

## **News You Can Use**

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### **Overview**

The main goal of this unit is to allow students to explore and discover news topics of interest. The curriculum unit I have chosen to write, *News You Can Use*, is designed for students at an elementary level, third through fifth grades. This unit could be adapted for any grade level. I intend to present my curriculum unit to my third grade, self-contained class at Mifflin School, where I teach my students Reading, Language Arts, Mathematics, Handwriting, Spelling, Social Studies, and Science. I will integrate this unit into the existing curriculum to help meet the Pittsburgh Public School communication standards. As part of the third grade curriculum, the students are given requirements in which pieces of their work must be completed and entered into their standards-based portfolios. In the third grade, the entire social studies curriculum focuses on the history of Pittsburgh exclusively. To add to this curriculum, I will make use of the KDKA website to involve students in the evolution of past events to the current events of Pittsburgh using this interactive tool. Reading and writing activities will come from the use of this website. Students will read news stories pertaining to Pittsburgh and will complete writing activities that involve summaries and personal responses to the information that they collect from the website. The third grade curriculum requires the students to complete responses to information, personal narratives, responses to literature, research writing, and other writing pieces. This curriculum unit that I have introduced will aid me in fulfilling the requirements that have been put forth by the district.

### **Rationale**

Before I became an educator, I was a Communications major at the University of Pittsburgh. I worked as an intern for a local cable talk show. I can

remember clearly how important it was to be up to date and knowledgeable about current events. There was much work in gathering factual background information of the guests that were interviewed for the talk show. How the news is reported is determined by what the public's interests are, based on feedback and television news ratings.

In my third grade class, it has been surprising to me how much my students really know what is going on in the news, both locally and nationally. Since this curriculum unit is about Pittsburgh's Mass Media, I decided to use the city's oldest news station KDKA-TV 2. The interactive tool that the students will use to complete the objectives and activities for this curriculum unit is the KDKA-TV website.

Third graders are exposed to all sorts of media. They can identify and discuss news stories that they heard on the news the night before school. Listening to them, you can tell that they are curious about what is going on around them and in their communities. Of course, some news stories evoke fear and wonderment from a child. This can be a very delicate situation when explaining violent news reports or negative events that do occur in the community. My focus is not to explain the news, but to allow the students to explore on their own the news stories that attract their interests. Students like to find stories that interest them or touch them personally or indirectly through others that they have known in their lifetime. Not only do my students enjoy reading, but they also enjoy responding by writing about what they know. Many of my students like to invent and write their own stories during free time and recess. They later ask me to read their creations. I think the link between reading and writing through the use of this unit will help keep my students motivated and interested even more through what they learn. Why not use their community to help them better understand how the world works? They need to see this through their own eyes.

I will begin the unit during a social studies lesson by asking the class, "Do you know what news is and how do we get it?" I will be interested to see how they respond to this question and I will make mental notes of what they think is news and what news items they may discuss without prompting them to do so. Vocabulary and news related items such as *news*, *violence*, *news anchors*, *media*, *local news*, *national news*, *politics*, *live remote*, *entertainment*, *live news*, and other important elements will be defined and discussed throughout the class period. How the news was reported in the past will be linked to the changes of how the news is reported today. Third graders are interested and curious about happenings that occur in their hometown. News stories such as floods, car accidents, sports stories, national news stories, entertainment stories, and even news stories regarding violence have been brought up in the classroom throughout the school year. I often hear students mention which television news channel they

received their information from when discussing news events. Children are aware of the happenings that occur in their hometown. From all of this, I would like to take my students on a journey involving the television news media. My class will direct themselves in finding out what kinds of news interests them and allow them to research those ideas on their own. The use of the KDKA website will help move students to independently explore their interests and will aid them in locating stories that they can relate to or that they are curious to understand. Many activities in this unit will be derived from their curiosities and interests in the news that they hear each day.

