



# *Just Think!*

Higher-level Thinking Skills  
and the Newspaper



# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>.2</b>
<b>About <i>Just Think!</i></b> .....	<b>.4</b>
<b>The Bloom Six</b> .....	<b>.6</b>
<b>Content Area Standards and Higher-Level Thinking Skills</b> .....	<b>.7</b>
<b>Lesson Plans</b> .....	<b>.9</b>
<b>Think Some More</b>	
• <b>Application Activities</b> .....	<b>.30</b>
• <b>Analysis Activities</b> .....	<b>.31</b>
• <b>Synthesis Activities</b> .....	<b>.32</b>
• <b>Evaluation Activities</b> .....	<b>.33</b>
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	<b>.34</b>

# *Introduction*

**Newspaper In Education Week** is a joint program of the Newspaper Association of America Foundation, the International Reading Association and the National Council for the Social Studies. NIE Week is observed the first full week of March; in 2004, it takes place March 1-5. The goal of the program is to reinforce a positive and relevant lifetime reading habit in students by engaging them with an authentic text—the newspaper.

## **About the Organizations**

**The Newspaper Association of America® Foundation** is dedicated to developing future readers by encouraging them to acquire and value information from newspapers and other media. The NAA Foundation pursues this mission by:

- Promoting and operating programs that encourage newspaper use by young people,
- Forming strategic alliances,
- Bestowing targeted grants to leverage NAA Foundation resources,
- Improving youth literacy through family and community initiatives.

The NAA Foundation supports local Newspaper In Education efforts through curriculum development, consultation, conferences, awards programs, training, a newsletter and computer services. The Foundation works cooperatively with state and local reading and social studies councils and newspapers throughout North America to promote NIE Week.

## **The International Reading Association**

The International Reading Association (IRA) is an organization of 90,000 members, including teachers, reading specialists, librarians, university professors, administrators, researchers, psychologists and others interested in promoting reading and better reading instruction. The IRA serves as an advocate and leader in the universal quest for literacy and is dedicated to service on an international scale. It has more than 1,300 councils functioning at the national, state and local levels. The IRA achieves its outreach through publications, conferences, journals and committees.

## **The National Council for the Social Studies**

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) is the largest association in North America devoted solely to social studies education. The NCSS serves as an umbrella organization for elementary and secondary-level teachers of history, geography, economics, political science, sociology, psychology, anthropology and law-related education. The NCSS has more than 26,000 individual and institutional members in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Canada and 69 other countries. Membership is organized into a network of more than 150 affiliated councils representing professionals such as classroom teachers, curriculum designers, curriculum specialists, university faculty and leaders in the various disciplines that constitute the social studies.

Additional information about NIE Week programs is available from each sponsoring organization:

### **Newspaper Association of America Foundation**

1921 Gallows Road, Suite 600

Vienna, VA 22182

(703) 902-1728

[www.naa.org/foundation](http://www.naa.org/foundation)

### **International Reading Association**

800 Barksdale Road

P.O. Box 8139

Newark, DE 19714-8139

(302) 731-1600

[www.ira.org](http://www.ira.org)

### **National Council for the Social Studies**

8555 Sixteenth St., Suite 500

Silver Spring, MD 20910

(301) 588-1800

[www.ncss.org](http://www.ncss.org)

# About *Just Think!*

## **Rationale**

The educational community once again recognizes the importance of developing higher-level thinking skills in children. The first generation of statewide standards-based testing too often focused on isolated skills and literal level understanding. These tests spawned “skills and drill” worksheets designed to prepare students only for high-stakes state testing. The system worked, at a price. Many students became literal level thinkers who learned how to look for the one “right” answer.

A sufficient number of educators and state officials finally realized that if students were to be life-long learners, what they really needed was to be able to think, reason and solve problems. As a result, the new generation of tests requires students to reason both within text and across texts. Ironically, the higher-level thinking requirements have always been in the standards, but the lower-level skills were easier to test. Good teachers have always emphasized thinking and reasoning. The times appear to be catching up with them.

*Just Think!* focuses on helping students develop higher-level thinking skills using the newspaper. We need students to be problem solvers and lifelong learners. The newspaper is a logical instructional medium for this cause. It is an authentic, real-world text, one that will engage students and provide the information they will need to make decisions throughout their lives.

## **Components**

*The Bloom Six* - provides an overview of Benjamin Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives.

*National Standards and Higher-Level Thinking Skills* - shows examples of higher-level thinking skills identified in national content standards.

*Lesson Plans* — presented in two parts:

*Open Their Minds*, the teacher page, and *Engage Your Brain*, the student activity page.

Each has its own elements and organization.

