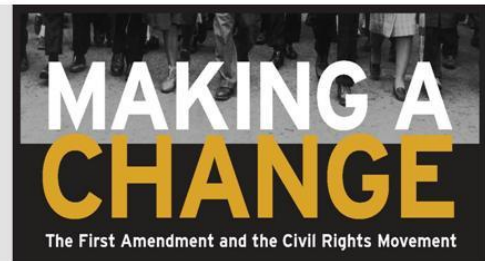


Civil Rights: Reporting Now



Rationale/Main Concept:

As technology has developed since the mid-20th-century civil rights era, the news media have found new ways to inform and engage their audiences. At the same time, audiences have more power to affect what news is reported and how. This lesson plan helps students evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different methods of communicating the news over time. Additionally, by translating an historic news report using modern technology, students will hone their abilities to clearly communicate a message based on research and gathering evidence.

Essential Questions:

- In what ways can news reporters share information today? How does this differ from methods available during the civil rights movement?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of technologies available today?
- What impact do these tools have on readers? On reporters?

Objectives — Through this lesson, students will be able to:

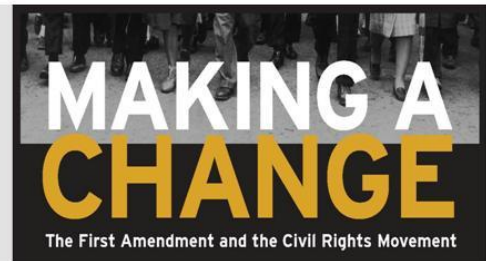
- Identify and describe changes in news technology, from the height of the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s to today.
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of these technologies for reporting the news.
- Analyze the impact of these technologies on reporters and audiences.
- Implement new technologies to translate a historic news report for a contemporary audience.
- Explain and justify their content, layout and technology choices to their peers.

Time: 30 minutes of classroom discussion, 20 minutes of small group work, additional time for project implementation

Materials:

- Lesson plan
- Internet access to use the Newseum media map and the Newseum’s front pages exhibit
- “Communicating the News” visual aid
- Class list of journalism best practices, created in Lesson 1: “Reporting Then”
- “Technology: Then and Now” worksheet
- “Remix It!” worksheet

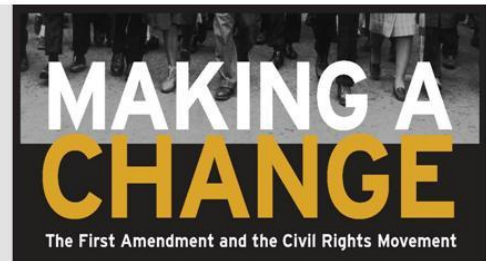
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Procedure:

1. Begin by telling students that today they are going to examine how advances in technology have affected the way the news media can cover news stories, including civil rights issues, over time. As a class, create a list of all the ways reporters can share events today. *Newspapers, radio, TV, blogs, Twitter, Facebook, etc.*
2. Give students time to explore the Newseum media map. Ask them to deduce the technologies available for producing the news during the civil rights movement. They may want to look at the newspaper descriptions as well as the civil rights timeline for hints. *Newspapers, radio, television beginning in the 1950s (though limited number of channels).* Go back to the list of reporting technologies created in the step above and circle all of the technologies that were available during the 1950s and 1960s.
3. Lead a discussion about the changes they see in news production over time. Ask students to consider how the available technologies affect the processes of gathering and disseminating the news, as well as the consequences for news consumers and publishers. *Ideas might include: technology makes it possible to spread the news more quickly, to more people; there are more media types to share news; anyone can be a news producer now; people can access the news 24/7; there's even more pressure to produce reports quickly, so it's harder for reporters to take the time to be accurate, fair and clear; etc.*
4. Show students the "Communicating the News" visual and hand out the "Why Use It?" worksheet. As students touch on the ideas mentioned above, point out that they are answering three questions: How is news produced? How is it distributed? How are readers involved? Note that technology has led to changes in each stage of the communication process. For example, news readers can now report the news as well — they don't have to go through an official publisher or news outlet. But there are strengths and weakness of each type of tool. As a class, go over the first example on the "Why Use It?" worksheet. Then give students time to add a few more entries, either collectively or individually.
5. Show your class the list of best practices they created in the previous lesson, "Reporting Then." Review their list collectively, and then ask what guidelines they want to add or revise, if any. Be sure that students address the ideas of determining important points, supporting details and maintaining accuracy. *Possible ideas include: use dynamic visuals, provide ways for readers to interact with reporters and each other, balancing producing quickly to be relevant and taking the time to research and check your sources, etc.*

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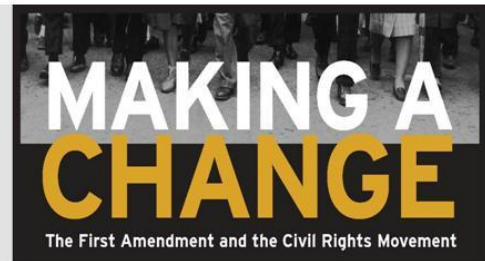


6. Finally, prepare students for their projects. Tell them they will have the rest of the period to plan how they will “translate” an article from the civil rights movement to a report created with modern tools. As a group, they need to decide the tool or tools they will use to inform and engage their audiences. They should capture the tone and information used in the original article — whether or not it is accurate, fair and clear. Have students break into small groups. Let each group choose a front page from the media. Use the “Remix It!” worksheet to create their new reports. (See *attached example*.)
7. Students should share their final products with the class. Then, as a class, analyze the products and debrief on the creation process. Possible discussion prompts include: What was hard about creating the reports? What was easy? Did students discover anything surprising, either about their event or about communicating the news?

