



**Lesson:**  
**MINDING THE MEDIA**

**OVERVIEW:**

In this lesson students will explore the relationship between media and activism. They will critically examine the ways in which the media covers news events. They will research varied components of media, and examine the differences between mainstream and non-mainstream media coverage of selected events. They will create a news report based on the events of The Boston Tea Party. They will be asked to study and evaluate the various protest avenues advocated by the Ruckus Society in the *Raising a Ruckus* production.

**SUBJECTS: History, Social Studies, English, American Democracy**

**GRADE LEVELS: 9-12**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

1. Students will critically examine varied images created by the media and their impact on society.
2. Students will conduct Internet research to inform their knowledge of the role media plays in reporting world events.
3. Students will research The Boston Tea Party and create a reenactment of it from a variety of perspectives.
4. Students will read and compare different versions of events occurring in the Seattle protests.
5. Students will investigate media bias.
6. Students will investigate the relationship between media and activism.
7. Students will critically examine media ownership and how it impacts the reporting of world news events.
8. Students will explore how language is used to support different political and ideological viewpoints.
9. Students will review and assess events pertaining to the one-year anniversary of the Seattle protests.

**MEDIA COMPONENTS: Bay Window: *Raising a Ruckus***

**TIME COMPONENTS:**

In order to most effectively implement the lesson activities it is suggested that the class watch the video in its entirety. The time allotment for each of the activities will vary according to the number of computers in the classroom, the students' fluency with conducting Internet research, and the time spent in discussion of the issues surrounding globalization. As a general guideline each of the activities should take approximately two 50-minute class periods after watching the video.

**Bookmark the following sites:**

<http://www.dell.homestead.com/revwar/files/TEAPARTY.HTM>  
<http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/revolution/teaparty.htm>  
<http://www.pbs.org/ktca/liberty/chronicle/bostonteparty-edenton.html>  
[http://more.abcnews.go.com/sections/us/dailynews/chat\\_wtoprotests120199.html](http://more.abcnews.go.com/sections/us/dailynews/chat_wtoprotests120199.html)  
<http://www.fair.org/extra/0001/wto-prattle.html>  
<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/editorials/jan-june00/activism.html>  
<http://www.ruckus.org/news/news.cgi>  
<http://www.fair.org/media-beat/000420.html>  
[http://www.ruckus.org/man/media\\_manual.html](http://www.ruckus.org/man/media_manual.html)  
<http://www.ruckus.org/news/news.cgi?action=servearticle&articlenum=219&keywords=>  
<http://www.ruckus.org/news/news.cgi?action=servearticle&articlenum=237&keywords=>  
<http://www.agitprop.org/artandrevolution/fullstory.html>  
<http://www.fair.org/activism/world-bank-protests.html>  
<http://www.cjr.org/owners/>  
<http://civilrightsforum.org/text/obligation.htm>  
[http://www.indymedia.org/display.php3?article\\_id=12014](http://www.indymedia.org/display.php3?article_id=12014)  
[http://www.justact.org/news/JA\\_news/JA\\_in\\_news.html](http://www.justact.org/news/JA_news/JA_in_news.html)  
<http://www.fair.org/resources.html>  
<http://www.videoactivism.org/videos.htm>

**INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY- SETTING THE STAGE**

**Activity One: The Power of the Media**

*The purpose of this activity is for students to think about the power of the media in portraying important world events.*

1. As a class, list all the different kinds of media that the students have been exposed to that day.
2. Divide the class into pairs. Ask them to discuss the following questions:
  - What is the most powerful media image you remember?
  - How has this image affected your life?
3. Ask for volunteers to share their remembrances.
4. Share the following pictures with the class:
  - Civil Rights Movement at <http://www.sitins.com/images/13.html>
  - The Fall of Saigon at <http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/specials/saigon/>
  - Japanese-American Internment Camps of WWII at <http://www.children-of-the-camps.org/>
  - National Vietnam Veterans Memorial at <http://www.vietvet.org/thewall.htm>
  - Berkeley Free Speech Movement at <http://home.att.net/~enfield/fsmhist1.html>
5. Discuss the impact these photographs and images had on society.

## **Activity Two: Access to Information**

*The purpose of this activity is for students to explore different aspects of media sources.*

1. Ask the students which they think is the most reliable source of world and local news:
  - Television
  - Radio
  - World Wide Web
  - Newspapers
2. Discuss the students' opinions as to the strengths and weaknesses of each media source. Create a class chart depicting strengths and weaknesses of each media source.
3. Discuss the following question with the class:
  - How has the Internet affected the ways people get information about the world?
4. Ask the students to conduct an Internet search to explore the number and kinds of non-mainstream media resources which are available on the Internet.
5. Share individual findings with the entire class.