*Open Their Minds* elements:

- Newspaper section
- Thinking level
- Guiding the lesson
- Rubric
- Internet resource(s)

*Engage Your Brain* elements:

- Think about it
- Make a connection

***Think Some More*** - contains higher-level thinking activities application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation for 10 different newspaper sections.

***The Bibliography*** - includes standards-related references.

# *The Bloom Six*

**B**enjamin Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives has been a staple of education for many years. Today, the levels may have slightly different designations — synthesis might be called creative thinking, for example — but they reflect the continuum from simple recall to evaluative thinking. The taxonomy does not suggest that teachers must move students from the first through the sixth level in a prescribed sequence. What the levels can do is help you plan your questioning strategies and assignments. You can check yourself to see that you are guiding students to higher-level thinking. Bloom's levels are listed here, along with some outcome verbs that help define the behaviors expected at each level. The activities in this guide focus on the top three levels of the taxonomy.

**⑥**

• • • **Evaluation** • • •

**Make a judgment based on personal knowledge, experience, values and opinions**

*Appraise, compare and contrast, critique, interpret, justify*

**⑤**

• • • **Synthesis** • • •

**Use prior knowledge to create a new and original whole**

*Adapt, compose, design, model, reconstruct*

**④**

• • • **Analysis** • • •

**Break down information into its component parts, examine structures**

*Correlate, differentiate, discriminate, infer, prioritize*

**③**

• • • **Application** • • •

**Use previously learned information to solve problems**

*Act, chart, construct, predict, produce, solve*

**②**

• • • **Comprehension** • • •

**Understand the meaning of new information**

*Describe, discuss, give examples, paraphrase, summarize*

**①**

• • • **Knowledge** • • •

**Recall previously learned material**

*Define, identify, label, list, name, state*

# *Content Area Standards and Higher-Level Thinking Skills*

**C**ontent standards in every subject area require students to use higher-level thinking skills. This table provides a sample of student expectations from national standards in specific subject areas.

<b>STANDARDS AREA</b>	<b>EXAMPLES OF LANGUAGE</b>
National Council of Teachers of English and International Reading Association  <i>Standards for the English Language Arts</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze how literary works are constructed, and what makes each a distinct work</li> <li>• Apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate and appreciate text</li> <li>• Recognize how to adapt tone, style, and content for a particular task</li> <li>• Plan, predict, investigate, analyze, hypothesize and speculate</li> </ul>
National Council for the Social Studies  <i>Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use critical thinking about social studies subject matter - understanding, applying, analyzing and evaluating</li> <li>• Propose, compare and evaluate alternative policies</li> <li>• Formulate strategies and develop policies</li> <li>• Analyze or formulate policy statements</li> </ul>
National Council for Geographic Education, National Geographic Society, Association of American Geographers & American Geographical Society  <i>Geography for Life: National Geography Standards</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze data to draw a map</li> <li>• Analyze ways in which people’s changing views reflect cultural change</li> <li>• Predict the likely effect of a change in industry on an internal structure of an urban area</li> <li>• Evaluate policy decisions</li> </ul>

*Continued on next page*



*Content Area Standards and Higher-Level Thinking Skills continued*

<b>STANDARDS AREA</b>	<b>EXAMPLES OF LANGUAGE</b>
National Research Council <i>National Science Education Standards</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Design and conduct scientific investigations</li><li>• Formulate and revise scientific explanations</li><li>• Propose designs and choose between alternative solutions</li><li>• Implement a proposed solution</li><li>• Evaluate the solution and its consequences</li></ul>
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics <i>Curriculum and Evaluation Standards for School Mathematics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use problem-solving approaches</li><li>• Apply integrated problem-solving strategies</li><li>• Formulate counter examples to judge the validity of arguments</li><li>• Construct proofs</li><li>• Model real-world phenomena</li><li>• Analyze properties</li></ul>

# *Lesson Plans*

# Open Their Minds!

## National News

### Thinking level: Evaluation

#### Background

The newspaper plays a vital role in our democracy. The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees freedom of the press and protects it from government intervention. The founders of our nation realized that someone should hold the government accountable for its actions. That’s why newspapers are called “the public’s watchdog.” Newspaper representatives attend government events, from school board meetings to presidential press conferences. Reporters cover Congressional hearings and full meetings of Congress. They attend court hearings. All of this is done to make sure the public is fully informed about its government.

#### Guiding the lesson

- Discuss the role of the press with the class.
- Have students look over international and national news stories in the newspaper. Select one or two stories and discuss with students.
- Ask students to talk about why citizens need to know about the stories.
- Go over the student activity page with students. Have students complete the activity individually.
- Have students share their completed assignments with the class.

