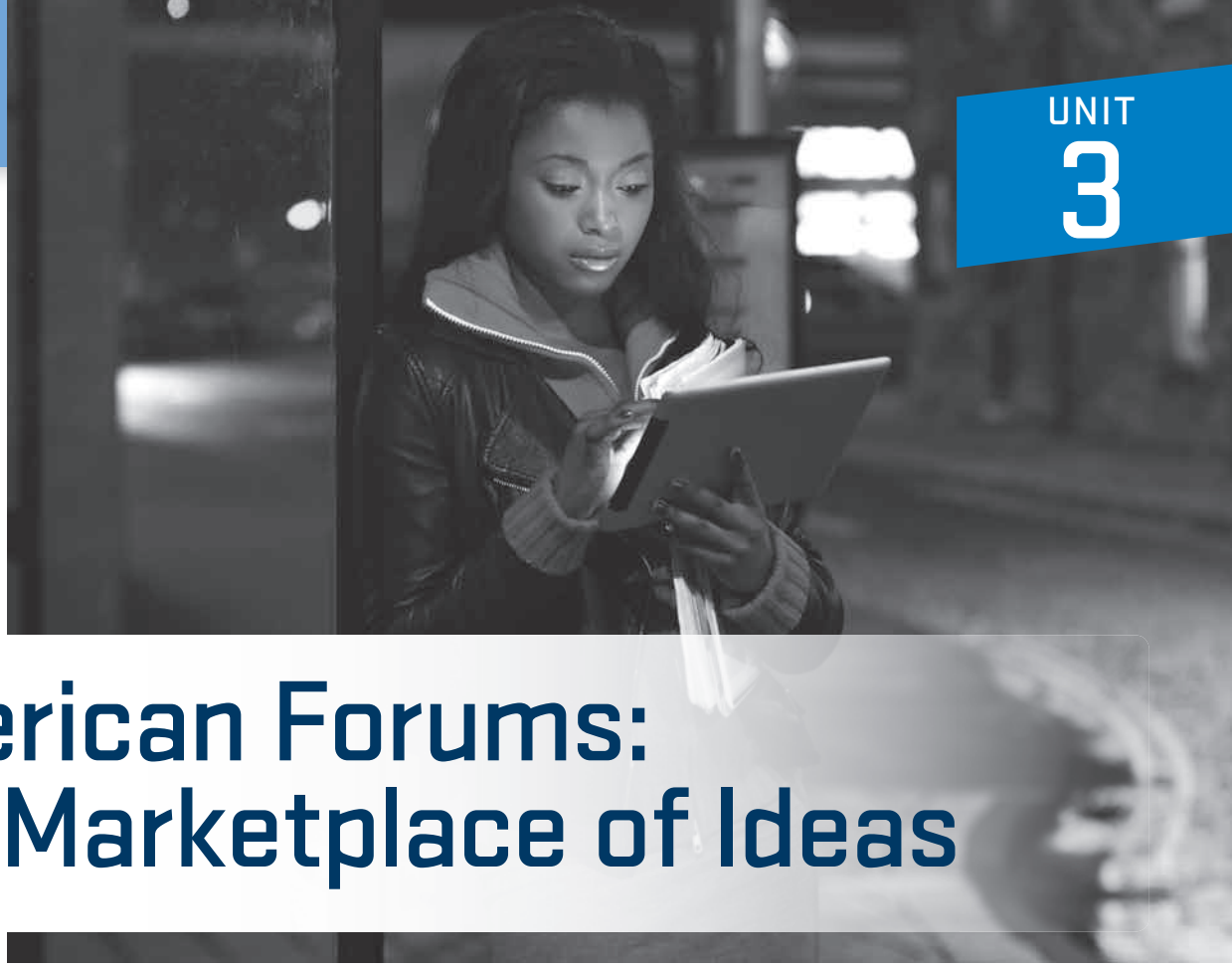

UNIT 3

American Forums: The Marketplace of Ideas

Visual Prompt: TV news, news magazines, newspapers, radio, and the Internet give us sometimes vital, and sometimes trivial, facts and opinions, creating a swirling array of often conflicting information. How do you obtain news and other information?

Unit Overview

The chaos of information overload can create an overwhelming presence in our lives, yet this information is also crucial to our ability to make informed decisions about everything from personal beliefs to public policy. Indeed, the ways in which these ideas and voices interact with each other create a marketplace of ideas—a forum through which we can shape, test, and revise our own perspectives on our society and the issues that dominate the day. One place in particular where opinions can be shared, heard, and responded to is the newspaper op-ed page. In this context, and in many others, satire is often used by social critics to challenge or comment upon prevailing attitudes. In this unit, you will learn to discern a news story from an opinion piece and a satirical text, and you will be better prepared to know where to go when you want to find out what America is thinking—and to create texts that may influence that thinking.

UNIT 3

American Forums: The Marketplace of Ideas

GOALS:

- To analyze and create editorial and opinion pieces
- To identify and analyze fallacious reasoning in a text
- To analyze how writers use logic, evidence, and rhetoric to advance opinions
- To define and apply the appeals and devices of rhetoric
- To analyze and apply satirical techniques
- To examine and apply syntactic structures in the written and spoken word

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

reasoning
evidence
bias
editorial
fallacies
parody
caricature

Literary Terms

target audience
secondary audience
concession
refutation
slanters
satire
Horatian satire
Juvenalian satire
persona
objective tone
subjective tone

Contents

Activities

*Texts not included in these materials.

Language and Writer's Craft

- Diction and Tone (3.2)
- Cumulative or Loose Sentence Patterns (3.19)

MY INDEPENDENT READING LIST

ACTIVITY 3.1

Previewing the Unit

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Close Reading, Graphic Organizer, Marking the Text, Summarizing, Paraphrasing, Think-Pair-Share

My Notes

Learning Targets

- Examine the key ideas and vocabulary for the unit.
- Identify and analyze the skills and knowledge necessary for success in completing the Embedded Assessment.

Making Connections

If you have ever listened to talk radio, watched cable "news" shows, or browsed the Web and social media sites, you may have seen many different versions of the same information. Some news is presented with a biased point of view, and when it comes to the expression of editorial opinions, sources often rely heavily on language and evidence that attempt to persuade through manipulation. So when you come into contact with the news, you should ask what information you are receiving and not receiving, where that information came from, and whether the purveyor of the news might have an agenda. In this unit, you will learn more about how to identify bias and how language is sometimes used as a substitute for logic. Good writers use evidence and reasoning to support their claims; the failure to do so can result in fallacies.

Essential Questions

Based on your current knowledge, respond to the Essential Questions.

1. How do news outlets impact public opinion or public perception?

2. How does a writer use tone to advance an opinion?

INDEPENDENT READING LINK

Read and Research

During this unit, you will read a local, national, or online newspaper every day. Create a log to keep track of what and when you read, and write down the titles of significant articles that you encountered in each section. Don't just read the first page or landing page (if you are reading an online publication); navigate through all the sections. Each day, cut out, scan, copy, or photograph one article that you enjoyed reading. Choose a publication that interests you, since you will be spending considerable time with it.

Unpacking Embedded Assessment 1

Read the assignment for Embedded Assessment 1: Creating an Op-Ed News Project.

> Working in groups, your assignment is to plan, develop, write, revise, and present an informational article on a timely and debatable issue of significance to your school community, local community, or national audience. After your group completes its article, you will individually develop a variety of editorial products that reflect your point of view (agreement, alternative, or opposing) on the topic. Be creative with your editorial products and include at least two different pieces, such as cartoons, editorials, letters, posters, photos, and so on.

With your class, read closely and mark the text for the knowledge and skills you must have to successfully complete this project.

Rights and Responsibility

ACTIVITY 3.2

Learning Targets

- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text.
- Summarize the opinion of a writer using textual details as support.

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Quickwrite, Diffusing, Metacognitive Markers, Socratic Seminar

Rights and the American Dream

While the American Dream is central to Americans' shared sense of identity, another defining belief of the American people is in the importance of free speech. As Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes famously observed in 1919, "the best test of truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market." Viewed in this way, the expression of contrasting and even conflicting ideas and opinions provides information that is crucial to our ability to make informed decisions about everything from personal beliefs to public policy. Indeed, the ways in which these ideas and voices interact with each other help us to shape, test, and revise our own perspectives on the issues that dominate our lives. This unit, with its focus on the media, begins with an in-depth examination of the constitutional amendment guaranteeing U.S. citizens their freedom of speech.

In Unit 1, you read the First Amendment to the United States Constitution as part of your study of the Bill of Rights. Refresh your memory of the First Amendment by rereading the text.

My Notes

Historical Document

First Amendment to the United States Constitution

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Working from the Text

1. Each of the following terms is taken verbatim from the First Amendment. Read through the list and then underline each word or term where it appears in the text of the First Amendment. Next, define each term. Feel free to use a dictionary or other resource as allowed or provided by your teacher.

respecting	
establishment	
prohibiting	
free exercise	
thereof	
abridge	
the press	
peaceably	
assemble	
petition	
redress	
grievances	

Rights and Responsibility

My Notes

2. Now transform the text by rewriting the First Amendment in the space below, replacing the vocabulary words with their definitions. In some cases, your definition may fit exactly; in others, you may need to rework the phrasing.

3. The First Amendment includes four basic rights or freedoms. What are they? Which of these will be the focus of this unit?

Preview

During the rest of this activity, you will read an informational text and participate in a Socratic Seminar to discuss the ideas of a free press, individual responsibility, and democracy.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

- Use metacognitive markers to note anything that raises a question for you (?), anything you find surprising (!), and anything that connects to the First Amendment (*).
- Circle unknown words and phrases. Try to determine the meaning of the words by using context clues, word parts, or a dictionary.
- Underline any rhetorical devices you can identify, and note the device.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

For 45 years, George Krimsky worked as a journalist, author, lecturer, and media critic. He served with the Associated Press for 16 years, both in the United States and abroad, and was eventually appointed the head of the AP's World Services News Department. In 1984 he left to found the Center for Foreign Journalists, now known as the ICFJ.

Informational Text

The Role of the Media in a Democracy

by George A. Krimsky

Chunk 1

In a free-market democracy, the people ultimately make the decision as to how their press should act, says George Krimsky, the former head of news for the Associated Press World Services and author of Hold the Press (The Inside Story on Newspapers).

1 Volumes have been written about the role of the mass media in a democracy. The danger in all this examination is to submerge the subject under a sludge of **platitudes**. The issue of whether a free press is the best communications solution in a democracy is much too important at the close of this century and needs to be examined dispassionately.

2 Before addressing the subject, it helps to define the terminology. In the broadest sense, the media embraces the television and film entertainment industries, a vast array of regularly published printed material, and even public relations and advertising. The "press" is supposed to be a serious member of that family, focusing on real life instead of fantasy and serving the widest possible audience. A good generic term for the press in the electronic age is "news media." The emphasis in this definition is on content, not technology or delivery system, because the press—at least in developed countries—can be found these days on the Internet, the fax lines, or the airwaves.

3 A self-governing society, by definition, needs to make its own decisions. It cannot do that without hard information, leavened with an open exchange of views. Abraham Lincoln articulated this concept most **succinctly** when he said: "Let the people know the facts, and the country will be safe."

4 Some might regard Lincoln's as a somewhat naive viewpoint, given the complexities and technologies of the 20th century; but the need for public news has been a cornerstone of America's system almost from the start.

5 Thomas Jefferson felt so strongly about the principle of free expression he said something that non-democrats must regard as an absurdity: "If it were left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter." The implication of those words is that self-governance is more essential than governance itself. Not so absurd, perhaps, if you had just fought a war against an oppressive government.

Chunk 2

6 In the wake of America's successful revolution, it was decided there should indeed be government, but only if it were accountable to the people. The people, in turn, could only hold the government accountable if they knew what it was doing and could intercede as necessary, using their ballot, for example. This role of public "watchdog" was thus assumed by a citizen press, and as a consequence, the government in the United States has been kept out of the news business. The only government-owned or-controlled media in the United States are those that broadcast overseas, such as the Voice of America. By law, this service is not allowed to broadcast within the country.

My Notes

platitudes: clichéd statements

succinctly: briefly and accurately

Rights and Responsibility

subsidy: financial support

There is partial government **subsidy** to public television and radio in the United States, but safeguards protect it against political interference.

7 Because the Constitution is the highest law in the land, any attempts by courts, legislators and law enforcement officers to weaken protected liberties, such as free expression, are generally preventable.

8 Fairly simple in theory, but how has all this worked out?

9 Generally speaking, pretty well, although the concept of a free press is challenged and defended every day in one community or another across the land. The American press has always been influential, often powerful and sometimes feared, but it has seldom been loved. As a matter of fact, journalists today rank in the lower echelons of public popularity. They are seen as too powerful on the one hand, and not trustworthy on the other.

10 In its early days, the American press was little more than a pamphleteering industry, owned by or affiliated with competing political interests and engaged in a constant war of propaganda. Trust was not an issue. What caused the press to become an instrument for democratic decision-making was the variety of voices. Somehow, the common truth managed to emerge from under that chaotic pile of information and misinformation. A quest for objectivity was the result.

GRAMMAR & USAGE
Rhetorical Devices

A **rhetorical question** is a figure of speech in the form of a question that an author asks to emphasize a point rather than elicit an answer. Rhetorical questions often occur immediately after a comment and suggest the opposite of it—the idea is to make a point more prominent. Authors often use rhetorical questioning as a persuasive device to influence the kind of response they want from an audience.

Notice the question in paragraph 8. The reader is not expected to answer this question, but rather to understand that the application of constitutional theory has not proven simple at all.

Find another rhetorical question that the author uses and discuss its effect with a partner.

Chunk 3

11 Many critics have questioned whether there is such a thing as "objectivity." Indeed, no human being can be truly objective; we can only *seek* objectivity and **impartiality** in the pursuit of truth. Journalists can try to keep their personal views out of the news, and they employ a number of techniques to do so, such as obtaining and quoting multiple sources and opposing views.

12 The question is whether the truth always serves the public. At times, the truth can do harm. If the truthful report of a small communal conflict in, say, Africa, leads to more civil unrest, is the public really being served? The journalistic purists—often those sitting in comfortable chairs far from conflict—say it is not their job to "play God" in such matters, and that one should not "shoot the messenger for the message."

13 If, however, one takes the rigid view that the truth always needs to be controlled—or Lenin's dictum that truth is **partisan**—the door is wide open for enormous abuse, as history has demonstrated time and again. It is this realization (and fear) that prompted Jefferson to utter that absurdity about the supreme importance of an uncensored press.

impartiality: lack of support for one side or the other

partisan: supports one party over another

14 What Jefferson and the constitutional framers could not have foreseen, however, was how modern market forces would expand and exploit the simple concept of free expression. While media with meager resources in most developing countries are still struggling to keep governments from **suppressing** news that Westerners take for granted, the mass media in America, Britain, Germany and elsewhere are preoccupied with their role as profitable businesses and the task of securing a spot on tomorrow's electronic superhighway. In such an environment, truth in the service of the public seems almost a quaint anachronism.

suppressing: holding down or back

15 Is the capitalist drive an **inherent** obstacle to good journalism? In one sense, the marketplace can be the ally, rather than the enemy of a strong, free media. For the public to believe what it reads, listens to and sees in the mass media, the "product" must be credible. Otherwise, the public will not buy the product, and the company will lose money. So, profitability and public service can go hand in hand. What a media company does with its money is the key. If it uses a significant portion of its profits to improve its newsgathering and marketing capabilities and eliminate dependence upon others for

inherent: built-in

its survival (e.g. state subsidies, newsprint purchases, or access to printing facilities), the product improves, and the public is served. If it uses its profits primarily to make its owners rich, it might as well be selling toothpaste.

16 The assumption in this argument is that the public overwhelmingly wants to believe its news media, and that it will use this credible information to actively and reasonably conduct its public affairs. Unfortunately, that assumption is not as valid as it was in simpler times. In affluent societies today, media consumers are seeking more and more entertainment, and the news media's **veracity** (even its **plausibility**) is less important than its capacity to attract an audience.

17 But, you say, look at the new technology that can penetrate any censorship system in the world. Look at the choices people have today. Look at how accessible information is today. Yes, the choices may be larger, but a case can be made they are not deeper—that big money is replacing quality products and services with those of only the most massive appeal. The banquet table may be larger, but if it only contains "junk food," is there really more choice? Declining literacy, for example, is a real problem in the so-called developed world. That's one reason why newspapers are so worried about their future.

Chunk 4

18 Where is the relevance of all this to the emerging democracies around the world? Certainly the American experience, for all its messiness, provides a useful **precedent**, if not always a model.

19 For example, when one talks about an independent media, it is necessary to include financial independence as a prerequisite, in addition to political independence. The American revenue-earning model of heavy reliance on advertising is highly suspect in many former communist countries, but one has to weigh the alternatives. Are government and party subsidies less imprisoning? If journalists are so fearful of contamination by advertiser pressure, they can build internal walls between news and business functions, similar to those American newspapers erected earlier in this century.

20 If they are fearful of political contamination of the information-gathering process, they can build another wall separating the newsroom from the editorial department—another important concept in modern American journalism.

21 The problem in many new democracies is that journalists who once had to toe the single-party line equate independence with opposition. Because they speak out against the government, they say they are independent. But haven't they just traded one **affiliation** for another? There is little room for unvarnished truth in a partisan press.

22 Is objectivity a luxury in societies that have only recently begun to enjoy the freedom to voice their opinions? Listen to a Lithuanian newspaper editor shortly after his country gained its independence: "I want my readers to know what their heads are for." His readers were used to being told not only what to think about, but what to think. Democracy requires the public to make choices and decisions. This editor wanted to prepare citizens for that responsibility with articles that inform but do not pass judgment. His circulation increased.

23 Though nearly 60 percent of the world's nations today are declared democracies—a monumental change from a mere decade ago—most of them have nevertheless instituted press laws that prohibit reporting on a whole array of subjects ranging from the internal activity and operations of government to the private lives of leaders. Some of these are well-intentioned efforts to "preserve public stability." But all of them, ALL of them, undermine self-governance.

My Notes

veracity: truthfulness
plausibility: believability

precedent: prior example

affiliation: close association

Rights and Responsibility

My Notes

24 The watchdog role of the free press can often appear as mean-spirited. How do the government and public protect themselves from its excesses? In the United States, it is done in a variety of ways. One, for example, is the use of "ombudsmen." In this case, news organizations employ an in-house critic to hear public complaints and either publish or broadcast their judgments. Another is the creation of citizens' councils which sit to hear public complaints about the press and then issue verdicts, which, although not carrying the force of law, are aired widely.

libel: publishing a false statement that hurts someone's reputation

25 Last, and most effective, is **libel** law. In the United States, a citizen can win a substantial monetary award from a news organization if libel is proven in a court of law. It is much harder for a public official or celebrity than an ordinary citizen to win a libel case against the press, because the courts have ruled that notoriety comes with being in the limelight. In most cases, the complaining **notable** must prove "malice aforethought."

notable: well-known person

26 There is nothing in the American constitution that says the press must be responsible and accountable. Those requirements were reserved for government. In a free-market democracy, the people—that is the voters and the buying public—ultimately decide as to how their press should act. If at least a **semblance** of truth-in-the-public-service does not remain a motivating force for the mass media of the future, neither free journalism nor true democracy has much hope, in my opinion.

semblance: outward appearance

27 The nature and use of new technology is not the essential problem. If true journalists are worried about their future in an age when everyone with a computer can call themselves journalists, then the profession has to demonstrate that it is special, that it offers something of real value and can prove it to the public. There is still a need today—perhaps more than ever—for identifying sense amidst the nonsense, for sifting the important from the trivial, and, yes, for telling the truth. Those goals still constitute the best **mandate** for a free press in a democracy.

mandate: authorization

28 George Washington's admonition, uttered at the Constitutional Convention, still stands: "Let us raise a standard to which the wise and honest can **repair**."

repair: go back

Second Read

- Reread the informational text to answer these text-dependent questions.
- Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

4. **Craft and Structure:** The prefix *dis-* generally reverses the meaning of a word. Using this information, and your knowledge of suffixes, what does *dispassionately* mean in paragraph 1?

5. **Knowledge and Ideas:** Which details in paragraphs 3–7 show the author's reasoning for arguing in favor of the importance of the free press clause of the First Amendment?

6. **Craft and Structure:** How do words and phrases such as "dispassionately" (paragraph 1), "it was decided" (paragraph 6), "accountable" (paragraph 6), and "generally speaking" (paragraph 9) set a tone that contributes to Krimsky's persuasiveness?

7. **Craft and Structure:** In paragraph 11, how does Krimsky say journalists try to be objective? How does he use this technique in paragraph 12?

8. **Key Ideas and Details:** In Chunk 4, in what two ways does Krimsky say the media must be independent? How does he suggest that these goals be achieved?

9. **Key Ideas and Details:** What does Krimsky mean in paragraph 21 when he suggests that newly free journalists who oppose the government have "traded one affiliation for another"?