I intend to have students work independently on some activities while also having them work in groups for other activities. Students will use the website to choose a news story that they will share and discuss with the class. They will explain why they chose that particular story and give their reaction to it. Students will also find a news story that they can react to or relate to personally and will write a personal narrative describing their reaction or personal experience. In groups, students can use the website to create their own newscast on stories they choose together by putting them in an order of importance based on their input. Other activities will evolve from the use of this website as well. What is available for the students to access on the website is streaming video feed of the day's newscast along with past video feeds, print summaries of the latest and most recent news, along with links to other sites to read more information about certain topics and news stories. I expect that the unit will last approximately nine weeks, which is one grading report quarter. As a culminating event, the students may create their own newscast to present to the class or we may have an employee of KDKA-TV come out to the school and discuss how news is important to young learners.

The first television newscast in Pittsburgh aired on Tuesday evening, January 11, 1949. KDKA-TV went on the air at this time as WDTV, which was owned and operated by the DuMont network. The programming aired on channel 3 in the beginning, but the station moved to channel 2 by the middle of the 1950's, becoming an affiliate of CBS. As the transition occurred, the station adopted the same call letters as its sister radio station, KDKA Radio. KDKA Radio was the world's first commercially-licensed radio station in 1920. Channel 2 was acquired by the Pittsburgh-based company, Westinghouse Electric. Radio helped local television news to evolve by supplying television with ideas and talent for the station's programming. In 1994, Westinghouse changed all of its television stations to affiliates of CBS and soon renamed itself CBS. In 1995, the company bought CBS. Westinghouse split up in 1997. This took KDKA Radio and KDKA-TV to Viacom, which merged with CBS in 2000. Under the ownership of Viacom, KDKA became sister stations with Pittsburgh's UPN

affiliate, WNPA-TV. KDKA-TV is owned by CBS, while KDKA Radio is owned by Infinity Broadcasting. Both CBS and Infinity are owned by Viacom.

Television news is interested in people, events, actions rather than trends, and analyses. The final product is a news package of all of these things. The stories included in a newscast are determined by those who work at the assignment desk. The stories are made into a newscast by the news producer. The producer makes sure that the flow of the topics is ordered in such a way to make the newscast continuous. To make a newscast flow takes the work of many people to make it successful. News directors, assignment editors, producers, photographers, editors, and reporters come together to give the news a visual look. Local television news is in constant competition for an audience because of ratings. Television news that is considered to be good is reflected through good ratings.

Today, there are more than 1,000 local commercial television stations airing programs in more than 200 markets throughout the United States. Over 600 of these stations are affiliates of one of the 4 major broadcasting networks, which include ABC, CBS, NBC, and Fox. The local affiliates of the major networks are more into the business of producing news programs. KDKA-TV news airs from 5:00 am to 7:00 am in the morning, during breaks in network talk shows, news at noon, news in the evening from 4 pm to 7 pm, and late at 11 pm daily. The station also airs newscasts during the weekend as well.

The rationale for the creation of this unit is to help me as a teacher to meet the requirements and guidelines for the students to complete their standards based portfolios. Also, this unit will meet many of the Communication Standards used in the Pittsburgh Public Schools. Producing this unit will allow me to monitor the interests of my students based on their reactions to local news stories and to help them gain appreciation of their hometown news media.

The seminar which I attended, *Pittsburgh's Mass Media*, inspired me to develop this curriculum unit. The focus of this seminar was to sharpen the understanding of the differences among the various media and to survey the landscape of print and electronic journalism. On a personal note, I chose to participate in this seminar because it relates to my undergraduate study in Communications, in which I still have a great interest.