#### Rubric

The student...	Excellent	Acceptable	Revisit
Identified an appropriate story/subject			
Identified effects on citizens			
Supported his/her position with details and logic			

#### Internet resources

FirstGov - The U.S. Government's official Web portal, [www.firstgov.gov](http://www.firstgov.gov)

#### News Web sites:

[www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com), [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com), [www.latimes.com](http://www.latimes.com), [www.chicagotribune.com](http://www.chicagotribune.com)

## *Engage Your Brain!*

## *National News*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### **Think about it**

The First Amendment of the United States Constitution guarantees freedom of the press. That's because the country's founders wanted an independent source to report to the people about the actions and decisions of their government officials. Your newspaper reports on policies the president is putting in place as well as laws being considered or passed by the Congress.

Select a national issue that is of interest to you. Collect news stories about the positions taken by the president and members of Congress. Then think about the issue yourself.

Answer these questions:

- What is the issue you've chosen? Write a headline that would be suitable for a story about it.
- Why is this issue important to national leaders? Why do we need to be concerned about it?
- What are the opposing sides of this issue? What are the consequences to ordinary citizens of each side's position?
- What is your position on the issue? Explain why you feel that way.

### **Make another connection**

Read a newspaper editorial about the issue. What is the newspaper's position? What new information or insights did you gain by reading the editorial?

# Open Their Minds!

## Local News

### Thinking levels: Analysis, synthesis

#### Background

Local news is the *raison d'être* [reason to be] of your local newspaper. You can learn about national and international news from television programs. Even local television programs discuss only a limited number of local stories in a morning or evening newscast. . Often, television stations send news crews only where they expect something dramatic to happen.

The newspaper, on the other hand, provides consistent coverage of local government meetings, such as city council or planning commission meetings. Newspapers recognize their role as the keepers of the public record from births and deaths, to police reports, to borough and township meetings. The newspaper acts as a concerned citizen of the community.

#### Guiding the lesson

Discuss the role of the newspaper in covering community news. Explain that newspapers generally offer more comprehensive reporting of community events when compared with radio and television news.

Have students identify local news stories they would expect to see on a television news program and those they would not expect to see on television. Have them explain their choices.

Discuss the activity sheet with students. Explain the term, stakeholder — anyone who has an interest in a situation. There are direct and indirect stakeholders in many community situations. For example, a budget shortage might cause a city council to curtail the hours that the public library is open. The immediate stakeholders are the library employees and regular patrons. However, public school students are also affected. The public at large may be affected because the library serves as an important source of public activities. You may want to discuss a recent community issue that affected different groups.

Have students work individually.

Have students share their responses.

#### Rubric

The student...	Excellent	Acceptable	Revisit
Identified stakeholder positions in detail			
Generated an original solution			
Demonstrated logical thinking in his or her solution			

#### Internet resource

Use your local newspaper Web site. To find local newspaper sites, check NewsVoyager at the Newspaper Association of America Web site, [www.naa.org](http://www.naa.org).

# Engage Your Brain!

## Local News

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Think about it

Your local newspaper’s mission is to serve your community. When there is a situation that requires community action, the newspaper reports on the problem and all the different individuals and groups that have an interest in the problem. People who are affected by a situation are often called “stakeholders.”

Read news stories about a problem or concern in your community. Identify the different stakeholders who are proposing different solutions to the problem. Collect your information in the space below. Then develop a solution of your own.

Stakeholder

\_\_\_\_\_

Stakeholder

\_\_\_\_\_

Stakeholder

\_\_\_\_\_

*Solution:*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Solution:*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Solution:*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What solution would you propose that is different from any of those proposed by the stakeholders?

\_\_\_\_\_

### Make a connection

Interview family members and friends. Ask their opinions about the problem. Ask them for their solutions. How are their solutions different from yours? Write a news story that reports on your findings.

# *Open Their Minds!*

## *Feature Stories*

### **Thinking level: Analysis**

#### **Background**

Feature stories are more often defined by what they are not: they are not “hard news,” they are not editorials, and they are not reviews. Feature stories are written more informally than news stories. They may be personal profiles. They may focus on an individual’s special hobbies or collections. They may provide “how-to” advice. Some feature stories relate to what is happening in the news. These features often provide additional information or a personal point of view on a current topic.

#### **Guiding the lesson**

- Select several feature stories in the newspaper to share with students. Have students suggest ways in which the stories are different from the hard news stories on the front pages of the newspaper.
- Discuss how the stories contribute to the public’s knowledge.
- Discuss the activity page with the students.
- Have students complete the activity individually or in pairs.
- Have students share their responses.

