

Title: Reporting the War - World War II

Key Words: Edward R. Murrow, Ernie Pyle, censorship, war reporting

Grade Level: middle and high school

Time Allotted: Half day introduction, one day for stations activity, half day wrap up

Lesson Overview	During times of crisis the public desires information. How is information reported? During World War II the radio provided a new approach to war reporting. This lesson is designed to help students explore how World War II was reported and the impact live reports had on the home front. Students will move through five different fifteen minutes stations where they will explore and analyze how the war was reported. In Station 1 students will have an overview on how war is covered, reported, and the technology used to broadcast war. Station 2 examines what the average American would have heard reported on the radio and how the reports shaped public opinion. In station 3 students examine the work of two frontline reporters Edward R. Murrow and Ernie Pyle and compare their styles of reporting. Station 4 covers the visual images provided to the public through newsreels and the purpose they served in informing the public and providing patriotic propaganda. In Station 5 students analyze the role of censorship and how the leaders of the time tried to control information. It also opens the question of the impact of censorship on modern day reporting.
Guiding Question(s)	How is information received and interpreted by the public in times of war or crisis? What role does the press have on building support or raising discontent during war? Should information be censored during times of war? How does technology impact how the public receives information?

Learning Objectives (SWBAT – Students Will Be Able to)

- Students will be able to use primary resources, such as news reels, radio broadcasts, and news articles.
- Students will be able to evaluate the authenticity of war reporting.
- Students will be able to compare the impact of a live report to an after the event news report.
- Students will evaluate the effectiveness of various styles of reporting the news, including newspaper reports, imbedded reports, radio broadcasts, and newsreels.
- Students will analyze various styles of reporting the news for bias, propaganda, and effectiveness of relaying the news.

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- **Students will evaluate the impact of technology on journalism.**
- **Students will be able to compare and contrast the reporting styles of Edward R. Murrow and Ernie Pyle.**
- **Students will analyze the role of censorship on reporting the news during war.**
- **Students will be able to evaluate the difference between war reporting during World War II and modern day.**

Standards of Learning:

Virginia Standard of Learning

- VUS.1 The student will demonstrate skills for historical and geographical analysis and responsible citizenship, including the ability to
- a) identify, analyze, and interpret primary and secondary source documents, records, and data, including artifacts, diaries, letters, photographs, journals, newspapers, historical accounts, and art, to increase understanding of events and life in the United States;**
 - b) evaluate the authenticity, authority, and credibility of sources;**
 - c) formulate historical questions and defend findings, based on inquiry and interpretation;**
 - d) develop perspectives of time and place, including the construction of maps and various timelines of events, periods, and personalities in American history;**
 - h) interpret the significance of excerpts from famous speeches and other documents;**
- VUS.12 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the effects of World War II on the home front by
- d) describing the role of media and communications in the war effort.**

OAH Historical Skills Taught:

Historic Comprehension –

- Define the purpose, perspective, or point of view from which the narrative has been constructed.
- Evidence historical perspectives – the ability to describe the past on its own terms, through the eyes and experiences of those who were there, as revealed through their literature, diaries, letters, debates, arts, and the like; and to “present-mindedness,” judging the past solely in terms of the present-day norms and values.

Historical Analysis and Interpretation-

- Identify the author or source of the historical document or narrative and assess its credibility.
- Differentiate between historical facts and historical interpretations, but acknowledge also that the two are related.

Assessment Tool(s)

The stations activity will be evaluated using the key provided. As the students evaluate the sources various interpretations of the documents might develop but the overall concepts are provided in the key.

An extension activity, depending on classroom time, is to have students practice being war reporters by researching various battles and creating a war report.

Materials/Resources

Annotated Bibliography

“Allies Drive on Into Italy, Planes Smash Foes From the Air, 1944.” *Digitized Videos in the*

National Archives. U.S. National Archives and Records, n.d. Web. 10 May 2012.

<<http://www.archives.gov/research/arc/videos.html>>.

The National Archives website has a variety of resources on World War II from propaganda posters, digital copy of the *The Day of Infamy* Speech, and newsreels. The digitized newsreels are a great source of information about the World War II time period.