10. **Key Ideas and Details:** How does the anecdote about the Lithuanian newspaper editor in paragraph 22 illustrate Krimsky's central idea regarding objectivity? How do the editor's readers respond?

11. **Craft and Structure:** Based on Krimsky's conclusion, what is his point of view about the importance of a free press within a democracy?

My Notes

Rights and Responsibility

My Notes

12. **Craft and Structure:** Based on the context of the last sentence, what is an "admonition"?

Working from the Text

13. You will next participate in a Socratic Seminar. To prepare for the Socratic Seminar, review the texts in this activity and respond to the pre-seminar questions. Use details from each text to support your thinking.

Pre-seminar questions:

- How important is a free press to a democratic society? What is the balance between the freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment and the responsibility of the individual in our society?
- Why is it important that the government is not involved with the media?
- Write one of your own open-ended questions based on the text.

Language and Writer's Craft: Diction and Tone

When writers make an argument, they choose between a **subjective** or an **objective tone** to convey information. Writers may use a subjective tone if they want to provide an opinion that contains a biased viewpoint, or they might use an objective tone if they want to convey unbiased facts that pertain to the argument. Each choice has its merits and drawbacks—when readers know an argument is subjective, it may feel more personal and contain emotions and judgment. When an argument is objective, it may feel as though the writer's opinions have been removed from the equation to produce a purely fact-based argument. Pay close attention to a writer's **diction**, or word choice, in order to ascertain whether the tone is subjective or objective. Subjective arguments tend to contain more emotional or opinionated language: "The American press ... has seldom been loved." Objective arguments tend to contain more neutral or factual language: "the media embraces the television and film entertainment industries, a vast array of regularly published printed material, and even public relations and advertising."

How do you know which tone to take in crafting an argument? First, consider your audience. A meeting with your teacher about raising a grade might not benefit from subjective emotional language. However, if you provide objective, measurable facts about your performance, the teacher may be more likely to consider your point of view.

PRACTICE Choose one paragraph from "The Role of the Media in a Democracy" and analyze whether the tone is objective or subjective. Which clues from the writer's diction indicate objectivity or subjectivity? Then, rewrite the paragraph in the opposing tone, paying close attention to diction.

Explain How an Argument Persuades

Krimsky begins his essay by defining terminology and revisiting some historical and key ideas about the founding of the U.S. government. Write an essay that explains how Krimsky continues to structure his essay to persuade readers of the vital role of free media within a democracy. How effective is this structure in conveying Krimsky's ideas in a convincing way? Be sure to:

- Use diction and precise language that maintain an objective tone as you describe Krimsky's structure.
- Employ logical organization as you build an explanation of how Krimsky's ideas progress.
- Develop your explanation by citing significant and relevant quotations, making sure not to introduce errors of fact or understanding.

My Notes

ACTIVITY
3.3

Introducing the Media

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Think-Pair-Share, Questioning the Text

My Notes

Learning Targets

- Examine a news source and identify its focus.
- Explain how a medium is tailored for a specific audience.

News Media Survey

1. Rank the following media outlets in the order you would turn to them for information on a major news story. (Use 1 to indicate the outlet you would turn to most often. Write N/A to indicate you would not use that outlet.)

_____ Newspaper
_____ Local TV News
_____ Cable News Station
_____ Word of Mouth
_____ Websites/Internet
_____ Radio News
_____ News Magazines
_____ News Podcast
_____ Social Media

2. Rank the following media outlets for accuracy and trustworthiness in how they present information. (Rank the most trustworthy outlet 1.)

_____ Newspaper
_____ Local TV News
_____ Cable News Station
_____ Word of Mouth
_____ Websites/Internet
_____ Radio News
_____ News Magazines
_____ News Podcast
_____ Social Media

3. Think back on the past month. About how much time (in hours) did you spend receiving news (not entertainment) from the following media outlets?

_____ Newspaper
_____ Local TV News
_____ Cable News Station
_____ Word of Mouth
_____ Websites/Internet
_____ Radio News
_____ News Magazines
_____ News Podcast
_____ Social Media

4. Rank each of the following reasons that you might give for not reading newspapers. (Write 1 next to the reason most appropriate for you. Write N/A if you disagree with the statement.)

_____ They are boring.
_____ They take too long to read.
_____ They don't have information that applies to me and my life.
_____ They usually focus on scandals, politics, and gossip.
_____ They are often filled with mistakes and lies.
_____ Other:

5. Do you feel that it is important to be knowledgeable about news? Explain.

Exploring Newspapers

6. Look over the following quotations about newspapers. In the space after each quote, summarize what the author is saying and then state whether you agree and why.
   - "Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter."—Thomas Jefferson, 1787
   - "Here is the living disproof of the old adage that nothing is as dead as yesterday's newspaper ... This is what really happened, reported by a free press to a free people. It is the raw material of history; it is the story of our own times."—Henry Steel Commager, preface to a history of *The New York Times*, 1951
   - "The newspapers, especially those in the East, are amazingly superficial and ... a large number of news gatherers are either cynics at heart or are following the orders and the policies of the owners of their papers."—Franklin D. Roosevelt, May 7, 1934
   - "For my part I entertain a high idea of the utility of periodical publications; insomuch as I could heartily desire, copies of ... magazines, as well as common Gazettes, might be spread through every city, town, and village in the United States. I consider such vehicles of knowledge more happily calculated than any other to preserve the liberty, stimulate the industry, and ameliorate the morals of a free and enlightened people."—George Washington, 1788
   - "I read the newspapers avidly. It is my one form of continuous fiction."—Aneurin Bevan (1897–1960), British Labour politician

My Notes

Introducing the Media

My Notes

- "What appears in newspapers is often new but seldom true." —Patrick Kavanagh (1905–1967), Irish poet

- "As people get their opinions so largely from the newspapers they read, the corruption of the schools would not matter so much if the Press were free. But the Press is not free. As it costs at least a quarter of a million of money to establish a daily newspaper in London, the newspapers are owned by rich men. And they depend on the advertisements of other rich men. Editors and journalists who express opinions in print that are opposed to the interests of the rich are dismissed and replaced by subservient ones." —George B. Shaw, Irish playwright, 1949

- "Most of us probably feel we couldn't be free without newspapers, and that is the real reason we want the newspapers to be free." —Edward R. Murrow, journalist, 1958

- "The decline of competing local daily newspaper voices diminishes not only the availability of local and regional news to consumers but also the availability of competing opinions and ideas, not just at local levels but at all levels. Social thinkers, historians, and political analysts have identified such diversity of thought—a marketplace of ideas—as essential to a functioning democracy." —Steven M. Hallock, journalism professor, 2007

Independent Reading: News Source Viewing Log

7. In small discussion groups, brainstorm a list of news sources you reference regularly. Your teacher will assign one to you to monitor this evening. Keep notes about your news source in the log below.

Time (Non-print) and Location	Story Focus or Headline	Target Audience	Perspective on Issue Covered

8. As you compare your source's coverage of news with that of other students, what key differences do you notice? What might explain those differences?

Check Your Understanding

After discussing differences, write a few sentences explaining how your source's coverage of news is tailored to what you think is its **target audience**. Identify a specific audience for your source.

Literary Terms

A **target audience** is the intended group for which a work is designed to appeal or reach. A **secondary audience** is the group who may also receive the message or may influence the target audience.

My Notes

ACTIVITY 3.4

The Newspaper Debate

LEARNING STRATEGIES: Skimming/Scanning, Marking the Text, Discussion Groups, Paraphrasing

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY
Reasoning is the thinking or logic used to make a claim in an argument. **Evidence** is the specific facts, examples, and other details used to support the reasoning.

My Notes

emergence: rise in popularity

Learning Targets

- Analyze how concessions and refutations can be used to refute an opposing argument.
- Apply strategies of refutation to a set of persuasive elements.

Preview

In this activity you will read and analyze two editorials, one that makes a claim about modern media consumption and another that refutes the claim.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

- Highlight details that are Sunstein's **reasoning** and **evidence**.
- Circle unknown words and phrases. Try to determine the meaning of the words by using context clues, word parts, or a dictionary.
- Underline any words with British spellings. (The *Financial Times* is a British newspaper.)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Cass Sunstein is a noted American legal scholar who has written dozens of books, essays, and newspaper and magazine articles on public policy, economics, law, and psychology. He has taught at the law schools of the University of Chicago, Harvard University, and Columbia University.

Editorial

How the Rise of the Daily Me Threatens Democracy

Financial Times, January 10, 2008
by Cass Sunstein

1 More than a decade ago the technology specialist, Nicholas Negroponte, prophesied the **emergence** of the Daily Me—a fully personalised newspaper. It would allow you to include topics that interest you and screen out those that bore or annoy you. If you wanted to focus on Iraq and tennis, or exclude Iran and golf, you could do that.

2 Many people now use the internet to create something like a Daily Me. This behaviour is reinforced by the rise of social networking forums, collaborative filtering and viral marketing. For politics, the phenomenon is especially important in campaigns. Candidates in the US presidential race can construct information cocoons in which readers are deluged with material that is, in their eyes, politically correct. Supporters of Hillary Clinton construct a Daily Me that includes her campaign's perspective but offers nothing from Barack Obama, let alone Mitt Romney.

3 What is wrong with the emerging situation? We can find a clue in a small experiment in democracy conducted in Colorado in 2005. About 60 US citizens were put into 10 groups. They **deliberated** on controversial issues, such as whether the US should sign an international treaty to combat global warming and whether states should allow same-sex couples to enter into civil unions. The groups consisted of predominantly either leftwing or rightwing members, with the former drawn from left-of-centre Boulder and the latter from Colorado Springs, which tends to be right of centre. The groups, not mixed, were screened to ensure members **conformed** to stereotypes. (If people in Boulder liked Vice-President Dick Cheney, they were cordially excused.) People were asked to state their opinions anonymously before and after the group discussion.

deliberated: thought about or discussed carefully

conformed: held to

My Notes

4 In almost every group, people ended up with more extreme positions. The Boulder groups favoured an international treaty to control global warming before discussion; they favoured it far more strongly afterwards. In Colorado Springs, people were neutral on that treaty before discussion; discussion led them to oppose it strongly. Same-sex unions became much more popular in Boulder and less so in Colorado Springs.

5 Aside from increasing extremism, discussion had another effect: it squelched diversity. Before members talked, many groups displayed internal disagreement. These were greatly reduced: discussion widened the rift between Boulder and Colorado Springs.

6 Countless versions of this experiment are carried out online every day. The result is group polarisation, which occurs when like-minded people speak together and end up in a more extreme position in line with their original inclinations.

7 There are three reasons for this. First is the exchange of information. In Colorado Springs, the members offered many justifications for not signing a climate treaty and a lot fewer for doing so. Since people listened to one another, they became more sceptical. The second reason is that when people find their views **corroborated**, they become more confident and so are more willing to be extreme. The third reason involves social comparison. People who favour a position think of themselves in a certain way and if they are with people who agree with them, they shift a bit to hold on to their preferred self-conception.

corroborated: strengthened by evidence

8 Group polarisation clearly occurs on the internet. For example, 80 per cent of readers of the leftwing blog Daily Kos are Democrats and fewer than 1 per cent are Republicans. Many popular bloggers link frequently to those who agree with them and to contrary views, if at all, only to ridicule them. To a significant extent, people are learning about supposed facts from narrow niches and like-minded others.

9 This matters for the electoral process. A high degree of self-sorting leads to more confidence, extremism and increased contempt for those with contrary views. We can already see this in the presidential campaign. It will only intensify when the two parties square off. To the extent that Democratic and Republican candidates seem to live in different political universes, group polarisation is playing a large role.

10 Polarisation, of course, long preceded the internet. Yet given people's new power to create echo chambers, the result will be serious obstacles not merely to civility but also to mutual understanding and constructive problem solving. The Daily Me leads **inexorably** also to the Daily Them. That is a real problem for democracy.

inexorably: unstoppably

The Newspaper Debate

My Notes

Second Read

- Reread the editorial to answer these text-dependent questions.
- Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

1. **Craft and Structure:** Given your knowledge of the base word *prophecy*, what is the meaning of the verb *prophesied* in paragraph 1?

2. **Key Ideas and Details:** Based on paragraphs 3 through 5, describe the sequence of events of the experiment conducted in Colorado. What is the effect on the subjects of hearing only their own viewpoints?

3. **Key Ideas and Details:** How does the image of "echo chambers" in paragraph 10 contribute to Sunstein's central idea?

4. **Craft and Structure:** What reasoning and evidence does Sunstein present for his claim that personalized news is a problem for American democracy? Are these reasons and evidence convincing?

Working from the Text

5. In the left-hand column, identify support (reasoning and evidence) Sunstein uses to justify his claim that the diminished role of the newspaper is a problem for American democracy. You will revisit this chart after you read the next editorial.

Sunstein	Potter

My Notes

The Newspaper Debate

Literary Terms
A **concession** is an admission in an argument that the opposing side has valid points. A **refutation** is the reasoning used to disprove an opposing point.

My Notes

Setting a Purpose for Reading

- Highlight Potter's **concessions** and **refutations**.
- Circle unknown words and phrases. Try to determine the meaning of the words by using context clues, word parts, or a dictionary.
- Underline words and phrases that indicate Potter's tone.

Editorial

The Newspaper Is Dying—Hooray for Democracy

Macleans, April 7, 2008
by Andrew Potter

1 The Newspaper Audience Databank (NADbank) released its readership numbers for 2007 a couple of weeks ago, and for those of us in the industry it was grim reading: almost everywhere you look, circulation, ad revenues and page counts are down, which is why you can now fire a cannon through any given newsroom at midday and not have to worry about committing reportercide.

2 But unless you work in the business, is there any reason to be especially concerned? Each year may put another loop in the newspaper's death spiral, but the overall consumption of news is on the rise, almost entirely thanks to the **myriad** online sources. The Internet is eating the newspaper's lunch, but there's plenty of food on the buffet table.

myriad: huge number of

3 In certain quarters, though, there is growing concern that the demise of the newspaper is a threat to democracy itself. The argument goes something like this: the economic logic of mass circulation meant a newspaper had to try to appeal to as many potential readers as possible. To do so, it brought together in one package a diverse set of voices, presenting each reader with ideas and perspectives that he or she might not otherwise have seen or sought out. This fostered the democratic values of curiosity, enlightenment and toleration, and the worry is that if the newspaper declines, so might democracy.

4 The sharpest version of this argument comes from Cass Sunstein, a law professor at the University of Chicago. In a recent column in the Financial Times, Sunstein fusses about the rise of what he calls the Daily Me, the highly personalized and customized information feeds that will allow you to "include topics that interest you and screen out those that bore or anger you." As Sunstein sees it, the Daily Me is the potential Achilles heel of democracy because of a phenomenon called group polarization: when like-minded people find themselves speaking only with one another, they get into a cycle of **ideological** reinforcement where they end up endorsing positions far more extreme than the ones they started with.

ideological: belief

5 Group polarization is everywhere. It helps explain why, for example, humanities departments are so left-wing, why fraternities are so sexist, why journalists drink so much. But, for the most part, it isn't a problem (for democracy anyway), since we routinely come into contact with so many people from so many different groups that the tendency toward polarization in one is at least somewhat **tempered** by our encounters with others.

tempered: lessened

6 Yet Sunstein is worried that group polarization on the Internet will prove far more **pernicious**. Why? Because of the image of the blogosphere as a series of echo chambers, where every viewpoint is repeated and amplified to a hysterical pitch. As our politics moves online, he thinks we'll end up with a public sphere that is partisan and extreme, and as an example, he points out that 80 per cent of readers of the left-wing blog Daily Kos are Democrats, while fewer than one per cent are Republicans. The result, he claims, "will be serious obstacles not merely to civility but also to **mutual** understanding."

pernicious: quietly deadly

mutual: shared

7 As upside-down arguments go, this one is ingenious. For decades, **progressive** critics have complained about the anti-democratic influence of the mass media, and that newspapers present a selective and highly biased picture of the world, promoting pseudo-arguments that give the illusion of debate while preserving the status quo. (Remember that the villain in *Manufacturing Consent*, the film about Noam Chomsky, was—wait for it—the New York Times.) And now that the Internet is poised to cast these lumbering dinosaurs of black ink and dead trees into the pit of extinction, we're supposed to say hang on, what about democracy?

progressive: politically liberal or left-wing

My Notes

8 There's a basic error here, paired with an equally basic misunderstanding of how the marketplace of ideas works. There is no reason at all to be concerned that 80 per cent of Daily Kos readers are Democrats, any more than to worry that 80 per cent of the visitors to McDonald's like hamburgers. Given what each of these outlets is selling, it would be bizarre if it were otherwise. What would be worrisome was if four-fifths of Democrats read only the Daily Kos, but there is absolutely no evidence that is the case.

9 Earlier this month, the Project for Excellence in Journalism, a think tank sponsored by the Pew foundation, released its fifth annual report (at journalism.org) on the state of the news media. For the most part, its analysis of the newspaper business confirmed the trends of declining circulation, revenues and staff. But with respect to public attitudes, the PEJ found that most readers see their newspaper as increasingly biased, and 68 per cent say they prefer to get their news from sources that don't have a point of view. The PEJ also found a substantial disconnect between the issues and events that dominate the news hole (e.g., the Iraq surge, the massacre at Virginia Tech) and what the public wants to see covered—issues such as education, transportation, religion and health. What this suggests, is, aside from some failings of newspapers, that readers go online in search of less bias, not the self-absorption of the Daily Me.

10 Nothing about how people consume media online suggests they are looking for confirmation of preexisting biases. In fact, we have every reason to believe that as people migrate online, it will be to seek out sources of information that they **perceive** to be unbiased, and which give them news they can't get anywhere else. The newspaper may be dying, but our democracy will be healthier for it.

perceive: interpret

The Newspaper Debate

My Notes

Second Read

- Reread the editorial to answer these text-dependent questions.
- Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

6. **Key Ideas and Details:** In paragraph 5, what reason does Potter give that group polarization is not a threat to democracy? Is there evidence provided to support this central idea?

7. **Craft and Structure:** The tone Potter employs in paragraphs 4–7 suggests that Sunstein's position is ridiculous. Which words and images most strongly contribute to this tone?

8. **Craft and Structure:** Potter presents Sunstein's point of view in paragraphs 4–7. Does he do so objectively and accurately? Explain.

9. **Key Ideas and Details:** In paragraphs 8 and 9, why is Sunstein concerned that 80 percent of Daily Kos readers are Democrats? In paragraph 8, why does this fact not concern Potter? What evidence does Potter cite in paragraph 9?

Working from the Text

10. Revisit the graphic organizer on page 211. List any concessions and refutations you found. Be sure to identify if each one is a concession or refutation.

11. In a deductive argument, the author presents a thesis and then attempts to support it. In an inductive argument, the model is reversed. The evidence is examined, and then a conclusion is reached. Identify each writer's use of inductive and deductive reasoning to support his positions. Why does each author structure his argument this way? Cite textual evidence in your answer.

Refuting an Argument

To refute an existing argument, authors rely on a variety of strategies of **refutation**. These strategies often "attack" different elements of an opponent's position. Some of the most common "attacks" include:

- attack on a claim: a big-picture attack focusing on the writer's overall position
- attack on reasoning: Does the evidence the writer uses logically support his or her conclusions?
- attack on evidence: Is the evidence timely, accurate, and unbiased? Is there counter-evidence?
- Attack on assumption: What does the writer assume to be true, and is that assumption accurate? (A writer's assumptions are often unstated.)

Check Your Understanding

In the following graphic organizer, practice refuting elements adapted from George A. Krimsky's article "The Role of the Media in a Democracy" from Activity 3.2.

Element	Your Refutation or "Attack"
Claim: In the age of technology, the media is still an essential part of a self-governing society.	
Reasoning: People's fascination with Britney Spears shows that celebrity news is more important than traditional news.	
Evidence: People who use Facebook are producers of news.	
Assumption: Everyone has access to a source of news.	

My Notes

The Newspaper Debate

INDEPENDENT READING LINK

Read and Connect

As you read daily from your self-selected news source, do you find yourself creating a kind of "Daily Me" by fully reading only those stories that support your personal interests or beliefs, or do you find yourself reading stories on a variety of topics and with varying viewpoints? Why are you employing this approach? Discuss your ideas with a partner.

My Notes

Explain How an Argument Persuades

Potter writes for the purpose of refuting Sunstein. Write an essay that explains the strategies of refutation Potter uses in this response. Do you find these strategies effective or ineffective and why? Be sure to:

- Introduce a topic statement that identifies the strategies.
- Develop the topic by selecting significant examples, including false statements or faulty reasoning, in Potter's text.
- Provide a concluding statement that follows from the analysis you have presented.

News or Views: A Closer Look

ACTIVITY 3.5

Learning Targets

- Access prior knowledge about objectivity and subjectivity.
- Analyze a news story for evidence of bias.

LEARNING STRATEGIES: Paraphrasing, Quickwrite, Marking the Text, Think Aloud, Think-Pair-Share

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY
Bias is a slanted attitude of either preferring or disliking something.

