

Sensationalism in the Media

(Sample Unit)*

Proficiency: Intermediate Low/Mid

Language: French

Theme: Communications and Media

*This sample gives the framework for a thematic unit that integrates all the components of the Model Curriculum. Teachers can modify this unit for their language and proficiency level and can include specific lessons and content that align with their local course or curriculum.**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- A. **Standards:** *Competencies; Process and Content Statements*
- B. **Content Elaborations:** *Theme; Topic; Essential Questions; Communicative Context*
- C. **Summative Assessment:** *End-of-Unit Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA)*
- D. **Expectations for Learning:**
NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements; NCSSFL Interculturality Can-Do Statements
- E. **Content and Authentic Resources:**
Language Functions, Vocabulary and Structures. Audio, Video and Print Resources
- F. **Instructional Strategies and Formative Assessments:**
Interpretive; Interpersonal; Presentational; Diverse learners; Other Strategies and Assessments
- G. **Connections:** *College and Career Readiness; 21st-Century Skills; Technology; Other Connections*

Ohio Department of Education, June 2014

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A.

STANDARDS: [K-12](#) [6-12](#) [9-12](#)

1. Communication
2. Cultures

Competency, Process and Content Statements

Interpretive:

2. **Analyze how authentic sources convey viewpoints and use authentic sources critically.**
 - a. Identify authentic sources and evaluate their suitability for specific tasks.
 - b. Analyze the viewpoints of authentic sources by determining who produced the texts, when, why and for whom.
3. **Comprehend and interpret information in authentic messages and informational texts.**
 - d. Examine essential elements of written informational texts to differentiate the main idea and relevant details from extraneous information.
 - e. Draw conclusions and justify inferences based on more nuanced ideas and details derived from authentic messages and informational texts.

Interpersonal:

2. **Interact with others using culturally appropriate language and gestures on familiar and some unfamiliar topics.**
 - e. Initiate, sustain and conclude conversations, interviews and debates on a wider range of personal, general knowledge, academic, interdisciplinary and work-related topics and issues.

Presentation:

1. **Convey meaning using writing processes and presentation strategies.**
 - b. Organize thoughts and choose resources.
 - e. Produce final drafts/presentations with aesthetic appeal using tools that help to convey meaning.
2. **Present information, concepts and viewpoints on familiar and some unfamiliar topics from across disciplines.**
 - l. Synthesize detailed interdisciplinary information and content to create and present more extensive reports, presentations and/or projects.

Intermediate Low/Mid — Sensationalism in the Media

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Cultures:

1. **Analyze and describe relationships among products, practices and perspectives and compare them across cultures.**
 - h. Examine cultural perspectives as they are portrayed in the media and other sources and describe them to others.

[Back to Top](#)

B.

CONTENT ELABORATIONS

Unit Theme: Communications and Media

Unit Topic(s): Sensationalism in the Media

Essential Question(s): What does sensationalism in the media look like? Why does it exist?

Communicative Context: Present, discuss and debate the effects of and reasons for sensationalism in the media.

C.

UNIT SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA)

IPA Theme: Why does the media sensationalize the news? How does it influence public opinion?

Authentic Resources:

- <http://www.gossip.fr/> (teacher only)
- <http://www.closermag.fr/> (teacher only)
- <http://www.voici.fr/> (teacher only)
- <http://www.parismatch.com/>
- <http://fr.yahoo.com/>
- <http://www.tv5.org/TV5Site/7-jours/>
- <http://www.france24.com/fr/>
- <http://www.lemonde.fr/>

[Back to Top](#)

Intermediate Low/Mid — Sensationalism in the Media

Interpretive Task(s): (Evaluate with an Interpretive performance or proficiency [rubric.](#))

1. Each student will be asked to find two media resources addressing the same news story. One source should be a “sensationalized” version of the news story; the other source should be an “objective” version of the same news story. Media resources do not have to be the same medium (e.g., one could be a video; one could be a written article).
2. Student will make a Venn diagram or other graphic outlining differences and similarities in the stories.
3. Student will complete a chart, with the following information:
 - a) *Origin of the resource*
 - b) *Justification/details supporting an opinion of whether it is sensationalized or objective*
 - c) *Critique of the information (biased, fair, subjective, persuasive, politically motivated, ulterior motive)*
 - d) *Whether the information should be presented in a different way, and how*
 - e) *Effect of the report on the student personally, or how it might affect various demographic groups of readers*
 - f) *Student's personal analysis, critique or opinion of each media resource (e.g., the reasons for and the effects of the various types of reporting presented)*

Presentational Tasks: (Evaluate with a Presentational performance or proficiency [rubric.](#))

1. Student will present a news story to the class, using media sources and Parts A, B, C, D, and E of the chart that was completed in Interpretive Activity # 3:
 - a) *Origin of the source*
 - b) *Justification/details supporting an opinion of whether it is sensationalized or objective*
 - c) *Critique of the information (biased, fair, subjective, persuasive, politically motivated, ulterior motive)*
 - d) *Whether the information should be presented in a different way, and how*
 - e) *Effect of the report on the student personally, or how it might affect various demographic groups of readers*

2. As an optional follow-up Presentational activity, students will find an authentic, objective news story and then role-play (oral or written) as a journalist for a “sensationalist” news agency. The job is to sensationalize the news story to appeal to a certain demographic group.

