

**Gr. 8 Current Events**  
**Length of Course: 1 Marking Period Cycle**  
**Revised: 2017- 2018**

**Course Description:**

The course will provide students with opportunities identify and explore the roots of contemporary social issues/current events by researching the various components that exist within single topic.

Due to the constraints of curriculum and timing, students are frequently not afforded opportunities to explore current events and other contemporary social issues on a regular basis. This cycle will attempt to both expose students to issues that affect their lives as well as instill within them an understanding of the complexity of these issues. In doing so, students will discover how science, history, technology, and language interact in the real world. Further, students will explore the existence of bias in the media as they research and discuss news from a variety of sources.

The course will use a variety of student-centered approaches to explore a particular issue. The process of examining each issue will remain consistent; however, time spent on individual topics will vary depending on the issue's complexity and student interest

**Big Ideas:** *Course Objectives / Content Statement(s)*

- News is presented to us in many forms, many of which are biased. It is important that we are able to discern the differences among biased news and form our own opinions based on, and supported by, credible sources.

**Essential Questions**

*What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?*

- How and why is life in America getting better or worse?
- Why are some news reports mentioned and analyzed by news sources more than others?
- How is technology affecting our daily lives? How will it affect us in the future?
- What is the background information behind a major headline news story and what happens when it is replaced by a new headline story?

**Areas of Focus: Proficiencies  
(Cumulative Progress Indicators)**

Students will:

*(Enter NJCCCS or Common Core CPI's here)*

NJSLSA.R7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

RI.6.7. Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.

6.2 World History/Global Studies: All students will acquire the knowledge and skills to think analytically and systematically about how past interactions of people, cultures, and the environment affect issues across time and cultures. Such knowledge and skills enable students to make informed decisions as socially and ethically responsible world citizens in the 21st century.

**Enduring Understandings**

*What will students understand about the big ideas?*

Students will understand that...

- Individuals have different values that change their perspective on the quality of their lives.
- News sources report on an ongoing and ever-changing basis.
- Technology can have both positive and negative impacts on the quality of life.
- Current event headlines have both a history that led up to it and a future that will result from it.

**- Examples, Outcomes, Assessments**

*(see [note](#) below about the content of this section)*

**Instructional Focus:**

- Students will stay up to date on current event news and research articles that relate to a guiding question of the week. Students will then use these articles to prepare and participate in a bi-weekly socratic discussion. Students will also apply their research and analysis skills to form their own opinions and present them in various forms.

**Sample Assessments:**

- FanSchool Draft- Four Rounds taking place for a period of two weeks at a time
- Ken Burns style broadcast about a under-reported topic of the week -
- Political Cartoon Analysis- Twice weekly
- Socratic Discussion- Bi-weekly

Science: MS-LS2-4, MS-LS2-5, MS-ETS1-1, and MS-ETS1-3. Unit 3: Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems

8.1 Educational Technology: All students will use digital tools to access, manage, evaluate, and synthesize information in order to solve problems individually and collaborate and to create and communicate knowledge.

- Original Documentary with outreach to an expert in the field of the topic being researched

**Instructional Strategies:**

Game-based  
Whole Class Discussion  
Small Group Discussion  
Small Group Project  
Individual Project  
Guided Inquiry  
Guided Reflections

**Interdisciplinary Connections:**

- **English:** Students read closely to determine a central idea of a text and proceed to analyze and cite evidence from that text.
- **Social Studies:** Students research the impact of global issues both nationally and internationally.
- **Science:** Students research impact of technology on society concerning climate change, pollution, scientific advances in medicine, etc.

**Technology Integration**

Fanschool  
New York Times  
The Week- Political Cartoons in Review  
Google Suite  
Youtube  
Allsides.com  
Wevideo.com  
NPR

**Global Perspectives**

- Research international current events on a weekly basis.

*The following skills and themes should be reflected in the design of units and lessons for this course or content area.*

21st Century Skills:

Creativity and Innovation: Students re-envision the way a news story is portrayed to the public.

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving: Students must learn how analyze an article and determine its level of bias.

Communication and Collaboration: Students work collaboratively on a variety of projects throughout the marking period. They communicate both in person and online to achieve completion of their academic goals.