Examining Bias

We tend to think that news articles are **objective**, which means they are based on factual information. However, all news reports are to some extent **subjective**—or based on feelings or opinions—because they represent the reporter's analysis of the information surrounding the story's topic. Close analysis of the text's content, structure, and publication context can reveal subtle indications of **bias** in terms of how the writer frames the issue.

You will be assigned one of the following six types of bias. In your small group, paraphrase the explanation for your assigned type of bias. Next, generate several guiding questions you can use to discern whether your assigned type of bias is present in a given text.

My Notes

Types of Bias

A. BIAS THROUGH SELECTION AND OMISSION

- An editor can express a bias by choosing to use or not to use a specific news item. For example, the editor might believe that advertisers want younger readers—they spend more money. Therefore, news of specific interest to old people will be ignored.
- Within a given story, details can be ignored or included to give readers or viewers a different opinion about the events reported. If, during a speech, a few people boo, the reaction can be described as "remarks greeted by jeers." Or the people jeering can be dismissed as "a handful of dissidents ..." or perhaps not even be mentioned.
- Bias through the omission of stories or details is very difficult to detect. Only by comparing news reports from a wide variety of outlets can this form of bias be observed.
- Bias in local news coverage can be found by comparing reports of the same event as treated in different papers.

B. BIAS THROUGH PLACEMENT

- Readers of papers judge first-page stories to be more significant than those buried in the back. Television and radio newscasts run the most important stories first and leave the less significant to later. Where a story is placed, therefore, influences what a reader or viewer thinks about its importance and suggests the editor's evaluation of its importance.

  For example, a local editor might campaign against handgun ownership by giving prominent space to every shooting with a handgun and gun-related accident in his or her paper.
- Some murders and robberies receive front-page attention, while others receive only a mention on page 20.

News or Views: A Closer Look

My Notes

- Similarly, where information appears *within* an article may also reveal evidence of bias. Because most readers only read the first few paragraphs of any given article, burying information at the end may work to suppress a particular point of view or piece of information, while placing it at the beginning emphasizes it. The opposite might be true, though; the end could reveal the writer's closing thought (and thus his or her personal bias) on the issue.

C. BIAS BY HEADLINE

- Many people read only the headline of a news item. In addition, most people scan nearly all the headlines in a newspaper. As a result, headlines are the most-read part of a paper. They can summarize as well as present carefully hidden biases and prejudices. They can convey excitement where little exists, they can express approval or condemnation, and they can steer public opinion.

D. BIAS BY PHOTOS, CAPTIONS, AND CAMERA ANGLES

- Some pictures flatter a person; others make the person look unpleasant. A paper can choose photos to influence opinion about, for example, a candidate for election. Television can show film or videotape that praises or condemns. The choice of which visual images to display is extremely important. Newspapers run captions that are also potential sources of bias and opinion.

E. BIAS THROUGH STATISTICS AND CROWD COUNTS

- To make a disaster seem more spectacular (and therefore worthy of reading), numbers can be inflated. "One hundred injured in train wreck" is more powerful than "Passengers injured in train wreck."
- Crowd counts are notoriously inaccurate and often reflect the opinion of the person doing the counting. A reporter, event sponsor, or police officer might estimate a crowd at several thousand if he or she agrees with the purpose of the assembly—or a much smaller number if he or she is critical of the crowd's purposes or beliefs. News magazines use specific numbers to enhance believability.

F. BIAS BY SOURCE CONTROL

- To detect bias, always consider where a news item "comes from." Is the information supplied by a reporter, by an eyewitness, by police or fire officials, by executives, by elected or appointed government officials? Each might have a particular bias that is presented in the story.
- Puff pieces are supplied to media outlets by companies or public relations directors—and even sometimes by the government (directly or through press conferences). The term *puff piece* comes from the word *puffery*, which means "overly flattering words about a topic." For example, the Avocado Growers Association might send a press release in the form of a news story telling of a doctor who claims that avocados are healthy and should be eaten by all. A food company might supply recipes for a newspaper's food section that recommends use of its products in the recipes. A country's tourist bureau will supply a glowing story, complete with pictures of a pleasant vacation. Recently, even government agencies have sometimes issued such releases.

- A pseudo-event is some event (demonstration, sit-in, ribbon cutting, speech, ceremony, ground breaking, etc.) that takes place primarily to gain news coverage.
- Similarly, the question of who is quoted in an article can point to bias. Be sure to consider who is quoted, what the quote seems to reveal or imply (negatively or positively) about the position, who is merely paraphrased, and what perspectives are unrepresented or remain silent in the article.

My Notes

Identifying Bias

1. Use the following graphic organizer to keep track of examples of the guiding questions each group developed for identifying bias. Then apply those questions to a sample newspaper article or online news source.

Bias Type	Guiding Questions	Examples
Bias Through Selection and Omission		
Bias Through Placement		
Bias by Headline		
Bias by Photos, Captions, and Camera Angles		
Bias Through Statistics and Crowd Counts		
Bias by Source Control		

News or Views: A Closer Look

My Notes

Preview

While editorials openly present opinions, newspaper articles may appear objective until carefully examined for evidence that reveals a more subjective agenda. Now you will read a news story and try to identify bias.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

- Underline any text that answers one of the guiding questions your class generated.
- Circle unknown words and phrases. Try to determine the meaning of the words by using context clues, word parts, or a dictionary.

Article

Facebook Photos Sting Minnesota High School Students

The Associated Press

1 EDEN PRAIRIE, Minn. — For 16-year-old Nick Laurent, walking out of Eden Prairie High School yesterday to protest the school's punishment of students seen partying on Facebook pages was about asking administrators to be fair.

2 More than a dozen students joined Laurent after learning of the walkout from fliers the junior handed out the day before. The students said school administrators overreacted to the **perception** that students in the photos were drinking.

perception: impression

3 "It's the loudest thing we could do," said Laurent, who organized the walkout but said he wasn't one of the students in the photos.

4 Laurent tried to make his point by passing out red plastic cups that were similar to those seen in some of the photos. He noted that it was impossible to see what was inside the cups, so administrators couldn't prove that students were drinking.

5 Laurent agreed that athletes and other students who sign a code of conduct to be involved in activities should face consequences if they break the rule against drinking alcohol. But he said the punishments were too harsh.

6 "They don't have (the) support of the students to hand out **arbitrary** punishments and punishments that don't fit the crime," he said.

arbitrary: unfair or unreasonable

7 Once the photos on the social-networking Web site came to the attention of administrators, 42 students were interviewed and 13 face some discipline over the pictures, school officials said.

8 School officials haven't said how the students were disciplined, but Minnesota State High School League penalties start with a two-game suspension for the first violation. Laurent and other students said they knew of classmates who were banned from their sports teams for five weeks.

9 Principal Conn McCartan did not return a call seeking comment on the walkout, but students said they expected they'd be punished.

10 In earlier statements, the school's principal said school officials did not seek out the pictures. But he didn't say who gave the school the photos.

11 "We do not go out looking at student social networking sites. We do however take action when we are given **legitimate** information about school or Minnesota State High School League violations," McCartan said in an e-mail to families of his students.

12 McCartan said interviews with students suggested, however, that the pictures might have been posted on such sites, and warned of the dangers.

13 "These sites are not private places," he wrote. "Their content forms a permanent and public record of conversations and pictures."

14 In an e-mail to parents and guardians, Superintendent Melissa Krull said, "We are not legally at liberty to discuss further details of this investigation."

15 Fourteen-year-old Ali Saley said cutting class for the cause was worth it. She held signs such as, "They walk or we do," in **solidarity** with the students who were punished. A few cars honked in support of the students as they gathered on a footbridge over the road in front of the school.

16 The Eden Prairie High School students who got into trouble ran afoul of a new reality: digital cameras and social networking sites make the entire world a public space.

17 It's becoming increasingly common for schools and potential employers to check social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace, and to penalize kids or other people for what they find, said William McGeveran, a professor at the University of Minnesota Law School and an expert on data privacy.

18 "Facebook is largely a public space. Users don't always perceive it that way, but that's what it is," McGeveran said.

19 Even when young people are cautious about what they put on the pages, he said, friends or acquaintances can post pictures of them in questionable situations without their knowing about it.

20 McGeveran cited research by the Pew Internet & American Life Project that suggested most teens were aware of the risks of posting personal information on the Internet. A report issued last month found that most teens restrict access to their posted photos and videos at least some of the time, and that few consistently share them without any restrictions.

21 "But some students are still foolish about what they put on their pages," he said.

22 Eden Prairie High School has about 3,300 students, and Facebook lists about 2,800 members in its network for the school, including more than 500 from the current senior class. A spot check on Jan. 9 showed that some had posted dozens and even hundreds of pictures of themselves and their friends. However, most members used a privacy setting to limit access to their profiles to friends and other authorized people.

23 Schools in Minnesota have limited ability to regulate the conduct of students after hours. When students participate in sports or certain fine-arts activities, however, they must agree in writing to abide by the long-standing rules of the Minnesota State High School League, which prohibit the use of alcohol, tobacco and controlled substances, even over the summer.

My Notes

legitimate: real or true

solidarity: togetherness

News or Views: A Closer Look

My Notes

ubiquitous: ever-present

24 League spokesman Howard Voigt noted that parents must sign the forms, too, certifying that they understand the rules and penalties. Still, he said, complaints are common.

25 "We run into that all the time here—parents call and accuse us of being too hard on their kid," he said.

26 Voigt said there had been several cases of students' running afoul of league rules because of potential violations posted on social-networking sites.

27 It's not safe for kids to assume what they do in small groups won't be broadcast to the entire world, McGeveran said.

28 "I don't think most of us would have liked to have lived our teen years in an era of **ubiquitous** camera phones and social networking," he said. "It really changes the perception of what places are private and which ones aren't."

Second Read

- Reread the article to answer these text-dependent questions.
- Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

2. **Craft and Structure:** In the opening paragraphs, what is the effect of focusing on Nick Laurent rather than focusing on the punished students, their parents, or the administration?

3. **Craft and Structure:** How does the reporter structure the article to present through Laurent the central idea that students are being punished unfairly?

4. **Craft and Structure:** In paragraph 15, how do students use two meanings of *walk* in their sign, "They walk or we do"? What is the effect of this parallel structure?

5. **Key Ideas and Details:** How does the information provided by expert William McGeveran in paragraphs 17 through 21 and paragraphs 27 and 28 develop the central idea that social media sites are not private places?

Check Your Understanding

Evaluate this article as a source of credible information. Did you find bias in this article, or is it objective? Explain.

Writing to Sources: Explanatory Writing Prompt

With a partner, identify a timely and debatable issue of significance to your school, local, or national community. Write a short informational article about the issue. Choose two to three informational articles to use as sources. Be sure to:

- Introduce a topic statement that states the issue and your view on its significance.
- Develop the topic by selecting direct quotations, specific examples, and concrete details from source texts.
- Use varied transitions and sentence construction to show the relationships among ideas.

INDEPENDENT READING LINK

Read and Discuss

Review several stories in your self-selected news source. Find examples of at least two types of bias. Share these examples with your peers. Explain how each example exemplifies the bias.

My Notes

ACTIVITY
3.6

The Bias of Rhetoric

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Paraphrasing, Discussion Groups, Note-taking

Literary Terms
Slanters are rhetorical devices used to present the subject in a biased way, either positively or negatively.

My Notes

Learning Targets

- Analyze how language can be used to manipulate readers or viewers.
- Distinguish between biased and objective rhetoric.

Slanting Reader Perception

1. **Quickwrite:** While the previous activity focused on how writers can construct the "truth" of their subject via their choices regarding content and structure, this activity focuses on how language itself can be used to influence the reader's perception of the subject. View the advertisement selected by your instructor. Then in a Quickwrite, identify what elements from the advertisement contribute to its power.

2. Sometimes a writer compensates for a lack of evidence and logical argumentation by using slanted language and emotional appeals that present a prejudiced depiction of a subject. This happens so often that there are names for these various **slanters**. As you read through the techniques described below, try to think of examples from the media that fit the descriptions. (Adapted from Brooke Noel Moore and Richard Parker's *Critical Thinking*, 8th ed., 2007)

Types of Slanters

A. LABELING (EUPHEMISMS AND DYSPHEMISMS)

Labeling is the use of a highly connotative word or phrase to name or describe a subject or action, a technique also called using **loaded language** or a **question-begging epithet**. When the connotations are positive (or less negative), the writer is using **euphemism**. For example, car dealers try to sell "pre-owned vehicles" rather than "used cars." In the opposite case, when the connotations are negative, the writer is using **dysphemism**. Consider, for example, the differences between these terms: *freedom fighter, guerrilla, rebel,* and *terrorist*. *Freedom fighter* is a euphemism, while *terrorist* is a dysphemism.

B. RHETORICAL ANALOGY

Rhetorical analogy is the use of a figurative comparison (sometimes a simile or a metaphor) to convey a positive or negative feeling toward the subject. For example, in the 2008 presidential race, Sarah Palin suggested (via a joke) that she was like a pit bull with lipstick.

C. RHETORICAL DEFINITION

Rhetorical definition is the use of emotionally charged language to express or elicit an attitude about something. A classic example is defining capital punishment as "government-sanctioned murder." A rhetorical definition stacks the deck either for or against the position it implies.

D. RHETORICAL EXPLANATION

When an opinion is expressed as if it were fact and is expressed in biased language, it is a rhetorical explanation. For example, you might say someone "didn't have the guts to fight back" when taunted by another person. This paints the person as motivated by cowardice. Or you might say the person "took the high road, instead of taking a swing."

E. INNUENDO

Innuendo is the use of language to imply that a particular inference is justified, as if saying "go ahead and read between the lines!" In this way, the speaker doesn't have to actually make a claim that can't be supported; instead, the audience is led to make the leap on their own. For example, a presidential candidate might say, "Think carefully about whom you choose; you want a president who will be ready to do the job on day one." The implication is that the opposing candidate is not ready.

F. DOWNPLAYERS

Downplayers are qualifier words or phrases that make someone or something look less important or significant. Words like *mere* and *only* work this way, as does the use of quotation marks, to suggest a term is ironic or misleading. For example: "She got her 'degree' from a correspondence school." Often these are linked to concessions with connectors such as *nevertheless*, *however*, *still*, or *but*.

G. HYPERBOLE

Hyperbole is the use of extravagant overstatement that can work to move the audience to accept the basic claim even if they reject the extremes of the word choice. Many of the other slanters can be hyperbolic in how they are worded; the key element is that the statement or claim is extreme. For example, in response to a dress code, a student might say, "This school administration is fascist!"

H. TRUTH SURROGATES

Using a truth surrogate is hinting that proof exists to support a claim without actually citing that proof. For example, ads often say "studies show," and tabloids often say things like "according to an insider" or "there's every reason to believe that. ..." If the evidence does exist, the author is doing a poor job of citing it; meanwhile, the author has not actually identified any source—or made any claim—that can be easily disproven or challenged.

I. RIDICULE/SARCASM

Ridicule and sarcasm are the use of language that suggests the subject is worthy of scorn. The language seeks to evoke a laugh or sarcastically mock the subject.

Check Your Understanding

Given one of the previous slanters, complete the following tasks in your small group and be prepared to share your findings with the class:

- Create your own paraphrased definition of the term.
- List the examples provided in the explanation and brainstorm additional examples.
- Create a brief skit for the rest of the class to illustrate the term.
- Take notes on the other groups' presentations of their slanters.

My Notes

INDEPENDENT READING LINK

Read and Discuss

Review several stories in your self-selected news source and find examples of at least two types of slanting. Share these examples with your peers. Explain how each example exemplifies bias. Tell the group whether or not you think the writer's techniques are effective, and explain your reasons.

ACTIVITY 3.7

Fair and Balanced

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Marking the Text, SMELL, Discussion Groups, Quickwrite, Socratic Seminar

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY
An **editorial** is an article in a newspaper or magazine expressing the opinion of its editor or publisher.

My Notes

vulnerable: easily hurt

Learning Targets

- Identify examples of slanters in an editorial.
- Revise selected passages to eliminate loaded language.

Preview

In this activity, you will read an **editorial** and investigate slanters in action.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

- Highlight any slanters you recognize in the editorial, and note what kind of slanter each one is.
- Circle unknown words and phrases. Try to determine the meaning of the words by using context clues, word parts, or a dictionary.
- Put a question mark next to anything that raises a question for you.
- Put an exclamation point next to anything that you have a strong response to.

Editorial

Abolish high school football!

NJ.com, September 20, 2007
by Raymond A. Schroth

1 Are you sure playing high school football is good for your son?

2 I had doubts long before I read the report in the New York Times (Sept 15) that of the 1.2 million teenagers who play high school football, an estimated 50 percent have suffered at least one concussion, 35 percent two or more. Since 1997, throughout 20 states, 50 boys have died.

3 A concussion is a blow to the head that smashes the brain against the skull. Because their brain tissues are less developed, adolescents are most **vulnerable**. The victim feels "weird," has splotchy vision, falls to the ground, vomits, goes into a coma, dies. If he survives he suffers depression, he can't concentrate, drops out, and/or develops symptoms later in life.

4 Worst of all, the young men overwhelmingly told the reporter that if they thought their heads had been damaged they would never tell the coach, because he might take them out of the game.

5 I've felt high school football did more harm than good since I taught high school in the 1960s, since I began getting an inkling of the damage done young bodies in both high school and college, where linemen are encouraged to "bulk up" to a grotesque 300 pounds in order to do more damage to the enemy—to say nothing of the damage done to their own late adolescent bodies by getting so fat.

6 Football, especially in high school, distorts the goals of the so-called educational institution that sponsors it, turns ordinary boys into bedazzled heroes, tells them they're the kings of the corridors, coddled by teachers afraid to flunk them, as their parents try to live out their glamorous dreams over the broken bodies of their children bashing their helmeted heads into one another as thousands cheer.

7 Buzz Bissinger's 1990 bestselling *Friday Night Lights*, a popular book, film, and TV series, was, in the long run, an **indictment** of the small Texas town with nothing going for it but its high school football team. If the town had a library, churches, a theater, a park—if the school had any classes—we never saw them. They were **irrelevant**.

8 The boys went to high school to play, feeding **delusions** that they would be noticed by a scout who would get them college scholarships and contracts on pro teams.

9 But, you say, if high schools drop football, that will deprive colleges and the pros of their feeder system. Right. It will also deprive colleges of many who have come for only one reason—to play—while their paid tutors ease them through the motions of an education.

10 But, you say, some football players are very bright. Absolutely right. I have taught three in recent years who were the best in the class, straight A's, a delight to have in the room. But they are exceptions to the rule, and few and far between.

11 Without football, how can ambitious athletes thrive? They can play soccer, basketball, baseball, tennis, lacrosse, and squash. They can run, swim, row, sail, wrestle, and bike. They can also read, write for the paper, act, sing, dance, walk, and pray. And when they graduate their brains will be enriched, not bruised.

12 The Times article quotes Kelby Jasmon, a high school student in Springfield, Ill., walking around today with two concussions, who says there is "no chance" he would tell the coach if he gets hit hard and symptoms return. "It's not dangerous to play with a concussion," he says. "You've got to sacrifice for the team. The only way I come out is on a stretcher."

13 If the school officials and his parents read that and leave him on the field, something is very, very wrong.

indictment: strong criticism

irrelevant: not important

delusions: false beliefs

My Notes

Second Read

- Reread the editorial to answer these text-dependent questions.
- Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

1. **Key Ideas and Details:** What objective evidence does Schroth provide in the beginning of his editorial and for what purpose?

2. **Craft and Structure:** Which slanters does Schroth use in paragraph 3? Do they make his case more or less convincing? Explain.

Fair and Balanced

My Notes

3. **Craft and Structure:** What are the effects of ridicule and sarcasm in paragraphs 7 and 8?

Working from the Text

4. In pairs, use the SMELL strategy to analyze this editorial. You have already done some work in the Language section of the strategy.

Sender–Receiver Relationship	Who is the writer explicitly addressing his argument to here?	
	How does he seem to feel about that target audience?	
	What values does the sender assume the reader shares or argue that they should share?	
Message	What is a literal summary of the content?	
	What is the article's ultimate thesis regarding the subject?	
Emotional Strategies	What emotional appeals does the writer include?	
	What seems to be his desired effect?	
Logical Strategies	What logical arguments or appeals does the writer include?	
	What is their effect?	
Language	What specific language/ slanters are used in the article to support the message or characterize the opposition?	

5. Copy five of the more slanted passages from Schroth's editorial to the spaces below and revise them to be less rhetorically manipulative.

Original Passage	Revised Passage

Check Your Understanding

Quickwrite: Respond to the Essential Question: How does a writer use tone to advance an opinion?

My Notes

ACTIVITY
3.8

How to Read an Editorial

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Graphic Organizer, SOAPSTone, Substituting/Replacing

My Notes

Learning Targets

- Use specific strategies to analyze an editorial.
- Examine the impact of audience and context on a writer's decisions.