Interpersonal Tasks: *(Evaluate each student with an Interpersonal performance or proficiency [rubric.](#))*

1. Student will then lead a class discussion using the above-mentioned chart, Parts D, E, and F.

d) Whether the information should be presented in a different way, and how

e) Effect of the report on the student personally, or how it might affect various demographic groups of readers

f) Student’s personal analysis, critique or opinion of each media resource (e.g., the reasons for and the effects of the various types of reporting presented)

[Back to Top](#)

D.

EXPECTATIONS FOR LEARNING

For teachers: [Standards Alignment Tool](#)

For students: [Can-Do Statements](#)

Learning Targets for This Unit:

Interpretive:

I can understand the main idea of texts related to everyday life and personal interests or studies.

- I can understand questions regarding something I have read.

Interpersonal:

I can participate in conversations on familiar topics using sentences and series of sentences.

- I can exchange information about subjects of special interest to me.

Intermediate Low/Mid — Sensationalism in the Media

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Presentational:

I can make presentations on a wide variety of familiar topics using connected sentences.
I can write on a wide variety of familiar topics using connected sentences.

Intercultural:

I can describe some basic cultural viewpoints.

I can make some generalizations about a culture.

I can recognize and refer to elements of traditional and pop culture.

[Back to Top](#)

E.

UNIT CONTENT AND AUTHENTIC RESOURCES

Content

Language Functions: Analyzing, critiquing, giving opinions, agreeing and disagreeing

Structures: Reviewing and assessing verb tenses: (e.g., past tense to talk about what you read, and conditional and subjunctive tense to talk about how the media source should be presenting the information to avoid sensationalism. “The media should do ____.” “It would be better if they ____”.)

Vocabulary: Media-related vocabulary for websites, news reports, social media

Authentic/Other Resources

(Audio, video or text, related to this unit)

- <http://www.gossip.fr/> (teacher only)
- <http://www.closermag.fr/> (teacher only)
- <http://www.voici.fr/> (teacher only)
- <http://www.parismatch.com/>
- <http://fr.yahoo.com/>
- <http://www.tv5.org/TV5Site/7-jours/>
- <http://www.france24.com/fr/>
- <http://www.lemonde.fr/>

[Back to Top](#)

Intermediate Low/Mid — Sensationalism in the Media

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F.

INSTRUCTION STRATEGIES AND FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS

Pre-Assessment of Prior Knowledge

Bell-Ringer/Pre-Reading Questions:

- What media sources are you, and others, exposed to on a regular basis?
- Do you tend to believe media reports, or are you skeptical of what you read/see/hear?
- What is sensationalism? Which media sources/people do you associate with sensationalism?
- Give examples of sensationalism in the media that you have been exposed to.
- What is your reaction to sensationalism in the media? (Ignore? Take seriously? Investigate further? Become angry? Become apathetic?)

Instructional Strategies and Formative Assessments

Interpretive Tasks and Strategies:

- Interpretive comprehension activity using teacher-chosen authentic media sources [listed in Section E] showing examples of a sensationalized as well as objective media source covering the same news story. Use this source to complete the following chart:

Chart to complete as a class:

- a) Origin of the source*
- b) Sensationalized or objective, with justification/details supporting student opinio.*
- c) Critique of the information (biased, fair, subjective, persuasive, politically motivated, ulterior motive)*
- d) Whether students think the information should be presented in a different way and how*
- e) Effect of the report on students personally, or how it might affect various demographic groups of readers*
- f) Discussion of the two sources, including comprehension, analysis, critiques and student opinions*
- g) Discussion of the reasons for and effects of the various types of reporting presented*

Intermediate Low/Mid — Sensationalism in the Media

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- Getting the gist, skimming, scanning, reading, viewing and listening for comprehension using authentic media sources.

Interpersonal Tasks and Strategies:

- Partner and whole class discussions using aforementioned comprehension chart

Presentational Tasks and Strategies:

- Presentation of a news story using authentic media sources; student-led whole class analysis, critique and discussion of the news story and the media sources, using aforementioned chart

Diverse Learners:

- Use concrete and abstract assessment tasks (Locate concrete information in a news story. Analyze, critique and discuss the type of and effects of this information).
- Make multisensory presentation (visual, auditory, reading, news clips).
- Use formulaic responses (agreeing, disagreeing, I think that ... , In my opinion ...).
- Employ grouping to allow students of different abilities to work together and share.
- Stretch vocab/structures (They should ... , It would be better to ... , It affects me by ...) of presentation tasks based on students' comfort level.
- Use a pre-designed chart to aid in comprehension and presentation of information. Use it together as a class the first time to comprehend, analyze, critique and discuss sensationalism in the media.

[Back to Top](#)

G.

CONNECTIONS

21st-Century Skills:

- Students as effective communicators use languages to engage in meaningful conversation, to understand and interpret spoken language and written text, and to present information, concepts and ideas.
- Students as collaborators use their native and acquired languages to learn and work cooperatively, sharing responsibility and making compromises while working toward a common goal.
- Students as productive global citizens use appropriate technologies when interpreting messages, interacting with others and producing written, oral and visual messages.

Technology:

- Students can use authentic media sources (websites, online newspapers, videos, social media, and podcasts)

Pre-AP:

- Students can compare and contrast two articles (one sensationalized, one objective), citing evidence from each resource, and take a stand on the influence of sensationalized media on the general public, or certain demographic groups.

[Back to Top](#)