

# NEWSEUM REPORTING UNDER FIRE

## Unit Overview

We believe that your visit to the Newseum, along with this unit of study on war reporting, will help you and your students better understand the guidelines and principles journalists use to report stories and the dilemmas inherent in reporting about violent conflict. We believe this knowledge will help students better understand the role of the free press and become more informed and critical news consumers.

By actively participating in this unit, including pre-visit activities, a Newseum experience and post-visit activities, students will come to understand the three guiding principles of journalism: fairness, accuracy and clarity. Students will grapple with real-life ethical decisions that journalists working in conflict zones face.

Our guiding question in this unit — *What principles guide how journalists reporting from conflict zones work?* — engenders a number of additional questions that will be good to keep in mind as you take advantage of your Newseum visit:

**What principles guide journalists reporting from conflict and war zones? What does it mean to be fair in reporting? To be clear and accurate? How do these principles change, if at all, when reporting under fire?**

- **How has war reporting changed events in the United States and the world?**
- **What standards do journalists use when reporting from conflict zones?**
- **How are issues of bias, fair reporting, national security and propaganda addressed by war journalists?**
- **How have communications technologies transformed war reporting?**

We appreciate your willingness to share with your students the benefits of viewing, hearing, reading and touching the elements of the First Amendment through which the Newseum brings history to life.

# NEWSEUM REPORTING UNDER FIRE

## National Standards of Learning

National Center for History in the Schools, National Standards for U.S. History Grades 5-12:

Content:	Standard
<b>The student understands contemporary American culture.</b> 7-12 Explain the influence of media on contemporary American culture. [Explain historical continuity and change]	Era 10 Standard 2D

Center for Civic Education, National Standards for Civics and Government Grades 5-8:

Content:	Standard
<b>The public agenda.</b> Students should be able to explain what is meant by the public agenda and how it is set.	III.F.1.
<b>Public opinion and behavior of the electorate.</b> Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions about the role of public opinion in American politics.	III.E.2.
<b>Political communication: television, radio, the press, and political persuasion.</b> Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on the influence of the media on American political life.	III.E.3.
<b>Forms of political participation.</b> Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions about the means that citizens should use to monitor and influence the formation and implementation of public policy.	V.E.3.

National Council for the Social Studies, Curriculum Standards for Social Studies  
Middle Grades:

Content:	Standard
b. explain how information and experiences may be interpreted by people from diverse cultural perspectives and frames of reference	(I) Culture
g. apply knowledge of how groups and institutions work to meet individual needs and promote the common good	(V) Individuals, Groups, & Institutions

# NEWSEUM REPORTING UNDER FIRE

## National Council for the Social Studies, Curriculum Standards for Social Studies High School:

Content:	Standard
b. predict how data and experiences may be interpreted by people from diverse cultural perspectives and frames of reference	(I) Culture
e. investigate, interpret, and analyze multiple historical and contemporary viewpoints within and across cultures related to important events, recurring dilemmas, and persistent issues, while employing empathy, skepticism, and critical judgment	(II) Time, Continuity, & Change
g. analyze the extent to which groups and institutions meet individual needs and promote the common good in contemporary and historical settings	(V) Individuals, Groups, & Institutions

## National Council of Teachers of English: Standards for the English Language Arts

Content:	Standard
Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.	Standard 1.
Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).	Standard 3.
Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.	Standard 4.
Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).	Standard 12.

# NEWSEUM PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

Dear Educator,

We are looking forward to welcoming you and your class to the Newseum for the Reporting Under Fire school program. This introductory activity will familiarize your students with some of the ethical dilemmas and logistical issues faced by reporters working in war and conflict zones.

- Reporting on Conflict Today

We hope this activity help you and your students get excited about your upcoming field trip. We'll see you soon!

Newseum Education Staff

# NEWSEUM PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Reporting on Conflict Today How do different media outlets report the same story?

Historian and journalist Harold Evans, in discussing the possible tension between reporting what a war correspondent sees and what his or her government claims is happening in a conflict, raises this question:

***Is the first duty of the correspondent to truth or to his country?*** Governments, understandably, put a priority on nurturing the morale of the armed forces and the people, intimidating an enemy with the force of the national will. They have few scruples about whether they are being fair as their propaganda demonizes an alien leader or even a whole population. ... Authority resents it when a newspaper or broadcast shades the black and white. Correspondents and their editors are not much inclined or able to do that in total wars of national survival, such as World War II, where a common will has formed against an indisputable evil. But in the limited, more controversial wars of recent years, it has been possible for a correspondent to report from “the other side,” from Baghdad in the Gulf War or Belgrade in the Kosovo conflict.

Keeping Evans’s words in mind, select a current conflict to track, such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Israel/Palestine, Sudan/Darfur or Tibet. Track reports of the conflict in a variety of media outlets for a week or more. Try to get at least 12 reports on the conflict from diverse sources. You should get as full a picture of the events as possible, with news reports from different locations and different perspectives. Be sure to read about your chosen conflict in the following media outlets:

- U.S. newspapers that focus on national news.
- U.S. newspapers that focus on local news (your hometown newspaper).
- Newspapers from other countries. More than 700 newspapers transmit their front pages electronically to the Newseum every day. This is a good place to look at the variety of international newspapers available. All of the front pages are available online every day at [newseum.org/todaysfrontpages](http://newseum.org/todaysfrontpages). You can access the full Web site of each paper by clicking on the front page image and then clicking “Web site” in the upper right corner.
- U.S. and international online news organizations.
- Blogs from people living in the conflict zone.