How to Read an Editorial

As you read through the following guidelines for reading editorials, paraphrase each of the points by writing a word or two in the margins that will help you to remember the point.

i. Examine the headline, sub-headline, and related cartoon (if it exists). What will this editorial be about? What guesses or assumptions can you make about the author's perspective at this point?

ii. Look at the author's name and affiliation, if given. What do you know about the author's background and/or potential bias at this point?

iii. Read the first two to three paragraphs very carefully. What issue is the author discussing, and what is his or her stance on this issue?

iv. Once you have determined the author's stance on the issue, stop reading for a moment or two. What is the other side to the issue? Who might think differently? What are one or two reasons that you know that might support the other side of the author's stance?

v. Continue reading the editorial. What are two of the strongest pieces of evidence that the author uses to support his or her side of the issue? Why are they effective?

vi. Did the author persuade you? Did the author address or refute the main objections of the opposition? Give an example. What did he or she not address? Why might the author have chosen not to address this element? Do you think the author was fair to the other side? Why or why not?

vii. Go back through the editorial and circle words and phrases that are "slanted." How do these words affect your feelings about the issue? About the author?

viii. If the author were standing right next to you now, what would you say to him or her?

Preview

In this activity, you will read and analyze an unsigned editorial from the *Minneapolis/St. Paul Tribune*. Your analysis will help build the skills you need to read and understand editorials and other written opinions.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

- Highlight any phrases or sentences that indicate speaker, occasion, audience, purpose, subject, or tone.
- Circle unknown words and phrases. Try to determine the meaning of the words by using context clues, word parts, or a dictionary.
- Put a question mark next to anything that raises a question for you.
- Put an exclamation point next to anything that you have a strong response to.

Editorial

Facing consequences at Eden Prairie High

from the *Minneapolis/St. Paul Star Tribune*

1 This just in: Some high school students drink alcohol and, in the Internet age, some underage drinkers are foolish enough to post party photos on popular websites. In the case of Eden Prairie High School vs. the partying Facebook students, we give administrators credit for their judgment and flunk the students on common sense.

2 Similarly, any parents considering taking legal action because they think the school went too far in disciplining students need a reality check. Teen drinking remains a serious problem in this state and Eden Prairie administrators deserve praise—not legal threats or complaints from parents—for taking **decisive** action that they knew would be controversial. Face it, parents, the Facebook kids screwed up, and here's a chance to talk about personal responsibility in the context of an underage drinking escapade that, thankfully, did not involve death or injury.

3 And here's the reality for students: We know high school students drink, and some experiment with drugs. Most of your baby boomer parents certainly did one or both, and some lost driver's licenses, had serious auto accidents and were suspended from the football team. That's how it goes with risks and consequences.

4 Your parents can probably tell you a few stories about binge drinking, too, either from their high school or college days or both. If not, go to the search field at startribune.com and type in these names: Jenna Foellmi, Rissa Amen-Reif, Amanda Jax and Brian W. Threet. In the past four months, these four young people all died in drinking-related incidents in Minnesota. Brian's funeral was Thursday afternoon in Farmington.

5 With that backdrop, protests over invasion of privacy are ridiculous. School administrators weren't surfing social networking sites without cause. They received a complaint and had a responsibility to investigate and act according to school policies. Students who think the Web has been used against them unfairly should fast-forward a few years and consider how they'll feel when a potential employer uses Facebook or MySpace in a background check, with a job offer on the line.

6 Some are viewing the athletes among the students who were caught red-cupped in Eden Prairie through a surprisingly sympathetic lens. That's wrongheaded. The Minnesota High School League requires student-athletes and their parents to pledge that the students will **abstain** from alcohol and illegal drugs. Break the pledge, lose the privilege.

7 We were encouraged by the reaction of Eden Prairie High School parent Larry Burke, whose daughter was not involved in the drinking incident. "The posting is very foolish," Burke told the Star Tribune. "But from a perspective of a parent, I'm glad it happened. There are a lot of discussions going on in a lot of households about alcohol and consequences."

8 Let's hope other parents bring as much common sense to those conversations as Burke.

My Notes

decisive: quick and definite

abstain: choose to stay away

How to Read an Editorial

My Notes

Second Read

- Reread the editorial to answer these text-dependent questions.
- Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

1. **Key Ideas and Details:** Which words and phrases in the first few paragraphs show which side of the argument the writer supports?

2. **Craft and Structure:** Which phrases most clearly show the writer's tone? Does this tone make the argument more or less persuasive?

Working from the Text

3. Use the questions in the "How to Read an Editorial" section of this activity to guide your responses to the editorial.

Title: _____ Author: _____

Issue: _____

Question	Response
i	
ii	
iii	

iv	
v	
vi	
vii	
viii	

4. Using the notes you have generated, be prepared to participate in a class discussion addressing the following questions (as well as any others inspired by the text):
   - What does the author seem to assume the audience is feeling about the issue?
   - How does the author tailor language and argument to his or her audience?
   - Does the author use slanters? If so, what is their effect?

Check Your Understanding

Quickwrite: How is an editorial different from a news story?

Writing to Sources: Explanatory Text

Now independently analyze a second editorial of your choice. Then write a text explaining how the writer tailors the language and argument to a target audience. Be sure to:

- Include a clear summary of the argument.
- Cite specific examples from the text.
- Comment on the effect the author's language has on the intended audience.

My Notes

INDEPENDENT READING LINK

Read and Connect

Read an editorial from your self-selected news source. Use the Working from the Text questions in this activity to write an analysis of the editorial.

ACTIVITY
3.9

How to Write an Editorial

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
RAFT, Drafting, Sharing and Responding, SOAPStone

My Notes

Learning Targets

- Compare and contrast the persuasive elements of two editorials.
- Craft an editorial of your own, carefully considering audience and context.

How to Write an Editorial

You have now had the opportunity to read and analyze a couple of editorials. Now you will walk through the steps of writing your own editorial.

Before You Write

- **Brainstorm for topics:** Choose topics in which you have a genuine interest and some prior knowledge. Be sure the topics are issues that are debatable. Do not, for example, argue for school violence because it would be difficult to find anyone in favor of such a thing. Many editorials are written as responses to news articles or other editorials, so be alert for interesting ideas while reading your news source each day.
- **Research your topic:** Ask opinions, conduct interviews, and locate facts. While editorials are opinion pieces, those opinions must still be supported with evidence.
- **Get both sides:** In addition to having support for your position, be certain that you have information about the other side of the issue. You will need this soon.
- **Consider your audience:** Use SOAPSTone as a prewriting strategy to consider details of your audience. What does your audience currently believe about this issue? Why? How will they respond to you? Why? What can you do to persuade them to change their minds? How will using slanted language affect your credibility and persuasiveness with them?
- **Write a thesis:** Before writing your draft, you must have a clearly stated position on this issue with a strongly worded reason for your position.
- **Write out your topic sentences and/or main ideas:** This preparation will help you organize your thoughts as you draft your editorial.

Writing a Draft

- **Get to the point:** Your first paragraph should immediately bring the reader's attention to the seriousness of the issue. Create a "hook" that will sell the piece to the reader: a current event or imminent danger, for example. You should then provide a concise summary of what you're going to tell the reader and include your thesis statement.
- **Provide context:** Give your readers important background information about the issue. This background should not be common knowledge (e.g., "drugs are dangerous") but should frame the issue and define any key terms that your reader will need in order to understand your argument.

- **Make your point:** Give your strongest two or three reasons why the reader should agree with you. Use relevant and appropriate evidence to support your reasons. State the source of your information, and be sure that your argument is clear and organized.
- **Address your opposition:** Reasonable people may think differently than you do on the subject. State at least one or two of the most credible reasons why someone might object to your point of view. Then refute their positions by explaining why their assumptions, claims, logic, and/or evidence are wrong.
- **Wrap it up:** Briefly summarize the main points of your argument and think of a powerful way to end your piece. Often this means giving your reader one last thought to consider.

Revising Your Draft

- **Check your evidence:** As you look back through your draft, consider whether you have included enough evidence to convince someone who thinks differently than you. Also, is that evidence relevant to your position?
- **Check your rhetoric:** Where is your language slanted? What words or phrases could you modify to "tone down" your voice and appeal to more people?
- **Check your grammar:** Nothing will make dismissing your ideas easier than misspelled or misused words or phrases. Triple-check your editorial for mistakes.

Argument Writing Prompt

With a partner, co-write a brief editorial on the subject of the Eden Prairie suspensions or another contemporary issue of your choice. Use the steps outlined in "How to Write an Editorial" to guide your writing. Be sure to:

- Introduce and establish the significance of your claim.
- Use language and varied sentence structures to establish relationships among reasons and evidence.
- Make use of rhetorical devices, such as appeals to emotion, logic, or ethics, to support your argument.
- Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone.

My Notes

How to Write an Editorial

Preview

Now you will read two editorials about high school graduation requirements. As you read, use the following graphic organizer to keep track of your observations. Complete the chart after you have read and analyzed both editorials.

Author	Reasons For	Reasons Against	Strongest Statement of Position
Jack O'Connell			
Nick Thomas			
You			
A person you know			

Setting a Purpose for Reading

- Underline each writer's position and key reasons for his position.
- Circle unknown words and phrases. Try to determine the meaning of the words by using context clues, word parts, or a dictionary.
- Highlight any words or phrases that illustrate the writer's tone.

Editorial

Pro and Con: Raising Graduation Requirements for High School Students

Time to raise the bar in high schools

by Jack O'Connell

1 The most important challenge we face in public education today is to improve high schools so that all California students graduate prepared to succeed in either college or the workplace. Today, far too many of our 1.7 million high school students are prepared for neither the demands of skilled employment nor the **rigors** of higher education. Employers consistently complain of graduates who lack critical problem-solving and communications skills. More than half of students entering California State University need **remediation** in reading or math. It is clearly time for us to reexamine high school in California, to raise the level of rigor we expect of all of our students and begin preparing every high school student to reach higher expectations.

2 How we meet the challenge of improving high school student achievement will determine the futures of our children and their ability to compete and succeed in the decades to come. Moreover, how we respond to this challenge will significantly affect the economic and social future of our state.

3 Research shows that students who take challenging, college-preparatory courses do better in school, even if they started out with poor test scores and low expectations. Students who take rigorous courses are also less likely to drop out, and they perform better in **vocational** and technical courses.

4 Our high schools today struggle with an achievement gap that leaves African-American, Latino and **socioeconomically** disadvantaged students lagging behind their peers. A failure to provide and expect all students to take demanding academic coursework has also created a high school "reality gap": While more than 80 percent of high school students say they intend to go to college, only about 40 percent actually take the rigorous coursework required for acceptance at a four-year university. The numbers are even lower for African-American graduates (24 percent) and Latinos (22 percent).

5 Many students are not aware that the "minimum requirement" courses they are taking aren't providing the rigorous foundation that will prepare them to fulfill their dreams after high school. In some cases, students are steered away from tough courses or find them overenrolled. The result is thousands of students who must spend significant, unnecessary time and money after high school if they are ever to fulfill their dreams.

6 To reverse this trend, we must make rigorous courses available to all of our students. We must redefine high schools as institutions that provide all students with a strong academic foundation, whether they are **bound** for college or the workplace after graduation.

GRAMMAR & USAGE
Diction

Diction, or the words a writer chooses, plays an important role in establishing tone and credibility. A writer may choose to use formal or informal words, abstract or concrete words, and emotional or clinical words, all to create an overall effect. Notice how O'Connell uses formal diction in his editorial to reflect his position as the state superintendent of schools. He chooses words such as *remediation*, *rigorous*, and *perform* to establish his credibility on the subject of education.

Find two more examples of the author's diction that reinforce the overall tone of the argument, and explain their impact to a partner.

rigors: strict requirements
remediation: help

vocational: job-related

socioeconomically: related to money and social status

My Notes

bound: headed toward

How to Write an Editorial

aligned: supported

virtually: almost completely

My Notes

7 I am proposing a High Performing High Schools Initiative that will raise expectations for our high schools and high school students. It will provide better training and support for high school principals. And it will establish a state "seal of approval" process for high school instructional materials, giving districts guidance in choosing materials that are standards-**aligned**, and therefore more rigorous than many used in high schools today.

8 It is simply wrong to decide for students as young as age 15 whether or not they are "college material" and capable of challenging courses in high school. Guiding students to an easier academic pathway, even if they show little early motivation or curiosity about possibilities beyond high school, **virtually** guarantees they won't be prepared with important foundational skills. It limits their opportunities for years to come. Years ago, this was called "tracking." Students facing childhood challenges such as poverty or the need to learn English—the description of fully well over a quarter of California's students today—would be tracked to less-challenging courses and denied opportunities after high school as a result.

9 By advocating for tougher curriculum in high schools, I am not in any way suggesting vocational education programs should be eliminated. In fact, legislation I introduced to improve high school achievement would reward schools that collaborate with businesses or labor unions to expand such successful programs as career partnership academies. These academies have been successful where they have provided rigorous academic instruction geared toward a career pathway.

10 The truth is that we can no longer afford to hold high expectations only for our college-bound students. Today, all of our students need the skills and knowledge contained in the curriculum that was once reserved only for the college-bound. Strong communications skills, knowledge of foreign language and culture, higher-level math and problem-solving skills are needed in technical trades as well as white-collar professions. The job of K-12 education in California must be to ensure that all of our students graduate with the ability to fulfill their potential—whether that takes them to higher education or directly to their career.

Second Read

- Reread the editorial to answer this text-dependent question.
- Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

1. **Craft and Structure:** What counterargument might O'Connell be writing to address? What response might an opponent make?

Editorial

New Michigan Graduation Requirements Shortchange Many Students

by Nick Thomas

1 Imagine waking up in the morning to find the electricity is out, or a pipe has burst or your car won't start. As you look though the Yellow Pages for a technician, do you really care if that person has a working knowledge of matrices, oxidation numbers, and Kepler's laws of planetary motion?

2 Apparently the state of Michigan does. Its new high school graduation requirements will assure that every graduate, regardless of their career choice, will have taken advanced math and science classes.

3 Among the new requirements are one credit each of algebra I, geometry and algebra II and an additional math class in the senior year. Also required is one credit of biology, one credit of physics or chemistry and one additional year of science.

4 This new curriculum may be helpful for a student who plans to go on to college, but it seems excessive for vocational students.

5 Plumbers, mechanics, construction workers, hairdressers and many other positions do not need an advanced math and science background. Math needed for vocational jobs could be learned through an "applied math" class, or on-site learning.

6 I'm concerned that when students are forced to take classes that are unnecessary for their chosen careers, they'll feel discouraged and put little effort into their classes. And if they can't take the classes they want, I'm afraid that more of them will drop out.

Advanced classes becoming basic classes

7 One of my biggest concerns with all students taking advanced classes is that the pace of the courses will slow down. Some students will undoubtedly not try to learn the material, and some will be incapable of learning as fast as others, leaving the teacher compelled to dumb down the class. In effect, advanced classes will become basic classes. This will have no additional benefit for vocational students and will hamper college prep students.

8 There's yet another way college-bound students might suffer from the new requirements. A very gifted English student who lacks ability in math could have their grade point average lowered significantly when required to take advanced math classes. And of course, when applying to college, high school grades are important.

9 A well-rounded education is ideal but can be achieved in many ways, not just through academics. Our economy depends on a variety of jobs. We need carpenters as well as engineers. We need hairdressers as well as doctors, and we need heavy equipment operators as well as lawyers.

10 All jobs are important, and students deserve to pursue their choice of a career without being forced to take unnecessary classes.

My Notes

How to Write an Editorial

My Notes

Second Read

- Reread the editorial to answer this text-dependent question.
- Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

2. **Craft and Structure:** How is Thomas's diction different from O'Connell's? What effect could this diction have on each writer's ability to engage and convince readers?

Check Your Understanding

Complete the graphic organizer on page 236 to compare the key ideas these two writers present. In your opinion, which of the two writers made the stronger case? Explain.

Argument Writing Prompt

You have co-written a brief editorial, and you have read two editorials with opposing views. Now, compose an editorial that responds to your original editorial. Write from an alternate perspective. Be sure to:

- Introduce and establish the significance of your claim.
- Develop the claim and respond to counterclaims with relevant evidence.
- Establish and maintain a formal style and an objective tone.

Where's Your Proof?

ACTIVITY 3.10

Learning Targets

- Evaluate the effectiveness of different types of evidence.
- Revise writing to incorporate appropriate evidence.

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Rereading, Think-Pair-Share, Discussion Groups

The Art of Evidence

1. To support the claims they make, authors use a variety of types of evidence. With a partner or small group, revisit one of the editorials you have read in this unit and fill in the chart below.

Type of Evidence: What is it used for? What are its limitations? "They X, but they Y."	Example from an Editorial in this Unit	Evaluation: What kind of appeal does it make: logos, ethos, or pathos? Does the evidence logically support the author's claim in this case? Why or why not?
Illustrative Examples (Personal Experience/Anecdotal/Media Example). They add reality to the claim but may not be generalizable.		
Hypothetical Cases. They challenge the reader to consider possible circumstances or outcomes, but there's no reason they will definitely happen.		
Analogies/Comparison. They make the unfamiliar or abstract more accessible, but they need to be more similar than different in order to be persuasive.		

Where's Your Proof?

Expert/Testimony. They provide expert support for causal claims, predictions of outcomes, or possible solutions, but they're still just opinions—and the source needs to be checked carefully!		
Statistics/Surveys. They support generalized claims and make strong logical appeals, but they must be reliable and unbiased.		
Causal Relationships. They suggest possible positive or negative outcomes, but there needs to be a clear link between the cause and the effect.		

My Notes

2. Once you have recorded your observations in the graphic organizer, be prepared to discuss those observations. You will want to make sure to address both the types and effectiveness of each technique the author has used. Make sure you reference specific examples from the text. With a partner, discuss why using a wide variety of evidence might be more persuasive or effective than using only one kind of evidence.

Check Your Understanding

Select one of the editorials you have written in this unit and revise one paragraph in it by adding at least one of the types of evidence from this activity. Share your revision with a partner and ask your partner to identify the type of evidence you used in your writing.

Reading and Writing a Letter to the Editor

ACTIVITY 3.11

Learning Targets

- Evaluate the effectiveness of multiple editorial letters based on criteria.
- Write an editorial letter according to specific criteria.

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Marking the Text, Sharing and Responding

How to Write a Letter to the Editor

Letters that are intended for publication should be drafted carefully. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

- Make one point (or at most two) in your letter. Be sure to identify the topic of your letter. State the point clearly, ideally in the first sentence.
- Make your letter timely. If you are not addressing a specific article, editorial, or letter that recently appeared in the paper you are writing to, try to tie the issue you want to write about to a recent event.
- Familiarize yourself with the coverage and editorial position of the paper to which you are writing. Refute or support specific statements, address relevant facts that are ignored, offer a completely different perspective on the issue, but avoid blanket attacks on the media in general or the newspaper in particular.
- Consider your audience (the newspaper's editors and readers):
  - What does your audience currently believe about the issue? Why?
  - How will they respond to you? Why?
  - What can you do to persuade them to change their minds?
  - How will using slanted language affect your credibility and persuasiveness?
- Check the letter specifications of the newspaper to which you are writing. Length and format requirements vary from paper to paper. (Generally, roughly two short paragraphs are ideal.) You also must include your name, signature, address, and phone number.
- Look at the letters that appear in your paper. Is a certain type of letter usually printed?
- Support your facts. If the topic you address is controversial, consider sending documentation along with your letter. But don't overload the editors with too much information.
- Keep your letter brief. Type and spell-check it. Have a peer edit it.
- When possible, find others in the community to write letters to show concern about the issue. If your letter doesn't get published, perhaps someone else's on the same topic will.
- If your letter has not appeared within a week or two, follow up with a call to the newspaper's editorial department.

My Notes

Reading and Writing a Letter to the Editor

Exploring Letters to the Editor

1. Your teacher will provide an editorial and several letters written in response to the editorial. Fill in the chart below for each of the letters to the editor. The last box is for your opinion on the editorial.

Letter Number	Agree or Disagree with Original Editorial?	Reasons
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

My Notes

Check Your Understanding

Quickwrite: Which of the letters to the editor makes the strongest argument? What makes that argument compelling?

Setting a Purpose for Reading

- Highlight any words or phrases that illustrate the writer's tone.
- Circle unknown words and phrases. Try to determine the meaning of the words by using context clues, word parts, or a dictionary.

Editorial

Why I **Hate** Cell Phones

by Sara Reihani

1 In this wild, unpredictable world that modern society has thrust upon us, only one gadget anchors us amid the whirl of Wiis, Wikis and Wi-fi: the cellular phone. From its origins as the pineapple-sized "car phone" exclusive to power-suited 80's business executives to its current incarnation as camera/computer/life coach, the cell phone has gone from convenient utility to graven idol of instant **gratification**. Scores of modern social phenomena are directly **attributable** to cell phones including textual flirtation, Bluetooth use disguised as schizophrenia and the ringtone as a profound expression of personal identity.