#### **Rubric**

<b>The student...</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Revisit</b>
Identified an appropriate feature story			
Identified several relevant characteristics			
Identified non-feature stories			

*Engage Your Brain!*

*Feature Stories*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Think about it**

A feature story can be hard to define. It may address a timely topic, but it is not late-breaking news. It is written in a more informal style than a news story, and often has a personal appeal to the reader.

Read several feature stories in your newspaper. Select one to analyze. Complete the graphic organizer below to define the feature story.

Characteristics of this feature story (topic, format, writing style):

---

---

---

Examples of other feature stories in this edition of the newspaper:

---

---

---

Examples of items in this edition of the newspaper that are **not** feature stories

---

---

---

**Make a connection**

Tape and view a morning television news program. Make a list of the segments that would be similar to a feature story in a newspaper. How are they alike? How are they different?



# Open Their Minds!

## Editorials

### Thinking levels: Analysis, evaluation

#### Background

The editorial and commentary pages of the newspaper provide readers with a variety of opinion pieces. The official editorial is a unique part of that page because it represents the official position of the newspaper on a given topic. The editorial may be written by the editor, publisher, an editorial writer or a member of the editorial team.

Newspaper editors have an advantage when it comes to discussing an issue because they have access to a great deal of information on the topic. Editors feel it is their duty to address topics of concern to readers as long as their writing is clearly identified as opinion.

Students often have an incomplete understanding of an editorial. Most don't see past the word opinion. When students write editorials, they are free with their opinions; however, they must also do the research necessary to support their opinions with facts, statistics and historical perspective.

#### Guiding the lesson

- Share a newspaper editorial with students. Point out the way the writer uses specific information, objective data or historical/sociological perspective to support his/her position.
- Give students a hypothetical editorial topic. Have them brainstorm the kinds of data they would need to support a position. Have them relate their knowledge of history to the topic.
- Introduce the activity page to students.
- Have students complete the activity page individually.
- Have students share their responses with the class.

#### Rubric

The student...	Excellent	Acceptable	Revisit
Identified the elements of the editorial			
Identified specific supporting details			
Provided persuasive points			
Used specific information in reacting to the arguments in the editorial			

#### Internet resources

#### News Web sites:

[www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com), [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com), [www.latimes.com](http://www.latimes.com), [www.chicagotribune.com](http://www.chicagotribune.com)

***Engage Your Brain!***

***Editorials***

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Think about it**

The editorial page of the newspaper provides readers with differing opinions about news events. Editorials present the views of the newspaper. Opinion columns present the views of individuals who comment regularly on news topics. Letters to the editor present the views of the newspaper’s readers.

Read your newspaper’s editorial on a national topic that interests you. Identify the standard editorial elements in the editorial you read and record them on the table below. Then explain your reaction to the editorial.

<b>Element</b>	<b>Example from editorial</b>
Identifying the issues and the newspaper’s position _____	_____
Presenting opposing points of view _____	_____
Refuting opposing points _____	_____
Presenting details supporting the newspaper’s position _____	_____
Urging readers to make a decision _____	_____

What do you consider to be the most persuasive points made in the editorial? Did the editorial change your mind or strengthen your original position? Why?

**Make a connection**

Tape and view a news analysis/commentary show from PBS, a network news show or a cable news channel. Identify the points the commentators make. Compare their comments to the editorial in your newspaper. Which arguments were the same? What new points or details did they add?

# *Open Their Minds!*

## *Entertainment News*

### Thinking level: Evaluation

#### Background

Entertainment reviews provide an important service to readers. Professional reviewers do more than give thumbs up or down on a particular event or film. The reviewer will describe how the creative work did or did not meet expectations.

Good movie reviewers, for example, discuss a movie in terms of how well it exemplifies its genre (science fiction, action-adventure, comedy, drama, etc.). A reviewer may also discuss an actor's performance with references to other works in which that actor appeared. Good reviewers know movie history and movie-making techniques (lighting, sound, camera angles, etc.). Reviewers are generally people who love the art form they cover.

A review can be informative, but it need not be prescriptive. If a student's favorite actor is appearing in a film, he/she will probably attend that movie regardless of the reaction of the critic.

#### Guiding the lesson

- Ask students to name a movie they have seen recently and that they would recommend to their friends. Often several students will respond with the same movie.
- Ask them to identify what it was that caused them to like the movie. List their ideas on the board. You may have to push them to get past descriptions ( It was awesome! ) and to find the elements that attracted them.
- Discuss with students the role of the movie reviewer. Emphasize the professional skills of the reviewer and point out why reviews are more than just opinions.
- Introduce the activity page to students.
- Have students complete the activity individually.
- Have students share their responses.