Growing up, I always watched KDKA-TV news. From the time I was a small child and now in my adult years, I have remained a faithful viewer of KDKA-TV news. It is funny how a news broadcast can bring back memories of the past. When I was off from school in the summers, I can vividly recall watching Patti Burns and Bill Burns co-anchoring the noon news every weekday

at noon. Then I recall “Evening Magazine” with Jon Burnett and Liz Miles as the hosts of that entertainment news show. Then there was “Pittsburgh Today” that was on at 2 pm weekdays for an hour with Patrice King Brown and Jon Burnett. It was sad to see those shows quietly make their exits because that represented my experiences of local news as a young boy. I do not think many people realize how much history comes with KDKA, but if you are from Pittsburgh, there is an appreciation for KDKA and its rich roots in history. KDKA is still a part of my “ongoing childhood.” Even today, many of the anchors and reporters on KDKA are the same faces I grew up with. I could even say they are an “extended family”. I grew up with these personalities and this news station. Even now, I enjoy seeing the familiar anchors and reporters as well as the new ones. KDKA’s slogan has been the “Hometown Advantage.” KDKA has always marketed the station on its deep local roots. This curriculum unit will help students experience their hometown’s rich history as well as allowing them to choose which news stories interest and affect them.

The math curriculum also plays a big role in the development of this curriculum unit. The Pittsburgh Public School District utilizes the Everyday Math curriculum. One way in which I already utilize the KDKA-TV News website is for the third grade’s Everyday Math Routines. In the morning, the students gather in the area of the room where I have the math routines posted. Here, the students identify the temperature for the day using a color coded thermometer to determine what colored weather day it will be, what the weather looks like outside, attendance, calendar activities, schedules, jobs, and other activities. The students hear the weather forecast in the morning and then offer to tell the class what the temperature of the day will be. With this information, we chart and tally the progress using a bar graph. One graph gives the colored days, based on temperature values assigned to that particular color. Throughout the year, we keep track of the different colored temperature days and make a bar graph to represent that information. In addition to that, we have an ongoing monthly bar graph that represents days that are rainy, sunny, cloudy, partly cloudy, snowy, and windy. For attendance, we use tally marks and numbers to mark the progress of the attendance of the students in our class. We also calculate the elapsed time between sunrise and sunset, which we also gather from the weather information. There are other routines that we do in addition to these. I mention the weather because it relates to the use of the website. When my students gather around me for the routines in the morning, it is in an area where my computer is in full view to them. What I do is that I log on to [www.kdka.com](http://www.kdka.com) and go to “KDKA Video” to the right of the home page. I then click on that and a display of items appear that can be viewed via video feed courtesy of KDKA-TV. From there, I click my mouse on the option “Today’s Accu-Weather Forecast”. The video feed of the weather forecast loads and begins to play with audio for the class to watch and listen for the pertinent information we need to complete our mathematical

routines. I zoom the video into full-screen mode so the students can easily see the information that is being presented on-screen. I started using the website for this purpose because I noticed that only the same students knew each day what the weather forecast was. That left other students without an opportunity to identify and participate in any of the weather activities. Utilizing the website insures that each student who is present for class will have an equal opportunity to participate in the morning routines and activities.

The morning routines are fun for the students and they keep the class interested and motivated to learn more about such topics as weather and science. My curriculum unit is more communications-focused but it also crosses over into the math curriculum at the same time. With the activities that I produce for this curriculum unit, the students will gain an appreciation of the news in our own community as well as acquiring new information that will keep their interest in learning alive. This unit will be entertaining and seem more like fun than actual work in order for students to meet their portfolio requirements and mathematical benchmarks for the third grade curriculum.

The majority of this unit will focus on the Communication standards that the third grade is expected to meet. Most of the skills will apply to reading fluency, reading comprehension, writing, and grammar conventions. Writing is an integral part of the portfolio requirements, which include a response to literature, a response to informational text, informative writing, persuasive writing, 25 books read as part of 25-book reading standard, narrative writing, and a research report. I believe that this curriculum unit will enable my students to meet many of these requirements. Although this unit is more directed towards the Communications and mathematical requirements than the reading requirements, this unit can be adapted and adjusted to any subject area. It is important to state that this type of unit could also be used with other official television news websites of affiliates of the other major news networks.

