

# Engaging with Television News as Primary Sources

\*Teacher should provide the transcript for students to follow along with if possible.

For a downloadable version of this guide, click [here](#)

Steps:

1. Before you watch (source information and visual information on news footage):
  1. What is the network / source of the news program (hint: look for logo)? What state/country is it in? Is it national or local?
  2. Who are the hosts / anchors? What do you know about them?
  3. Is this a news or commentary segment? Cable news programs in particular include numerous commentary segments that have different standards than their news programs. Is the network known for having a particular political perspective?
  4. What guests, reporters or experts are being interviewed? What do you know about them?
  5. What do you predict this segment will be about? What headlines or other text or images help you to predict what it will be about?
  6. When was this segment broadcasted? What do you know about this time period/event/topic?
2. Watch the news segment for the first time
  1. As you follow along
    1. Make note of visuals used and how they relate to the story
    2. What is your reaction to the story? How does the story make you feel?
    3. How does the segment make you think about the event being covered? What questions does it raise (write them down)
    4. List any vocabulary words or terms that you don't know
    5. Underline anything you find important
    6. Put a question mark “?” after anything you have a question about
3. After the first reading:
  1. Write a short summary of the piece (3-5 sentences)
  2. What do you think the purpose of this segment was? Do you think it accomplished its purpose?
  3. How is the segment designed to draw and keep your attention, especially through visual elements and how the anchors/reporters/experts/video are used in the segment?
4. Watch the segment for the second time
5. After the second reading:
  1. What do you notice the second time you did not notice in the first viewing? What questions you generated are still left unanswered?
  2. What is the tone of this segment?
    1. Put a box around five words/phrases that show you the tone

3. Is the segment historical? What would you need to put it into historical context?
4. How does encountering this segment firsthand change its emotional impact?
6. Connect this interview to history:
  1. What did you find from this news segment that you might not learn anywhere else?
  2. Did this news segment support or contradict what you knew about this event already? How so?
  3. What other documents or historical evidence are you going to use to help you understand this event or topic?
  4. Compare this historical news segment to other news broadcasts you've heard recently watched (e.g., TV news, online news). How is it similar or different?
7. Identifying Bias:
  1. Compare how this broadcast framed the event or issue with other sources. What does this tell you about the particular perspective of this news organization or network? What does it say about their viewership or political views?
  2. How does the use of particular visual elements, headlines (including running text on the bottom of the screen), use of elements such as "breaking news" or similar visuals, and video or images shape the story being told?
  3. How do the guests, experts, or reporters being interviewed shape the story? If they are on location what effect does that have?
  4. What elements of the broadcast make it more believable or trustworthy? What elements make it less believable or trustworthy? Why?
  5. How does the news story being told fit within the contextual information we learned about? Does it follow or deviate from it?
  6. If it does deviate, are there any potential problems with that? Why or why not?