

MAISA and the REMC Association of Michigan Best Practices in Technology Integration Plan

Title: Novel News

Subject(s): Language Arts and Literature

Intended Grade Level(s): High School

Description: Novel News is a culminating group activity that can be used with most novels. Students use the information they have learned through reading a novel and doing other associated activities to create a newspaper about the people, places, issues, and events that make up the novel. Students use publication software to create the newsletter.

Students in groups of four to five write feature stories, letters-to-the-editor, advertisements, want ads, articles, cartoons, illustrations, columns, and other newspaper-style writing. To compose the newspaper, students use the novel's content. For example, students might take the role of a character and write to an advice columnist about a problem. Another student might respond to the letter as an advice columnist would. An automobile accident occurring in their novel might become the subject of a hard news article. In creating the newspaper, students explore newspaper forms, develop proficiency using publication software, and deepen their understanding of the novel they have read.

Curriculum Benchmarks:

The main goals of this plan include:

- [MI.ELA.2.HS.1](#) Applying knowledge of genres through reading nonfiction directions and newspapers, creating different formats of writing, and organizing the newspaper they are writing.
- [MI.ELA.3.HS.1](#) Sharing reading with other students and developing teamwork skills.
- [MI.ELA.1.HS.1](#) Reading for information from more than one source.
- [MI.ELA.2.HS.3](#) Generating ideas for writing through a variety of strategies.
- [MI.ELA.2.HS.1](#) Writing for a variety of purposes and in a variety of forms.
- [MI.ELA.2.HS.2](#) Writing for audience and purpose.
- [MI.ELA.3.HS.1](#) Attending to punctuation, spelling, etc.
- [MI.ELA.3.HS.3](#) Learning to follow written directions and to apply them.

Materials/Hardware/Software:

1. Copies of newspapers.

2. Access to computers and printers. (This works better if each group has access to at least one computer and best if each group has access to more than one.)
3. A publication program to create newsletters such as: Microsoft Word 97 Newsletter Wizard or other newsletter publication software. Note: Those with on-screen prompts are easiest for the students to use.
4. A printed copy of software directions, if available. (The directions for Microsoft Word '97 Newsletter Wizard can be printed from the screen.)

Activities/Procedures:

Teacher preparation prior to introducing this activity:

1. Become familiar with the newsletter software program you plan to use.
2. Teachers should also arrange and schedule use of computers if another class area must be used or prepare a schedule of use for the classroom if a single classroom computer is to be used. Often students can also type their columns in compatible programs, copy them, and paste them into the newsletter.
3. Create the classroom groups of 4-5. Consider placing at least one student with some computer familiarity in each group.
4. Prepare the grading rubric, written guidelines and directions, and assignment sheets you may wish students to follow.

The activity:

Day 1: Examine a newspaper in groups and as a class. Have each group spend 15 minutes cutting out different types of articles. Students should create a folder of their articles to use as models in later writing activities. (Note: Time can be adjusted if students have more or less familiarity with newspaper forms.) Students share their findings with other groups.

Students then begin to assign and delegate work assignments. The following is a guide to help students make decisions about assignments.

DIVISION OF LABOR FOR GROUP _____.

ARTICLE TYPE

ASSIGNED TO:

ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF GROUP MEMBERS ASSIGNED TO:

In what ways have you tried to make the writing, illustration, and production of this newspaper the equal responsibility of all group members?

As students determine writing assignments, remind them of other responsibilities that may arise, such as typing, drawing, choosing illustrations, editing, etc.

Days 2-3: Students during this period create their columns, horoscopes, cartoons, ads, articles, etc. The teacher during this time acts as a resource person. Students are expected to use the models found in the newspapers to guide the development of their articles. Students should be reminded of copyright laws and the need to accurately reflect

the novel's characters and events. Students are encouraged to use peer review and editing and to follow the writing process.

Days 4/5: Students work with computers on this day. Student groups using one or more computers are "walked" through the publication software. The printed directions are distributed to each group. Students are instructed how to enter the program and save it. The directions may vary depending on the software used. Among the instructions given are:

1. Choosing the newsletter style and creating from the Wizard.
2. How to type in or copy in articles.
3. Using Clip Art.
4. Linking text boxes.
5. Changing style elements.
6. Shading and borders.
7. End symbols
8. PullQuote
9. Sidebars

Part of this assignment is to use the printed and screen directions to accomplish the task. Students should not be overly directed. How much "walk-through" the teacher gives may in part depend on the age and the computer experience of those in the groups.

If time is a factor or teachers are limited by the number of computers available, a representative of each group can receive instruction as other students compose, revise, and edit their work. Original art and cartoons can be scanned in if that technology is available. (Some students are ready and computer-wise enough to follow the procedures for these tasks. If this is the first time students have used most of these commands, I advise against having them become involved with scanning.)

Students copy or type in their text, place PullQuotes, Clip Art, etc. in their newsletter. Students print after editing, and each group turn in a copy to be copied and published for other groups. Before students turn in their newspapers, they individually complete a self-evaluation form.

The teacher makes copies of each paper. Five copies each are all that are necessary if no group exceeds five members. Rubrics are copied for students to use in scoring in the next day's activities.

Day 6: Student groups trade papers in 10 minute intervals (approximate depending on the number of groups and class length) and using the scoring rubric rate other group's newspapers. Student groups compose two comments about each paper they evaluate; these should be positive comments about things they like in the construction or content of the newspaper. Student groups also provide two suggestions or questions about each newspaper they evaluate. In the last ten minutes, students as a whole class discuss what they found interesting and what they liked about other papers.

Assessment/Evaluation:

Assessment is accomplished in two ways. First students do a self-evaluation. Secondly the following rubric is used to score groups' newspapers. The self-evaluation works with the rubric and can reveal some of the ways each student has contributed (or not contributed) to the writing of the newspaper. Self-evaluation also aids students in becoming self-regulating and developing their metacognition. Generally, students receive credit/no credit scores for reflecting in a reasonable way. Reasonable is defined for them before they attempt to self-evaluate.

Self-evaluation questions:

SELF-EVALUATION FORM

NAME:

In composing the newspaper, I felt I did the best job when I _____

The reason I think I did my best job is because _____

The two things I wrote or created that best reflect an idea, character, theme, or setting in the novel are:

- 1.
- 2.

The novel is best reflected in each of these because _____

In writing and creating the newspaper about the novel (Title) _____, I noticed some things about the novel I didn't notice or understand before. Two were:

- 1.
- 2.

What were the two most important things you learned from writing the newspaper items, reflecting on the novel, and/or working with a group? Why?

- 1.

Because: _____

- 2.

Because: _____

What would you like me to consider when grading you and your group? _____

SCORING RUBRIC FOR NEWSPAPER

Below is a scoring rubric for group newspaper projects. Here are some explanations of what the chart refers to:

1. **Accuracy** refers to the truthfulness and balance of your reports. Did you report events, quotes, characters, settings, etc. as they were shown in the novel? Did you balance your report to include all views and attitudes shown by the characters in the novel?
2. **News forms** include such things as: feature news, straight news, editorials, want ads, regular ads, columns, comics, editorials, letters-to-the-editor, sports reports, published announcements, horoscopes, schedules, etc.
3. **Themes** include major ideas or beliefs the author shows, supports, or explores.
4. **Characters** should include main and minor characters, both protagonists and antagonists.
5. **Setting** refers to the places where the events of the story occur.
6. **Genre** refers to the kind of work: Is it a mystery, romance, biography, realistic fiction, etc.?
7. **Mechanics** refers to usage, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and formatting.
8. **Point of view** refers to the ways in which stories and reports are told: first person, omniscient, third person limited, etc.
9. **Layout** refers to positioning of important stories, pictures, minor stories, story order, page transitions, etc.
10. **Originality** can be shown by use of original drawings, unique presentations of material, creative wording or expression.
11. **Clarity** refers to the clearness and accuracy of wording.

Name of group members:

Score total: /55

	EXCELLENT: 5	AVERAGE: 3.5 POINTS	POOR: 1.5
Accuracy	Balanced and true to story	Balanced but may contain inaccuracies	Unbalanced and inaccurate
News forms	Uses 8 or more	Uses 7-5	Uses 4 or fewer
Theme	Explores three themes	Explores 2 themes	Explores one theme
Characters	Uses 6 or more characters	Uses 5-3 characters	Uses 2 or fewer characters
Setting	Uses 3 or more settings	Uses 2 settings	Uses 1 setting
Group labor	Equally divides work	One student does too much or too little	Two students do too much or too little
Mechanics	Accurate in spelling, usage, etc.	Some distracting errors in spelling, etc.	Many errors in spelling, etc.
Point of view	Expresses a range of view points	Expresses two-three views	Expresses only one view

Lay-out	Logical, eye-catching, illustrative	Logical and orderly	Disorganized and illogical
Originality	Shows 2 or more original elements	Shows 1 original element	No original elements
Clarity	Wording is unfailingly clear and readable	Wording is reasonably clear and accurate	Wording is sometimes unclear and inaccurate

Follow-up Activities:

1. Post the completed newspapers for other classes to read. Students respond well to feedback from other students and teachers.
2. Discuss with students the teacher-scored rubrics and compare them with those of the students. Part of this discussion should highlight differences and help students have a clearer understanding of considerations that made up the scoring.

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