## **Objectives**

As mentioned previously, students in the Pittsburgh Public School District are required to develop new skills and to compile a Standards Based Portfolio. As students continue to complete activities put forth in this curriculum unit, they will meet many of the writing requirements. Also, students will be expected to present their portfolios to their class as part of an in-school portfolio viewing activity. To help students successfully reach the communication goals, rubrics will be utilized in aiding students to understand the importance of the standards and requirements set forth by the district. The end result helps the students meet and hopefully

exceed the expected criteria for each individual piece of work. The objectives that will help students progress through the unit are as follows:

1. The students will be able to identify, recite, read, and define key terms of television news.
2. The students will be able to view a local newscast from KDKA-TV and identify the different types of news stories.
3. The students will be able to use the daily Accu-Weather forecast to complete the daily math routines.
4. The students will be able to discuss news stories that affect them personally.
5. The students will be able to use the computer to navigate through the KDKA-TV News website.
6. The students will be able to find additional information on a news story of their choosing.
7. The students will be introduced to the history of KDKA-TV and have a discussion about it.
8. Students will be able to compare and contrast the KDKA-TV News website to other news websites.
9. The students will be able to discuss which kinds of news stories may be inappropriate for public consumption.
10. The students will be able to find a positive news story, discuss how they feel about it, and provide information explaining why the story was positive.
11. The students will be able to work in cooperative learning groups for various activities.
12. The students will be able to create their own newscast.
13. The students will be able to discuss facts of local television news.
14. The students will read news stories.

15. The students will present completed activities to the class.
16. The students will be able to write a narrative related to an experience or story taken from the KDKA-TV News website.
17. The students will be able to write an information piece on a news story topic.
18. The students will visit a local television news station.
19. The students will be able to expand vocabulary through listening, reading and writing opportunities.
20. The students will read to be informed and entertained.
21. The students will initiate new topics for discussion and add new ideas to topics being discussed.

### **Strategies**

To help students arrive at an understanding of the news media, it is important for them to make sense of the vocabulary utilized in the television news business. My class will need to know what elements make up the television news and how it works. For this to occur, I will take the students, step by step, through many of the elements of the news accompanied by specific terms and vocabulary. Most of the students that I have taught are primarily successful through visual learning. A visual learner myself, that is the teaching style that seems to captivate and maximize a student's knowledge. The use of visuals such as photos, overhead transparencies, audio, video, and other visual aids will be used in order to prepare students to understand the concepts of this curriculum unit.

Also to aid me in introducing this curriculum unit, I will show an actual newscast will be shown to the class to help students see how a newscast is pieced together and how it flows. Any time this curriculum unit is utilized, a brand new news show program will be chosen to represent the most recent events that have occurred during the teaching of this unit. We will watch the newscast as I stop periodically throughout it to explain and analyze the flow that the newscast takes. The terms that the students learn can be used and exemplified directly in context as the newscast progresses. Besides, the website format of the news is largely drawn from and inspired by the station's televised newscast format.

It is also important for students to understand the place in history that KDKA-TV news represents. Since the basis of this curriculum unit deals with

Pittsburgh's mass media, the importance of KDKA's presence in our hometown needs to be touched upon and discussed. A timeline of KDKA television will be devised and shared with the class so they can see how important KDKA has been to our city. The discussion will also call upon the students' prior knowledge of the Pittsburgh news media in general. This will generate more interest among the students as the discussion builds.

Much of this curriculum unit will evolve around the use of the KDKA-TV 2 website. The basis for the activities put forth in this unit have been derived from using the website as an interactive tool for the students. In order to ensure that the class can successfully log on to the website and navigate through it, a training session on using the Internet is recommended. I will take my students to the lab and show them the proper way to gain access to the website. The overhead projector will be used to show the class step by step how to use the website. The class will follow my directives as they watch me navigate the website one step at a time. I will introduce the website along with all of the features the website has to offer. Also, I will go through many sections of the website giving a brief overview of each. Some of the sections include: State News, Local News, National News, International News, Health News, Consumer News, Recall News, Sports News, Water Cooler Talk, Entertainment News, Weather News, KDKA Special Reports, Sports News, and other news features the website contains. The taskbar to the left of the website offers many different topics and categories of news the students can choose to research. In addition of showing the class which stories they can access to read, the use of the "KDKA-TV Video" feature will be conducted as well. Eventually, the class will use the video player function to create their own news forecast.

