

Social Studies Quickie Lessons

Local, State, National, and World

Skill: Students Differentiates between local, national and international.

Students can do an interesting analysis of where news is happening as follows: Have them look at the front page of the newspaper and group the news that appears there. How many of the stories are about your state, the nation or the world? Discuss where most of the news is coming from and why. Locate the places on a map. Define some of the characteristics of that place and it's people.

Character Issue

Skill: Students understand the qualifications of leadership.

Americans are often thinking about the character of their elected politicians. Have students skim the Help Wanted ads in the newspaper and circle all the jobs that need a person of character as an important part of the job requirements.

Accentuate the Positive

Skill: Student is able to articulate a positive self-image

Believe it or not, most students describe themselves as having a positive self-image and as happy, responsible and self-reliant. Share this with your students and ask them to find a person in the news that fits each of those categories (and other positive traits). Then have them write a description of themselves. Are they positive or negative (or some of both)?

Random Acts of Kindness

Skill: Students understand personal responsibility and responsible behavior.

Have students look at the day's newspaper, choose 10 people from the stories and rate these people on a 1-to-10 scale (10 being best) to measure their kindness. Which were easiest to find and why? Discuss where historical figures rate on this scale.

Conflict Resolution

Skill: Describe how negotiations, mediations and arbitration are used to resolve conflicts.

Follow the stories on U.S foreign policy related to negotiations, mediations and arbitration throughout the world (Middle East, N. Ireland, etc.). Prepare an organizational outline of all attempts by the U.S. to intervene in these issues. Conclude with a detailed report.

Human Rights

Skill: Understand the meaning of human rights as it applies to U.S. foreign policy.

Search the newspaper for examples of situations (in the U.S. or abroad) where human rights are an issue or have been abused. How is our president or congress dealing with these human rights issues and abuses? Are there other organizations addressing these issues and abuses?

Individual Right and the Common Good

Skill: Identify situations which the exercise of individual rights may conflict with the common good.

Find 3-5 articles or photographs that identify individual rights that may be conflicting with the common good (ex.- individuals right to smoke vs. public health). What is the constitutional amendment or article guarantees individual rights in each situation? What common good may be violated. What might be a fair balance between the individual's rights and the common good?

Older and Wiser

Skill: Students is able to understand that different parts of the population have special needs and issues.

Older people are special in many ways and have unique needs and assets. Discuss with your class some of the stereotypes about the elderly. Then have them search the paper to see how older people are represented. Discuss the stories that they find and how the stereotypes are found or proven false in the stories. What are the concerns of the elderly (aging, health, death, money, etc.)?

Geography Hunt

Skill: Students understand geographic concepts.

Have students go on a geography scavenger hunt to find a foreign country and city, a U.S. city, town or neighborhood, a body of water, a country on another continent, a city in a direction (north, south, east or west) of where they live and other geographic concepts.

Mapping

Skill: Match maps with real places or photographs.

Find stories and pictures of three U.S destinations and three in foreign countries. Locate each place on your classroom map or globe. What is the approximate distance from the closest, farthest? What is the latitude and longitude? What is the place known for?

Law of the Land

Skill: Identify how local, state and national laws are made.

Students research newspaper stories on local, state and national legislation that are being enacted or is pending. What effect will the law have? If pending, will the law pass? Describe the process of legislation for one of the laws.

Other Social Studies Quickie Lessons

Analyzing the news, what are the most important concerns in the world, the nation, your community, in your life? Which one(s) concern you most and what can you do about them?

Look in today's newspaper; identify the name of leaders, what country they represent and their leadership roles.

Students read the newspaper for at least a two-week period. Have them list the people continually in the news. Who are they? Why are they in the news? Collect photos of the newsmakers and do a picture quiz of who they are, where they are from, and why they are in the news.

Students develop a glossary of terms, people, events, and places used in the newspaper that are unfamiliar to them.

Cut out a comic strip and eliminate the writing in the balloons and write a new story.

Have students read the comics and make headlines above their favorite comic. Have students read their headline and ask others to identify which comic the headline applies to.

Identify, clip and categorize news stories that reflect good, bad, and humorous news (or other traits). What types of events have you included in each category? What types of events appear continually in the news? Select one subject or event and classify news stories related to the subject.

Find examples of factual, interpretive, speculative, promotional and propaganda stories in the paper. Rewrite one of these types of stories into another type.

Find examples of articles that discuss what may happen as a result of an event. Develop a list of predictive statements (an oil embargo will lead to higher gasoline prices).

Young people of ten feel they receive unfavorable press. Analyze news stories on youth over a period of time and graph your results based on good, bad, or neutral news.

Identify problems and list them in the order of importance in your community, region, state or nation. What are possible solutions to these problems?

Identify community organizations in the news. What are the purposes of the organization? How do they contribute to the community? What is your personal view of the organizations?

Find a current national or international story that will effect your local community or state. What effect will it have? How should the community respond?

What evidence do you find in the newspaper of how your community is changing and growing and what the traditions are?

List products advertised in the newspaper that are from foreign countries. What countries are they from and are more from one particular country?

Identify customs and traditions reflected in the news. Are these practices linked to heritage, explain?

Find articles that represent “man vs. nature” and “nature vs. man.” Create a display on the interdependencies between human beings and nature.

In newspaper articles, identify cultural differences between foreign countries and ours. Make a categorized list of cultural differences by country.

Discuss what is meant by the “norms” of society. Have students find articles with examples of behavior that deviates from the norm and discuss them.

Create a community collage of articles showing the many aspects of their community.

Make a “Good News” bulletin board each week as the starting point for classroom discussion and sharing of good news of the students.