



NATIONAL
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Making Meaning of May 4 **K-12 Teaching Plan**

Name of Educator: Angelann T. Stephens

Educator's Teaching Plan Number & Title: Project 58, "Understanding the Power and Damage and Implications of Media Messaging"

Level of Students for Educator's Teaching Plan: 9-12 grades

Subject Area for Educator's Teaching Plan: English

Educator's State: Georgia

Description of Educator's Teaching Plan: Students learn the concept of a *national narrative*—controlled by those in power; presented through mainstream media; and containing messages that obscure truth. Using multiple techniques and sources, students decode multimedia messages to dismantle ahistorical narratives and misinformation.

This educational teaching plan was developed during Kent State University's Summer 2021 workshop titled Making Meaning of May 4: The 1970 Kent State Shootings in US History. The workshop was supported by Kent State and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant program titled *Landmarks of American History and Culture: Workshops for School Teachers*.

This teaching plan is shared to promote understanding of the Kent State shootings on May 4, 1970; enhance humanities education across the disciplines; and illustrate the meaning of May 4 for today.

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Lesson Plan Template

Title of Lesson Plan:

Understanding the Power and Damage and Implications of Media Messaging

Lesson Overview:

This lesson is multi-layered. Essentially this means that several mini-lessons are necessary to unveil the complexity of the more important lesson. Students will answer three essential questions:

- What is a master narrative?
- How and why does the media perpetuate master narratives or meta narrative?
- How was the media weaponized during the May 4, 1970 Kent State Shooting? How do different media outlets represent what happened?
- How can facts be nuanced in their presentation?
- How can citizens (students) locate information about the rhetor of a rhetorical situation?
- Why is it important to corroborate information?
- How is historical context important in the presentation of details/facts?

Students will analyze multiple documents that presented information about student protests and the Kent State Shooting on May 4th.

Lesson Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Close read informational text for comprehension and critical analysis;
- Identify, interpret, explain, and evaluate the main ideas;
- Cite evidence from primary source documents to support responses to the close reading questions;
- Analyze and assess other resources that provide historical and biographical context to the historical moment

Grade Level:

9th-12th Grades



Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.8: Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.6: Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.10: By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.


CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.12.2: 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.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.

Historical Background:

Media is all around us. It saturates our lives, our thoughts, our ideas, our fears. It is omnipresent, consistently seeping messages into our psyche even when we think we



have turned away or moved on to some other tasks. Because the media is ubiquitous and inescapable, its power to damage human's understanding of others, history, and information is done, whether we know it or not.

The narrative that mainstream media presents about our nation, people, gender, race, and society at large is a national narrative, a national memory. But national memories belong to those in power. These are narratives and messages that powerful people in control present to society. Students don't necessarily recognize that messages in these narratives obfuscate the truth in order to keep people from interrogating problems or paradoxes. But there are other narratives available, but those narratives can only be accessed with work, effort, purpose. Historical narratives and historical memories are those stories by people who lived those moments in our history. It is these historical memories where students can gain truths. Primary documents also provide narratives and evidence of their times.

Using multiple sources and techniques, students will decode multimedia messages to dismantle a-historical narratives and misinformation.

Front load key terms to students so they become comfortable with the academic language in the unit:

- [Historical Memory](#)
- Master Narrative: A popular, very problematic, highly inaccurate narrative/account; a powerful and popular but inaccurate story
- Metanarrative: "An overarching account or interpretation of events and circumstances that provides a pattern or structure for people's beliefs and gives meaning to their experiences."
- [Positionality](#)
- [Guard Dog Theory](#)

Key Concepts:

- Media will portray master narratives without contextualizing information.
- People in power will use the media to perpetuate master narratives.
- Media can also be used to provide counter-narratives, narratives to attack or go against master narratives.



Video

Historical Memory Video from Brown University Choice Program


<https://www.choices.edu/video/what-is-historical-memory/>

Newspapers from Different Media Groups

The Kent Stater (Kent State's Student Newspaper)

- May 1, 1970
- Oct. 7, 1970, n. 4
- Oct. 7, 1970, n. 7

The Call and Post (African-American Newspaper)

- July 4, 1970 (p. 1)
 - Oct. 31, 1970 (pp. 1-2)
- 

The Akron Beacon (Major Newspaper of Akron)

- May 4, 1970 (p. 1-2)
- May 5, 1970 (pp. 1, 2, 6, 8, 9, 15, 16, 27)

National Magazines

- *Time Magazine*: “At War with War”
- *Life Magazine*: “Kent State: Four Deaths at Noon”