#### Rubric

The student...	Excellent	Acceptable	Revisit
Identified specific elements of the review			
Identified appropriate points made by reviewer			
Identified his/her personal interests, qualities, etc. that related to the review			

***Engage Your Brain!***

***Entertainment News***

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Think about it**

Your newspaper provides information about the arts, usually in the entertainment section. A popular feature in the entertainment section is the movie review. Your newspaper may include reviews of current movies from a local staff writer or from national reviewers.

Read three movie reviews in your newspaper. Choose the movie you would most like to see based only on the reviews and your personal opinions.

Movie title: \_\_\_\_\_

Identify the different elements that influenced your movie selection:

---

---

---

List points made by the reviewer that caused you to choose that movie:

---

---

---

List your personal interests, values or experiences that caused you to choose that movie:

---

---

---

**Make a connection**

View the movie. In what ways was the review accurate? Did your personal interests and experiences turn out to be good predictors of whether or not you would like the movie? How?

# *Open Their Minds!*

## *Science News*

### **Thinking level: Analysis**

#### **Background**

Science plays an increasingly important role in our lives. Science stories today involve more than news of the latest invention or medical advance. Every science issue has implications on many levels: personal, social, economic, political, religious and ethical.

There are multiple sides to every science story. Technological advances, for example, may increase communication but may also raise questions of privacy rights. Stem cell research may hold the answers to many devastating medical conditions, but it raises religious questions as well.

Science stories are found on national news pages as well as in special science news pages. Many newspapers dedicate a weekly section to science.

#### **Guiding the lesson**

- Ask students to identify a recent science breakthrough or advance they've heard or read about.
- Have them discuss the benefits of the advance. Then ask them to think about any negative consequences of that breakthrough. Discuss the fact that every new scientific advance has consequences people may not have considered.
- Introduce the activity page to students.
- Have students complete the assignment individually.
- Have students share their responses with the class.

#### **Rubric**

<b>The student...</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Revisit</b>
Identified an appropriate advance			
Recognized positive consequences			
Recognized negative consequences			
Supported his/her opinion in a logical manner			
Provided examples to support his/her position			

***Engage Your Brain!***

***Science News***

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Think about it**

Your newspaper provides information about the latest breakthroughs and advances in all fields of science. That's because science plays an important role in our lives from medicine, to the environment, to space exploration, to computers and technology.

Read and think about a news story on a scientific breakthrough/advance. Consider the impact of this development and your opinion about its value.

What is the headline? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is the breakthrough/advance? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Why do scientists consider it important? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Who will be happy about this development? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Who will be unhappy about this development? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

In your opinion, is this news cause for happiness or concern? Why? Give examples.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Make a connection**

Collect stories about this breakthrough/advance in news magazines. What issues are raised in the magazines? Are those issues the same as the ones that are raised in your newspaper? What is different in the coverage?

# *Open Their Minds!*

## *Business News*

### Thinking level: Evaluation

#### Background

Business news is of interest to many readers today. Decisions made by large corporations affect many communities. Almost every working person has a stake in the performance of the stock market — a measure of business health — through personal investments or retirement accounts. Many newspapers contain a daily business section; others run a special weekly business section. Business articles cover the traditional stories, such as which corporations and market sectors are doing well and why. In addition, there are often stories related to corporate greed, ethics and legal issues.

#### Guiding the lesson

- Ask students to name an individual business or business sector that they think is very successful.
- How do they know the business is doing well? Who would be affected if the business failed? Encourage students to go beyond corporate employees losing their jobs. What would the effects be in their communities or their lives?
- Introduce the activity page to students.
- Have students complete the activity page in pairs or small groups.
- Have students share their responses with the class.

#### Rubric

The student...	Excellent	Acceptable	Revisit
Identified a business change			
Described reasons for the change			
Supported his/her position with logical arguments			

#### News Web sites:

[www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com), [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com), [www.latimes.com](http://www.latimes.com), [www.chicagotribune.com](http://www.chicagotribune.com)

***Engage Your Brain!***

***Business News***

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Think about it**

Your newspaper keeps you informed about events and changes in the world of business. Events that affect national companies can influence the country's economy. Decisions made by local businesses can affect the financial health of your community.

Read a news story about a change in a business product or service. Think about the causes and effects of the change. What is your reaction to the change?

What is the headline?

\_\_\_\_\_

What product or service is being changed?

\_\_\_\_\_

Why did the company make the decision to change the product/service?

\_\_\_\_\_

Why wasn't this change made before?