Once the students are more experienced in understanding a televised newscast and using the Internet to navigate the KDKA-TV website, I will begin to introduce the activities that will be done throughout this curriculum unit. All the activities in this unit are connected to the requirements and standards set forth by the Pittsburgh Public School District for Communications and mathematics. A sample news story will be taken from the website. I will be showing different uses for the information to help students model their writing. For the class, I will take that news story and have paragraphs already written and display them in the following formats: a persuasive paragraph, an informational paragraph, a narrative, and research writing. The formats will be taught and modeled to the class before the activities begin. These examples will help students to brainstorm and prewrite their own paragraphs taken from the news stories they find on the website. This will piece together the students' entries to be included in their communications portfolios. For math, sample bar graphs, tallies, elapsed time examples using sunrise and sunset, and temperature differences will be displayed and discussed to help better prepare the class for the math routine activities

utilized with the Everyday Math curriculum. The students will be made aware of the connection between what they learn in the classroom and its importance in their real life experiences.

The final strategy that will be used in this curriculum unit will be a personal reflection upon what the class wants to know and what they are learning.. Throughout the reflection, the students will give their opinions about how they feel about the information they find and how beneficial the website can be to them. For me, this will allow the students to react freely to what they find on the website and will give me a picture of the students' interests, likes, and dislikes. As students work through the objectives in this unit, they will be completing the district standards set by the Pittsburgh Public School district while they are satisfying and exploring their interests at the same time. Besides meeting requirements and fulfilling standards, it is important that they are learning and having fun while they are doing it. The idea is to keep the students engaged in enriched learning experiences which will in turn motivate them to become even more involved in the learning process on their own.

### **Classroom Activities**

Here are detailed descriptions of the activities that will be used to meet the requirements and standards of the Pittsburgh Public School District. These activities represent the heart of the unit. These activities were designed with the interests of the students in mind. All activities can be adapted and modified for special education learners when applicable.

#### **Activity 1 – Tapping Into Prior Knowledge**

Before getting heavily involved with this curriculum unit, the teacher will survey the students' knowledge through a discussion utilizing a K-W-L Chart. This is another skill that is taught, reviewed, and reinforced not only in the third grade, but in all of the elementary grades in general. A brief overview/review of the K-W-L chart will be conducted prior to the start of the activity. The students will complete a K-W-L chart. The first step, (or the K) is that the students will record what they already know about the local television news. I am curious to see what the students already know about the news media. The next step, (or the W) in completing a K-W-L chart is that the students will write down questions concerning what they would like to learn about the television news media. This will give them the opportunity to discuss what they would like to find out about the news media among their classmates. For the last step (the L) in this process, the students will share what they have come to learn about KDKA and the local television news in Pittsburgh. I really want to see what the students know about

the Pittsburgh news media specifically. Once the activities of the unit have been completed and the requirements set forth by the district are met, I will conclude the unit by discussing what the students have learned throughout the course of the unit. This activity is to be used as a discussion where the lines of dialogue can be opened between the students and the classroom teacher.