“Edward R. Murrow.” *Radio Days*. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 May 2012. <<http://www.otr.com/news.shtml>>.

I was concerned about this website because it is not associated with an educational institution. It does not have advertisements and appears to be reliable. It has very good sound recordings of various reporters in World War II but also other events in American History

“Ernie Pyle: War Time Columns.” *Ernie Pyle*. Indiana University School of Journalism, n.d. Web. 11

May 2012. <<http://journalism.indiana.edu/resources/erniepile/wartime-columns/1/>

#WartimeColumns>.

The Indiana University School of Journalism has an outstanding collection of Ernie Pyles’ columns and images. The columns are easy to access and have a short description before each column for better searching.

“FDR to Winton Churchill re: Leaks to the Press About Anti-Submarine Methods 11/10/1944.”

Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum. National Archives, n.d. Web. 10 May 2012.

<<http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/cgi-bin/htsearch?words=censorship;page=2>>. The Franklin

Roosevelt Presidential Library website is a good source for digital photos and documents. It is easy to search and has wide variety of resources. It does not have digital versions of fireside chats or film with FDR.

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“Hopkins on Conference with Stalin to FDR 9/11/1941.” *Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum*. National Archives, n.d. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/cgi-bin/htsearch?words=censorship;page>>.

The website provides good images of President Roosevelt and his family. It also has a good digital collection of Roosevelt’s correspondence to others and documents sent to him. It does not have a digital collection of voice or film archives of FDR.

Lane, Katie. “Censorship and War Propaganda.” *American Studies at the University of Virginia*.

http://xroads.virginia.edu/~class/am485_98/lane/media/censor.htm, Fall 2009. Web. 9 May 2012. <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~class/am485_98/lane/media/censor.htm>.

This website is sponsored by the University of Virginia American Studies department that was disbanded in 2009. The academic research collected from 1994 - 2009 is maintained on the website but new information is not added. The articles on reporting war are well researched, cited, and interesting to read.

Reporting War In American. PBS co produced by Insignia Films and WETA, 2003. Web. 10 May 2012. <<http://www.pbs.org/weta/reportingamericaatwar/>>.

The PBS website covers reporting war in American during the 20th century. It has a good collection of World War II reporters talking about their experiences. The reports can be streamed.

Reporting World War II: American Journalist 1938 – 1946, The Library of America, Penguin Putnam, Inc, 2001.

The book is a collection of news reports from various reporters during World War II. It provides an excellent source of primary resources from a variety of reporters.

“Voices of World War II: Voices From the Home Front.” *Voices of World War II: Voices from the HomeFront*. University of Missouri Kansas City Nicols Library in conjunction with the Harry Truman Presidential Library and Museum, n.d. Web. 9 May 2012. <<http://library.umkc.edu/spec-col/ww2/main.htm>>.

The UMKC website is an excellent resource for World War II radio recordings. It has a wide variety of newscasts from the radio. It is well organized into special topics such as Before the War, the War in Europe and Post World War II.

Teacher Guide

Stations are an instructional model designed to provide student access to a variety of information on a topic, such as reporting war. Students will move through five stations on topics of reporting World War II. At each station they will explore a different aspect of reporting the war. Each station will require access to technology. Students will listen to excerpts from Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill speeches; explore the Newseum website on reporting the war, read excerpts from the reporting of Edward R. Murrow, and Ernie Pyle, and watch newsreels of war reports.

The goal of this activity is for it to cover a lot of information quickly. It is important for the stations to have as much time as possible. Start the activity at the end of class on the day before. It should take approximately 15 minutes. Use the Introduction PowerPoint to get students thinking about the reporting styles of Edward R. Murrow and Ernie Pyle. For homework, depending on the level of your students, have students read two columns written by Ernie Pyle. The two columns are *The God-Damned Infantry* from May, 3, 1943 and *The Death of Captain Warkow* from Jan 10th 1944. The readings can be accessed at <http://journalism.indiana.edu/resources/erniepyle/wartime-columns/1/#WartimeColumns>.