## **LEARNING ACTIVITIES:**

### **Activity One:**

*The purpose of this activity is for students to critically examine different perspectives on conveying information.*

1. Read a brief overview of the history of The Boston Tea Party at <http://www.dell.homestead.com/revwar/files/TEAPARTY.HTM>.
2. Divide the class into three small groups. Ask the students to imagine that today's media were present at the time of the original Boston Tea Party. Each group will be required to write a script and then stage a presentation reporting the event from different viewpoints (the presentation can be done in the form of a TV news program, and may be videotaped for later analysis or comparison).

### **Group One:**

The British controlled television news station W-BRIT

### **Group Two:**

The American Freedom Alternative News started by the American colonists

### **Group Three:**

Balance in Radio which tries to always portray all sides of a story fairly

3. After the students have presented their reports, visit the following Web sites:

- Read this eyewitness account of the Boston Tea Party at <http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/revolution/teaparty.htm>.
- Listen to scholar Pauline Maier's description of the event from the PBS Web site at <http://www.pbs.org/ktca/liberty/chronicle/bostonteparty-edenton.html>.

4. Compare these reports to the groups' enactments and discuss how different perspectives contribute to understanding events.

### **Activity Two: Multiple Perspectives**

*The purpose of this activity is to allow students to critique varied news reporting perspectives. They will write a news report of their own, and research how the Seattle protests were reported by different media sources.*

1. As a class, watch the segment of the *Raising a Ruckus* video which features the Seattle protest. (About 2 or 3 minutes into the tape, segment begins with "While the delegates met inside.")
2. Ask each student to act as a reporter and write a paragraph describing what he or she saw.
3. Read ten (or more) students' paragraphs aloud.
4. Discuss the similarities and differences in students' reporting observations and some possible reasons for them.
5. Divide the class into three groups. Assign each group one of the following articles to summarize:
  - a) [http://more.abcnews.go.com/sections/us/dailynews/chat\\_wtoprotests120199.html](http://more.abcnews.go.com/sections/us/dailynews/chat_wtoprotests120199.html)
  - b) <http://www.fair.org/extra/0001/wto-prattle.html>.
  - c) <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/editorials/jan-june00/activism.html>

Share the groups' summaries and compare the differences in the reports.

Ask the students to use the Internet to find two further reports on the protests in Seattle. Compare the differences and similarities in their findings.

6. Direct the class to the Ruckus Society Webpage archives at:  
<http://www.ruckus.org/news/news.cgi>.

Divide the class into small groups and ask them to choose an article to summarize. The articles should be on the same topic yet must be reported by a different source.

7. Compare the summaries. Discuss differences in coverage.

8. Ask the students to respond in writing to the following questions:

- Why are there differences in how a story is told?
- How does the ways news is reported affect activists?
- How do these differences impact public knowledge about world events?

### **Activity Three: What Does Independence in Media Mean?**

*The purpose of this activity is for students to explore the notion of media independence.*

1. Read the following article about media independence entitled *When Corporate Media Cover "Independent Media"* by Norman Solomon at <http://www.fair.org/media-beat/000420.html>.

Have the students answer the questions below in writing.

- What conflict does the following quote highlight?

"Global corporate media? Gee, that would be us," Jackson deadpanned, "CNN, owned by Time Warner, soon to be merged with America Online. They don't like us very much. They want to tell their story their way."

- Do you agree with the following statement?

"We believe that objectivity is, in fact, a myth -- that everyone has a bias, everyone has an agenda -- and that corporations like major news corporations have a corporate bias."

- What do you think the author means by the following statement?

"These days, news stories about "independent media" often emphasize the use of digital technology. But the most important successes are human rather than technical."

2. Share students' responses in a whole class discussion.

3. Ask students to answer the following question:

- What does independence in media mean?

### **Activity Four: Activists Dealing With the Media**

*The purpose of this activity is for students to evaluate the ways in which activists interact with the media. They will compare different reports of an event.*

1. Visit the Web site containing The Ruckus Society's Media Manual at [http://www.ruckus.org/man/media\\_manual.html](http://www.ruckus.org/man/media_manual.html).