Research Articles

- Jim DeBrosse’s “Four Dead in Ohio”: How the Media Ignored the Threat of Deadly Force at Kent State University May 4, 1970
- Lae’l Hughes-Watkins: “Between Two Worlds: A Look at the Impact of the Black Campus Movement on the Antiwar Era of 1968-1970 at Kent State University”
- David Lindquist: “May 4, 1970: How U.S. History Textbooks Portray the Kent State Shootings”

Graphic Organizers/Activities

1. [Painting Analysis Worksheet \(PDF\)](#)
2. [Literature Circle \(Word\)](#)-use pieces of it for nonfiction
3. [Nonfiction Discussion Circles \(Similar to Lit Circles\) \(Google Docs\)](#)
4. [Dialectical Journal](#)
5. [Synthesis Source Analysis Worksheet for each student/group](#)
6. [Historical Context Graphic Organizer](#)



Procedures:

*This lesson is designed in layers!

1. Introduce the background on how media/news often plays both sides of debates. Remind students to **ALWAYS** look at the dates of artifacts present in the lesson because this practice helps establish a continuing theme that crosses multiple generations and times. The key is to pay attention the rhetor and the message.
2. Open discussion with the difference of national memory vs. historical memory. Show the 3 min. clip of Professor Gross discussing what is historical memory (video).

Historical Memory Video from Brown University Choice Program

<https://www.choices.edu/video/what-is-historical-memory/>

3. Allow students time to discuss/process.
4. Remind students that we are discussing one specific incident, but how that incident is portrayed by different rhetors can be divergent. Who and what we listen to is important to what we learn. What we regurgitate and share on media can reinforce narratives. Are you propelling narratives of the powerful or narratives of the victims?
5. Tell students they are transitioning to a 2019 artwork that seems to be addressing similar concerns. Allow students access to the Painting [Analysis Worksheet \(PDF\)](#) before disseminating [“Unseen Narratives” – The Work of Titus Kaphar in the National Portrait Gallery](#). This handout needs a **double reading**. This article offers text with visuals. Cover up the text with large post-it notes or sheets and have students to just study the visuals first. Allow them time to talk and process. Have them use the Painting Analysis Worksheet when looking at one image at a time. Share out! Be generous with time at this moment.

Some of your students may not recognize the symbolism in the artwork. After generous discussions, allow students to pose questions. It is optional to answer these questions now or to wait and answer the questions after the reading.

Allow students access to [Dialectical Journal](#) to use for guided reading of the article. After a few paragraphs, allow students to jot down key text from the reading on the left and a response to that text on the right. Repeat this process until students have completed the reading. This may be a good time to go back to their questions about the painting. Some of the written text may have answered some of the questions. Have



students share the text they selected and the importance of that text. Be generous with time to allow students to share thoughts/ideas. Debrief.

Return to the issue of the Master Narrative. How does Kaphar's work counter a Master Narrative? How does Kaphar's work relate to the first four newspaper articles? What is the Master Narrative Kaphar attacks?

Debrief

Students need context: Who, What, When, Where, (Why and How will be explored in newspapers)

6. Show [History.com's "Kent State Shooting" video](#) or read text.

Pass out the different Newspapers to Groups

7. Have students get into groups. Each group will become part of a Literature Circle (see handout). Disseminate the different newspapers to each group. Have students complete the newspaper readings in their groups using Literature Circle as their guide.

Allow students time to share with the teacher and collaborate with the group.

Literature Circle Resources

1. [Literature Circle \(Word\)](#)-use pieces of it for nonfiction
2. [Nonfiction Discussion Circles \(Similar to Lit Circles\) \(Google Docs\)](#)

Debrief. Share out. Discuss. Revisit the questions:

- What is a master narrative or metanarrative?
- How and why does the media perpetuate master narratives or meta narrative?
- How can facts be nuanced in their presentation?
- Who is the rhetor? Is s/he (rhetor) supporting the students of Kent State? Is s/he (rhetor) supporting the Administrators and/or US Government in the protest?



Assessment and Extensions:

- [Synthesis Source Analysis Worksheet for each student/group](#)
- Literature Circles on Research Articles
- Gallery Walk where different literature groups could put together visuals/presentations of info from their article
- Connect to a modern-day protest: [Athletes & Protest Binder](#)
- Resources from NCTE Conference:
 - [Training Truth Seekers Presentation](#) by Rogers and Nichols
 - [NCTE-17 Fake News](#) by Reimer and Adams
- [Historical Context Graphic Organizer Activity](#)

[Graphic describing AllSides.com]

Link to this document via web: <https://www.allsides.com/media-bias/media-bias-ratings>

*The general public votes to determine media bias for AllSides (Limitations)



[Graphic - "Left vs. Right (US)"]