### Activity 2 – Television and the Terms Behind The Cameras

For this activity, the students will read, recite, identify, and define terms used in conjunction with the television news media. The use of these terms through reading and discussion will make the activities more comprehensible and interesting for the students. They need to know these terms in order to identify elements of a newscast as well as extending these terms in their writing assignments. Here is a list of terms that students might see on a list of “terms to know”:

<i>news</i>	<i>producer</i>
<i>violence</i>	<i>reporter</i>
<i>news anchors</i>	<i>writer</i>
<i>media</i>	<i>meteorologist</i>
<i>local news</i>	<i>call letters</i>
<i>national news</i>	<i>Associated Press</i>
<i>politics</i>	<i>newscast</i>
<i>entertainment</i>	<i>news networks</i>
<i>live news</i>	<i>CBS</i>
<i>Nielsen</i>	<i>sportscaster</i>
<i>syndicate</i>	<i>editing</i>
<i>Telecommunications Act (1996)</i>	
<i>FCC</i>	

### Activity 3 – Similarities and Differences

For this activity, the students will utilize the Internet to compare the KDKA-TV website to other local television websites in the Pittsburgh area. The students may compare any component of the website to the other. For example, the students could compare the local news section of the KDKA website to the local news section of another local website or websites. Students will write 1-3 paragraphs discussing the similarities and/or differences that they have found. This activity parallels the “compare and contrast” paragraph writing that is taught from the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Harcourt curriculum. The computer lab should be reserved and utilized to complete this activity.

#### Activity 4 – Persuasive Writing

Students will be asked to decide what kinds of news stories they consider to be appropriate or inappropriate for public consumption. The class will choose a news story that interests them, and they will state their position of whether or not the story is appropriate to air. The students need to use details from the story to help state the position that they choose. Why is the story inappropriate? Why do you think the story should air on the local news? This activity will allow the teacher to explore what news is, and perhaps that will start a discussion about sensationalism too. The students are to write the paper so it seems as if they may be able to sway another person to view the same opinion. It is also important to note here that a student can have a positive story about a sad event. The paper should be at least one to three paragraphs in length. It should start with a topic/introduction sentence, have a least three to five supporting details, and conclude by restating the main idea/topic sentence. The students will have the option to share their paper with the class. A discussion of opinions will occur at the completion of this activity.

#### Activity 5 – The History of Local Pittsburgh Television News

The students can look into the past of local television news through research. Part of the curriculum in the third grade Harcourt Reading Series is to teach students how to search for information and to utilize various resources to do so. Students may use the library, the Internet, encyclopedias, books, and newspaper articles. Students will gather the information they find and write a 1 -2 paragraph summary of the material they have found. Summarizing is another skill that is taught in the third grade.

#### Activity 6 – You Can't Be Negative If You Are Positive

This activity is meant to allow students to seek and find a news story that has a positive effect on them or for their community. The students are left with the option to choose a story from the KDKA website which illustrates “positivity” from their own minds and perspectives. This activity can be done as an independent activity or in cooperative learning groups. The students will explain and discuss why they feel the news story is a positive one. What “evidence” can be presented to persuade others in the class that the news stories are in fact positive in nature. For example, a story about a community that comes together to raise money for a resident who lost their home in that community can be viewed as a positive story. For a negative story, a student may write about why it is unfair to tear a church or building down that has had important meaning in their community. This activity is also beneficial in crossing over to another activity involving writing paragraphs of persuasion (See Activity 4).

### Activity 7 – Morning Routines: Mathematics and the Accuweather Forecast

This activity coincides with the Everyday Math Curriculum set forth by the Pittsburgh Public School District. The students can log on to the KDKA-TV website to find out what the temperature will be for that given day. This activity is great because it includes all students, rather than relying on students to have to watch the news in the morning before they attend school. The Accu-Weather forecast video feed will be viewed by the class. With this information, the color-coded thermometer is adjusted and set appropriately. The information is also used to complete a weather chart and temperature graph. Elements of the Everyday Math Curriculum are similar in the elementary grade levels. Some routines may vary from grade level to grade level. These activities and the implementation of new activities can be adapted and adjusted from this particular activity.