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you believe this is a change for the better or the worse? Why?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Make a connection**

Visit the web site of the company involved in the news story. Read what the company says about the change. Does the site discuss potential negative effects of the change or does it present only a positive picture? Where would you go to get a different point of view?

Collect business opinion columns that address this news. How do the commentators evaluate the decision made by the company?



# *Open Their Minds!*

## *Comics*

### Thinking level: Synthesis

#### Background

Many readers assume the comics pages are for children. Although that may have been true at one time, most modern comic strips target adults. Read the comic strips in your newspaper. You'll find strips that deal with interpersonal relationships, teenagers and school, sociological issues and political concerns. It requires a certain level of sophistication to appreciate the humor in many comic strips today.

#### Guiding the lesson

- Have students look at the comics pages of your newspaper and identify the strip they like best.
- Have students discuss their choices. Ask students to identify the problems they see reflected in the comic strips. List the problems on the board. Discuss why the problems might be considered humorous.
- Introduce the activity page to students. (Note: In the One-Stop Advice Center, students may select columnists as well as newsmakers to help solve problems.)
- Have students work in pairs or small groups to complete the assignment.
- Have students share responses with the class.

#### Rubric

The student...	Excellent	Acceptable	Revisit
Identified a variety of problems			
Identified appropriate people to address those problems			

***Engage Your Brain!***

***Comics***

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Think about it**

Your newspaper includes comic strips to entertain you. Years ago, comic strips were based on jokes. Today, comic strips often find their humor in real-life situations. Comic strips revolve around our family life, workplace, friends and schools.

Read the comic pages of your newspaper. Identify the kinds of problems people are experiencing in the strips. Then identify people in the news – newsmakers or columnists - who could help with those problems.

Use the graphic organizer below to create a one-stop, full-service comics solution center.

**One-Stop Advice Center**

<p><b>Type of problem:</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p><b>Newsmaker:</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p><b>Type of problem:</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p><b>Newsmaker:</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p><b>Type of problem:</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p><b>Newsmaker:</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p><b>Type of problem:</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p><b>Newsmaker:</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p><b>Type of problem:</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p><b>Newsmaker:</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p><b>Type of problem:</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p><b>Newsmaker:</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

**Make a connection**

Read newspaper advice columns to find solutions to problems illustrated in comic strips.

Ask friends to tell you about the television comedy programs they like. What kinds of problems show up in those programs? How are they similar to the problems you see in the comics pages?

# *Open Their Minds!*

## *Display Ads*

### Thinking level: Synthesis

#### Background

Advertising makes up the majority of the newspaper. Just as television commercials offset the cost of creating and distributing programming, newspaper ads provide income to keep the newspaper running. Most newspapers contain about 60%-65% advertising and 35%-40% news.

Newspaper ads tend to be direct and informational as well as graphically interesting. Most newspaper ads promote local businesses and services.

#### Guiding the lesson

- Have students pull out the local or lifestyle section of your newspaper. Tell them that on the count of three, you want them to open the section to any page they choose. Ask them to note the first thing they look at on the page. Generally it will be a large picture or an ad.
- Ask students who first looked at ads to explain what caused them to notice the ad. Usually it will be bold or unusual type, a graphic image, or a lot of white space in the ad. Explain that ads have to be eye-catching to get the reader’s attention. Have them look at another ad on the same page. Have them identify the special qualities of that ad.
- Introduce the activity page to students.
- Have students complete the assignment in pairs or small groups.
- Have students share their ads with the class.

#### Rubric

The student...	Excellent	Acceptable	Revisit
Used compelling visual			
Provided useful information			
Included positive points about the product.			
Used language to encourage the reader to act			

#### Internet resource

NAA Athena Awards – [www.athenaawards.com](http://www.athenaawards.com); [www.naa.org](http://www.naa.org)

## *Engage Your Brain!*

## *Display Ads*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### **Think about it**

Ads for stores and other businesses serve an important purpose in your newspaper. The ads let you know where you can go for goods and services in your community. The ads also offset the cost of the newspaper.

Find and read a news or feature story about someone with an unusual talent, or someone who has accomplished something significant. Create an ad promoting that individual. Be sure to use these elements in your ad:

- Get the reader's attention (with art, font type, white space)
- Give information about the product (the individual)
- Emphasize the good points of the product
- Include language that urges the reader to "purchase" (acknowledge and celebrate) the person you've chosen

### **Make a connection**

Listen to a radio commercial. How does the commercial address the elements you included in your ad? Create a radio ad for your product.

***Open Their Minds!******Classified Ads*****Thinking level: Synthesis****Background**

The classified ads are an excellent example of people-to-people communication through the newspaper. These ads address all aspects of daily living — jobs, housing, services, hobbies, even pets.