2 While constantly reachable has undeniable advantages, cell phones deceive us into thinking that this **accessibility** is an inalienable right rather than a flawed privilege. By giving people my cell phone number, I give them permission to contact me whenever they want, no matter where I am or what I am doing. I am thus **shackled** to their whim, subjecting me to their contact when it may not be desired. I could, of course, simply turn off my phone, but this is no longer an acceptable excuse. After all, what is the use of owning a cell phone if you are going to leave it off all the time?

3 Those who live lives more unpredictable than mine may have good reason to consider their cell phones **crucial** lifelines, but for most of us, they are more of a luxury than a necessity. Cell phones are currently dirt cheap to manufacture, but their true cost is **insidious** and **pervasive**. Besides the perils of hidden fees and the lubricious allure of text-messaging, one must consider the emotional enslavement that comes with allowing the outside world to contact you almost anywhere. Owning a cell phone guarantees that you can and will be interrupted in movie theaters, libraries or scenes of pastoral tranquility, usually for trivial reasons. In a world full of landlines, pay phones, email, instant messages and Facebook messages, few of us need the accessibility to go that extra mile.

4 The most alluring thing about cell phones for the younger generation (i.e., us) is their **efficacy** as instruments of spontaneity. They ensure that no matter where you are or what you are doing, you can be notified of other entertainment opportunities; namely, where the new party is at. In this way, we are freed from the responsibility of making plans in advance. We can also cancel plans at the last minute without condemning ourselves to evenings of loneliness—instead, we can just use the opportunity to **insinuate** ourselves upon everyone else in our electronic phone books. This protean convenience breeds selfishness by liberating us from any solid idea of obligation. The primal human fear of isolation also comes into play here; cell phones feed on this anxiety like blood-hungry mosquitoes, promising a solution for the many who live in vague terror of spending time alone with their thoughts.

WORD CONNECTIONS

Roots and Affixes

The word *spontaneity* comes from the Latin word *sponte*, which means "willing" or "of one's own accord." The suffix *-eity* makes the term a noun that means "the quality of doing things of one's own accord." Today, the word means "the quality of doing things without planning."

gratification: satisfaction or pleasure
attributable: able to be traced to

accessibility: ability to reach someone
shackled: chained

crucial: very important
insidious: gradually harmful
pervasive: spreading everywhere

My Notes

efficacy: effectiveness

insinuate: sneakily become part of a group

Reading and Writing a Letter to the Editor

5 In a way, cell phones actually decrease effective communication. They allow us to make calls from almost anywhere, meaning that we do not have to interrupt our other activities to sit down and call someone in particular. We can do anything while talking on the phone: distractedly check Facebook, drive irresponsibly. If I can call someone at any time to obtain or verify information, it lessens my incentive to actually listen to them the first time they tell me something, which is **inadvertently** disrespectful and powerfully habit-forming. The worst side effect of modern conveniences like cell phones is how easy it is to be dependent on them in the most casual situations.

They give you brain cancer, too.

inadvertently: unintentionally

My Notes

Second Read

- Reread the editorial to answer these text-dependent questions.
- Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

2. **Craft and Structure:** How does Reihani create meaning by juxtaposing the words *vague* and *terror* in the phrase "vague terror" in paragraph 4?

3. **Craft and Structure:** From what point of view does Reihani write? What might readers infer regarding the examples Reihani gives in paragraph 5?

Check Your Understanding

What tone did the writer reveal through her diction?

Writing to Sources: Argument

Write a letter to the editor in response to Reihani's editorial. Use the steps outlined in "How to Write a Letter to the Editor" to guide your writing. Be sure to:

- Utilize an organizational structure that follows the specifications of your local newspaper and logically sequences your claim, reasons, evidence, and response to counterclaims.
- Use a variety of rhetorical techniques, including anecdotes, case studies, or analogies.
- Provide a concluding statement that follows logically from your argument.

Fallacies 101

ACTIVITY 3.12

Learning Targets

- Identify fallacious logic, appeals, and rhetoric in sample texts.
- Use logical fallacies and refute the fallacies of others in a debate.

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Discussion Groups, Quickwrite

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY
Fallacies are false or misleading arguments.

Identifying Fallacies

1. You will be given a set of card manipulatives, some of which will contain the names of specific types of **fallacies** and others of which will contain the definitions. In your small group, you will need to match the fallacies with their definitions.

2. Next, read through the following informational text and check your answers.

My Notes

Types of Fallacies

Fallacies are commonplace in advertising, political discourse, and everyday conversations—and they will continue to be as long as they work to persuade. By learning to recognize them when you see them, you can strip away their power. There are many different ways to categorize fallacies, and many different names for the various types. The following eleven fallacies (adapted from Brooke Noel Moore and Richard Parker's *Critical Thinking*, 8th ed., 2007) are divided into the different types of offense they represent. Learn these, and you'll be ready to see through many of the rhetorical scams that come your way each day.

A. Logical Fallacies: Errors in Reasoning

- **Hasty generalization:** The leap to a generalized conclusion based on only a few instances. For example, on a trip to Paris you meet several rude Parisians, leading you to conclude that French people are rude.
- **Post hoc:** Literally meaning "after this," it's a causal fallacy in which a person assumes one thing caused another simply because it happened prior to the other. For instance, the high school soccer team loses an important game the day after they start wearing new uniforms. The coach blames the loss on the new uniforms.

B. Emotive Fallacies: Replacing Logic With Emotional Manipulation

- **Ad populum:** Literally meaning "appeal to the people"; arguing that something is true because other people think so; refers to a variety of appeals that play on the association of a person or subject with values that are held by members of a target group (think of images of the flag in ads playing on patriotism) or the suggestion that "everybody knows" that something is true (as with bandwagoning).
- **"Argument" from outrage:** Aristotle said that if you understand what makes a person angry, you can use that anger to persuade him or her to accept a position without critically evaluating it. This fallacy is the backbone of talk radio and of political rhetoric on both extremes of the political spectrum. It often employs loaded language and labels. It also includes scapegoating—blaming a certain group of people or even a single person.

Fallacies 101

My Notes

- **Ad misericordiam, or appeal to pity:** If you have ever asked a teacher to give you a better grade or a second chance because things have been tough recently or because you worked SO hard, you're guilty of this one! It refers to an attempt to use compassion or pity to replace a logical argument.
- **Ad baculum, or scare tactics:** An appeal to fear in place of logic. If a candidate for office says, "Electing my opponent will open the door for new terrorist attacks," it represents an attempt to scare people into rejecting the person, despite providing no evidence to justify the claim.

C. Rhetorical Fallacies: Sidestepping Logic with Language

- **Straw man:** Erecting a distorted or exaggerated representation of a position that is easily refuted. For example, Schroth says, "But, you say, if high schools drop football it will deprive colleges and the pros of their feeder system," an argument that is, of course, a ridiculous attempt to justify high school football—and one that is thus easy to refute.
- **Ad hominem/genetic fallacy:** Literally meaning "to the man," ad hominem refers to attacks against a person him- or herself rather than the ideas the person presents. This is a dominant feature in political campaigns, where sound-bite 30-second advertisements attack a candidate's character, often with mere innuendo, instead of his or her policy positions. When this extends to criticizing or rejecting a general type of something simply because it belongs to or was generated by that type, it is a genetic fallacy. For example, to say an idea comes from the "media elite" makes it sound like it should be rejected—but who are the media elite?
- **Red herring/smokescreen:** Answering the question by changing the subject. For example, when pulled over for speeding, a person might respond to the officer's question, "Why were you speeding?" by saying, "The school no longer offers driver's education classes."
- **Slippery slope:** Half appeal to fear and half a causal fallacy, a person uses a slippery slope when they suggest one action will lead to an inevitable and undesirable outcome. To say legalizing voluntary euthanasia paves the way for forced euthanasia is a slippery slope argument.
- **Either/or (or false dilemma):** This is a conclusion that oversimplifies the argument by suggesting that there are only two possible sides or choices. It is very common in debates of policy, where issues are always complex but which politicians reduce to simplistic binaries (either/or) for rhetorical purposes.

Fallacy Face Off

3. Now that you have been introduced to the concept of fallacious appeals, take up the challenge to use as many as possible in a **Fallacy Face Off**. As a class, select a current, high-profile, controversial issue. Feel free to pull this topic from some of your recent newspaper readings. You will use this topic in a **mock debate**.
4. Next, split into teams. Each team member will select or be assigned a fallacious appeal to use regarding the selected topic.
5. When the teams are ready, they will use these fallacious appeals in a mock debate. Each team will take turns presenting their appeals to the class as if presenting at a public rally, televised debate, or other venue of the class's choosing.
6. As other groups present their arguments, you will be responsible for identifying and challenging the nature of the fallacy being used by the speaker.
7. After exploring these fallacies in class, discuss the following questions in your small group:
   - Why are fallacies so common in our political discourse? Which ones are most common and why?
   - Why are fallacies so powerful—and so dangerous?
   - Why might you choose to use a fallacy—or rhetorical slanters—in a letter or speech? What would be the pros and cons of doing so?
   - How does the use of fallacies affect the ethos of a writer or speaker?
   - What is the relationship between considering your audience and deciding whether to use fallacious appeals or slanters?

Writing to Sources: Argument

Review the letter to the editor that you wrote in Activity 3.11 and revise it using at least one of the types of fallacy from this activity. Share your revision with a partner and ask him or her to identify the type of fallacy you used. Be sure to:

- Revise your letter to clearly state your position, if needed.
- Incorporate at least one fallacy into your letter.
- Prepare your letter in final draft, checking that it is grammatically and technically accurate. As needed, consult references to ensure that you are spelling and using words correctly.

My Notes

ACTIVITY 3.13

How to Read and Write an Editorial Cartoon

LEARNING STRATEGIES: Skimming/Scanning, Visualizing, Brainstorming, Sketching

My Notes

Learning Targets

- Analyze the format, style, and conventions of editorial cartoons.
- Apply knowledge from this analysis to create an editorial cartoon.

Preview

In this activity, you will delve into the world of editorial cartoons. Once you have studied the genre and analyzed some examples, you will have an opportunity to create your own cartoon.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

- Circle unknown words and phrases. Try to determine the meaning of the words by using context clues, word parts, or a dictionary.
- Put a question mark next to anything that raises a question for you.
- Put an exclamation point next to anything that you have a strong response to or surprises you.

Informational Text

An Inside Look at Editorial Cartoons

by Bill Brennen

1 A few weeks ago, Joy Utecht, the journalism teacher at Grand Island Senior High, asked if I could visit with some of her students about editorial cartoons.

2 The invitation was exciting because editorial cartoons are one of my favorite subjects. Very few items are as unique to a newspaper as editorial cartoons.

3 A very brief history lesson: Editorial cartoons first appeared in the United States on single-page broadsheets during the colonial times. The first popular cartoon is a snake severed into 13 parts with the names of each colony by each piece. The caption is simple, "Divided we die."

4 Such a theme helped the colonies, with their diverse locations and interests, unite under a common cause.

5 Flash forward to the years in New York City after the Civil War, when Tammany Hall[1] became such a powerful political machine that it nearly sucked the life out of its residents. In addition, William Tweed stole millions from the taxpayers.

6 Eventually, the *New York Times* and eventually law enforcement officials began investigations of the Tweed Ring, but it was the powerful cartoons of Nast that brought the politicians to their knees. At one point, Nast, who worked for *Harper's Weekly*, turned down a bribe of $500,000 to discontinue his cartoons.

WORD CONNECTIONS

Etymology

Broadsheets, also called *broadsides*, were originally large pieces of paper printed on one side, often used for announcements. They later evolved into the modern newspaper. Newspapers considered broadsheets are larger and tend to cover serious stories, as opposed to *tabloids*, which are smaller and cover more sensational stories.

[1] **Tammany Hall:** Tammany Hall was the name given to the Democratic political machine that dominated New York City politics from the 1790s until the 1960s.

7 Instead, Nast made Tweed the most recognizable face in America. When Tweed tried to flee conviction, he was arrested in Spain, because authorities recognized his face from Nast's cartoons.

8 By the way, Nast deserves partial credit for another icon, one that has stood the test of time. Along with an artist named Clement Moore, Nast drew the first Santa Claus.

9 Photography became a part of American newspapers and magazines as early as the Civil War, but the process was difficult and illustrations remained a part of American newspapers until early into the 20th Century.

10 But the sketches known as editorial cartoons are as popular today as they ever have been. People love the humor, simplicity and caricatures of politicians of the day. Caricatures, I told the students at Senior High, are exaggerations of one's physical features.

11 In recent years, there have been the JFK haircut, the LBJ ears, the Nixon eyebrows, the Carter teeth and the Clinton jaw. Of course, each cartoonist has his or her own style, but it is amazing how they reach out to the same features to identify a politician.

12 A good editorial cartoon must have five basic features.

- It must be simple. ...
- People must understand it. The cartoon must make sense to those who read the particular paper. A school newspaper might run a cartoon about cafeteria food that includes an inside joke and isn't readily understood by the general public. The cartoon would only make sense in the school newspaper.
- The cartoon must be timely. ...
- It must evoke emotion. A good cartoon should make people laugh or make them mad.
- Always, the cartoon must give a point of view. The cartoon may be looking at the truth, but it usually is coming from a specific viewpoint. When we look down at an object, the viewpoint is very different when we look up at the object. Editorial cartoons are the same way.

13 The *Independent* doesn't always agree with the viewpoint of each cartoon in the paper. Most certainly the readers don't always agree with them. But we all should agree that political cartoons are thought provoking. Just like a photograph, a well-illustrated editorial cartoon can be worth a thousand words.

14 There probably are about 100 newspapers, give or take a few, that employ full-time cartoonists. Unfortunately, it is a luxury that only metropolitan-sized newspapers can afford. Smaller newspapers subscribe to syndicated features for the right to reprint some of the better cartoons that have been published.

15 The next time you look at an editorial cartoon in the newspaper, try to look at it a new way. Instead of thinking about just whether you agree or disagree with the message, see if the cartoons have the five basic components to it [*sic*]. Then you can determine whether the message is getting through.

My Notes

How to Read and Write an Editorial Cartoon

My Notes

Second Read

- Reread the informational text to answer these text-dependent questions.
- Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

1. **Key Ideas and Details:** What evidence in paragraphs 5–7 shows the power of the editorial cartoon?

2. **Key Ideas and Details:** Which phrases in paragraphs 10–12 hint at why photographs have never replaced editorial cartoons?

3. **Craft and Structure:** Which words and phrases in the text show Brennen's point of view about the value of editorial cartoons?

Reading Editorial Cartoons

4. Because there is so little space for an editorial cartoonist to make his or her point, the cartoonist often uses symbols and allusions as shorthand for the meaning of the cartoon. Examine each of the cartoons your teacher supplies and identify the symbols and allusions. Why might the cartoonist have chosen these symbols or allusions?

5. Most editorial cartoons present a specific political perspective. Do the cartoons you are examining have a specific point of view? How does the cartoonist demonstrate these perspectives?

6. Editorial cartoons are designed to evoke emotion—humor, anger, or outrage, for example. How do the cartoonists do this?

7. Based on your responses to the other questions here, what does the message of your assigned cartoon seem to be, and what can you infer about its intended purpose?

Creating Your Own Editorial Cartoons

8. Now that you have had some experience reading and analyzing political cartoons, try to create some of your own.
   - Brainstorm topic ideas by thinking about current events in your school, your hometown, or the world. List a few ideas below.
   - Choose one of your ideas and describe a point that you might want to make about that event. Perhaps you agree and want to show your support, or perhaps you would like to ridicule those who might feel differently.
   - What symbols, sayings, pop culture allusions, or other easily recognizable references might be appropriate for this topic?
   - Sketch a very rough draft of what your cartoon might look like.

My Notes

How to Read and Write an Editorial Cartoon

My Notes

Independent Reading Checkpoint

Review your self-selected news source. Which articles have you read? Create a portfolio of these articles by printing copies or writing brief summaries. Add commentary after each article, including the writer's claim or topic, a description of rhetorical organization or strategies, and an analysis of effectiveness. Continue reading your self-selected news source throughout the second part of the unit. Continue to add articles and commentary to your portfolio.

Creating an Op-Ed News Project

EMBEDDED ASSESSMENT 1

ASSIGNMENT

Working in groups, your assignment is to plan, develop, write, revise, and present an informational article on a timely and debatable issue of significance to your school community, local community, or national audience. After your group completes its article, you will individually develop a variety of editorial products that reflect your point of view (agreement, alternative, or opposing) on the topic. Be creative with your editorial products and include at least two different pieces, such as cartoons, editorials, letters, posters, photos, and so on.

Planning and Prewriting: Take time to plan all the texts that you will include.	■ How can you build a list of potential issues that are both interesting to your group as well as debatable and timely? ■ What format will your opinion pieces take (e.g., editorials by newspaper staff, letters to the editor, editorial cartoon)? ■ How will you split the various tasks and roles among your group members so that everyone is doing a fair amount of work?
Drafting: Decide how you will incorporate support and organize texts.	■ How will you gather evidence to support your positions? ■ How can you use models of argumentative writing from this unit to help you add rhetorical elements that will appeal to your audience? ■ What sort of organizational patterns do the kinds of pieces you are writing tend to follow? How can you emulate these so that your pieces read like a real informational or editorial publication?
Evaluating and Revising: Create opportunities to review and revise.	■ What sort of strategies can you use to provide feedback to each other on the quality of your pieces (e.g., SMELL, SOAPSTone)? ■ What kinds of feedback from peers and the Scoring Guide can help guide your revision? ■ How will you assure that your product as a whole represents multiple perspectives on your topic?
Checking and Editing for Publication: Be sure your work is the best it can be.	■ How can you use examples of either print or online newspapers to create a realistic layout for your articles? ■ How will you check your own or each others' work for grammatical and technical accuracy? What references will you consult?

Reflection

After completing this Embedded Assessment, think about how you went about accomplishing the assignment, and respond to the following:

- How do newspapers impact public opinion or public perception?
- Which of the rhetorical techniques that your group used do you think were the most effective in appealing to your audience? Why?

Technology Tip

Consider using online document sharing to develop your group article. For your individual work, you may also want to use word processing or creative programs to create editorial products. Visuals and video could also be part of your final product.

Creating an Op-Ed News Project

SCORING GUIDE

Scoring Criteria	Exemplary	Proficient	Emerging	Incomplete
Ideas	The project • explicitly represents multiple and varied editorial perspectives • is extremely persuasive throughout every piece, demonstrating a thorough understanding of persuasive techniques • provides evidence of thorough and original research throughout; each piece demonstrates appropriate and ample evidence to support the thesis.	The project • represents various perspectives that are implied throughout the work as a whole • demonstrates a clear intention to persuade in most pieces, showing an adequate understanding of persuasive techniques • demonstrates that research has been conducted to support the positions; the majority of pieces demonstrate sufficient evidence supporting the thesis.	The project • represents a limited range of perspectives • demonstrates an intention to persuade in a few of the pieces; some of the pieces may be descriptive or expository rather than persuasive • demonstrates that some research has been conducted to support the positions with lapses in completeness to adequately support the thesis.	The project • lacks a range of perspectives • offers pieces that may be descriptive or expository rather than persuasive • does not demonstrate adequate research; the majority of the pieces demonstrate insufficient evidence to adequately support the thesis and/or opinions remain unsupported.
Structure	The project • is organized exceptionally, so that ideas move smoothly and comfortably • accurately follows the organizational pattern of the article type, whether informational or editorial.	The project • is organized in a way that is clear and easy to follow • largely follows the organizational pattern of the article type, whether informational or editorial.	The project • is unevenly organized with lapses in coherence • attempts to follow the organizational pattern of the article type, whether informational or editorial, with some lapses.	The project • is difficult to follow and may jump too rapidly between ideas • struggles to follow the organizational pattern of the article type, whether informational or editorial.
Use of Language	The project • demonstrates purposeful use of rhetoric designed to appeal to the target audience(s) • contains few or no errors in grammar or conventions.	The project • demonstrates functional use of rhetoric but may not directly appeal to the target audience • may include minor errors in grammar and conventions that do not interfere with understanding.	The project • attempts to use rhetoric with limited appeal to the target audience • includes some errors in grammar and conventions that interfere with the meaning.	The project • inconsistently demonstrates rhetoric • includes many errors in grammar and conventions that seriously interfere with the meaning.

Previewing Embedded Assessment 2 and Introducing Satire

ACTIVITY 3.14

Learning Targets

- Reflect on concepts, essential questions, and vocabulary.
- Identify and analyze the knowledge and skills needed to complete Embedded Assessment 2 successfully.
- Generate examples of satirical writing.

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Close Reading, Graphic Organizer, Marking the Text

My Notes

Making Connections

The op-ed page is an important forum for the exchange of ideas in our society, but the conversation does not stop there. Not everyone who contributes to the conversation means exactly what they say. **Satire** may be the tool of choice for some writers (and cartoonists) who prefer to use irony and a range of tones to make statements about the issues of the day. If you have ever enjoyed watching late-night comedy shows, you know how effective—and how much fun—this approach can be when it comes to changing perception of the subjects being lampooned. Immersing yourself in the art of satire, you will explore how writers use a range of genres and techniques to present their messages in indirect ways. In this way, satirists can make powerful contributions to the marketplace of ideas.

