

# The Media & COVID-19

*A Journal of the Plague Year: An Archive of Covid-19*



## **U.S. History Curriculum**

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## The Media & COVID-19

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this activity is for students to apply their knowledge about American media through news articles focused on COVID-19. Historians use critical thinking skills to better understand the world around them. Students are refining this specific skill through this activity. Student work is being submitted to the *A Journal of the Plague Year: An Archive of Covid-19* as their submissions highlight the aspects of COVID-19 they deem most significant. Additionally, their submission may highlight the role of the media during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Essential Question:**

How is the media covering the COVID-19 pandemic?

### **Student Outcomes:**

- Students will select a news article that represents an important aspect of the COVID-19 to highlight how the media is covering the pandemic.
- Students will write a summary of the article that details the point and importance of the chosen news article, why they chose the article, what the article reveals about life during the COVID-19 pandemic, what bias exists in the article, and, finally, what they believe the responsibility of the media is during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Students will submit their selected news article and their summary to *A Journal of the Plague Year: An Archive of Covid-19*.

### **Pre-Activity Ideas:**

- Discuss the role of the media in a democracy.
- Examine bias and perspective through “Columbus: Hero or Villain?” activity. Students are given a variety of sources and are asked to compile evidence as to whether Columbus should be considered a hero or a villain. They are also asked to identify the bias that exists in each document. Sources could include: a children’s story about Columbus, presidential proclamations for Columbus Day, textbook excerpts, art, primary source documents, and Chapter 1 from Howard Zinn’s *A People’s History of the United States*. This activity ends in a student led discussion that draws on evidence from the examined sources.
- Study the history of the American media.
- Analyze various moments in which the media shaped American history. Examples could include the Boston Massacre, the explosion of the U.S.S. Maine, WWII Disney propaganda, Watergate, and the Pentagon Papers.

- Evaluate the current state of media in the United States. Focus on the topics of bias, spin, social media, fake news, filter bubbles, echo chambers, circular reporting, the citizen reporter.
- Identify personal bias and political leanings through a study of political ideologies and a political survey.
- Choose an essential question and write a 5 paragraph essay in response, using evidence gathered through the unit activities. Option to record Flipgrid video with response.
  - Option #1: How has the media actively changed the course of American history? What are the benefits and dangers of this characteristic of the media?
  - Option #2: What is the role of the media in a democracy? Is the American media fulfilling this role?
  - Option #3: How has the internet changed the media and the way Americans consume news? Is this change positive or negative?
  - Option #4: What is the point of political parties in America? Are modern American political parties doing their job?

**Article Selection & JOTPY Submission:**

- Formal assignment instructions are located at the bottom of this lesson plan (Appendix A).
- Students are instructed to think about what pandemic topics (i.e., school, sports, family, masks, healthcare workers, the economy, etc.) are most important to them. Then to find a news article related to that topic.
- Students submit their selected article and summary to *A Journal of the Plague Year: An Archive of Covid-19*.

## APPENDIX A

### **Select a COVID-19 news article that you think demonstrates an important aspect of the pandemic.**

This can be a news article you have read recently. Or a news article that has stood out to you during the COVID-19 pandemic. If you haven't read a news article about COVID-19, think about what pandemic topics (i.e., school, sports, family, masks, healthcare workers, the economy, etc.) are most important to you. Then find a news article related to that topic. Historians use critical thinking skills to better understand the world around them. This is the skill you are refining through this activity.

### **Now that you have a news article, fill out the below chart.**

Title of News Article	
Type of Object	News Article
Tell a Story What is the main point of this news article?  Why did you choose this news article?  What does this news article reveal about life during the COVID-19 pandemic?  Why is this news article important?  What bias exists in this news article?  What is the responsibility of the media during the COVID-19 pandemic?	
List hashtags that	#sanfranciscobayarea, #californiahighschool,

describe this news article.	#americanstudies, #media, #news
Website URL	
Who created this object? Include the author name and the news source.	
When was this article written?	
Is there a location for this news article?	

**Finally, submit this news article to the [COVID-19 archive](#).**