

Breaking News!

The Role of the Media in Nixon's Presidency

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Grade Level	11th Grade	**Time Frame**	90 minutes
Subject	Social Studies	**Duration**	1-2 class period(s)
Course	AP US History, U.S. History		

Essential Question

How does the media impact the presidency?

Summary

In this lesson, students evaluate how the media played a role in the presidency and resignation of President Richard Nixon by exploring news articles and watching a video. Students extend their learning by analyzing the history of presidential impeachments. As a reflection to wrap up the lesson, students respond with their thoughts on how the media impacted Nixon's presidency.

Snapshot

Engage

Students evaluate statements related to the president and rate their level of agreement.

Explore

Students examine newspaper snippets to infer the types of scandals that involved President Nixon.

Explain

Students view and reflect on a video about President Nixon and Watergate.

Extend

Students review the instances of presidential impeachment, and then construct claims and counter-claims about Nixon’s decision to resign.

Evaluate

Students respond to the essential question to summarize their learning.

Standards

CollegeBoard AP US History Course Description (AP US History (2020))

KC 8.2.III.E: Public confidence and trust in government's ability to solve social and economic problems declined in the 1970s in the wake of economic challenges, political scandals, and foreign policy crises.

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies: United States History (9th through 12th grade))

USH.7.2F: Evaluate the impact of the Watergate Scandal on executive powers including the role of the media, the Pentagon Papers, the first use of the 25th Amendment, and President Ford's decision to pardon former President Nixon.

Attachments

- Extra, Extra, Read All About It Posters—Breaking News - Spanish.docx
- Extra, Extra, Read All About It Posters—Breaking News - Spanish.pdf
- Extra, Extra, Read All About It Posters—Breaking News.docx
- Extra, Extra, Read All About It Posters—Breaking News.pdf
- Four Corners Signs—Breaking News.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Breaking News.pptx
- Rate Your Agreement—Breaking News - Spanish.docx
- Rate Your Agreement—Breaking News - Spanish.pdf
- Rate Your Agreement—Breaking News.docx
- Rate Your Agreement—Breaking News.pdf
- Reporting the News Graphic Organizer—Breaking News - Spanish.docx
- Reporting the News Graphic Organizer—Breaking News - Spanish.pdf
- Reporting the News Graphic Organizer—Breaking News.docx
- Reporting the News Graphic Organizer—Breaking News.pdf
- SIT—Breaking News - Spanish.docx
- SIT—Breaking News - Spanish.pdf
- SIT—Breaking News.docx
- SIT—Breaking News.pdf
- Trial by Senate—Breaking News - Spanish.docx
- Trial by Senate—Breaking News - Spanish.pdf
- Trial by Senate—Breaking News.docx
- Trial by Senate—Breaking News.pdf

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Rate Your Agreement handout (attached; one per student)
- Reporting the News Graphic Organizer (attached; one per student)
- Extra, Extra, Read All About It posters (attached; one set per group or class)
- SIT handout (attached; one per student)
- Trial by Senate handout (attached; one per student; print front to back)
- Four Corners Signs (optional; attached; one set)

5 minutes

Engage

Pass out the attached **Rate Your Agreement** handout to each student as they enter the classroom. Use the attached **Lesson Slides** to guide the lesson. Display **slide 3** and tell students to read each statement on the handout, then circle their level of agreement: *strongly agree, agree, disagree*, or *strongly disagree*. Then, ask students to write down an explanation for the choice they circled.

After giving time for students to read the statements, ask them to talk to an Elbow Partner about the statements and the level of agreement they chose. Move through **slides 4-7** and review each statement. Ask for a few volunteers to share their thoughts. Use **slides 8-9** to review the essential question and lesson objective with students.

Optional Strategy

Instead of printing handouts, consider using the Four Corners strategy for this activity. Label four locations in your classroom: *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Disagree*, and *Strongly Disagree*, using the attached **Four Corners Signs.** Show slide 3 and instruct students to indicate their decision by moving to the labeled location. Transition through slides 4-7, having students move after each statement.

20 minutes

Explore

Teacher's Note: Activity Preparation

Print out the attached **Extra, Extra, Read All About It** posters prior to class. Decide if you want to post the six posters around the room or have students look at the posters in groups of four while seated. Print out the required number of posters depending on your choice.

Print pages 1-6 to hang around the room. Page 7 contains the sources for the previous pages.

Pass out the attached **Reporting the News Graphic Organizer** to each student and introduce students to the Painting a Picture strategy. Move to **slide 10** and ask students to read each newspaper snippet. On their graphic organizer, direct students to write their observations about each article in the left column and what they can infer about how the information impacted Nixon's presidency in the right column.

After students analyze the posters, ask several students to share what they can infer about Nixon's presidency. Have a brief discussion about the scandals Nixon faced while in office.

20 minutes

Explain

Move to **slide 11** and pass out the attached **SIT** handout, or alternatively, have students write S I T vertically on the back of their Reporting the News Graphic Organizer handout. Introduce students to the S-I-T strategy. Tell students that as they watch a video about Nixon, they should look for something that is surprising, interesting, and troubling. Transition to **slide 12** and play the video Breaking News!

Embedded video
https://youtube.com/watch?v=FF5GVCVD6N4

After the video, provide time for students to finish writing their S-I-T responses; then ask for several volunteers to share what they wrote down.

Move to **slide 13** and have students talk to their partner about the reflection questions on the slide.

- What was the Watergate scandal?
- How did the media play a role in the Watergate scandal?
- Do you think Nixon's resigning was the right decision?

Provide about 5 minutes for students to talk with their partners before having a whole class discussion about the above questions. Clarify any misconceptions and ensure students understand how the Watergate scandal led to Nixon's resignation.

20 minutes

Extend

Pass out the attached **Trial by Senate** handout to each student. Direct their attention to the top of the handout: The Presidential Impeachment Process and review the process of impeaching and removing the president with students.

Move to **slide 14** and as a class, review the circumstances that led to Andrew Johnson's impeachment on the handout and slide. Repeat this with **slides 15** and **16** for Bill Clinton and Donald Trump, respectively.

Transition to **slide 17**. Ask students to think about how the process of impeachment and removal has worked for presidents. Move to **slide 18** and place students into groups of four. Ask students to move to the back side of the Trial by Senate handout. Introduce students to the Debate Team Carousel strategy.

Ask each student to write their responses to the question in box one. When students finish, ask them to pass their paper to the student on their right. Ask students to read what is written in box one and write a statement of support for that response in box two. Next, ask students to pass their papers to the right again and ask the next student to add a counter-argument response in the third box. Finally, pass papers to the right once more. That student reads the responses in boxes one-three and then writes a statement that summarizes the responses in the first three boxes.

Now ask the class to pass the handout back to the original student and provide a few minutes for everyone to read all the responses. Ask for volunteers to share what they now think after reading the responses. Have a class discussion about the high bar of removing a president from office and why this might be.

5 minutes

Evaluate

Move to **slide 19** and provide time for students to respond to the Exit Ticket question on the slide: *How did the media impact Nixon's presidency?* Have students write their response on the back of their Trial by Senate handout. Collect the handouts to review and assess student understanding of the lesson content.

Resources

- K20 Center. (n.d.). Bellringers and exit tickets. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/125
- K20 Center. (n.d). Debate team carousel. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/110
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Elbow partners. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/116
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Four corners. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/138
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Painting a picture. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/1331
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Surprising, interesting, troubling. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/926