
Unit 4 – Analyzing Current Events

Unit Overview:

This unit presents several ways to incorporate current events into the English curriculum. The Advanced Language curriculum calls for AP students to be able to converse intelligently on a variety of subjects so a knowledge of current, controversial topics is essential. The unit includes four long-term projects: the first project asks students to collect, analyze, and compare national columnists, the second asks students to explore the issue of affirmative action, the third asks students to consider the topic of homelessness, and the fourth asks students to choose their own controversial issue to research. Because these projects depend upon the student's ability to analyze rhetorical strategies, they should be incorporated after the completion of Units 1 and 2.

Upon completion of all four projects, students will have written three problem/solution papers (two research-based) on current events, one current-event(s) column, one rhetorical analysis essay, and one AP-style free response timed essay.

Lesson 4-1: Day 1 Analyzing a National Column

Objective:

To familiarize students with current, controversial topics in the column format.

Skills attained:

Students will recognize rhetorical elements and be able to analyze those elements in terms of author's purpose and effect.

Topics:

- Rhetorical devices

Procedure:

- Students will identify/analyze rhetorical devices in a national column
- Students will begin the columnist project

Materials list:

Student copies of a national column; student copies of **Student Worksheet 4:1 Analyzing Rhetorical Strategies Used in Columns**

Unit 4 – Analyzing Current Events Daily Lesson Plans

Description:

Before class, choose two national columns that present contrasting views on the same current controversial issue. You will be using these two columns as whole group practice to prepare students to complete the columnist project. Select one of the columns and distribute a copy to each student. As a class, complete steps 2-4 of Part 1 of **Student Worksheet 4:1**. Have students keep the annotated column and discuss the rest of the columnist project. Instruct students to choose their columnist and obtain two copies of the first column for homework. They will be working in pairs to annotate/analyze their first column the following class period.

Homework:

Two copies of first column.

Lesson 4-1: Day 2 Analyzing a National Column

Objective:

To familiarize students with current, controversial topics in the column format.

Skills attained:

Students will recognize rhetorical elements and be able to analyze those elements in terms of author's purpose and effect.

Topics:

- Rhetorical devices

Procedure:

- Students will identify/analyze rhetorical devices in a national column
- Students will begin the columnist project

Materials list:

Student copies of **Student Worksheet 4:1 Analyzing Rhetorical Strategies Used in Columns**

Description:

Check for homework (two copies of first column). Have students work in pairs to annotate their first column. Circulate throughout the room and assist when necessary. Allow students 15-20 minutes to work on their annotations. Then, instruct students to begin working on steps 3-4 of Part 1 of Student Worksheet 4:1. Allow them another 10 minutes or so to complete these sections. About ten minutes before the end of the period, have groups choose one target audience analysis to share with the class. As students present, instruct students to narrow their analyses if possible. Have students complete steps 2-4 for their first column for homework. You will be collecting the first column the next class period. Mark any corrections needed on the first column and return to students. Assign remainder of columnist project due on day 15.

Unit 4 – Analyzing Current Events Daily Lesson Plans

Homework:

Complete steps 2-4 for the first column; begin work on the remainder of the columnist project, due day 15.

Lesson 4-2: Day 3 Writing the Current Event Research Paper: Affirmative Action

Objective:

To reinforce students' awareness of and ability to write persuasively about current controversial events; to introduce/reinforce all steps in the research process.

Skills attained:

Students will research a current controversial issue and incorporate that research into a short research paper.

Topics:

- Writing a research paper

Procedure:

- Students will read and discuss articles on affirmative action
- Students will conduct independent research on affirmative action
- Students will incorporate their knowledge into a short research paper

Materials list:

Student copies of "The Great White Myth" by Anna Quindlen and "Affirmative Action: The Price of Preference" by Shelby Steele (or alternative pro and con articles on affirmative action); student copies of **Appendix Y: The Current Events Research Paper**.

Description:

Distribute copies of "The Great White Myth" by Anna Quindlen, available in *Readings for Writers* and many other anthologies (or use an alternative pro article). Have students read the article silently and then work in pairs or small groups to complete the Facts and Strategies questions. About 10 minutes before the end of the period, discuss answers as a class. Assign the second pro article, "Affirmative Action: The Price of Preference" by Shelby Steele, also available in *Readings for Writers* (or use an alternative con article) and discussion questions for homework.

Homework:

Read and complete discussion questions on con article on affirmative action; bring one Internet article on affirmative action to class (both due day 5).

Unit 4 – Analyzing Current Events Daily Lesson Plans

Lesson 4-2: Day 4 Writing the Current Event Research Paper: Affirmative Action

Objective:

To introduce students to the concept of plagiarism; to reinforce students' ability to write ethical and credible research papers.

Skills attained:

Students will recognize and avoid plagiarism.

Topics:

- Avoiding plagiarism

Procedure:

- Students will read about plagiarism
- Students will take an interactive quiz on plagiarism
- Students will take a quiz on plagiarism

Materials list:

Copies of **Appendix Z: Avoiding Plagiarism**; access to student computers and the Internet.

Description: Have students complete Appendix Z: Avoiding Plagiarism; about 10 minutes before the end of class, administer Unit 4:1 Plagiarism quiz.

Homework:

Read and complete discussion questions on con article on affirmative action; bring one Internet article on affirmative action to class.

Lesson 4-2: Day 5 Writing the Current Event Research Paper: Affirmative Action

Objective:

To reinforce students' awareness of and ability to write persuasively about current controversial events; to introduce/reinforce all steps in the research process.

Skills attained:

Students will research a current controversial issue and incorporate that research into a short research paper.

Topics:

- Writing a research paper

Procedure:

- Students will read and discuss articles on affirmative action
- Students will conduct independent research on affirmative action
- Students will incorporate their knowledge into a short research paper