Assign small groups to research the ways in which The Ruckus Society talks about newspapers, radio and television. Ask each group to report back to the class. They should include the following information:

- a) how the Ruckus Society described the varied media
- b) if they agree or disagree with the information presented

2. Ask the students to critically analyze and compare how the events which occurred on August 14, 2000 were reported in the media.

**Example One:**

<http://www.ruckus.org/news/news.cgi?action=servearticle&articlenum=219&keywords=>

**Example Two:**

<http://www.ruckus.org/news/news.cgi?action=servearticle&articlenum=237&keywords=>

<http://www.agitprop.org/artandrevolution/fullstory.html>

3. Discuss the following question with the class:

- Why do groups like the Ruckus Society need to train activists in ways of dealing with the media?
- What do you think of the idea of training camps for activists?
- Do you agree with their tactics for dealing with the media?

**Activity Five: Language & Bias Issues**

*The media uses the power of visual images and of words. In this activity students will be encouraged to explore specific uses of language and the political and ideological perspectives they suggest.*

1. Read the following article with the class:

<http://www.fair.org/activism/world-bank-protests.html>

2. Ask each student to write a “Letter to the Editor” expressing his or her opinion of this article.

3. Ask the students to look for examples of how language is used in the article to portray a particular political or ideological point of view. Provide the following example to the class:

The article states “...if they're hoping for a replay of last year's violence in Seattle, those charged with keeping the peace in Washington, D.C., have other ideas.”

How would it change the article if the words **“the police”** were used instead of **“those charged with keeping the peace.”**

Ask the students to find similar examples in the article.

## **Activity Six: Who Owns What**

*In this activity students will investigate media ownership and examine its implications.*

1. Send the class to explore the following Web site at <http://www.cjr.org/owners/>. Ask them to follow varied links which show what different media own.

2. Read the following quote from the site with the class:

“Media companies continue to grow, and a shrinking number of them shape what we view and read. What does that mean for journalists -- and for the nation?”

Read the following article at

<http://civilrightsforum.org/text/obligation.htm>

- Discuss the implications suggested by these articles in terms of corporate globalization.
- Discuss the relationship between advertisers and media and how they can impact how people get information about world events.

## **Activity Seven: The Independent Media Center Looks at Seattle One Year Later**

*In this activity students will review events of the prior year, and discuss their relevance to what is occurring at the present time in the Youth Movement.*

1. Divide the class into small groups. Each group should choose one of the articles from the Independent Media Center’s feature on the one-year anniversary of the Seattle protests at [http://www.indymedia.org/display.php3?article\\_id=12014](http://www.indymedia.org/display.php3?article_id=12014).
2. Each group should prepare a presentation which explains the article they have chosen to the class. This could be in the form of a skit, a poem, a videotape, an essay, music, a Web page or a drawing.

## **EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:**

### **Activity One:**

1. Ask the students to critically examine how the organization Just Act is portrayed in the news. A good place to begin is at [http://www.justact.org/news/JA\\_news/JA\\_in\\_news.html](http://www.justact.org/news/JA_news/JA_in_news.html).
2. Ask the students to choose an organization that they support and research how it is portrayed in the media.

### **Activity Two:**

1. Have the class choose an event that occurred in the last week. Compare mainstream and non-mainstream sources. For a list of online news sources, visit the site at <http://www.fair.org/resources.html>

### Activity Three:

1. As a class, watch the brief video at <http://www.videoactivism.org/videos.htm>. Compare the issues to those portrayed in *Raising a Ruckus*.

### Activity Four:

1. Have the students browse through the following photographs and choose one that represents a powerful image. Ask them to describe the context and the meaning of the picture as a representation of a pivotal moment in history.

<http://www.tdo.com/local/bhm/1pparks/1pparks.htm>

<http://www.health.org/gpower/girlarea/gpguests/RosaParks.htm>

<http://www.midsouth.rr.com/civilrights/>

<http://home.att.net/~enfield/fsmhist1.html>

[http://sunsite.berkeley.edu:2020/dynaweb/teiproj/fsm/monos/enfield/@Generic\\_BookView](http://sunsite.berkeley.edu:2020/dynaweb/teiproj/fsm/monos/enfield/@Generic_BookView)

<http://www.wall-berlin.org/gb/chute.htm>

<http://www.igc.apc.org/hric/crf/english/99summer/e12.htm>

<http://www.mcs.com/~rwor/a/china/tienamen.htm>

<http://www.iwojima.com/index.cfm>

<http://www.robinconstablehanson.com/memorial.htm#Viet%20Nam%20War%20Memorial>

2. Share students' choices with the entire class.