Information Literacy: Students conduct online research throughout the marking period. They also learn how to identify bias in news articles and media.

Media Literacy: Students become aware of marketing tools used by media companies to promote their content.

Life and Career Skills: Exposes students to elements of outside influence that could cloud decision making in the future. Further, children learn how to manage time during long-term projects.

21st Century Themes (as applies to content area):

Financial, Economic, Business, and Entrepreneurial Literacy: Students discuss world economic conflicts and their impact upon future governments and economies.

Civic Literacy: Identifying bias in the media.

Health Literacy: Identifying and discussing the negative impact of climate change and pollution on ecosystems across the globe.

## Unit 1- Life in America

<b>Day 1</b>	Become familiar with classroom rules and procedures.	class intro intro activity- nyt new quiz
<b>Day 2</b>		intro m.p. project, choose social issue
<b>Day 3</b>		project work day
<b>Day 4</b>	Analyze current events to determine draft needs.	fanschool- national
<b>Day 5</b>	Analyze current events to determine draft needs.	fanschool- national

<b>Day 6</b>	Construct a nationwide draft using previous research/annotations based on weekly current events.	draft
<b>Day 7</b>		Project work day
<b>Day 8</b>	Research and annotate a current, supplementary article for the guiding question of the week.	Socratic research
<b>Day 9</b>	Research and annotate a current, supplementary article for the guiding question of the week.	Socratic research
<b>Day 10</b>	Discuss the guiding question of the week using current event articles, prepared annotations, and prepared questions.	socratic

## Unit 2- Current Events Update

<b>Day 11</b>		News Reading Day
<b>Day 12</b>		Kahoot research
<b>Day 13</b>		Kahoot research
<b>Day 14</b>		Kahoot research
<b>Day 15</b>		Project work day
<b>Day 16</b>		Kahoot creation
<b>Day 17</b>		Kahoot day

## Unit 3- Technology

<b>Day 18</b>	Create an original political cartoon satirizing a current political or pop culture event.	Political cartoon day
<b>Day 19</b>	Analyze current events to determine draft needs.	Draft research day
<b>Day 20</b>	Construct a nationwide draft using previous research/annotations based on weekly current events.	Draft
<b>Day 21</b>	Research and annotate a current, supplementary article for the guiding question of the week.	Socratic research

<b>Day 22</b>	Research and annotate a current, supplementary article for the guiding question of the week.	Socratic research
<b>Day 23</b>		Project work day
<b>Day 24</b>	Analyze and annotate current event articles in preparation for a Socratic discussion.	Technology Mini-Documentary
<b>Day 25</b>	Research and annotate a current, supplementary article for the guiding question of the week.	Socratic Research
<b>Day 26</b>	Discuss the guiding question of the week using current event articles, prepared annotations, and prepared questions.	Socratic
<b>Day 27</b>	Create an original political cartoon satirizing a current political or pop culture event.	Political Cartoon

#### Unit 4- Exceptionalism

<b>Day 28</b>		Project work day
<b>Day 29</b>		Project work day
<b>Day 30</b>	Analyze current events to determine draft needs.	Draft Research
<b>Day 31</b>	Construct a nationwide draft using previous research/annotations based on weekly current events.	Draft Day

<b>Day 32</b>	Research and annotate a current, supplementary article for the guiding question of the week.	Socratic Research
<b>Day 33</b>	Research and annotate a current, supplementary article for the guiding question of the week.	Socratic Research
<b>Day 34</b>	Discuss the guiding question of the week using current event articles, prepared annotations, and prepared questions.	Socratic
<b>Day 35</b>	Create an original political cartoon satirizing a current political or pop culture event.	Political Cartoon
<b>Day 36</b>		Project work day

### **Unit 5- Cumulative Project Final**

<b>Day 37</b>		Final Edits
<b>Day 38</b>		Final Edits
<b>Day 39</b>		Present
<b>Day 40</b>		Present
<b>Day 41</b>		Present

\*\*\* The last few days are used as emergency days in case of snow days, assemblies, or extra time needed on assignments throughout the cycle.