### Activity 8 – How Does The News Affect You?

The students will think of a news story from the past that has been important to them or to someone close to them. The purpose of this activity is for students to rationalize their feelings about the events and occurrences that they experience in their lives. The class will relay their feelings about the story they choose through writing. A narrative writing piece will be displayed, modeled, taught, and reviewed before any writing process begins. The class will review brainstorming ideas along with the prewriting process. The computer lab will be made accessible for students to carry out this activity if needed. This activity interests students because it allows them to use their own “voice,” so to speak. Students like to talk about their experiences in class, so this activity will work as a self-motivator to do just that. The writing can range from one to three paragraphs, depending on the grade level that is participating in this activity. This activity can be adapted and adjusted to elementary students as well as students in the upper grades.

### Activity 9 – Wait, Is There More News You Can Use?

This activity was developed to strengthen the students’ skills in using resources to gather more information than what the news stories may provide. Many news stories include issues and concerns that people take an interest in every day. Issues such as pollution, violence, health, politics, crime, weather, sports, hometown happenings, and countless other topics can be dissected and extended. For example, a news story may report on a major fire that has occurred in the area. A student may want to learn more about how certain fires can be caused. That student may decide to research fire safety and find out how such disasters can be prevented from becoming another report on the evening news.

The students will write a paragraph or paragraphs consisting of information as it relates to a news story they found on the KDKA-TV website. This activity can be used as a portfolio entry for students who need to meet the Pittsburgh School District's portfolio requirements. The students may also watch a KDKA newscast and recall a story they may want to read more about later on the KDKA-TV news website. The students will carefully use the research and writing processes before starting this activity. This activity can be adapted and adjusted for other grade level students and can be applied to objectives and learning goals for students who have individual education plans. The class will be asked to share their research and findings with the rest of the class or in small cooperative learning groups.

#### Activity 10 – Make Your Own Newscast

Making a newscast takes a lot of work for local television news stations. To begin this activity, the jobs of those who work in local television news should be reviewed. The KDKA news website posts the video segments of most stories that are reported and aired for the television newscasts. The website allows the user to pick and choose news stories from the video feed that the user is interested in viewing. Basically, the website offers the option to customize only the news that the people want to use. The class will watch me make a sample newscast on the smart board to aid them in the proper steps to take to successfully complete this activity. During the modeling, I will allow students to help me choose the news stories in order to motivate and prepare them for the start of this activity. Depending on the teachers' preferences, this activity can be done by the students independently or in cooperative learning groups. The use of the in-school computer lab is suggested. Also, students may choose to continue working on this activity if they wish to do so. The class can do this activity one of two ways, or both:

1. The students will pick ten news stories from the website and order them from highest of importance all the way down to the least of importance (students should have viewed several KDKA newscasts to help them better understand how they should go about doing this).
2. The students may pick ten news stories that illustrate the news which interests them. Students do not necessarily need to put these stories in a specific order, but they should be prepared to analyze and discuss why they chose the news stories that they used to complete this activity.

The students should record the news stories they choose on paper or save them as a document file to return to at a later time on disk. This activity can be

written or used as a discussion among the class. Adapt and adjust the activity as needed for any student or grade level.

#### Activity 11 – Picture It

The class will get a disposable camera to work on this activity. Students will be asked to think of events and happenings that occur or will be occurring in their community or in the Pittsburgh area in general. Students will take pictures of the event they choose or of other occurrences that they find interesting and newsworthy. They can take notes, interview a person attending the event, and videotape the event if they wish to do so. The disposable camera is the primary tool for this activity. Once the pictures have been developed, the students can make a poster utilizing the pictures in which they will conduct their own presentations of what they chose for the activity. This activity is meant to be fun for the students as well as making them aware of how reporting and being “on the scene” is an important aspect of producing the local news telecast that KDKA delivers everyday. This activity can be adjusted for any grade level.