Essential Questions

Based on your study of the first part of the unit, review and revise your answers to the Essential Questions.

1. How do news outlets impact public opinion or public perception?

2. How does a writer use tone to advance an opinion?

Developing Vocabulary

Review the Academic Vocabulary of the unit and the Literary Terms to check your knowledge and ability to use these terms fluently in writing and in speaking. Also check that you can pronounce each word correctly. For any words you may not know exactly how to pronounce, check a reference such as a dictionary for pronunciation guides. What strategies will you use to gather knowledge of other new terms independently? How will you develop the ability to use them accurately?

Unpacking Embedded Assessment 2

Closely read the assignment for Embedded Assessment 2: Writing a Satirical Piece.

> You have been studying how opinions are expressed and perceived in a democratic society through a variety of rhetorical formats including satire. Your assignment is to develop a satirical piece critiquing some aspect of our society.

In your own words, summarize what you will need to know to complete this assessment successfully. With your class, create a graphic organizer to represent the skills and knowledge you will need to complete the tasks identified in the Embedded Assessment.

1. As you read the following text, use your metacognitive markers to indicate anything that provokes a question (?), anything about which you wish to comment or make a connection (*), and anything you find surprising (!). Be prepared to discuss your response.

Previewing Embedded Assessment 2 and Introducing Satire

Literary Terms

Satire is a manner of writing that mixes a critical attitude with wit and humor in an effort to improve humankind and human institutions. Editorial cartoons are often rather satirical. You will learn more about satire in the second half of this unit.

Horatian satire pokes fun at human foibles and folly with a witty, gentle, and even indulgent tone.

Juvenalian satire denounces, sometimes harshly, human vice and error in dignified and solemn tones.

WORD CONNECTIONS

Roots and Affixes

Denounce, *derision*, and *derogatory* all begin with the Latin prefix *de-*, which means "remove from" or "do the opposite of." The root of *denounce* is from the Latin *nuntiare*, meaning "to report." Adding *de-* creates the meaning of reporting in a negative way.

derogatory: belittling or disrespectful
derision: mockery

denounces: publicly names as wrong or evil

My Notes

Introduction to Satire

Satire is a literary genre that uses irony, wit, and sometimes sarcasm to expose humanity's vices and foibles, giving impetus to change or reform through ridicule. Types of direct satire include **Horatian satire** and **Juvenalian satire**, named after the Roman writers Horace and Juvenal, who made the genre famous. As you read satire, look for these characteristic techniques of satiric writing:

Irony: A mode of expression that uses words (verbal irony) or events (situational irony) to convey a reality different from and usually opposite to appearance or expectation. The surprise recognition by the audience often produces a comic effect. When a text intended to be ironic is not seen as such, the effect can be disastrous. To be an effective piece of sustained irony, there must be some sort of audience tip-off through style, tone, use of clear exaggeration, or other device.

Hyperbole: Deliberate exaggeration to achieve an effect; overstatement

Litotes: A form of understatement that involves making an affirmative point by denying its opposite. Example: "The grave's a fine and private place, / But none, I think, do there embrace." (Andrew Marvell, "To His Coy Mistress")

Caricature: An exaggeration or other distortion of an individual's prominent features or characteristics to the point of making that individual appear ridiculous. The term is applied more often to graphic representations than to literary ones.

Wit: Most commonly understood as clever expression—whether aggressive or harmless, that is, with or without **derogatory** intent toward someone or something in particular. We also tend to think of wit as being characterized by a mocking or paradoxical quality, evoking laughter through apt phrasing.

Sarcasm: Intentional **derision**, generally directed at another person and intended to hurt. The term comes from a Greek word meaning "to tear flesh like dogs" and signifies a cutting remark. Sarcasm usually involves obvious verbal irony, achieving its effect by jeeringly stating the opposite of what is meant so as to heighten the insult.

Ridicule: Words intended to belittle a person or idea and arouse contemptuous laughter. The goal is to condemn or criticize by making the thing, idea, or person seem laughable and ridiculous.

Parody: An imitation of a work or of an author with the idea of ridiculing the author, ideas, or work. The parodist exploits the peculiarities of an author's expression—his or her propensity to use too many parentheses, certain favorite words, or other elements of the author's style.

Invective: Speech or writing that abuses, **denounces**, or attacks. It can be directed against a person, cause, idea, or system. It employs a heavy use of negative emotive language. Example: "I cannot but conclude the bulk of your natives to be the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth." (Swift, *Gulliver' s Travels*)

Identifying the Elements of Satire

ACTIVITY 3.15

Learning Targets

- Identify the elements of satire by marking a text.
- Analyze how a satirist uses humor to develop a position.

Preview

Satire is a specific form of literature in which an author often adopts a **persona** to convey a perspective different from her or his own in order to make a point. In this activity, you will try to identify the characteristics of the persona of a satirical essay.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

- Highlight words, phrases, or sentences you find funny.
- Circle unknown words and phrases. Try to determine the meaning of the words by using context clues, word parts, or a dictionary.
- Put a star next to instances of **parody** and **caricature** you find.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Bouchier is a British writer who has lived in the United States since 1986. He has written fiction, nonfiction, commentaries, and humor columns for newspapers, literary journals, and magazines. He is also an award-winning essayist for National Public Radio.

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Marking the Text, Quick Write

Literary Terms

A **persona** is a voice or mask that an author, speaker, or performer assumes for a particular purpose.

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

Parody is an imitation of another's work with the idea of ridiculing the author, his or her ideas, or the work itself.

Caricature is an exaggeration or other distortion of characteristics to the point of making a person or group appear ridiculous.

My Notes

Satire

Let's Hear It for the Cheerleaders

by David Bouchier

1 Strange things happen on college campuses in summer. I was nearly trampled to death the other day by a horde of very young women wearing very short red skirts and chanting something that sounded like "A fence! A fence!"

2 A fence might be a very good idea, perhaps with some razor wire and a warning sign saying "Danger: Cheerleaders Ahead." Long Island is host to more than a dozen cheerleader camps. For the educationally gifted, Hofstra and Adelphi Universities even offer cheerleading scholarships ("Give me an A! Give me an A!").

3 But I think there is some intellectual work to be done here. Cheerleading needs a history, a philosophy and, above all, a more sophisticated theory of communications.

4 The cheerleading phenomenon is almost unknown in the rest of the world. British soccer fans do their own cheerleading, with a medley of traditional songs, bricks and bottles. In less civilized parts of the world, fans express their enthusiasm by running onto the field and beating up the opposing team. Only in America do we have professional partisans to do the jumping and yelling for us.

Identifying the Elements of Satire

My Notes

5 Strange as it may seem to foreigners, the cheerleading industry has many ardent supporters. It is said to build self-confidence, positive attitudes and a mysterious quality called spirit, which seems to involve smiling a lot. Cheerleading also teaches the value of teamwork, something that women have often despised in the past as a male excuse for mindless violence and idiotic loyalties. "Be 100 percent behind your team 100 percent of the time" is a slogan that would be heartily endorsed by Slobodan Milosevic, the Orange Order and the Irish Republican Army.

6 Young cheerleaders also acquire valuable practical skills: impossible balancing tricks, back flips and the brass lungs they will need for child raising or being heard at the departmental meeting. Above all, they learn to compete in hundreds of local and national events. Cheerleaders are clearly the corporate leaders and the political stars of the future.

7 Cheerleader culture is much broader and shallower than I had imagined. There are glossy magazines and webzines featuring the essential equipment: deodorants, contact lenses, Cheer Gear, makeup, party dresses and miracle diets. **Novices** can learn how to create a successful cheer routine with hot music, unique moves, fab formations, and multiple levels. They can also learn to make their own pom poms (called just "Poms"). There are international stars out there you've never heard of, and even a few anonymous muscular cheerleading males, whose job it is to support the base of the feminine pyramid.

novices: new members of the group

8 Despite cheerleaders' obsession with pyramids, my research suggests that cheerleading began in ancient Greece, rather than in Egypt. The first cheerleaders were called Maenads, female attendants of the god Bacchus. Their task was to encourage the crowds to have a good time, with frenzied **rites** and extravagant gestures. The opposing squad, the Furies, were merciless goddesses of vengeance who would swing into violent action if their team was losing. The ancient Greeks must get the credit for being the first to give young women these important career opportunities.

rites: ceremonial acts

9 So many teams were decimated by the Furies or led astray by the Maenads that cheerleading fell into disrepute for 2,000 years, until it was revived in a kinder, gentler form in the United States. But it's still a dangerous activity. In an average year, high school footballers lose 5.6 playing days to injuries, according to the January 1998 Harper's Index, a **compilation** of statistics. Cheerleaders lose 28.8 days. These accidents are blamed on excessive acrobatics and the passion for building taller and taller pyramids.

compilation: collection

10 But all enthusiasm is dangerous, especially when it takes a physical form. If cheerleading is part of education, let's use it to educate by focusing on the message. Surely we can do better than waving our poms, doing somersaults and chanting:

Champs take it away

Now Play by Play

Move that ball

Win win win.

11 Let's face it, this is not exactly a stellar example of the sophisticated use of the English language. To reduce the risk of injury and make the sport more educational and less distracting for the fans, I propose to substitute verbal skills for physical high jinks. Routines should become more static, and chants should become more grammatical, more literary and more **conducive** to the kinder, gentler society we all hope for in the next century.

conducive: likely to bring about

Why don't you fellows

Pick up that ball

And move it carefully

To the other end of the field?

12 If we really want to teach good social values, let's chant this famous verse from Grantland Rice:

For when the one great Scorer comes

To write against your name

He writes not that you won or lost

But how you played the game.

13 Now there's a catchy message for the millennium!

14 And why not bring that youthful spirit and those brilliant visuals out of the stadium and into the workplace? Cheerleaders should be in every office, with a chant for every corporate game. In a lawyer's office, for example, a spirited cry of "Rule of Law! Rule of Law! Sue! Sue! Sue!" accompanied by some eyepopping dance steps, would give courage and purpose to desk-bound drones. On Wall Street, a simple chant of "Go Greenspan! Low Interest! Never mind the Asians!" would create a positive environment for investment. And cheerleaders would share their boundless enthusiasm with the rest of us who, in the game of life, so often find ourselves on the losing team.

Second Read

- Reread the satire to answer these text-dependent questions.
- Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

1. **Craft and Structure:** In paragraph 1, what information does the reader understand that Bouchier's persona does not? How does this disparity set the tone for the satire?

2. **Craft and Structure:** What are two examples of Bouchier's use of diction to create humor in paragraph 7?

GRAMMAR & USAGE
Diction

Satire benefits greatly from careful **diction.**

Bouchier creates a satirical tone by infusing a lighthearted topic with overly formal diction. For example, he says ancient cheerleaders use "frenzied rites" and "extravagant gestures" and that injuries happen because of "excessive acrobatics." The tension created by this mismatch in topic and word choice makes the piece unexpected and funny.

Find two more examples of how the author uses diction to create satire in the piece.

My Notes

Identifying the Elements of Satire

My Notes

3. **Craft and Structure:** What does Bouchier parody in paragraph 11? What is the effect of the parody?

Working from the Text

4. Create a graphic organizer like the following chart, and quote two or more passages you found funny. Explain why you thought each was funny and identify the satirical techniques being used. Interpret what each had to say about the subject referenced in the quote. An example has been provided to get you started.

Humorous passage	Identify humorous techniques and humor of quote	What is the implied message?
"... perhaps with some razor wire and a warning sign saying 'Danger: Cheerleaders Ahead.'"	The writer uses hyperbole, irony, and vivid imagery to create a ridiculous picture of cheerleaders as a threat that needs to be contained.	The image seems to suggest that cheerleaders are dangerous.

Check Your Understanding

Quickwrite: Explain how Dave Bouchier's article fits the definition of satire. Support your answer with evidence from the text.

Determining the Meaning of Unknown Words

When you are reading a text and find a word you do not know, there are several ways to determine the word's meaning.

First of all, look for **context clues** and use the reading strategy of diffusing. What meanings and connotations do surrounding words and sentences provide?

> **Example:** What does the word *ardent* mean in the text below?
>
> The cheerleading industry has many **ardent** supporters. It is said to build self-confidence, positive attitudes, and a mysterious quality called spirit, which seems to involve smiling a lot.

Here, *ardent* is clearly modifying *supporters*. The second sentence tells you that people believe many good things about cheerleading, so you can probably tell that *ardent* means "enthusiastic" or "passionate."

Also, you can use **patterns of word changes** that indicate different meanings or parts of speech. If you know that *ardor* means "passion; enthusiasm" and you recognize *-ent* as a suffix that transforms a noun to an adjective, you can figure out the meaning of *ardent* without looking it up.

Sometimes, however, you need to consult a dictionary to be sure you understand a word's **denotation**, or definition, and its **connotations**, or associations. You can also look up a word's **etymology**, or history, to learn more about it. For instance, if you look up the etymology of *ardent*, you will learn that it literally means "burning."

Check Your Understanding

Read the text below. Use context clues to determine the meaning of *decimated*.

> The opposing squad, the Furies, were merciless goddesses of vengeance who would swing into violent action if their team was losing. ... So many teams were **decimated** by the Furies or led astray by the Maenads that cheerleading fell into disrepute for 2,000 years.

First, jot notes based on context clues and your knowledge of word parts and changes. Then look up the word in a good dictionary or dictionary of usage. What was the word's original, literal meaning? Is it still used that way?

My Notes

ACTIVITY
3.16

The Satirical Spectrum

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Think-Pair-Share, Discussion Groups, Graphic Organizer

My Notes

Learning Targets

- Analyze cartoons for satirical content and techniques.
- Compare and contrast cartoons to determine purposes for satire.

Satire as a Rhetorical Tool

You will next look at how a writer uses satire as a rhetorical tool. Go back to Bouchier's essay in Activity 3.15 and use the following questions to discuss the tone of the piece.

1. Choose one tone word that characterizes the entire piece. What do you think of the writer's attitude toward the subject? In two to three sentences, justify your choice.

2. Identify and explain one element of irony in the text.

3. Where is the tone of the piece most obvious? Give examples and justify your response.

4. Based on your observations, place the text on the continuum below. Be prepared to justify your answer.

1 —— 2 —— 3 —— 4 —— 5 —— 6 —— 7 —— 8 —— 9 —— 10

Horatian Juvenalian

5. Your teacher will share some examples of cartoons with you. You may want to review the satirical techniques you already know as you examine the examples. How does the visual content contribute to the cartoon's overall tone? As you examine the cartoon, consider the following questions:
   - What elements of satire are present in the cartoon?
   - What is the implied message of the artist?
   - Is the cartoon effective in presenting the implied message?
   - Where does the cartoon fit in the Horatian to Juvenalian continuum above? Justify your placement.

Writing to Sources: Explanatory Text

Review the sample cartoons and consider the artist's purpose for satire in each cartoon. Then, in an essay, explain how each cartoon seeks to affect the reader's perception of the subject. Be sure to:

- Introduce the artist's purpose in a topic statement.
- Include concrete details and examples from the cartoon to support your claim.
- Use precise language, including metaphor, simile, or analogy, to explain your ideas.

My Notes

ACTIVITY
3.17

The Tone of Satire

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Marking the Text, Graphic Organizer, Quickwrite

Learning Targets

- Analyze an author's use of genre and detail for satirical purposes.
- Explore the impact of ridicule on the perception of a writer's subject.

Preview

In this activity, you will read and analyze an article from the satirical publication *The Onion*. The publication calls itself "America's Finest News Source," and its motto, *Tu stultus es*, is Latin for "You are a fool/idiot."

Setting a Purpose for Reading

- Highlight words, phrases, or sentences you find funny.
- Circle unknown words and phrases. Try to determine the meaning of the words by using context clues, word parts, or a dictionary.
- Put a star next to text that shows the author is parodying the form of a news article.

GRAMMAR & USAGE
Dash

Writers use **dashes** to force readers to pay attention to a particular part of a sentence. A dash interrupts the flow of the sentence and signals for the reader to slow down and get ready for what he or she is going to read next. Dashes also tend to create more dramatic tension in a sentence than commas do.

Notice how the writer uses dashes effectively in this text to heighten the irony and humor. In paragraph 5, the writer sets the line *George shoots Lennie in the head* between dashes to emphasize the clash between what the student expects to read and what she is surprised to read.

Find another example in the text of a dash, and practice saying the sentence aloud with a partner to note how the punctuation changes the pacing and emphasis of the sentence.

Satire

Girl Moved To Tears by *Of Mice and Men* Cliffs Notes

from *The Onion*

1 CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA—In what she described as "the most emotional moment" of her academic life, University of Virginia sophomore communications major Grace Weaver sobbed openly upon concluding Steinbeck's **seminal** work of American fiction *Of Mice And Men*'s Cliffs Notes early last week.

2 "This book has changed me in a way that only great literature summaries can," said Weaver, who was so shaken by the experience that she requested an extension on her English 229 essay. "The humanity displayed in the Character Flowchart really stirred something in me. And Lennie's childlike innocence was beautifully captured through the simple, ranch-hand slang words like 'mentally handicapped' and 'retarded.'"

3 Added Weaver: "I never wanted the synopsis to end."

4 Weaver, who formed an "instant connection" with Lennie's character-description paragraph, said she began to suspect the novel might end tragically after reading the fourth sentence which suggested the gentle giant's strength and fascination with soft things would "lead to his untimely **demise**."

5 "I was amazed at how attached to him I had become just from the critical **commentary**," said Weaver, still clutching the yellow-and-black-striped study guide. "When I got to the last sentence—'George shoots Lennie in the head'—it seemed so abrupt. But I found out later that the '**ephemeral** nature of life' is a major theme of the novel."

seminal: important
demise: death

commentary: discussion or explanation
ephemeral: short

6 Weaver was assigned *Of Mice And Men*—a novel scholars have called "a masterpiece of **austere** prose" and "the most skillful example of American naturalism under 110 pages"—as part of her early twentieth-century fiction course, and purchased the Cliffs Notes from a cardboard rack at her local Barnes & Noble. John Whittier-Ferguson, her professor for the class, told reporters this was not the first time one of his students has expressed interest in the novel's plot summary.

7 "It's one of those universal American stories," said Ferguson after being informed of Weaver's choice to read the Cliffs Notes instead of the pocket-sized novel. "I look forward to skimming her essay on the importance of following your dreams and randomly assigning it a grade."

8 Though she completed the two-page brief synopsis in one sitting, Weaver said she felt strangely drawn into the plot overview and continued on, exploring the more fleshed-out chapter summaries.

9 "There's something to be said for putting in that extra time with a good story," Weaver said. "You just get more out of it. I'm also going to try to find that book about rabbits that George was always reading to Lennie, so that I can really understand that important allusion."

10 Within an hour of completing the Cliffs Notes, Weaver was already telling friends and classmates that Steinbeck was her favorite author, as well as reciting select quotations from the "Important Quotations" section for their benefit.

11 "When I read those quotes, found out which characters they were attributed to, and inferred their context from the chapter outlines to piece together their significance, I was just blown away," said a teary-eyed Weaver. "And the way Steinbeck wove the theme of hands all the way through the section entitled 'Hands'—he definitely deserved to win that Nobel Prize."

12 Weaver's roommate, Giulia Crenshaw, has already borrowed the dog-eared, highlighted summary of the classic Depression-era saga, and is expecting to enjoy reading what Weaver described as "a really sad story about two brothers who love to farm."

13 "I loved this book so much, I'm going to read all of Steinbeck's Cliffs Notes," said Weaver. "But first I'm going to go to the library to check out the original version *Of Mice And Men* starring John Malkovich and Gary Sinise."

austere: simple or plain

My Notes

The Tone of Satire

Literary Terms

Objective tone refers to a tone that is more clinical and that is not influenced by emotion. **Subjective tone** refers to a tone that is obviously influenced by the author's feelings or emotions.

My Notes

Second Read

- Reread the satire to answer these text-dependent questions.
- Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

1. **Craft and Structure:** What is the writer's point of view regarding Weaver's choice to read the CliffsNotes rather than the actual novel? How do you know?

2. **Craft and Structure:** In paragraph 12, what is ironic about Weaver's description of the story?

Check Your Understanding

Is the tone of the piece **objective** or **subjective**?

Writing to Sources: Explanatory Text

As a group, review the satire techniques on page 258. Then, write a group analysis of the author's use of the techniques in "Girl Moved To Tears by *Of Mice and Men* Cliffs Notes." Be sure to:

- State the purpose of the satire in a topic statement. What is the author criticizing?
- Select relevant examples of satire from the text. Explain the purpose of each.
- Identify and explain the use of parody by connecting to the audience's knowledge of the specific genre conventions of a news article.