Teachers will need to prep the room for stations. Students should be able to logically move from station to station. Depending on class size and classroom furniture, desks or tables should be placed into five student areas around the room. (I have desk with detached chairs. I place five desks in each station, four facing each other with one on the end.) Students should be assigned evenly over the five stations. Pre-assigning the groups help the station activities start quicker. After students are seated return to the introduction Powerpoint from the day before. Review the writing styles of Edward R. Murrow and Ernie Pyle. Using the PowerPoint provide a brief overview of each station and hand out the station packet. Students will work on each station activity independently, but can clarify information with their group members. The teacher will monitor student progress and keep track of the time. I use a stop watch to keep the stations on time. (I have 85 minutes blocks, which means each station is 15 minutes with 5 minutes for an introduction and 5 minute de-briefing at the end of class.) The stations take prep time to set up. In advance the teacher will need to reserve laptops and headphones. Due to charging issues, I also suggest power supplies for the lap tops and power strips. The day of the stations activity the teacher will need to set up the room in advance. I suggest twenty

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minutes for set up and clean up. Even though the stations take time for set and clean up, the classroom will flow quietly and smoothly. If a teacher is traveling or does not have access to technology, the stations could be set up in the library or a computer lab.

This stations activity relies on computer access. Students will need to be able to stream video, listen to radio reports using Real Player, and access websites. All the web sites are listed in the stations handout. In station #3 and #5 the documents can be printed out before class. In stations #3 the Ernie Pyle columns should be read either for homework or in the class before the stations. The websites will allow for students who miss the stations activity to catch up at home.

Depending on time, I have included an extension activity that requires students to research a World War II battle and report their findings using a journalistic style. Students can work in groups or as individuals to develop a radio report, news column or newsreel to explain the impact of various battles on the outcome of the war.

Modifications (to meet needs of diverse learners)

The lesson plan is designed to allow for struggling readers to listen to radio reports, watch newsreel and explore websites. A homework assignment is to read two Ernie Pyle readings. The readings could be covered in class the day before the stations. Stations activities work well with all levels of students due to the variety of activities and level of engagement. If there is more than one teacher in the classroom it is helpful to have the teachers supervise station 3 and 5. Teacher in the stations help to guide students on the different reporting styles of Edward R. Murrow and Ernie Pyle and with the primary resources in the censorship stations. It also helps to keep students motivated.

Instructional Procedures/Process

This lesson is intended as an introduction or early activity in a World War II unit.

1. Introduction – The day before the stations activity introduce the lesson with Introduction PowerPoint. The opening activity is for students to draw a picture of the Battle of Britain or the invasion at Omaha Beach using the description of Edward R. Murrow or Ernie Pyle. Then they will compare what they liked about each reporter and which they feel is better at reporting the event. There is not a correct answer, both are interesting to read. Then review the stations activity for the next day.
2. Preparation - Before class place students into pre-assigned groups. The classroom will need to be set up into five groups. Each group will need to have lap tops. If lap tops are not available or if there is a limited number of lap tops stations #3 and #5 can have the information printed in advance. Also the activity can take place in the computer lab or the library. It is also important to have back up electrical supplies because often the battery life of the lap tops is limited.
3. Stations – Students will need to start the Stations activity immediately. Use the introduction PowerPoint to review Edward R. Murrow and Ernie Pyle and their reporting styles.
4. Hand out the stations handout and preview each station using the Introduction PowerPoint.
5. Students will have 15 minutes at each station. Once the stations start the primary role of the teacher is keep students on track, keep time, trouble shoot technical problems, and clear up any confusion.
6. Exit Slip – In the last five minutes of class hand out an exit slip.

How is war reported? Compare how war was reported during World War II to modern day news reports? How has access to information changed? Has the changes in technology resulted in us being a better informed public? Explain.

Closure (Activity/Procedure that brings the lesson back to the guiding question)

During the last five minutes of class have students complete the following exit slip.

How is war reported? Compare how war was reported during World War II to modern day news reports? How has access to information changed? Has the changes in technology resulted in us being a better informed public? Explain

If time is tight the exit slip can be an entrance slip for the next class. During the next class review the stations activity by completing a Venn Diagram where students compare and contrast the way news is reported during the World War II to modern day. The summing up question is:

Has the changes in technology resulted in us being a better informed public? Explain

name _____ date _____