#### Activity 12 – Keeping Us Anchored In Our Hometown

This activity allows the students to get to know more about the job of a news anchor on the television news. The students have viewed multiple newscasts on KDKA either by live television during the noon news or by utilizing the video feed provided by the website. I will ask the students to recall what a news anchor is and what job the news anchors do. Once the students have had a discussion about this, they will be directed to the KDKA website to get to know some of the hometown news reporters and news anchors. On the website, students will click on the link on the blue menu screen on the left where it shows the listing, “KDKA-TV News Team”. A listing of the news personalities will be displayed. The students will pick two personalities that they have recognized from the television newscast and do a short synopsis of those personalities. The students should look to see if the news employee has a Pittsburgh connection. The students will choose from the following:

Sonni Abatta  
Bob Allen  
Mary Berecky  
Don Cannon  
Dave Crawley  
Marty Griffin  
Harold Hayes  
David Highfield

Paul Alexander  
Jennifer Antkowiak  
Jon Burnett  
John Cater  
Jon Delano  
Ross Guidotti  
Lynne Hayes-Freeland  
Rebecca Hower

Ralph Iannotti  
Paul Martino  
Dr. Paul Nemiroff, PhD, MD, FACS  
Bob Pompeani  
Andy Sheehan  
Dr. Maria Simbra  
Kristine Sorensen  
Jeff Verszyla  
Yvonne Zanos

Mary Robb Jackson  
Patrice King Brown  
Kelli Olexia  
Ken Rice  
John Shumway  
Stacy Smith  
John Steigerwald  
Brenda Waters

Once the information is gathered, the students will write a summary of what they learned in 1-2 paragraphs. The information will be shared with the class in a discussion format. This activity can be adjusted and adapted for students in other grade levels. This activity can also be done using another local news station's website if the teacher prefers to do that.

#### Activity 13 – Let's Go and Do the Weather, Shall We?

The students may want to visit the Carnegie Science Center to view the Weather Watch E-Motion cone sculpture. This can be a field trip that can be attended at the end of this curriculum unit if the teacher would like to plan the trip. When the sculpture changes color, it indicates that the weather outside will be changing.

When the beacon turns:

**RED:** It is getting warmer.

**BLUE:** It is getting colder

**GREEN:** This means that there is no change

**YELLOW:** This means that severe weather is on its way.

In addition to this, time should be made available for the students to explore the other exhibits and activities that the Carnegie Science Center has to offer. This experience is fun and educational at the same time. It is a great experience for all students of all ages, even adults.

#### Activity 14 – The Culminating Activity

To end the curriculum unit, I thought it would be beneficial and interesting to have a news personality from the KDKA-TV news team come to the school and speak to the class about the television news. This would give the students to the opportunity to ask any other questions they may have about Pittsburgh's news media.

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Kidney, Walter C., Pittsburgh Then And Now, Thunder Bay Press, California, 2004. *This book shows the evolution of Pittsburgh from its early years to the city that it is now.*

Lubove, Roy, Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh Volume Two: The Post Steel Era, The University Of Pittsburgh Press, 1996. *This book discusses major decisions, events, programs, and the personalities that transformed the city from the 1970's up to the present.*

Neuman, Susan B., Literacy In The Television Age, Ablex Publishing Corporation, New Jersey, 1991. *This book explains what children take from television and how television influences literacy and school learning.*

Patterson, Philip, Stay Tuned: What Every Parent Should Know About Media, Covenant Publishing, Missouri, 2002. *This book deals with how to make peace with the media in the household.*

Schneider, Cy, Children's Television: The Art, The Business, And How It Works, NTC Business Books, Illinois, 1987. *This book gives a look at the important factors behind children's reactions to television programs and media today.*

Steye, James, The Other Parent: The Inside Story Of The Media's Effect On Our Children, Atria Books, New York, 2002. *Through TV and media, children are learning how to live in an adult world long before they are ready.*

### **Websites**

[www.kdka.com](http://www.kdka.com)

[www.thepittsburghchannel.com](http://www.thepittsburghchannel.com)

[www.carnegiesciencecenter.org](http://www.carnegiesciencecenter.org)

[www.answers.com/kdka-tv](http://www.answers.com/kdka-tv)

## Student Bibliography

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