INDEPENDENT READING LINK

Read and Connect

Review the selections in your news portfolio. Compose a short mock news story inspired by one of the texts. Share your news story with a group.

Writing a Parody

ACTIVITY 3.18

Learning Targets

- Examine how parody is used to critique a subject.
- Craft an original parody of a mass-media program.

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Marking the Text, Oral Reading, Drafting

Introducing Parody

A parody is a specific technique that imitates an author or a work for the purpose of humor. The parodist exploits the peculiarities of an author's expression or the characteristics of a typical format.

1. Based on your discussion of this definition, brainstorm a list of parodies you're familiar with. Think of popular music, television, movies, print sources, etc.

2. As you watch the news excerpt provided by your teacher, make a list of things in the show that might be ripe for parody. Think about the people you see, the show's style, the graphics used, the stories reported, etc., that are typical of this show and of news broadcasts in general.

Preview

In this activity, you will read a parody by Dave Barry and create one of your own about some aspect of television programming.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

- Highlight words, phrases, or sentences you find particularly funny.
- Circle unknown words and phrases. Try to determine the meaning of the words by using context clues, word parts, or a dictionary.
- In the margin, keep a running list of the different elements of television news shows Barry is parodying.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dave Barry is a writer and journalist who wrote a weekly humor column for more than 25 years. He won a Pulitzer Prize for commentary in 1988 and is the only humor writer to win this prestigious award.

My Notes

Writing a Parody

My Notes

Parody

In Depth, but Shallowly

by Dave Barry

1 If you want to take your mind off the troubles of the real world, you should watch local TV news shows. I know of no better way to escape reality, except perhaps heavy drinking.

2 Local TV news programs have given a whole new definition to the word *news*. To most people, *news* means *information* about events that affect a lot of people. On local TV news shows, news means anything that you can take a picture of, especially if a local TV News Personality can stand in front of it. This is why they are so fond of accidents, burning buildings, and crowds: these are good for standing in front of.

3 On the other hand, local TV news shows tend to avoid stories about things that local TV News Personalities cannot stand in front of, such as budgets and taxes and the economy. If you want to get a local TV news show to do a story on the budget, your best bet is to involve it in a car crash.

4 I travel around the country a lot, and as far as I can tell, virtually all local TV news shows follow the same format. First you hear some exciting music, the kind you hear in space movies, while the screen shows local TV News Personalities standing in front of various News Events. Then you hear the announcer:

ANNOUNCER: From the On-the-Spot Action Eyewitness News Studios, this is the On-The-Spot Action Eyewitness News, featuring Anchorman Wilson Westbrook, Co-Anchor-person Stella Snape, Minority-Group Member James Edwards, Genial Sports Personality Jim Johnson, Humorous Weatherperson Dr. Reed Stevens, and Norm Perkins on drums. And now, here's Wilson Westbrook.

WESTBROOK: Good evening. Tonight from the On-the-Spot Action Eyewitness News Studios we have actual color film of a burning building, actual color film of two cars after they ran into each other, actual color film of the front of a building in which one person shot another person, actual color film of another burning building, and special reports on roller-skating and child abuse. But for the big story tonight, we go to City Hall, where On-the-Spot Reporter Reese Kernel is standing live.

KERNEL: I am standing here live in front of City Hall being televised by the On-the-Spot Action Eyewitness News minicam with Mayor Bryce Hallbread.

MAYOR: That's "Hallwood."

KERNEL: What?

MAYOR: My name is "Hallwood." You said "Hallbread."

KERNEL: Look, Hallbread, do you want to be on the news or don't you?

MAYOR: Yes, of course, it's just that my name is—

KERNEL Listen, this is the top-rated news show in the three-county area, and if you think I have time to memorize every stupid detail, you'd better think again.

MAYOR: I'm sorry. "Hallbread" is just fine, really.

KERNEL: Thank you, Mayor Hallbread. And now back to Wilson Westbrook in the On-the-Spot Action Eyewitness News Studios.

WESTBROOK: Thank you, Reese; keep us posted if anything further develops on that important story. And now, as I promised earlier, we have actual color film of various objects that either burned or crashed, which we will project on the screen behind me while I talk about them. Here is a building on fire. Here is another building on fire. Here is a car crash. This film was shot years ago, but you can safely assume that objects just like these crashed or burned in the three-county area today. And now we go to my Co-Anchorperson, Stella Snape, for a Special Report on her exhaustive three-week investigation into the problem of child abuse in the three-county area. Well, Stella, what did you find?

SNAPE: Wilson, I found that child abuse is very sad. What happens is that people abuse children. It's just awful. Here you see some actual color film of me standing in front of a house. Most of your child abuse occurs in houses. Note that I am wearing subdued colors.

WESTBROOK (reading from a script): Are any efforts under way here in the three-county area to combat child abuse?

SNAPE: Yes.

WESTBROOK: Thank you, Stella, for that informative report. On the lighter side, On-the-Spot Action Eyewitness Reporter Terri Tompkins has prepared a three-part series on roller-skating in the three-county area.

TOMPKINS: Roller-skating has become a major craze in California and the three-county area, as you can see by this actual color film of me on roller skates outside the On-the-Spot Action Eyewitness News Studio. This certainly is a fun craze. Tomorrow, in Part Two of this series, we'll see actual color film of me falling down. On Wednesday we'll see me getting up.

WESTBROOK: We'll look forward to those reports. Our next story is from Minority-Group Reporter James Edwards, who, as he has for the last 324 consecutive broadcasts, spent the day in the minority-group sector of the three-county area finding out what minorities think.

EDWARDS: Wilson, I'm standing in front of a crowd of minority-group members, and as you can see, their mood is troubled. (*The crowd smiles and waves at the camera.*)

WESTBROOK: Good report, James. Well, we certainly had a sunny day here in the three-county area, didn't we, Humorous Weatherperson Dr. Reed Stevens?

STEVENS: Ha ha. We sure did, though I'm certainly troubled by that very troubling report Stella did on child abuse. But we should see continued warm weather through Wednesday. Here are a bunch of charts showing the relative humidity and stuff like that. Ha ha.

WESTBROOK: Ha ha. Well, things weren't nearly as bright on the sports scene, were they Genial Sports Personality Jim Johnson?

JOHNSON: No, Wilson, they certainly weren't. The Three-County Community College Cutlasses lost their fourth consecutive game today. Here you see actual color footage of me watching the game from the sidelines. The disgust is evident on my face. I intended to have actual color film of me interviewing the coach after the game, but the team bus crashed and everyone was killed.

My Notes

Writing a Parody

My Notes

WESTBROOK: Thank you, Jim. And now, here is Basil Holp, the General Manager of KUSP-TV, to present an Editorial Viewpoint:

HOLP: The management of KUSP-TV firmly believes that something ought to be done about earthquakes. From time to time we read in the papers that an earthquake has hit some wretched little country and knocked houses down and killed people. This should not be allowed to continue. Maybe we should have a tax or something. What the heck, we can afford it. The management of KUSP-TV is rolling in money.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was the opinion of the management of KUSP-TV. People with opposing points of view are probably in the vast majority.

WESTBROOK: Well, that wraps up tonight's version of the On-the-Spot Action Eyewitness News. Tune in tonight to see essentially the same stories.

Second Read

- Reread the parody to answer these text-dependent questions.
- Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

1. **Key Ideas and Details:** In paragraph 3, Barry writes, "all local TV news shows follow the same format." How does he continue this central idea with the titles and names of the imagined news team?

2. **Craft and Structure:** What is Barry parodying with Stella Snape's report on child abuse on page 271? What is his point of view about how local TV news handles this type of report?

3. **Craft and Structure:** What evidence in Edwards's minority-group report on page 271 reveals Barry's point of view regarding this type of report?

4. **Craft and Structure:** How does Barry use hyperbole in Holp's editorial viewpoint to critique the practices of local TV news shows?

My Notes

Check Your Understanding

Rank Barry's satirical intent on the scale below. Justify your ranking.

1 —— 2 —— 3 —— 4 —— 5 —— 6 —— 7 —— 8 —— 9 —— 10

Just plain silly (Horatian) — Biting sarcasm/criticism (Juvenalian)

Narrative Writing Prompt

Write a parody of some aspect of TV programming. Choose a partner and a subject (a genre like soap operas, sports broadcasts, reality shows, children's television programs; or a specific show like *Oprah* or *CSI* or *60 Minutes*, etc.). Next, write your parody, using the format of a script. Use the following questions as a basis for planning your parody.

Details: What images should you include? What images should you avoid? Put your subject in the middle of a circle, and then brainstorm a list of conventions and features that might be good parody material. Think about what things in the show are just a *little* annoying.

Tone/purpose: How critical should you be? Is it time for brutal sarcasm or playful wit? Is the show an offense to good taste or just a silly waste of time? Are you out to destroy or merely to tease?

Audience: How familiar is your audience with the show? What is their attitude toward the show? How will these answers affect what you should and should not do in your script? How will the use of irony, overt sarcasm, or ridicule affect your audience's response to your parody? You will present your script to your classmates in a reader's theater, so keep that audience in mind.

Organization: Focusing on the formulas of your subject, how should you start, develop, and end your script?

Diction: What patterns of speech can you identify that would be easy to parody? How stupid or cliché do you want to make your characters/personalities appear?

Syntax: What about the pacing of the script? Where should it read the most quickly? Where should the reader hang on every word? How can you accomplish this?

ACTIVITY 3.19

Need Some Advice?

LEARNING STRATEGIES: Marking the Text, Graphic Organizer, RAFT

My Notes

Learning Targets

- Analyze satirical techniques used for comic effect.
- Examine how syntax is used for effect.

Preview

In this activity, you will read a satirical essay by Mark Twain called "Advice to Youth." Before you begin reading, consider the following questions. Be prepared to discuss your responses.

- What advice do adults typically give teenagers?
- Why do adults feel it is necessary to pass on this information?
- Is this advice typically helpful? Do you typically heed that advice? If not, why not?

Setting a Purpose for Reading

- Highlight words, phrases, or sentences you find particularly funny.
- Put a star next to any places where the text takes a surprising departure from where it seems to be going.
- Put a question mark next to any parts that you can tell are supposed to be funny, but you don't quite get the joke.
- Circle unknown words and phrases. Try to determine the meaning of the words by using context clues, word parts, or a dictionary.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Samuel Clemens, whose pen name was Mark Twain, was born in 1835 in Missouri. His most famous novel, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, caused a revolution in American literature. During his life, he was also famous for his humorous lectures, essays, and sayings.

Satire

Advice to Youth (1882)

by Mark Twain

1 Being told I would be expected to talk here, I inquired what sort of talk I ought to make. They said it should be something suitable to youth—something **didactic**, instructive, or something in the nature of good advice. Very well. I have a few things in my mind which I have often longed to say for the instruction of the young; for it is in one's tender early years that such things will best take root and be most enduring and most valuable. First, then. I will say to you my young friends—and I say it beseechingly, urgingly—

didactic: that teaches moral values

2 Always obey your parents, when they are present. This is the best policy in the long run, because if you don't, they will make you. Most parents think they know better than you do, and you can generally make more by humoring that superstition than you can by acting on your own better judgment.

3 Be respectful to your superiors, if you have any, also to strangers, and sometimes to others. If a person offends you, and you are in doubt as to whether it was intentional or not, do not resort to extreme measures; simply watch your chance and hit him with a brick. That will be sufficient. If you shall find that he had not intended any offense, come out frankly and confess yourself in the wrong when you struck him; acknowledge it like a man and say you didn't mean to. Yes, always avoid violence; in this age of charity and kindliness, the time has gone by for such things. Leave dynamite to the low and unrefined.

4 Go to bed early, get up early—this is wise. Some authorities say get up with the sun; some say get up with one thing, others with another. But a lark is really the best thing to get up with. It gives you a splendid reputation with everybody to know that you get up with the lark; and if you get the right kind of lark, and work at him right, you can easily train him to get up at half past nine, every time—it's no trick at all.

5 Now as to the matter of lying. You want to be very careful about lying; otherwise you are nearly sure to get caught. Once caught, you can never again be in the eyes of the good and the pure, what you were before. Many a young person has injured himself permanently through a single clumsy and ill finished lie, the result of carelessness born of incomplete training. Some authorities hold that the young ought not to lie at all. That of course, is putting it rather stronger than necessary; still while I cannot go quite so far as that, I do **maintain**, and I believe I am right, that the young ought to be temperate in the use of this great art until practice and experience shall give them that confidence, elegance, and precision which alone can make the accomplishment graceful and profitable. Patience, diligence, painstaking attention to detail—these are requirements; these in time, will make the student perfect; upon these, and upon these only, may he rely as the sure foundation for future **eminence**. Think what tedious years of study, thought, practice, experience, went to the equipment of that **peerless** old master who was able to impose upon the whole world the lofty and sounding maxim that "Truth is mighty and will prevail"—the most majestic compound fracture of fact which any of woman born has yet achieved. For the history of our race, and each individual's experience, are sewn thick with evidences that a truth is not hard to kill, and that a lie well told is immortal. There is in Boston a monument of the man who discovered anesthesia; many people are aware, in these latter days, that that man didn't discover it at all, but stole the discovery from another man. Is this truth mighty, and will it prevail? Ah no, my hearers, the monument is made of hardy material, but the lie it tells will outlast it a million years. An awkward, feeble, leaky lie is a thing which you ought to make it your unceasing study to avoid; such a lie as that has no more real permanence than an average truth. Why, you might as well tell the truth at once and be done with it. A feeble, stupid, **preposterous** lie will not live two years—except it be a **slander** upon somebody. It is indestructible, then, of course, but that is no merit of yours. A final word: begin your practice of this gracious and beautiful art early—begin now. If I had begun earlier, I could have learned how.

6 Never handle firearms carelessly. The sorrow and suffering that have been caused through the innocent but heedless handling of firearms by the young! Only four days ago, right in the next farm house to the one where I am spending the summer, a grandmother, old and gray and sweet, one of the loveliest spirits in the land, was sitting at her work, when her young grandson crept in and got down an old, battered, rusty

My Notes

maintain: declare strongly

eminence: success
peerless: without equal

preposterous: silly
slander: harmful statement about someone

Need Some Advice?

WORD CONNECTIONS

Roots and Affixes

The word *inestimable* is formed from the prefix *in-*, meaning "not," the root *estim*, meaning "to value," and the suffix *-able*, meaning "able to be." Thus, something *inestimable* is impossible to put a value on. The words *estimate* and *esteem* also derive from the same Latin root.

My Notes

precepts: rules

gun which had not been touched for many years and was supposed not to be loaded, and pointed it at her, laughing and threatening to shoot. In her fright she ran screaming and pleading toward the door on the other side of the room; but as she passed him he placed the gun almost against her very breast and pulled the trigger! He had supposed it was not loaded. And he was right—it wasn't. So there wasn't any harm done. It is the only case of that kind I ever heard of. Therefore, just the same, don't you meddle with old unloaded firearms; they are the most deadly and unerring things that have ever been created by man. You don't have to take any pains at all with them; you don't have to have a rest, you don't have to have any sights on the gun, you don't have to take aim, even. No, you just pick out a relative and bang away, and you are sure to get him. A youth who can't hit a cathedral at thirty yards with a Gatling gun in three quarters of an hour, can take up an old empty musket and bag his grandmother every time, at a hundred. Think what Waterloo would have been if one of the armies had been boys armed with old muskets supposed not to be loaded, and the other army had been composed of their female relations. The very thought of it makes one shudder.

7 There are many sorts of books; but good ones are the sort for the young to read. Remember that. They are a great, an inestimable and unspeakable means of improvement. Therefore be careful in your selection, my young friends; be very careful; confine yourselves exclusively to Robertson's Sermons, Baxter's Saint's Rest, The Innocents Abroad, and works of that kind.

8 But I have said enough. I hope you will treasure up the instructions which I have given you, and make them a guide to your feet and a light to your understanding. Build your character thoughtfully and painstakingly upon these **precepts**, and by and by, when you have got it built, you will be surprised and gratified to see how nicely and sharply it resembles everybody else's.

Second Read

- Reread the satire to answer these text-dependent questions.
- Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

1. **Craft and Structure:** How does Twain satirize typical advice about obeying one's parents in paragraph 2?

2. **Craft and Structure:** How does Twain change the meaning of "get up with the lark" in paragraph 4 to create humor?

3. **Key Ideas and Details:** Which words and phrases in paragraph 5 express the likelihood of learning to tell the perfect "immortal" lie? What is Twain's real message?

4. **Craft and Structure:** How does the last sentence suggest Twain's purpose for the satire?

My Notes

Need Some Advice?

My Notes

Working from the Text

5. *Didactic* (Greek, *didaktikos*: apt at teaching) is a term often used to describe a speaker's or writer's tone when that speaker or writer is attempting to educate or inform an audience. Provide an example of textual evidence for why Twain's piece could be described as didactic.

Check Your Understanding

Quickwrite: Where does "Advice to Youth" fall on the Horatian to Juvenalian continuum? Identify textual support to justify your answer.

Language and Writer's Craft: Cumulative or Loose Sentence Patterns

Cumulative (or **loose**) sentences are sentences in which the main idea is followed by a series of phrases that supply further details about a person, place, event, or idea. Writers tend to use them to make their writing informal or conversational. Consider this example in which the main idea or clause is in italics, followed by a series of phrases.

> "*We reached New York that morning after a turbulent flight and some exciting experiences*, tired but exhilarated, full of stories to tell our friends and neighbors."

In "Advice to Youth," Mark Twain uses cumulative sentences for comedic effect. Notice how this works in the second sentence of his speech:

> "*They said it should be something suitable to youth*—something didactic, instructive, or something in the nature of good advice."

By listing out the "suitable" qualities that "they" suggest, Twain seems to wink knowingly at the audience in a conversational way.

PRACTICE In the graphic below, identify at least three pieces of advice Twain renders to his audience. Write the main clause in column one, write the main or modifying phrase or clause in column two, and explain the effect of this loose sentence pattern in column three. In some cases, Twain may add multiple modifying clauses, so beware!

Main Clause 1	Main Clause 2 or Modifying Phrase/ Clause	Effect on Meaning

Narrative Writing Prompt

Write your own lecture of advice to a particular audience. Use a RAFT to select a role for you to play and an audience to whom to impart your great wisdom (your topic). Be sure to:

- Select a topic that is specific to your audience.
- Use an appropriate format in which to deliver your message to your audience (e.g., an editorial, a letter, etc.) and follow the format's conventions.
- Use loose sentence patterns to create a humorous effect.

My Notes

ACTIVITY 3.20

Twain in Twain

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Marking the Text, SOAPSTone

My Notes

Learning Targets

- Compare and contrast two satirical texts to analyze their purpose and the techniques used.
- Evaluate the author's choice of tone to appeal to an audience.

Preview

In this activity, you will read another satirical piece by Mark Twain to analyze how the master of American humor used tone to appeal to an audience.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

- Highlight words, phrases, or sentences you find particularly funny.
- Identify and keep notes about the satirical techniques Twain uses.
- Circle unknown words and phrases. Try to determine the meaning of the words by using context clues, word parts, or a dictionary.

WORD CONNECTIONS

Word Relationships

The verb *invoke*, meaning "to ask for help," usually from a god, is derived from the Latin word *invocare*, meaning "to call." Other words based on *invocare* are *invoker*, *invocation*, and *invocatory*.

martial: military

sabers: heavy cavalry swords with curved blades

tumult: noise and confusion

Satire

The War Prayer

by Mark Twain

1 It was a time of great and exalting excitement. The country was up in arms, the war was on, in every breast burned the holy fire of patriotism; the drums were beating, the bands playing, the toy pistols popping, the bunched firecrackers hissing and spluttering; on every hand and far down the receding and fading spread of roofs and balconies a fluttering wilderness of flags flashed in the sun; daily the young volunteers marched down the wide avenue gay and fine in their new uniforms, the proud fathers and mothers and sisters and sweethearts cheering them with voices choked with happy emotion as they swung by; nightly the packed mass meetings listened, panting, to patriot oratory which stirred the deepest deeps of their hearts, and which they interrupted at briefest intervals with cyclones of applause, the tears running down their cheeks the while; in the churches the pastors preached devotion to flag and country, and invoked the God of Battles beseeching His aid in our good cause in outpourings of fervid eloquence which moved every listener. It was indeed a glad and gracious time, and the half dozen rash spirits that ventured to disapprove of the war and cast a doubt upon its righteousness straightway got such a stern and angry warning that for their personal safety's sake they quickly shrank out of sight and offended no more in that way.

2 Sunday morning came—next day the battalions would leave for the front; the church was filled; the volunteers were there, their young faces alight with **martial** dreams—visions of the stern advance, the gathering momentum, the rushing charge, the flashing **sabers**, the flight of the foe, the **tumult**, the enveloping smoke, the fierce pursuit, the surrender! Then home from the war, bronzed heroes, welcomed, adored, submerged in golden seas of glory! With the volunteers sat their dear ones, proud, happy, and envied by the neighbors and friends who had no sons and brothers to send forth to the field of honor, there to win for the flag, or, failing, die the noblest of noble

deaths. The service proceeded; a war chapter from the Old Testament was read; the first prayer was said; it was followed by an organ burst that shook the building, and with one impulse the house rose, with glowing eyes and beating hearts, and poured out that tremendous invocation—"God the all-terrible! Thou who ordainest! Thunder thy clarion and lightning thy sword!"

