

Using Media to Inform Public Opinion

The Media and the Abolitionist Movement

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Grade Level	8th Grade	**Time Frame**	2–3 class periods
Subject	Social Studies	**Duration**	110 minutes
Course	U.S. History		

Essential Question

How can citizens create change? How can ordinary citizens use the media to influence public opinion? How did the abolitionist movement use media to fight for the end of slavery?

Summary

In this lesson, students begin by viewing two short interviews with journalists before reflecting on the role of journalism in a democratic society. Next, students analyze excerpts from speeches and newspaper editorials by Frederick Douglass and William Lloyd Garrison. Working in groups, students use evidence from their document analysis to show how abolitionists used the media to fight for the end of slavery. Students connect the role of journalism to the words of Douglass and Garrison. Finally, students draft brief summary statements describing how the work of Douglass and Garrison has influenced modern journalism.

Snapshot

Engage

Students watch interviews with an editor and a columnist and discuss their roles and the importance of journalism in a democratic society.

Explore

Using the Sentence-Phrase-Word strategy, students analyze excerpts from 19th-century media (speeches and newspaper editorials) by leading abolitionists Frederick Douglass and William Lloyd Garrison.

Explain

Working in collaborative groups, students use evidence from their document analysis to complete a chart showing how abolitionists used the media to fight for the end of slavery.

Extend

Students listen to a person working in journalism today and consider the importance of the media.

Evaluate

Students write statements describing how Douglass's and Garrison's work relates to journalism today.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - English (6-12)

ORG 302: Provide a simple conclusion to a paragraph or essay (e.g., expressing one of the essay's main ideas)

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Reading (6-12)

IDT301: Identify a clear central idea in straightforward paragraphs in somewhat challenging literary narratives
WME201: Understand the implication of a familiar word or phrase and of simple descriptive language

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Writing (6-12)

I&A 301: Understanding the task and writing with purpose. A score in this range indicates that the writer is able to: -Generate a somewhat clear thesis that establishes a perspective on a contemporary issue -Respond to other perspectives on the issue

Oklahoma Academic Standards SOCIAL STUDIES (Grade 8)

8.C.10.3: Summarize the impact of the Abolitionist Movement on the institution of slavery.
8.C.10.3.A: Assess the impact of the work of notable abolitionists, such as Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison, and Sojourner Truth.

Attachments

- Abolitionist Speeches and Newspaper Editorials—Using Media to Inform Public Opinion.docx
- Abolitionist Speeches and Newspaper Editorials—Using Media to Inform Public Opinion.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Using Media to Inform Public Opinion.pptx
- Magnetic Statement Posters—Using Media to Inform Public Opinion.docx
- Magnetic Statement Posters—Using Media to Inform Public Opinion.pdf
- Magnetic Statements—Using Media to Inform Public Opinion.docx
- Magnetic Statements—Using Media to Inform Public Opinion.pdf
- Media Chart Sample Responses—Using Media to Inform Public Opinion.docx
- Media Chart Sample Responses—Using Media to Inform Public Opinion.pdf
- Media Chart—Using Media to Inform Public Opinion.docx
- Media Chart—Using Media to Inform Public Opinion.pdf

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Magnetic Statement Posters (attached; one set; print single-sided)
- Magnetic Statements (attached; one per student)
- Abolitionist Speeches and Newspaper Editorials (attached; one assigned source per student)
- Media Chart (attached; one per student)
- Media Chart Sample Responses (attached)
- Magnetic Statements Sample Responses (attached)

Preparation

Print the attached **Magnetic Statement Posters** and display the posters around the classroom.

20 minutes

Engage

Use the attached **Lesson Slides** to guide the lesson. Begin by telling students they will watch two short videos that introduce the role of an editor and a columnist who work in news media. Display **slide 3,** which has students think about what the difference is between an editor and a columnist. Move through **slides 4–5** to play the videos.

Embedded video
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DqxNKbwwNo8

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

Move to **slide 6** and provide a few minutes for students to discuss the question with a partner. Invite a few students to share their responses.

Display **slides 7–8** to review the essential questions and learning objectives with students. Ask students to consider the essential questions and learning objective throughout the lesson.

