

This curriculum is meant to engage students in a critical examination of modern American history through the lens of media coverage. Abuse of power at the highest levels has the ability to change the course of history, and the past century is ripe with examples. Journalists, as firsthand witnesses to history, played a pivotal role in exposing corruption, exploitation and other wrongdoing. By analyzing key journalistic investigations and subsequent coverage, students will gain a fuller contextual understanding of history from the Cold War era to the post-9/11 world in which we now live. Students will also develop a critical eye to be used when examining power in the future—whether or not they choose to become journalists themselves.

Essential Questions

Enduring Understandings

What is power?

Power can take varying forms, but -- at its heart -- it is the ability to have influence over people and situations. Whether power has a positive or negative influence is up to the people who hold it.

Who has power?

While wealthy corporations and government decision-makers can yield enormous amounts of power, they are not the only ones who can. Masses united by a common cause or even determined individuals committed to uncovering the truth can be just as powerful.

How is power abused?

Power can be abused for a myriad of reasons: for financial gain or political advancement, to spread an ideology or to stifle opposition, to maintain the status-quo or to force dramatic change.

What can be done when power is abused, and why is it important to do something?

The inherent danger in power is that, if left unchecked, it could become unlimited. Because of this, abuse of power threatens the ideals of our democracy. In order to ensure the rights of all individuals, especially those belonging to minority groups, those who hold substantial amounts of power must be consistently monitored. Since the origination of the First Amendment, it has become the role of our free and independent press to be the monitors of power--to investigate exploitation and wrongdoing, to publicize such behavior to the American public, and ultimately to ensure that those who abuse their power are held accountable for their actions.

Common Core State Standards

Grades 9-10

Grades 11-12

Reading: Informational Text

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.1
Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.7
Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.1
Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.7
Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Writing

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.7
Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.7
Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

Speaking and Listening

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1
Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4
Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1
Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.4
Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

Curriculum Overview

	Unit 1: McCarthyism	Unit 2: Civil Rights	Unit 3: Vietnam	Unit 4: Watergate	Unit 5: Corporate Power	Unit 6: Post-9/11
Anchor Question	How can fear be used as a tool of power?	What happens when the truth is uncomfortable?	Is it better for some things to remain secret?	What should citizens expect of their government?	Should money be able to buy you power?	Can you be patriotic and question your government at the same time?
Summary	<p>Students will examine Sen. Joseph McCarthy's rise to power in the early 1950s.</p> <p>Students will analyze how McCarthy used fear to increase his influence and will evaluate the news media's role in the Senator's ascent, as well as his eventual downfall.</p>	<p>Students will examine how racial discrimination and violence was originally covered by the news media.</p> <p>Students will analyze the role African-American journalists played in advancing the Civil Rights Movement.</p>	<p>Students will examine how unrelenting reporting led to increased criticism of the Vietnam War.</p> <p>Students will evaluate the impact that investigative reporting can have on public opinion.</p>	<p>Students will examine how investigative reporting led to President Nixon's impeachment and, ultimately, resignation.</p> <p>Students will evaluate the role a free and robust press has in protecting a country's democratic ideals.</p>	<p>Students will examine the challenges reporters faced when investigating powerful tobacco companies in the 1990s.</p> <p>Students will analyze conflict between newsrooms and news executives and will evaluate the influence of money on news coverage.</p>	<p>Students will examine post-9/11 investigative reporting during a time of heightened patriotism in the country.</p> <p>Students will analyze news coverage leading up to the war in Iraq and will evaluate the depth and breadth of this reporting.</p>
Resources Included	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ Lesson Plan ⊕ Student Handout ⊕ Rubric ⊕ "McCarthyism" Video ⊕ Supplemental Materials on Investigating Power website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ Lesson Plan ⊕ Student Handout ⊕ Rubric ⊕ "Freedom Rides," "The Black Press," and "The Emmett Till Murder" Videos ⊕ Supplemental Materials on Investigating Power website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ Lesson Plan ⊕ Student Handout ⊕ Rubric ⊕ "My Lai Massacre" Video ⊕ Supplemental Materials on Investigating Power website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ Lesson Plan ⊕ Student Handout ⊕ Rubric ⊕ "Watergate" Video ⊕ Supplemental Materials on Investigating Power website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ Lesson Plan ⊕ Student Handout ⊕ Rubric ⊕ "Taking on Big Tobacco" Video ⊕ Supplemental Materials on Investigating Power website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ Lesson Plan ⊕ Student Handout ⊕ Rubric ⊕ "Enablers of War" and "Stress and Duress" Videos ⊕ Supplemental Materials on Investigating Power website

Summative Writing Assignments Provided

<i>Compare and Contrast</i>	<i>Expository</i>	<i>Persuasive</i>	<i>Argumentative</i>
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