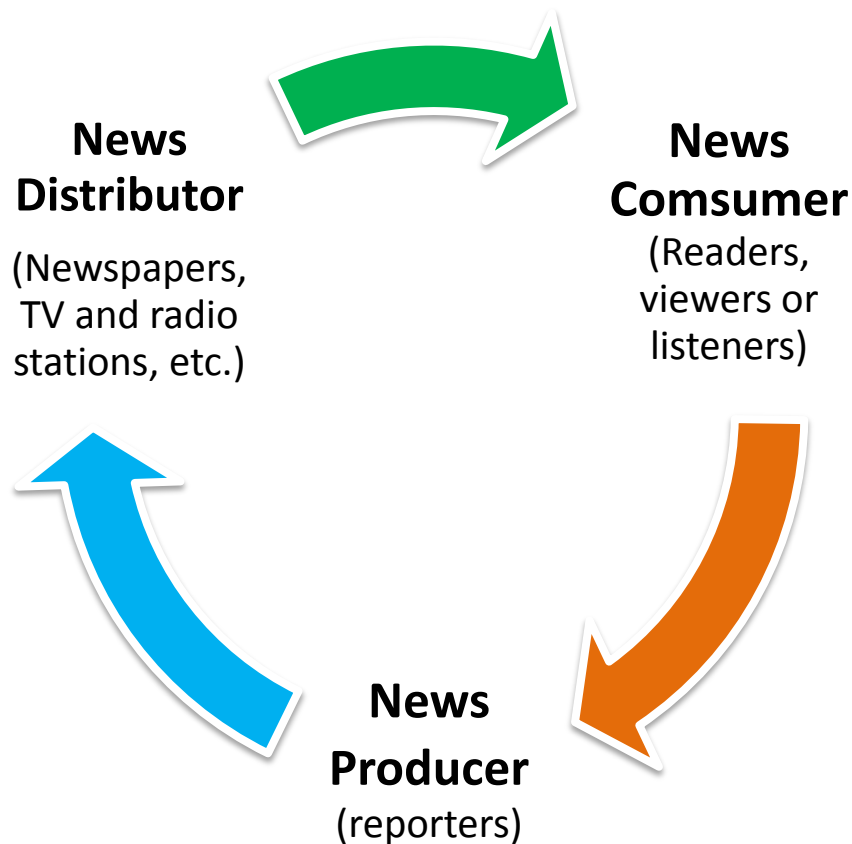
Extension Activities:

Reverse Translation: Pick a news story about a current civil rights issue that uses a form of media not available during the 1950s and 1960s (e.g., blog post, tweet, etc.). Create a news story like those in the front pages featured on the media map. What additional research do you have to do? What is easier about this process than that for creating a modern news story? What’s harder? For news producers, what are the advantages and disadvantages of using an older style and format? What about for news consumers?

At the Newseum: Visit the “Civil Rights at 50” exhibit. Ask students to choose one of the featured events, and then retell the story of what happened using a modern communication tool: Twitter. Students should compose three to five tweets of 140 characters or fewer that communicate the key points of the story. Remind them that their tweets, though short, should still strive to follow the guidelines of ethical journalism and be accurate, fair and clear. Students may tweet in the Newseum, or write their tweets on poster paper in the classroom.



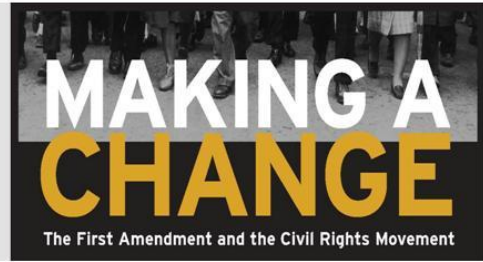
Visual: Communicating the News



News Consumer: The person who listens, watches or reads the news. This person chooses the distributor(s) and producer(s) s/he receives the news from.

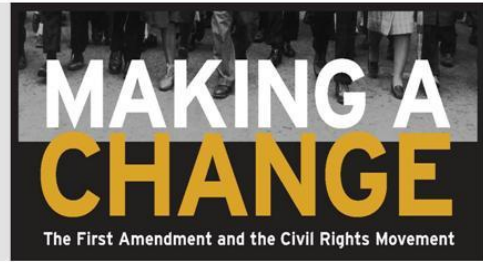
News Producer: The person who covers current events and turns research, observations and interviews into reports for the public. This person decides what information is important and how to communicate it.