3 Then came the "long" prayer. None could remember the like of it for passionate pleading and moving and beautiful language. The burden of its **supplication** was, that an ever-merciful and benignant Father of us all would watch over our noble young soldiers, and aid, comfort, and encourage them in their patriotic work; bless them, shield them in the day of battle and the hour of peril, bear them in His mighty hand, make them strong and confident, invincible in the bloody onset; help them to crush the foe, grant to them and to their flag and country imperishable honor and glory—

4 An aged stranger entered and moved with slow and noiseless step up the main aisle, his eyes fixed upon the minister, his long body clothed in a robe that reached to his feet, his head bare, his white hair descending in a frothy **cataract** to his shoulders, his seamy face unnaturally pale, pale even to ghastliness. With all eyes following him and wondering, he made his silent way; without pausing, he ascended to the preacher's side and stood there waiting. With shut lids the preacher, unconscious of his presence, continued with his moving prayer, and at last finished it with the words, uttered in fervent appeal, "Bless our arms, grant us the victory, O Lord our God, Father and Protector of our land and flag!"

5 The stranger touched his arm, motioned him to step aside—which the startled minister did—and took his place. During some moments he surveyed the spellbound audience with solemn eyes, in which burned an uncanny light; then in a deep voice he said:

6 "I come from the Throne—bearing a message from Almighty God!" The words **smote** the house with a shock; if the stranger perceived it he gave no attention. "He has heard the prayer of His servant your shepherd, and will grant it if such shall be your desire after I, His messenger, shall have explained to you its import—that is to say, its full import. For it is like unto many of the prayers of men, in that it asks for more than he who utters it is aware of—except he pause and think.

7 "God's servant and yours has prayed his prayer. Has he paused and taken thought? Is it one prayer? No, it is two—one uttered, the other not. Both have reached the ear of Him Who heareth all supplications, the spoken and the unspoken. Ponder this—keep it in mind. If you would beseech a blessing upon yourself, beware! lest without intent you invoke a curse upon a neighbor at the same time. If you pray for the blessing of rain upon your crop which needs it, by that act you are possibly praying for a curse upon some neighbor's crop which may not need rain and can be injured by it.

8 "You have heard your servant's prayer—the uttered part of it. I am **commissioned** of God to put into words the other part of it—that part which the pastor—and also you in your hearts—fervently prayed silently. And ignorantly and unthinkingly? God grant that it was so! You heard these words: 'Grant us the victory, O Lord our God!' That is sufficient. The whole of the uttered prayer is compact into those pregnant words. Elaborations were not necessary. When you have prayed for victory you have prayed for many unmentioned results which follow victory—must follow it, cannot help but follow it. Upon the listening spirit of God fell also the unspoken part of the prayer. He commandeth me to put it into words. Listen!

My Notes

supplication: plea

cataract: waterfall

smote: struck hard

commissioned: assigned the task

Twain in Twain

My Notes

unavailing: useless

protract: prolong

beset: troubled
contrite: remorseful or apologetic

9 "O Lord our Father, our young patriots, idols of our hearts, go forth to battle—be Thou near them! With them—in spirit—we also go forth from the sweet peace of our beloved firesides to smite the foe. O Lord our God, help us to tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells; help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriot dead; help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the shrieks of their wounded, writhing in pain; help us to lay waste their humble homes with a hurricane of fire; help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with **unavailing** grief; help us to turn them out roofless with little children to wander unfriended the wastes of their desolated land in rags and hunger and thirst, sports of the sun flames of summer and the icy winds of winter, broken in spirit, worn with travail, imploring Thee for the refuge of the grave and denied it—for our sakes who adore Thee, Lord, blast their hopes, blight their lives, **protract** their bitter pilgrimage, make heavy their steps, water their way with their tears, stain the white snow with the blood of their wounded feet! We ask it, in the spirit of love, of Him Who is the Source of Love, and Who is the ever-faithful refuge and friend of all that are sore **beset** and seek His aid with humble and **contrite** hearts. Amen.

(After a pause.)

10 "Ye have prayed it; if ye still desire it, speak! The messenger of the Most High waits!"

11 It was believed afterward that the man was a lunatic, because there was no sense in what he said.

Second Read

- Reread the satire to answer these text-dependent questions.
- Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

1. **Craft and Structure:** How do Twain's descriptions create a caricature in paragraph 1? What point of view does this description suggest?

2. **Key Ideas and Details:** In paragraph 2, what evidence shows the townspeople's expectations for the war?

3. **Key Ideas and Details:** Who or what is the messenger who enters the story beginning with paragraph 4? Support your response with text evidence.

4. **Key Ideas and Details:** Summarize the man's message to the townspeople as stated in his prayer in paragraph 9. What theme does his message suggest?

5. **Key Ideas and Details:** What can you infer about human nature from the town's reaction to the messenger in paragraph 12?

Working from the Text

6. Once you have finished reading the piece, conduct a comparative SOAPSTone, looking at the different ways in which Twain treats these drastically different topics. To help you organize your thoughts, you might fold your paper lengthwise, use the first column to complete a SOAPSTone on "Advice to Youth" and the second column for "The War Prayer." Be prepared to discuss your responses.

7. As a follow-up to the comparative SOAPSTone activity, discuss the following questions:
   - How is the type of satire being used appropriate for the subject and purpose?
   - How do the terms *Horatian satire* and *Juvenalian satire* apply to the two satires by Twain?

Check Your Understanding

Transfer your answers to a poster and include a visual element that symbolizes the differences between the texts. Present your poster to the class.

My Notes

INDEPENDENT READING LINK

Read and Respond

Select a text from your news portfolio. Explain in writing how the writer uses tone to advance his or her opinion.

ACTIVITY 3.21

The Satirical Critique

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Marking the Text, Brainstorming

My Notes

Learning Targets

- Examine how tone is connected to a writer's purpose.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of a satirical text.

Preview

In this activity, you will read two satirical pieces and use them as guides to begin work on your own.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

- Highlight words, phrases, or sentences you find particularly funny.
- Underline words and phrases that contribute to the satiric tone and purpose of each essay.
- Circle unknown words and phrases. Try to determine the meaning of the words by using context clues, word parts, or a dictionary.

TEXT 1

Satire

Gambling in Schools

by Howard Mohr

1 [When Minnesota jumped into legalized gambling, it was off the deep end without a lifeguard. First it was Canterbury Downs, a clean, well-lighted horse track that seemed more like a Lutheran church with betting windows. Then came Powerball, Daily Three, Gopher Five (named after the official state rodent), and Scratch-Offs. At the same time Native American casinos were springing up in the land of sky blue waters, raking it in with blackjack and slot machines and high-stakes bingo. What could possibly be next?]

2 Parents and teachers who have been worried sick about finding enough money just to maintain public schools at a **minimal** level, worry no more. The Minnesota Legislature last week approved the Education Gambling Bill. The bill allows Video Gaming Devices (VGDS) in K-12 classrooms. Only two machines per classroom will be permitted, unless the class size exceeds thirty, in which case one additional VGD machine will be permitted for each additional ten students. Class size, however, will not be a problem once the gambling revenue begins pouring in.

3 Students in math classes will be instructed in probability, statistics, and hot streaks. The VGDs in kindergarten classrooms will operate with nickels only. All students will be expected to do their assignments and homework before gambling, unless they're on a roll.

4 Powerball and Gopher Five tickets will be sold only in the lunchroom during the noon hour. But the attractive neon Minnesota lottery signs will be permitted at the main entrance of the school and near the scoreboard at games.

5 Pulltabs and Scratch-Offs are specifically outlawed in the bill because they make a big mess, according to the powerful Janitor's **Lobby**.

minimal: basic

lobby: group that works to influence lawmakers

6 Off-track horse betting will be handled in the Principal's office, with a $2 and $5 window initially, but with the option of a $100 window after the first year. Race results will be available in convenient locations. The first half hour of the school day will be a "**handicapping** homeroom," but students will be encouraged to arrive early if they are psyched up and have the feeling that this is the day.

handicapping: picking which horse will win a race

7 Each school system may publish and sell its own Tip Sheet or it can hire a professional tipster, such as "Gimp" Gordon or "Fast-Forward" Freddy, to be a counselor and role model.

8 Betting on high school sports will be forbidden, but the morning line for collegiate and professional sports will be broadcast on Channel One and posted in the principal's office near the sports betting window. As a safeguard, students will not be allowed to bet on sporting contests unless they have successfully passed Math II, "Point Spreads and Injuries."

9 Poker games will be operated as an extracurricular activity from the final bell until four a.m. The School will be the "house" and provide the dealers. There will be a 10 percent rakeoff for each pot up to a maximum of $10 per hand. Only Five-Card Draw, Stud, and Hold-Em will be permitted. Midnight Baseball, Spit in the Ocean, or Mission Impossible will not be permitted because they are silly games of chance and would send the wrong message to students.

10 Gambling will obviously bring new life and big money to the schools, but there are other advantages:

1: Students will be prepared for jobs in the gambling industry after graduating.

2: Part-time jobs will be created in the schools for change walkers, dealers, security officers, and so on.

3: A wider variety of people will be attracted to the teaching profession.

4: Discipline will be better because the hope of getting something for nothing is one of the oldest drives for excellence.

11 A bigger gambling issue faces the Legislature soon: Should gaming be permitted in hospitals and medical centers? And if so, how much and what kind? Would patients be able to bet the ponies from their beds? Could nurses deal blackjack in the sunroom? Could you go double or nothing with your physician?

My Notes

Second Read

- Reread the satire to answer these text-dependent questions.
- Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

1. **Key Ideas and Details:** What evidence in paragraph 2 indicates why schools might get involved with gambling?

The Satirical Critique

My Notes

2. **Craft and Structure:** How is the last sentence in paragraph 9 ironic? What critique of gambling does it suggest?

3. **Craft and Structure:** How does the shift to hospitals and medical centers in paragraph 11 show Mohr's point of view on gambling as a means of financial support for public services?

GRAMMAR & USAGE
Verbal Phrases

A **gerund** is a verb ending with *-ing* and functioning as a noun. For example, the gerund of the verb *poison* is *poisoning*. A **gerund phrase** consists of a gerund, its object, and its modifiers. Notice the gerund phrase functioning as the subject in the first sentence of this text: "*Poisoning the earth* can be difficult ..."

A **participle** is a word formed from a verb that can also be used as an adjective. For example, the verb *rise* may be used as a past adjective (*the risen sun*) or a present adjective (*the rising sun*). A **participial phrase** consists of a participle and any modifiers. Notice this participial phrase from the text: "*Keeping this in mind*, we should generate ..."

Find two more examples of gerund phrases and participial phrases in the text.

TEXT 2

Satire

How to Poison the Earth

by Linnea Saukko

1 Poisoning the earth can be difficult because the earth is always trying to cleanse and renew itself. Keeping this in mind, we should generate as much waste as possible from substances such as uranium-238, which has a half-life (the time it takes for half of the substance to decay) of one million years, or plutonium, which has a half-life of only 0.5 million years but is so toxic that if distributed evenly, ten pounds of it could kill every person on the earth. Because the United States generates about eighteen tons of plutonium per year, it is about the best substance for long-term poisoning of the earth. It would help if we would build more nuclear power plants because each one generates only 500 pounds of plutonium each year. Of course, we must include persistent toxic chemicals such as polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) and dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) to make sure we have enough toxins to poison the earth from the core to the outer atmosphere. First, we must develop many different ways of putting the waste from these nuclear and chemical substances in, on, and around the earth.

2 Putting these substances in the earth is a most important step in the poisoning process. With deep-well injection we can ensure that the earth is poisoned all the way to the core. Deep-well injection involves drilling a hole that is a few thousand feet deep and injecting toxic substances at extremely high pressures so they will penetrate deep into the earth. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), there are about 360 such deep injection wells in the United States. We cannot forget the groundwater aquifers that are closer to the surface. These must also be contaminated. This is easily done by shallow-well injection, which operates on the same principle as deep-well injection, only closer to the surface. The groundwater that has been injected with toxins will spread contamination beneath the earth. The EPA estimates that there are approximately 500,000 shallow injection wells in the United States.

3 Burying the toxins in the earth is the next best method. The toxins from landfills, dumps, and lagoons slowly seep into the earth, guaranteeing that contamination will last a long time. Because the EPA estimates there are only about 50,000 of these dumps in the United States, they should be located in areas where they will leak to the surrounding ground and surface water.

4 Applying pesticides and other poisons on the earth is another part of the poisoning process. This is good for coating the earth's surface so that the poisons will be absorbed by plants, will seep into the ground, and will run off into surface water.

5 Surface water is very important to contaminate because it will transport the poisons to places that cannot be contaminated directly. Lakes are good for long-term storage of pollutants while they release some of their contamination to rivers. The only trouble with rivers is that they act as a natural cleansing system for the earth. No matter how much poison is dumped into them, they will try to transport it away to reach the ocean eventually.

6 The ocean is very hard to contaminate because it has such a large volume and a natural buffering capacity that tends to neutralize some of the contamination. So in addition to the pollution from rivers, we must use the ocean as a dumping place for as many toxins as possible. The ocean currents will help transport the pollution to places that cannot otherwise be reached.

7 Now make sure that the air around the earth is very polluted. Combustion and evaporation are major mechanisms for doing this. We must continuously pollute because the wind will disperse the toxins while rain washes them from the air. But this is good because a few lakes are stripped of all living animals each year from acid rain. Because the lower atmosphere can cleanse itself fairly easily, we must explode nuclear tests bombs that shoot radioactive particles high into the upper atmosphere where they will circle the earth for years. Gravity must pull some of the particles to earth, so we must continue exploding these bombs.

8 So it is that easy. Just be sure to generate as many poisonous substances as possible and be sure they are distributed in, on, and around the entire earth at a greater rate than it can cleanse itself. By following these easy steps we can guarantee the poisoning of the earth.

Second Read

- Reread the satire to answer these text-dependent questions.
- Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

4. **Craft and Structure:** How does Saukko's choice to structure her satire as a how-to list create an unemotional tone?

My Notes

The Satirical Critique

My Notes

5. **Craft and Structure:** What phrase near the end of paragraph 1 describes Saukko's organization of the text? How effective is this organization?

6. **Craft and Structure:** How is the phrase "poisoned all the way to the core" in paragraph 2 an example of hyperbole? What effect does it have on the reader?

7. **Craft and Structure:** How does Saukko use irony throughout the text to show her point of view?

Working from the Text

8. Which satire is more effective in making its point? Why?

9. Meet with others who chose the same essay. Be prepared to debate with a member of the group who chose the other essay, using effective reasoning and evidence from the text to prove your claim. Be able to point to satirical techniques and purpose.

Writing a Satire

The first task of writing a satire is to choose a topic you are informed and passionate about. Think of some of the topics written about in this unit: shallowness, football, war, gambling, and pollution.

Imagine that your school has a persistent problem with students being late to class. Evaluate how the steps below can get you started on a satirical piece of writing.

Step 1: Identify the topic.
Students being late to class (tardiness)

Step 2: State the problem in hyperbolic terms.
The staggering lack of students at the beginning of class leaves teachers paralyzed. (The diction overstates the severity of the problem: "paralyzed" and "staggering.")

Step 3: Propose an ironic solution.
If students are late, they must stand outside the door for 20 minutes.
(This action does not solve the problem of students not being in class to learn.)
1st offense: Students will carry around a 40-lb clock for the remainder of the day.
2nd offense: Students will receive jail time.
(The punishment does not fit the "crime.")

Step 4: Use wit (wordplay, clever language, or rhetorical analogy).
Punishment will be doled out in a *timely* manner. (Word play)
This problem is a *ticking time bomb*! (Rhetorical analogy)

Step 5: Downplay the severity of the punishment using litotes.
Missing class and being ridiculed is a *small price to pay* to promote punctuality.

Sample paragraph using the above process:
It has come to my attention that students have been late to class at an alarming level. The staggering lack of students at the beginning of class leaves teachers paralyzed. To address this problem, we are adopting a new tardy policy. Following the first offense, students will carry around a 40-lb clock for the remainder of the day. Following the second offense, students will receive a night in jail, during which time they will be able to think about what they have done wrong. We promise to dole out this punishment in a timely manner because we have identified this issue as a ticking time bomb!

Check Your Understanding

Brainstorm a list of controversial public issues you could satirize.

My Notes

The Satirical Critique

My Notes

Narrative Writing Prompt

Choose one controversial topic from your brainstorm to develop. Draft a satirical narrative paragraph based on it. Be sure to:

- Establish the setting, characters, problem, and narrative point of view.
- State the problem in hyperbolic terms.
- Propose an ironic solution.
- Use fun, precise words, telling details, and sensory language to create vivid images.

Independent Reading Checkpoint

Review the completed portfolio based on your self-selected news source. Which articles discuss controversial issues or make debatable claims? Review the guidelines for submitting a letter to the editor to the source. Write a letter to the editor in response to the article. Be sure to succinctly state your claim, reasons, evidence, and response to counterclaims. If possible, submit your letter to the news source.

Writing a Satirical Piece

EMBEDDED ASSESSMENT 2

ASSIGNMENT

You have been studying how opinions are expressed and perceived in a democratic society through a variety of rhetorical formats including satire. Your assignment is to develop a satirical piece critiquing some aspect of our society.

Planning and Prewriting: Take time to create a plan for choosing a topic and audience.	■ What has guided your choice of topics? Do you have the information to sustain a satiric treatment? ■ Will your piece be more Horatian or Juvenalian? What techniques of satire apply well to that form (hyperbole, parody, irony, ridicule, etc.)? ■ If you use parody, what typical conventions of the format do you plan to use as part of the satire? ■ To whom will you address your satire and why? What is your satirical purpose—what effect do you hope to have on this audience?
Drafting: Decide how you will incorporate elements of satire.	■ How will you demonstrate the flaws or foibles of your satire's subject? ■ As you draft your esssay, how will you stick to the conventions that you identified for your satire in your prewriting? ■ What sort of tone is appropriate for the audience and purpose you identified?
Evaluating and Revising: Create opportunities to review and revise.	■ How can you revise to add additonal satirical language elements (loose and cumulative sentences, irony, hyperbole, and litotes)? ■ What sort of strategies could you and a peer use to provide each other with feedback (e.g., evaluate with the Scoring Guide, use the SOAPSTone strategy)?
Checking and Editing for Publication: Be sure your work is the best it can be.	■ How will you check for grammatical and technical accuracy? ■ What sort of outside resources can help you to check your draft (e.g., a format guide, a dictionary, etc.)?

Reflection

After completing this Embedded Assessment, think about how you went about accomplishing this assignment, and respond to the following:

- Satire requires a sort of balancing act, mixing humor that draws in your audience with criticism that points out a particular flaw. How did you approach the challenge of balancing these two different elements?

Writing a Satirical Piece

SCORING GUIDE

Scoring Criteria	Exemplary	Proficient	Emerging	Incomplete
Ideas	The satire • offers insight into a topic that is relevant, current, and debatable • argues a convincingly persuasive position • skillfully demonstrates techniques of satire that are ideal for the topic.	The satire • presents a topic that is generally relevant, current, and debatable • argues a clear position • demonstrates techniques of satire that are suitable for the topic.	The satire • presents a topic that is not fully relevant, current, or debatable • argues a position • demonstrates techniques of satire that are somewhat suitable for the topic.	The satire • presents a topic that is irrelevant • includes a vague or unclear position • fails to demonstrate techniques of satire that are somewhat suitable for the topic.
Structure	The satire • presents ideas in an arrangement that is most conducive to the writer's position • is aptly organized using typical conventions of the format.	The satire • logically arranges ideas to support the writer's position • is organized appropriately using typical conventions of the format.	The satire • arranges ideas to somewhat support the writer's position • is mostly organized using typical conventions of the format.	The satire • arranges ideas in a way that detracts from the writer's position or may be irrelevant • is organized in a way that does not match the typical conventions of the format.
Use of Language	The satire • uses language elements (e.g., skillfully incorporating loose and cumulative sentences, irony, hyperbole, and litotes, etc.) extremely effectively • insightfully matches tone and satirical effect to the intended audience and purpose • contains almost no errors in standard writing conventions.	The satire • uses language elements (e.g., incorporating loose and cumulative sentences and satirical techniques) appropriately • applies appropriate tone and satirical effect for the intended audience and purpose • may contain minor errors in writing conventions that do not interfere with understanding.	The satire • uses language elements less effectively • struggles to match tone and satirical effect to the intended audience and purpose • includes some errors in conventions that interfere with the meaning.	The satire • does not use language elements • does not match tone and satirical effect to the intended audience and purpose • includes errors in writing conventions that seriously interfere with its meaning.