30 minutes

Explore

Teacher's Note: The Abolitionist Movement

If students are not already familiar with the abolitionist movement, take time to review the goals of the abolitionist movement. Consider including these ideas:

- All abolitionists believed that slavery should be made illegal, but held a range of beliefs about why slavery should end.
- Some more radical abolitionists believed not only that slavery should end but also that free Black people should have the same rights as White people.
- Making slavery illegal in the United States would require a federal law or an amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Tell students that during the 1800s, the issue of slavery and its expansion into new U.S. territories was discussed widely. Without mass media outlets like television, radio, and the internet, the public's understanding of issues like slavery was shaped through media such as speeches and newspapers. Speeches were given in public settings and were often reprinted in newspapers or released as pamphlets. Newspapers were used to influence public opinion. The abolitionist movement used these methods to inform and persuade the American people to demand an end to the system of slavery and, in some cases, equal rights for Black people.

Display **slide 9** to share prominent abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison's background with the class. Move to **slide 10** to show students the masthead of Garrison's newspaper, *The Liberator*. Move to **slide 11** to share more information about Frederick Douglass, another prominent abolitionist who escaped slavery. Share the masthead of Douglass's newspaper, *The North Star*, **on slide 12**.

Using the Jigsaw strategy, distribute one source to each student from the attached **Abolitionist Speeches and Newspaper Editorials** handout**.** There are four sources, but each student analyzes only one. Move to **slide 13** and introduce students to the Sentence-Phrase-Word strategy as detailed on the slide.

After providing time for students to analyze their documents, place students into groups by the source they read. Display **slide 14** and have each group share the sentence, phrase, and word they selected from the source they analyzed. Have each group select a spokesperson to identify the source and share the sentence, phrase, and word that best represent it.

Sample Student Responses

A volunteer from a group who read source one, "The Meaning of the Fourth of July for the Slave," might explain the sentence *"The rich inheritance of justice, liberty, and independence [given to you] by your fathers, is shared by you, not by me,"* by saying that Douglass argues that slavery and racism are hypocritical given the founding principles expressed in the Declaration of Independence. Therefore, slavery has no place in the United States.

A student who chooses *"whirlwind"* as their word from the same article might point to Douglass's belief that the abolitionist movement needed to gain enough support to be a whirlwind strong enough to destroy slavery. Answers for this activity will vary widely. As long as students' reasoning makes sense and connects to the main idea of the texts, any answer is acceptable.

30 minutes

Explain

Have students return to their original groups and distribute the attached **Media Chart** handout to each student. Display **slide 15**. As a class, work together to complete the chart. For each author, identify and summarize three arguments presented across the two sources. Provide time for students to review each source and ask for volunteers to share what points should be added to the chart.

Teacher's Note: Specific Examples

Ask students to be specific. "Douglass thought slavery was bad" is too general. Students should consider the *reasons* Douglass and Garrison gave to explain why they believed slavery was unjust and how their writings and speeches supported abolition. For a list of possible responses, see the attached **Media Chart Sample Responses.**

15 minutes

Extend

Move to **slide 16**. Tell students they will watch a video about a journalist working today. Ask students to consider how journalism has changed and remained the same since the time of Frederick Douglass and William Lloyd Garrison. Display **slide 17**, play the video, and stop it at 7:30.

Embedded video
https://youtube.com/watch?v=NphSY4EGUgc

After the video, move to **slide 18** and provide time for students to discuss the video with a partner. Ask students to discuss with a partner how journalism has changed and whether they are interested in a journalism career. Ask for a few volunteers to share what they discussed.

Display **slide 19** and introduce students to the Magnetic Statements strategy. Tell students to read the posters on the walls, then stand by the poster they agree with the most. After students have gathered by their magnetic statement, have each group discuss why they chose that statement. After a few minutes of discussion, ask a volunteer from each group to explain why the group selected its statement. Have students return to their seats.

15 minutes

Evaluate

Move to **slide 20** and distribute the attached **Magnetic Statements** handout to each student. Tell students to choose two of the five statements and write a 2–3 sentence statement to explain how the work of Frederick Douglass and William Lloyd Garrison relates to journalism today. Have students complete this portion individually.

Sample Student Responses

For a list of possible responses, see the attached **Magnetic Statements Sample Responses.**

Once students have finished writing, consider asking volunteers to share one of the connections they made. If time allows, invite volunteers to share one of the connections they made. Collect the handouts to assess students' understanding of the lesson content.

Resources

- K20 Center. (2024, July 25). *K20 ICAP: The truth is out there* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NphSY4EGUgc
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Jigsaw. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/179
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Magnetic statements. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/166
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Sentence-phrase-word. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/54
- The Guardian. (2018, November 14). *'Changing the world for the better': Katharine Viner tells us about her role* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DqxNKbwwNo8
- The Guardian. (2018, December 5). *What's the difference between news and opinion? Gary Younge tells us about his role* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgJJgvLaahg