



A Note to Teachers

Both of us have taught at high school, university, and college levels. Our students, like some of yours, adamantly declare that they do not like to read and that they are not very good at reading. Our students say that they “do not understand” reading assignments or that the reading is “too difficult.” Statements like these, made us take another look at the reading habits of high school and college students.

As we, and others, have observed, students at the secondary and college level have difficulty in reading for a variety of reasons including:

- Failure to understand the vocabulary in the text
- Failure to understand sentences and sentence structures
- Failure to understand how sentences relate to one another
- Failure to understand how information fits together (organization)

These failures result in *lack of interest or concentration* in our students when we assign reading tasks.

The information and activities in this presentation are ones that we have found helpful to our students.

Reading Newspapers and Periodicals

Reading newspaper and periodicals requires many of the same or similar techniques as reading short stories and novels. There are, however, important differences among these genres. Stories (or narratives) have characters, conflicts, settings, and resolutions. News stories have these same elements. One major difference, however, is that readers must *decide* to believe a story—they know that it is fiction and must *conscientiously agree* to the possibility of the story's truthfulness in a particular time or place. Inherent in the news article is the trust readers have in its truthfulness. What people read in newspapers and periodicals they have a tendency to take as the truth. The availability of this genre is important also. Newspapers are delivered daily to our homes. No other genre enjoys the directness and frequency of newspaper articles. This familiarity adds to the trust readers have about the truthfulness of the contents.

A second major difference is the reader's established prejudice or bias toward a particular person, group, or event that is being reported. Although prior knowledge does influence the ways in which readers react to text in all genres, in news articles readers' prior experiences and knowledge appear to have a greater influence on their interpretation and reaction to the text.

Third, the structure of the news article gives the impression of "the whole story" while in many cases only gives incomplete information. News often develops over long periods of time; however, newspapers and periodicals are under short time constraints. These constraints force publishers to go to press before the story has ended. The public's desire to know current information adds to this practice. The recent election is a prime example of the ways in which the print media helped shape public opinion. Before the facts and details were known, articles were written about both candidates. Many of these articles contain misinformation or false information.

According to Tony Buzan, author and developer of Mind Maps (available on the Web), these [articles] tend to give a very fragmented coverage of a subject, typically concentrating on the most interesting and glamorous parts of a topic while ignoring the less interesting but often essential background. Typically areas of useful information are padded out with large areas of irrelevant data or with advertising.

Tony Buzan has categorized news articles into three main types. We have listed these below.

Article Types And How To Read Them
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• News Articles: here the most important information is presented first, with information being less and less significant as the article progresses. News articles are designed to explain the key points first, and then flesh them out with detail.• Opinion Articles: Opinion articles are designed to advance a viewpoint. Here the most important information is contained in the introduction and the summary, with the middle of the article containing supporting arguments.• Feature Articles: these are written to provide entertainment or to provide background on a subject. Typically the most important information is in the body of the text.

The following table from Muskingum College is a nice way to visualize what teachers know about good and poor readers.

METACOGNITIVE BEHAVIORS OF GOOD AND POOR READERS
MUSKINGUM COLLEGE

	GOOD OR MATURE READERS	POOR OR IMMATURE READERS
BEFORE READING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate prior knowledge • Understand task and set purpose • Choose appropriate strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start reading without preparation • Read without knowing why • Read without considering how to approach the material
DURING READING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus attention • Anticipate and predict • Use fix-up strategies when lack of understanding occurs • Use contextual analysis to understand new terms • Organize and integrate new information • Self-monitor comprehension by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Knowing comprehension is occurring ○ Knowing what is being understood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are easily distracted • Read to get done • Do not know what to do when lack of understanding occurs • Do not recognize important vocabulary • Do not see any organization • Add on, rather than integrate, new information • Do not realize they do not understand
AFTER READING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on what was read • Feel success is a result of effort • Summarize major ideas • Seek additional information from outside sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop reading and thinking • Feel success is a result of luck

Finally, we have included the following chart from Konawaena Elementary.

Reading Strategies

Before Reading, While Reading and After Reading

Before Reading	During Reading	After Reading
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorm, Categorize, Label (BCL) • Picture Word Association (PWA) • Predict • Vocabulary/Predictions Web • Skim and Scan • Formulate Questions • Fast Write (for fluent writers) Write what is already known about subject, even if words are repeated, until a new idea surfaces. • KWL (What do I know, Wonder About, Learned) to elicit prior knowledge; motivation to seek answers for questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor / Adjust Reading Rate • Mature Reader Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Predict ○ Validate ○ Document ○ Question • Textual Reading Strategies (Highlight key concepts) • Reread • Summarize • Use reading strategies to balance word recognition process • Visualize • Identify Confusing Parts • KWL • Monitor Vocabulary and Understanding • Context Clues • Seek Help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm, Adjust Predictions • Skim • Apply VRIMM strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Visualize ○ Retell ○ Integrate Learning and Doing ○ Mature Reader Process ○ Make the Process Visible • Reread • Think Aloud • KWL • Note-taking • Question or Infer • Reflect through: Writing, Talking, Dance and Movement, Drawing, etc. • Visualize Structures (Graphic Organizers) • Develop generalizations • Make connections to universal concept • Make personal connections (wisdoms)

Activities



Pre-Reading

KWL Chart

Title of publication _____

Date of publication _____ Page numbers _____ Volume No. _____

Name of Author _____

Title of Article _____

Directions: Before you begin to read the article, look at the headline. Then fill in the first two columns of the chart. After reading, fill in the third column.

WHAT I KNOW	WHAT I WONDER ABOUT	WHAT I STILL NEED TO LEARN

Brain Storming Ideas

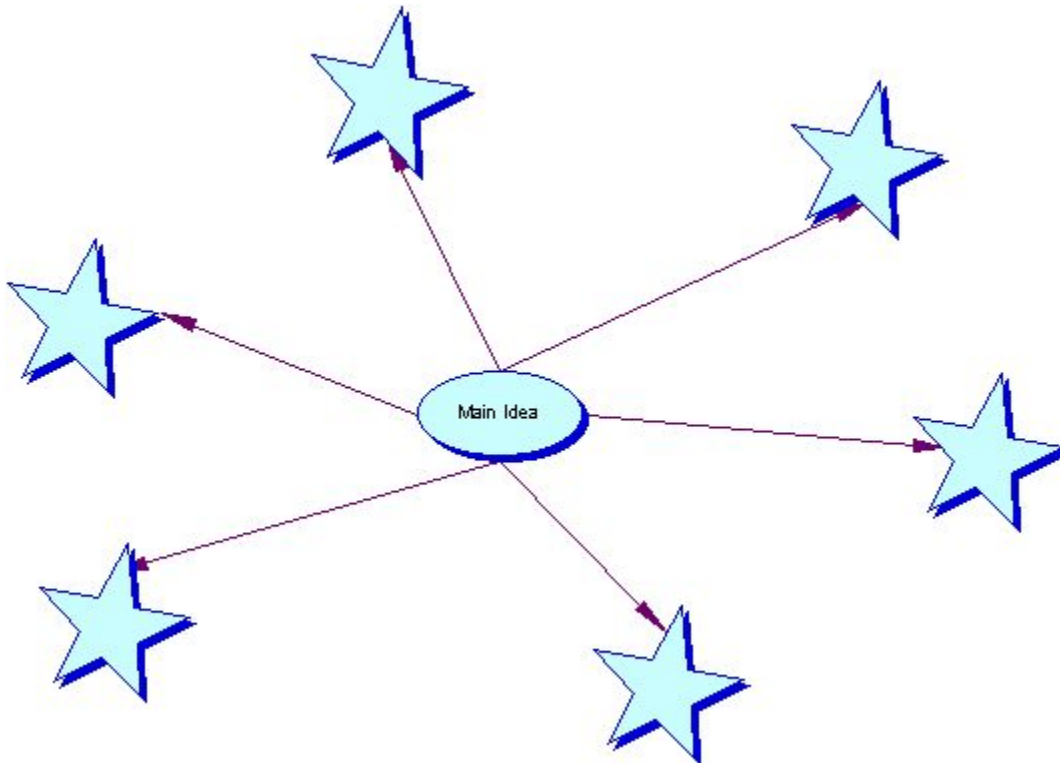
Title of publication _____

Date of publication _____ Page numbers _____ Volume No. _____

Name of Author _____

Title of Article _____

Directions: Before you begin to read the article, think about all the information you know about the topic. List all the information on a separate sheet of paper. Next, organize the information in the web below. Draw more “stars” for more ideas. You may write outside of the stars.



Is a Picture Worth a 1000 Words?

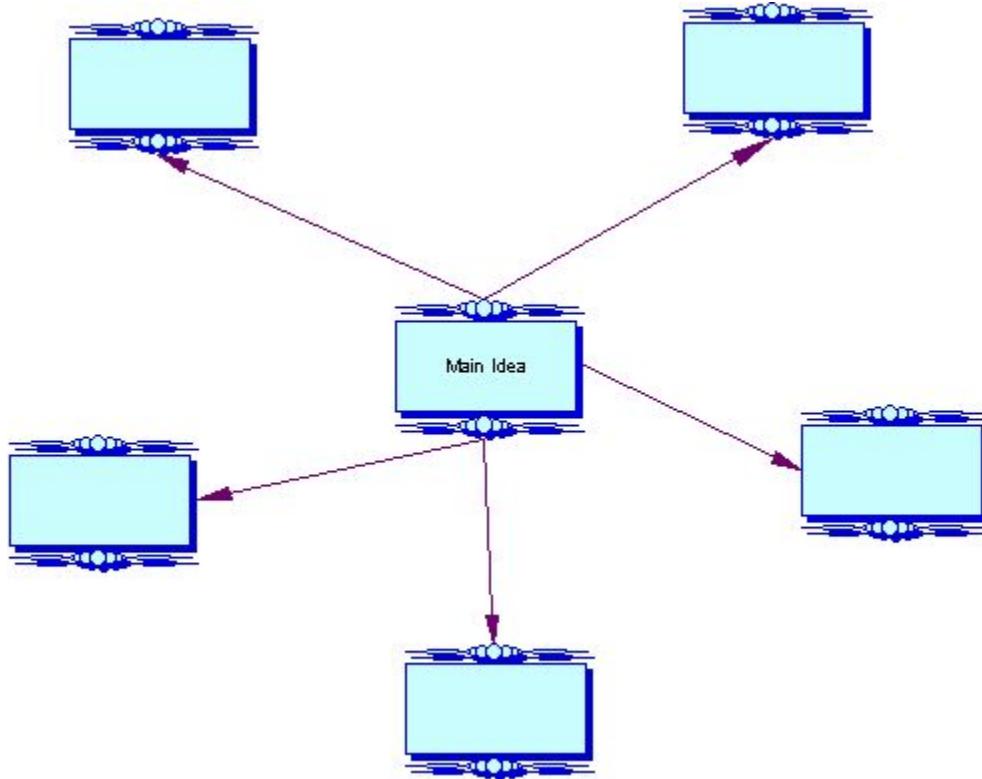
Title of publication _____

Date of publication _____ Page numbers _____ Volume No. _____

Name of Author _____

Title of Article _____

Directions: Choose an article with a picture. Before reading, look at the picture and fill in the following chart.



Skim and Scan

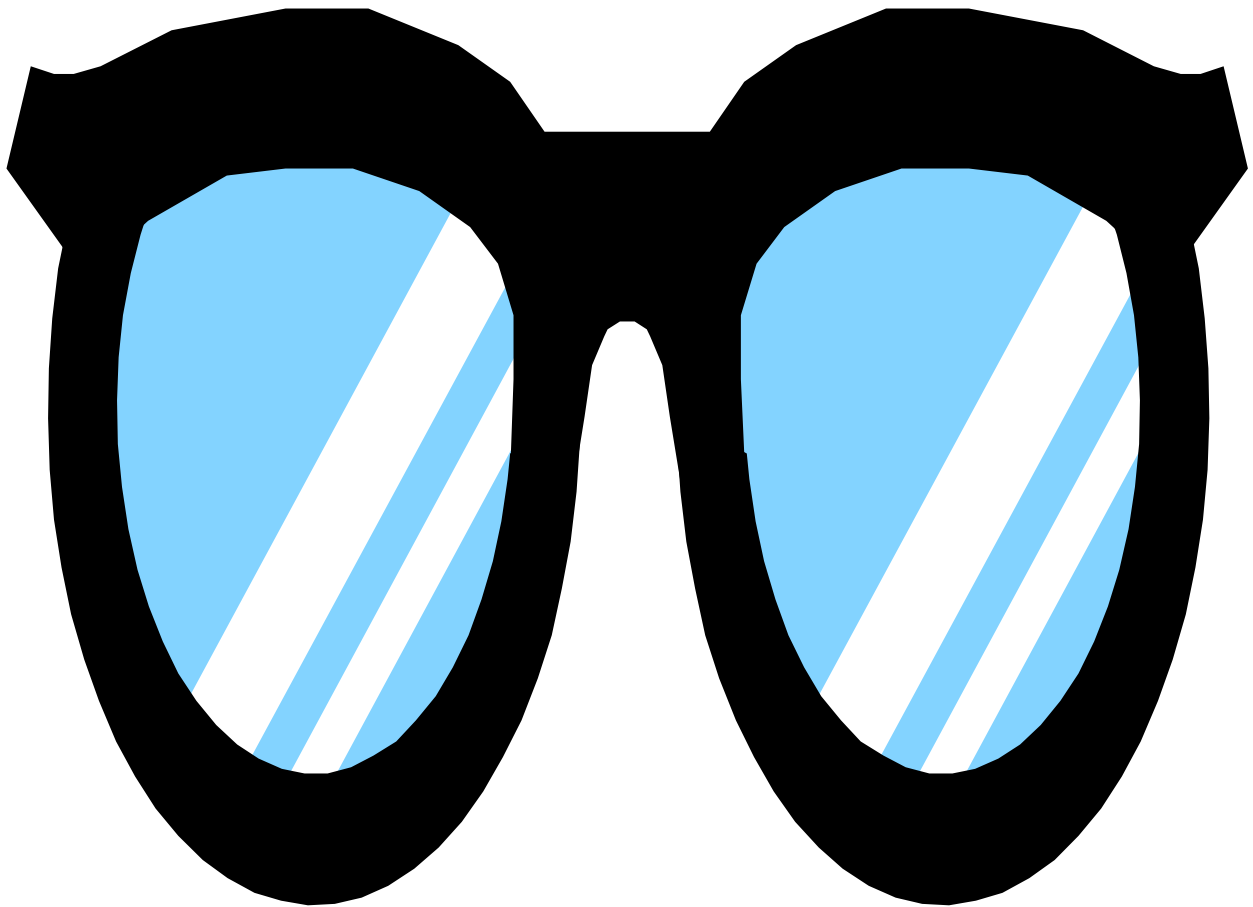
Title of publication _____

Date of publication _____ Page numbers _____ Volume No. _____

Name of Author _____

Title of Article _____

Directions: Before you read the article, place your finger under the headline and move it down the middle of the column. Try keeping your eyes toward the middle of the print. Next, fill in the spectacles with the information you remember from skimming and scanning.



Activities



During Reading

Reporter's Formula

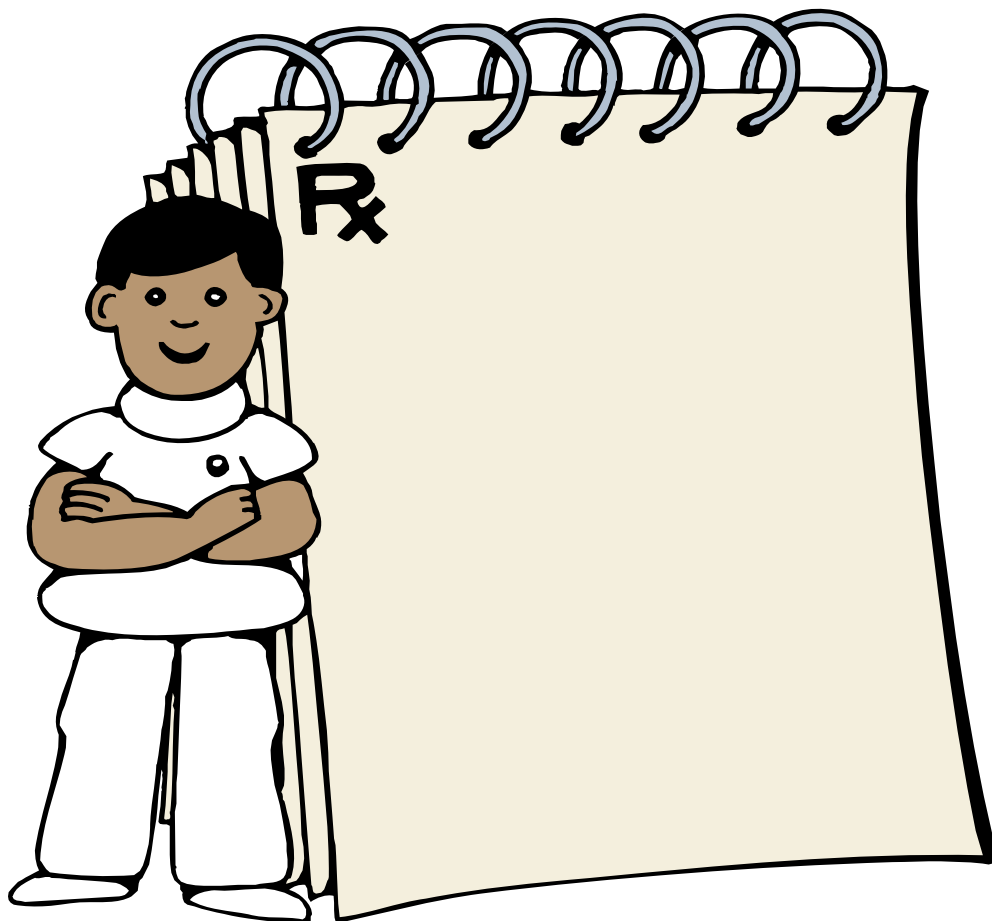
Title of publication _____

Date of publication _____ Page numbers _____ Volume No. _____

Name of Author _____

Title of Article _____

Directions: Reporter's answer the following questions in news articles: who, what, when, where, why, and how. While reading your article, fill in the answers to these questions on the notebook.



Fact or Opinion?

Title of publication _____

Date of publication _____ Page numbers _____ Volume No. _____

Name of Author _____

Title of Article _____

Directions: Jot down the facts (in the boxes) and opinions (in the clouds) as you read.



What's Between the Lines

Title of publication _____

Date of publication _____ Page numbers _____ Volume No. _____

Name of Author _____

Title of Article _____

Directions: Newspaper and periodical articles rely on the reader to make inferences about what they are reading. As you read your article, think about what information is printed (explicit) and what information you need to supply or infer. Write down the explicit information on the first line and the information you infer on the second one.

Explicit
Infer

Explicit
Infer

Explicit
Infer

Explicit
Infer

Explicit
Infer

The Whole Truth and Nothing But?

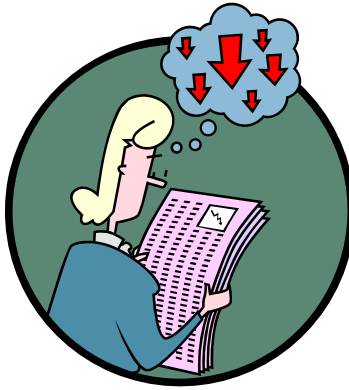
Title of publication _____

Date of publication _____ Page numbers _____ Volume No. _____

Name of Author _____

Title of Article _____

Directions: Reporters write articles from their point-of-view. As you read the article, jot down words that appeal to emotions rather than intellect in column A. Jot down less emotional words in column B. Some words you might read are: *horrifying, historic, discrimination, harassment, brutal, irresponsibility, and unreasonable.*



A

B

Activities



After Reading

Sum It Up!

Directions: After you have read your article, ask yourself the following questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

Title of publication _____
Date of publication _____ Page numbers _____ Volume No. _____
Name of Author _____
Title of Article _____

<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">Why was this article written?</div> <div style="text-align: center;">↓</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0; width: 100%; height: 60px; margin-top: 10px;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">Who is the intended audience?</div> <div style="text-align: center;">↓</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0; width: 100%; height: 60px; margin-top: 10px;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">What is the author's credentials</div> <div style="text-align: center;">↓</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0; width: 100%; height: 60px; margin-top: 10px;"></div>
<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">Is there a special bias?</div> <div style="text-align: center;">↓</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0; width: 100%; height: 60px; margin-top: 10px;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">Compare the opening and closing paragraphs</div> <div style="text-align: center;">↓</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 5px; width: 100%; text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;">Opening</div> <div style="text-align: center;">↓</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 5px; width: 100%; text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;">Closing</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">Write the key or repeated words</div> <div style="text-align: center;">↓</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0; width: 100%; height: 60px; margin-top: 10px;"></div>
<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">Main Idea</div> <div style="text-align: center;">↓</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0; width: 100%; height: 60px; margin-top: 10px;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">Draft three sentences that expresses the main idea</div> <div style="text-align: center;">↓</div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"><div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0; width: 100%; height: 60px; margin-right: 20px;"></div><div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0; width: 100%; height: 60px; margin-right: 20px;"></div><div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0; width: 100%; height: 60px;"></div></div>	

Muddiest Point

T.A. Angelo and K. P. Cross 1993 *Classroom Assessment Techniques* 2nd Ed. San Francisco: Josey Bass, p. 154-8

Directions: After reading your article, think about the part that was the *least* clear to you. Write down the muddiest point in the article and two ways that will help you make it clearer.

Title of publication _____

Date of publication _____ Page numbers _____ Volume No. _____

Name of Author _____

Title of Article _____



Two Ways to Clean Up

The Minute Paper

T.A. Angelo and K. P. Cross 1993 *Classroom Assessment Techniques* 2nd Ed. San Francisco: Josey Bass, p. 154-8

Title of publication _____

Date of publication _____ Page numbers _____ Volume No. _____

Name of Author _____

Title of Article _____

Directions: After reading, take just 60 seconds to answer the following two questions.



What are the 2, 3, 4, or 5 most significant useful, meaningful, surprising, disturbing things you have learned?

What questions remain in your mind?

Additional Activities

The following activities come from a variety of sources. Many of these were used successfully by classroom teachers.

International news articles

1. ***Build A Country.*** Collect information about a country in the news. Try to find information about the leaders, current events, and important people. Draw a map of the country and locate important places. Add to the information in the news with information on the Internet or in library books.
2. ***Life Around The World.*** Collect information about various places in the world. From the information collected, compare what life might be like in these places with life in the United States. Variations of this activity include holidays or other special events.

National news articles

1. ***Here's The Problem.*** What's the solution? Chose a particular problem that affects the nation (pollution, endangered animals, labor problems, economy and others are good to begin). Collect information from a variety of local newspapers (most can be found on the Internet). Create a poster that outlines the problem and offers at least two solutions that would address multiple points of view. (This activity is best done in groups and over a period of time).
2. ***You've Got Mail.*** Find a pen pal (or Internet pal). Ask your pen pal to send you information about issues in his or her state and send information about the issues in your state. Begin a dialogue about the similarities and differences about living in different areas of the United States.
3. ***United States Funniest. . .*** Collect unusual or funny stories about life in the United States from a variety of local newspapers. Make a class scrapbook of these stories and display it in the library. A variation of this activity is to collect political cartoons.
4. ***It's Picture Perfect.*** After collecting information about living in different areas of the nation, create a comic strip about life in the United States and post it on the bulletin board or the school's web page.

State news articles

1. ***Who's Who In. . .*** Read the newspapers to find information about famous people in the state. Then find additional information in the library or on the Internet. Create a Who's Who book with the information collected.

2. ***What's Going On?*** Use the newspapers to find information about current issues in the state. Create a chart about the important attributes of the problem. After collecting more information, list two possible solutions on the same chart. Use the chart and information found in the news articles to write to the state officials. Outline the problem and solutions in the letter.
3. ***A Great Place to Be. . .*** Collect information about interesting places to visit in the state, interesting stories, or events. Create a brochure that might be used to encourage other people to visit the state.

Add your ideas here. Don't forget to send them to George and Linda!