The classified section gets its name from the fact that the ads are put into categories, or classified, so they are easy to find. Most classified sections have an index at the beginning that helps readers efficiently locate the ads for the goods and services they need.

The classified section can provide a profile of the community through the types and number of positions available and the number of people seeking employment. The dominant business-to-buyer area in the classifieds is automobile advertising.

**Guiding the lesson**

- Have students open their newspapers to the classified section and find the index. Sometimes the index lists categories by name; other times, the index has icons for the different sections.
- Have students use the index to identify the different categories of ads.
- Introduce the activity page to students.
- Have students complete the assignment individually or in pairs.
- Have students share their responses with the class.

**Rubric**

<b>The student...</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Revisit</b>
Located appropriate resources			
Included resources in writing activity			
Wrote using sufficient details			
Wrote using an appropriate structure			

**Internet resource**

Newspaper Association of America, [www.naa.org](http://www.naa.org)

***Engage Your Brain!******Classified Ads***

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Think about it**

Your newspaper's classified ads section is valuable to your community. Among other connections, it provides a way for businesses that need help to connect with people seeking jobs. These ads can give you a picture of the economic vitality of your community.

Design a position for a personal assistant. You want someone who can help you with many different aspects of your life. Use a collection of advertised positions in the classified ads to help define the role of the person you seek.

Find classified ads that describe someone who could help you:

- Improve your schoolwork
- Improve your personal relationships
- Use your money efficiently
- Dress well
- Fix your car
- Do yard work around your house
- Make decisions about the best CDs or DVDs to buy
- Make improvements on your house
- Take care of your pets

Write a classified ad for your personal assistant, combining these different roles:

**Make a connection**

Find characters in the comic pages of your newspaper who would make a good team to help you in all the areas listed above.

## *Application*

Students use previously learned information in new situations.

SECTION	ACTIVITY
<b>National, international news</b>	Read a news story about a proposed new federal law or Supreme Court decision. Discuss the different ways the new law or court decision will affect individuals, groups and current laws.
<b>Local news</b>	Read a news story about a citizens' group that is proposing some change in your community. Describe how the proposed change would affect the social, economic and political situation in your community.
<b>Feature story</b>	Read a feature story about an individual who has achieved a major accomplishment. What lessons could you learn from this individual?
<b>Editorials</b>	Identify a problem discussed in an editorial. What existing law or ethical principle would you use to address the problem? What recommendations would you make?
<b>Sports</b>	Look at the past statistics of several teams in a professional sports league or conference. Which two teams do you think will be the league/conference leaders at the end of the season? Why?
<b>Entertainment</b>	Look at the television section of the newspaper. Develop a viewing schedule that would give you information about one of the three branches of government. Use at least two different newspapers.
<b>Science/technology</b>	Read a story about a scientific/technological advance. Write a story explaining how the advance will benefit individuals and/or businesses.
<b>Comics</b>	Find a personal problem illustrated in a comic strip. Write a letter advising the character on how to solve the problem. Base the solution on your personal experience.
<b>Display ads</b>	Locate an ad for an existing service. Suggest ways to expand the service and provide new uses for it.
<b>Classified ads</b>	Identify a problem presented in a news story. Find someone in the classified section of the newspaper who could help solve the problem.

# *Analysis*

**Students break down information into component parts and use the information to solve problems and make decisions.**

<b>SECTION</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>
<b>National, international news</b>	Read several news stories about a major national or international issue. Discuss the historical, economic and social elements that have created the situation that exists today.
<b>Local news</b>	Read news stories about a community concern and identify elements that contribute to it. Determine where you might look for ideas that address that concern – like other communities that have a similar geography, social structure or history. What can you learn from those communities?
<b>Feature story</b>	Read a feature story and identify the way it addresses these elements: (1) is timely, (2) has human interest, and (3) has a special interest for at least one group of newspaper readers.
<b>Editorials</b>	Read an editorial on a topic that interests you. Discuss how the editorial employs these elements: (1) statement of the problem, (2) opposing arguments, (3) refuting opposing arguments, (4) recommendations for solution, (5) call to action.
<b>Sports</b>	Read newspaper stories about two major teams in a sport. Compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses of the two teams. What strengths would give one team the advantage over the other?
<b>Entertainment</b>	Look at the movie ads in the newspaper. Based on the ads and ratings, select an appropriate movie for each of these age groups: 7 and under, 8 –13, 14–17, and adult.
<b>Science/ technology</b>	Collect several stories about scientific advances or breakthroughs. In which area is the progress being made - biology, chemistry, physics or technology? Which advances represent contributions from more than one branch of science?
<b>Comics</b>	Examine the comics page of the newspaper. Classify the strips by these types: jokes, relationships, family/home, workplace, school, politics and other. Which type of strip do you like the best? Why?
<b>Display ads</b>	Examine a large display ad for a product in the newspaper. Determine how the ad: (1) attracts attention, (2) provides information, (3) develops interest, and (4) encourages the reader to make the purchase.
<b>Classified ads</b>	Make a column or bar chart showing the numbers of different positions advertised in the classified ads. Which types of skills are in greatest demand? Which types are in least demand? What do the advertised positions tell you about your community?



