urgency or importance of this
 - Who is involved in the situation
 - ii. For the middle, students should look for:
 - How did the conflict begin
 - What happened before the current situation
 - How has this situation gotten worse
 - iii. For the end, students should look for:
 - What might be some consequences
 - How might this situation get more complicated
 - What does someone hope for
 - b. **Learning experience 2: interviewing.** Students will make inferences about what questions the journalist may have asked in order to get the information for that section.
 - c. **Learning experience 3: quoting.** Students should highlight direct quotes that appear in the article so they can see how to appropriately place these in their own article.
3. **Conduct interview:** Following the guidance from the [Interviews | Journalist Toolbox, The Pulitzer Center](#), and pages 3 and 4 from the Performance Task & Interview Transcript, students should conduct their interview.
 - The interview should be at least 10 -15 minutes
 - The students should secure the interview subject’s permission

- Hold time for students to edit their interviews

4. **Transcribe interview.** After recording the interview, students should use the last page on the Performance Task & Interview Transcript to capture the transcript.
5. **Write the profile:** Students should follow the guide on Performance Task & Interview Transcript to write the profile.
 - a. **Research:** Students will research to find 1-2 articles that have been written related to the story the interview subject shares.
 - i. Students should pull out excerpts from the found articles that they can use in the profile as supplemental info.
 - They should write these with citations used in news articles where they fit best.
 - Just a couple of pieces of research are needed, but the research should highlight information that the audience will not already know from listening to the interview.
 - An example of a proper citation: According to a 2012 Pulitzer Center article titled “____,” *followed by the information they found*
6. **Peer review the written profile.** Students should read each other’s drafts and ask questions about anything that is not clear or something that they want to learn more about.
7. **Accuracy check and permission:** Ensure students show the profile and share the recording with the person they interviewed and receive permission to make it public. They might need to make corrections or changes based on the person’s feedback.
8. **Audio record profile:** Each student should audio record his/her/their written profile and make sure to add a headline, publication date, and byline. The goal here is to have students produce an audio recording that people can listen to, even if it’s not perfect. See “Some Things to Consider” in the Performance Task section above.
9. **Listening / Reading Session:** After students upload their audio recordings, they should exchange the written pieces and take turns listening to each other’s self-profiles.
 - a. Each listener should write a response explaining what the profile with the research made them think, feel, consider, or reconsider.
 - b. Listeners should also include any questions that go unanswered or that they wonder about after listening.
 - c. If students do not submit an audio recording, they can share the written versions.