ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR USING THE NEWSPAPER

Purpose:

• to provide motivation to read by using authentic, current reading material in your classroom,
• to expose students to the newspapers as an important form of media,
• to provide an opportunity for students to read diverse, self-selected articles that are written at a reading level appropriate for them,
• to help students

1. Read and write for meaning. Remove the headlines from a number of news stories. Display the headline-less stories on a classroom bulletin board. Provide students with the headlines, and ask them to match each to one of the stories. As students replace the missing headlines, ask them to point out the words in the headlines that helped them find the correct story. Then distribute headlines from less prominent stories and ask students to choose one and write a news story to go with it. When the stories have been completed, provide each student with the story that originally accompanied the headline. Ask: How close was your story to the original? How effectively did the headline convey the meaning of the story? You might follow up this activity by asking students to write a headline for their favorite fairy tale.

2. Read a map. Arrange students into groups, and assign each group one international story in the news. Have students explore Maps and choose a map related to their assigned story. Ask students to use the map to answer some or all of these questions:

1. In what city did the story take place?
2. What country is that city in?
3. What is the capital of that country?
4. What language is spoken there?
5. What continent is the country part of?
6. What countries or bodies of water border the country on the north, south, east, and west?
7. What physical characteristics of the country might have contributed to the events in the story?
8. What effect might the event or series of events have on the physical characteristics of the country?

3. Understand the media. Distribute advertisements cut from newspapers, and ask students to list the products in order, according to the appeal of the ads. Create a chart showing how students rated each product. Then distribute a list of the following propaganda techniques:

• Bandwagon -- the implication that "everybody else is doing it."
• Plain folks -- the implication that "users of this product are just like you."
• Card stacking -- distorting or omitting facts.
• Name-calling -- stereotyping people or ideas.
• Glittering generalities -- using "good" labels, such as patriotic, beautiful, exciting, that are unsupported by facts.
• Testimonial -- an endorsement by a famous person.
• Snob appeal -- the implication that only the richest, smartest, or most important people are doing it.
• Transference -- the association of a respected person with a product or idea.

Discuss each ad, and determine the propaganda technique(s) used. Ask: Which techniques were most effective? Which were least effective? What factors, such as gender, geographic location, or age, might have influenced the effectiveness of each technique? As a follow-up to the activity, you might ask students to design their own ads using one of the propaganda techniques studied.

4. **Arrange in sequence.** Cut up some popular comic strips, provide each student with one complete strip, and ask students to put the comics back in the correct order. Or arrange students into groups, provide each group with several cut-up strips from the same comic, and ask them to separate the panels into strips and arrange the strips in the correct order. Then introduce students to a series of stories about an ongoing news event, and ask them to arrange the stories in the order in which they appeared. Encourage them to use the stories to create a news time line.

5. **Expand your vocabulary.**

   a. As students read articles have them look for vocabulary words that are unfamiliar to them. Have them look those words up and use them in a sentence.

   b. After you have taught the students about word parts, have them practice figuring out unknown words they recognize in the paper through word parts.

   c. After teaching lessons on the topics, have students look in the newspaper for examples of similes, metaphors, irony, hyperbole, and satire.

6. **Sort and classify.** Teach students the various categories of the newspaper: News, Editorials, Features, Humor, Advertising, Sports, and Entertainment. Label each of seven shoe boxes with one of the following newspaper Ask students to cut out the newspaper stories they read each day and put each one in the appropriately labeled shoe box. After reading and discussing articles for a few weeks, have students skim as many of the stories as possible and write an adjective describing each on index cards attached to each box. You might suggest adjectives such as factual, sad, inspiring, opinionated, misleading, silly, serious, and biased. Discuss and compare the adjectives. What conclusions can students reach about each category based on those words?

Adapted from

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