# Synthesis

Students use prior learning and skills to create something original.

SECTION	ACTIVITY
<b>National, international news</b>	Select a news story about an important problem facing the international community. Select people you read about in the newspaper to create a commission that could find a solution to the problem.
<b>Local news</b>	Select a news story about a concern facing your community. Identify different individuals or groups who have ideas for addressing the concern. Write three possible scenarios for the outcome of the situation.
<b>Feature story</b>	Select a feature story about an unusual individual. Write a letter to that individual commenting on his/her achievements and asking questions you have that were not answered in the story.
<b>Editorials</b>	Collect opinion columns and letters to the editor about a particular topic. List the points made in the columns and letters. Add your own points and write your own editorial.
<b>Sports</b>	Read stories about two or three different sports. Create a new sport that borrows elements from each one. Be sure the rules for your new sport encourage participation from all team members.
<b>Entertainment</b>	Look at the movie ads in the newspapers. Combine elements from two movie titles to create a new title. Write a story to go with the new title.
<b>Science/technology</b>	Locate a news story about a problem in your community. List different ways science could contribute to a solution. Write your own solution to the problem using these scientific ideas.
<b>Comics</b>	Select a comic strip that reflects something in your life. Use the strip as a model to create your own comic strip about your family, friends or school.
<b>Display ads</b>	Select three related products and/or services advertised in the newspaper. Create a new ad that puts the products/services together in a package deal.
<b>Classified ads</b>	Read a national or local news story about a current problem. Write a classified ad, offering work to someone who has the skills to solve the problem.

## *Evaluation*

**Students judge situations based on their personal knowledge, values and opinions.**

<b>SECTION</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>
<b>National, international news</b>	Select a news story about a national or international issue about which people take different sides. Discuss the consequences of each side's position. Take a stand on the issue and explain why you support that position.
<b>Local news</b>	Use newspaper stories to identify the three most important issues facing your community. Rank them from most important to least important. Explain how each issue impacts individual citizens, businesses and government institutions.
<b>Feature story</b>	Select a news story about an individual or community group that supports a particular cause. Write a letter to the editor expressing your opinion about the actions of that individual or group.
<b>Editorials</b>	Select an editorial with which you disagree. Write a rebuttal to the editorial responding to the editorial writer's ideas point by point.
<b>Sports</b>	Select newspaper sports stories profiling two athletes in the same sport. Which athlete do you find most admirable? What professional and personal qualities stand out in that individual?
<b>Entertainment</b>	Read the weekly entertainment section of your newspaper. Look at the fine arts and performing arts events taking place in your area. What type of entertainment do you think is underrepresented? What recommendations would you make to a local arts council to improve the cultural climate in your community?
<b>Science/technology</b>	Select a news story about a medical breakthrough or advance. Evaluate the benefits of the new medicine, product or procedure in terms of cost, ease of use, and side effects.
<b>Comics</b>	Examine comic strips about school or family life. Select the one you think is most realistic. Explain how that strip portrays real life.
<b>Display ads</b>	Compare and contrast ads for two brands of a product or service. Select the product/service you think is best. Explain your selection.
<b>Classified ads</b>	Read all of the classified ads related to a particular job. Which of the ads would you choose? Why? What makes that ad the most attractive?

# ***Bibliography***

**Bloom Benjamin S. and David R. Krathwohl.** *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals, by a committee of college and university examiners. Handbook I: Cognitive Domain.* New York, Longmans, Green, 1956.  
<http://faculty.washington.edu/krumme/guides/bloom>.

**National Council for Geographic Education, National Geographic Society, Association of American Geographers, & American Geographical Society. (1994).** *Geography for Life: National Geography Standards.* Washington, DC.

**National Council for the Social Studies. (1994).** *Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies.* Washington, DC.

**National Council of Teachers of English & International Reading Association. (1996).** *Standards for the English Language Arts.* Urbana, IL.

**National Council for Teachers of Mathematics. (1989).** *Curriculum and evaluation standards for school mathematics.* Reston, VA.

**National Research Council. (1996).** *National Science Education Standards.* Washington, DC: National Academy Press.