# NEWSEUM PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

Once you have gathered your reports, read through them several times and then answer the questions below.

1. Do these reports offer differing accounts of the events or of the issues that are disputed? What events or issues are being described in these reports?
2. Who are the writers of these accounts? Are any of them clearly advocating for one side or another? If so, which side is being advocated by whom?
3. Who is the intended audience of these reports? Why are the reports being written? Are the reports written for the general public? For people who already know a lot about the conflict? For people who support one side or the other? Are they written to propel action, to increase knowledge or for another reason? Does the author want you to read this and go out and do something about it?
4. Where are these reports being written from? The conflict zone? The “front lines” of the conflict? A city far away?
5. Think back to the question asked by Harold Evans: “Is the first duty of the correspondent to truth or to his country?” Do you think these reports are truthful? Do you agree with Evans’s assessment that reporters are able to cover current conflicts from “the other side” and not focus only on their countries’ stake in the conflict?

# NEWSEUM IN THE NEWSEUM

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Reporting Under Fire

### Visit the World News Gallery and the Journalists Memorial (Level 3)

Journalists face danger every day. Some are targeted deliberately, while others simply are in the wrong place at the wrong time. They often take calculated risks, sometimes paying with their lives.

Explore both galleries and then select one artifact or journalist to find out more about. Answer the questions below about your selection.

What or who did you select? Why did you select this item or person?

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#### For artifacts:

When is this item from? \_\_\_\_\_

Where was this item used? \_\_\_\_\_

How did this item help to spread truth? \_\_\_\_\_

#### For journalists:

When did this person live? \_\_\_\_\_

Where did this person work? \_\_\_\_\_

How did this person work to spread truth? \_\_\_\_\_

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# NEWSEUM POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

Dear Educator,

We hope you enjoyed your recent visit to the Newseum, and that you and your students will view the coverage of conflict zones and war reporting with a more critical eye and an awareness of the ethical and logistical considerations. Enclosed are two activities that may help extend the experience and allow you to apply concepts that were presented in the **Reporting Under Fire** lesson.

- War Stories: Newseum Online Exhibit
- Press Freedoms Around the World

We hope these activities help you and your students become both more informed about and more engaged in exploring our First Amendment rights.

Newseum Education Staff

# NEWSEUM POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

## War Stories Newseum Online Exhibit

The Newseum's online exhibit "War Stories" explores some of the major issues wartime reporters face, from ethical dilemmas to physical safety concerns to changing communications technology. View the online exhibit at [newseum.org/warstories](http://newseum.org/warstories) and select one of the two sections — "Video Interviews" or "Media and Technology" — to explore in more depth. Answer the questions for your chosen section.

### Video Interviews

*Hear what it's like to be a war correspondent as leading journalists discuss what they have seen and heard covering conflicts from World War II to the Gulf War. Be sure to listen to at least one journalist from each conflict.*

### Video Interviews Questions

1. Which interview do you find most compelling? Why?
2. After listening to the reporters' experiences from conflicts spanning nearly 50 years, what role, if any, do you think communications technology played in how they experienced the war?
3. What is consistent among the experiences of the reporters? What is consistent among the conflicts? What is different?

### Media and Technology

*Learn about the communications technologies available to war reporters from the Civil War to the Bosnia/Kosovo conflict. Find out how different and faster communication affected what reporters could do and what the public knew.*

### Media and Technology Questions

1. How did technology affect what Americans at home were able to see of the conflict?
2. The U.S. government has granted vastly different levels of access to journalists in different wars. Which conflicts had the greatest level of government censorship of the press? Which conflicts had the least amount of censorship of the press? Did reporters' access to the conflict — battlegrounds, troops, etc. — affect the level of censorship?
3. What is the rationale for censoring journalists covering conflict zones? Do you agree or disagree with this reasoning?

# NEWSEUM POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Press Freedoms Around the World

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees all Americans five fundamental freedoms: speech, press, religion, assembly and petition. Our First Amendment protects our right to freedom of expression and allows journalists to investigate and report stories without censorship or interference from the government. Not all nations protect these freedoms. Every day, journalists around the world face intimidation, censorship and perilous conditions. Journalists have been harassed, attacked and imprisoned simply for asking questions or reporting facts, but news still gets out, exposing the truth through the mainstream, underground and online press.

Select one of the recent conflicts below and research the different sides of the dispute and the events that occurred or are still occurring. Write a brief summary of the conflict. Next, research the freedom of expression rights and press freedoms in that region (a list of Internet resources is below). Answer the questions below.

### Conflict Zones:

- Afghanistan
- Chechnya
- Iraq
- Israel/Palestine
- Kosovo/Yugoslavia
- Rwanda
- Somalia
- Sudan/Darfur
- Tibet

### Internet Resources

Freedom House World Press Freedoms: [freedomhouse.org](http://freedomhouse.org)  
(Click on "Freedom of the Press" on the left side.)

CIA World Factbook: [cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/](http://cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/)

United Nations Peacekeeping Forces: [un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/](http://un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/)  
(Click on the left side for current and past operations.)

### Questions

1. Find your conflict zone on the online World Press Freedoms map at [freedomhouse.org](http://freedomhouse.org). How does Freedom House rank the nations involved in your chosen conflict? What does this ranking mean?
2. Thinking about the conflict zone you researched, how do you think government censorship and the lack of a free press might enable conflict to grow within and among nations and groups?