News Distributor: The person or organization that connects the news consumer and the news producer. This organization decides what to print or broadcast, when to publish the news and how to attract consumers.



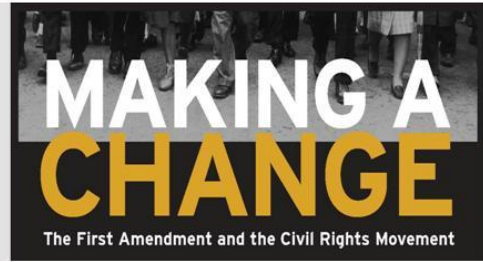
Why Use It? Technology in News Reporting Today

Technology	How It Works	Pros	Cons
Newspapers	Journalists (usually professionals) research events or topics, and then write reports that are published on a regular schedule.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Time for research because doesn't publish continuously• More space for context — stories can be short or long as needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not necessarily up-to-the-minute• Cost — more expensive today than other media• Not immediately interactive

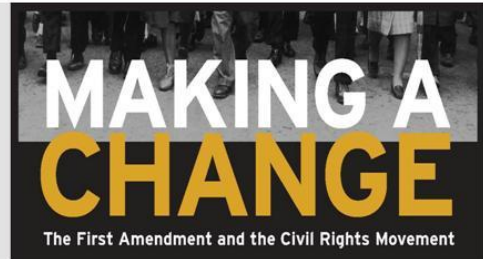


Remix It!

Team Members	
Historic Newspaper Name	
Article Headline	
Content	
Who was involved?	
What happened?	
Where did it happen?	
When did it happen?	
Why and how did it happen?	
Summary (2-3 sentences)	



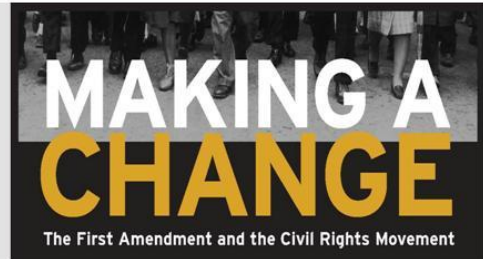
"Remixed" Plan	
Remix Tool	
Justification for Tool	
Role of Each Member	
Next Steps	



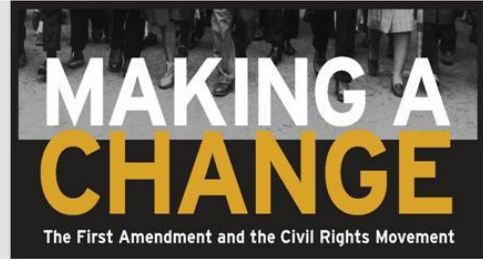
Example: Remix It! Worksheet

Team Members	Mary, Kirsti, Anna
Historical Newspaper Name	<i>The Washington Post</i>
Article Headline	Mammoth Rally of 200,000 Jams Mall in Solemn Orderly Plea for Equality
Content	
Who was involved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 200,000 people gathered on the Mall — blacks and whites • Phillip Randolph, director of the march • Martin Luther King Jr. • Other leaders representing civil rights organizations and religious organizations • House and Senate leaders, including House Speaker John McCormack • President John F. Kennedy and Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson • Police Chief Robert Murray
What happened?	“March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom” — it was the biggest civil rights demonstration in the history of the nation
Where did it happen?	Washington, D.C. — On the National Mall, on Capitol Hill and at the Lincoln Memorial
When did it happen?	Aug. 28, 1963
Why and how did it happen?	More than 200,000 people arrived by “special buses and trains” for the purpose of urging Congress to pass civil rights legislation. Participants used assembly, song and speeches share their message — their desire for “full equality.” Civil rights leaders then met with members of Congress, the president issued a statement supporting the marchers and the speaker of the house said the march would help

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	pass a civil rights bill.
Summary (two to three sentences)	On Aug. 28, 1963, people from all around the country gathered at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., to advocate for racial equality. They called on Congress to pass civil rights legislation and vowed to return home and continue the battle for full equality.
“Remixed” Plan	
Remix Tool	Twitter
Justification for Tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real-time reporting rather than next day • Reach a variety of audiences, especially youth • Can show photos • Communicate directly with the audience • Free
Role of Each Member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary: lead tweeter • Kirsti: lead researcher • Anna: assistant researcher and tweeter
Next Steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kirsti will do more research to find out what events happened at the Lincoln Memorial, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. People who spoke and what they said b. People who performed and what they sang/did 2. Anna will research what other people in Washington did during the march, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Regular citizens in Washington — what they said about the march during and after the program b. Members of Congress — how they reacted to the march before and after it happened 3. Kirsti, Anna and Mary will meet to put their research into chronological order 4. Mary, Kirsti and Anna will start turning the



	research into tweets 5. Mary will come up with times to tweet and a hashtag and start tweeting
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