Unit Overview

During this year, you have explored the idea of perspective by learning about and applying various critical lenses to literary texts. These perspectives allow you to view texts through a particular set of assumptions. Looking at real events, rather than literary texts, poses the different but related challenge of discerning which representation of reality—if any—is closest to the objective truth. This challenge is particularly significant in the context of how the media relate events. From reporting a war in a foreign country to covering a local city council meeting, the media have an obligation to represent the facts of the story as objectively as possible. In this unit, you will explore how an event’s meaning is shaped by reporting. You will be asked to analyze the reporting of events. You will examine how reports appear to show a critical perspective and what you see if you apply a critical perspective to reports. This unit asks you to become an active rather than passive viewer of journalistic media texts, recognizing that journalistic reporting, like a literary text, needs to be read or “decoded” carefully.

Visual Prompt: Compare and contrast the images above. How do these images represent the media in very different ways—and what different messages and meanings are suggested as a result?
GOALS:
• To evaluate media as an information source
• To investigate a variety of perspectives on a single event
• To analyze how different critical perspectives shape the reporting and interpreting of events
• To create a media text by applying multiple lenses to the investigation and representation of an event
• To analyze the integration of quotations and their effect on the reader

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY
agenda
media
media channel
documentary film
primary footage
archival footage
synthesize
conventions

Literary Terms
paradox
rhetorical slanters
rhetorical context

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LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Close Reading, Marking the Text, Graphic Organizer, Summarizing

INDEPENDENT READING LINK
For your independent reading, you might consider nonfiction about the media, such as a biography about a prominent journalist such as Edward R. Murrow or books about the experiences of journalists reporting from the front lines or from distant countries. Later in the unit, you will be reading about a free speech controversy surrounding a band, so you might also consider musician-related works.

Learning Targets
• Preview the big ideas for the unit.
• Identify and analyze the skills and knowledge needed to complete Embedded Assessment 1 successfully.

Making Connections
We are not passive consumers of media; rather, as active participants we bring our own sets of interests, experiences, assumptions, and biases to what we read, see, and hear, as do those who produce what we read, see, and hear. When we care about an event, we want to know how to determine what is true about the event and how to get close to that truth. However, it is important to recognize our own filters—those personal interests, experiences, assumptions, and biases—and how they significantly affect our ability to discern the truth. In this unit, you will use critical perspectives to analyze media sources.

Essential Questions
Based on your current knowledge, write answers to these questions in the My Notes space.

1. How do media sources influence our understanding of the truth and significance of an issue?

2. How are media texts constructed to support an agenda or interpretation?

Developing Vocabulary
Review the Academic Vocabulary and the Literary Terms on the Contents page. Use a vocabulary strategy such as QHT to analyze your knowledge of these words.

Unpacking Embedded Assessment 1
Read the following assignment for Embedded Assessment 1 and summarize the major elements in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

Your assignment is to write an argumentative essay, including an annotated bibliography, that argues for the use of a particular critical lens to interpret an event, supporting your argument with evidence from at least five texts gathered alone or with your group members.

Summarize in your own words what you will need to know for this assessment. With your class, create a graphic organizer that represents the skills and knowledge you will need to accomplish this task, and strategize how you will complete the assignment. To help you complete your graphic organizer, be sure to review the criteria in the Scoring Guide.
Learning Targets

- Explain how nonfiction texts reflect or reveal critical perspectives.
- In collaborative groups, develop criteria and strategies for selecting supporting evidence from texts.

What Is the Media?
1. In this activity, you will examine an analysis of how media coverage of news has changed since the advent of television over 60 years ago. Before doing so, take a minute to consider how you yourself gather information about events that take place in the world around you.
2. Complete the following graphic organizer with information about current events.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School/Local Event</th>
<th>Details/Facts I Know About Event</th>
<th>Information Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State/National Event</td>
<td>Details/Facts I Know About Event</td>
<td>Information Sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Event</td>
<td>Details/Facts I Know About Event</td>
<td>Information Sources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ACADEMIC VOCABULARY**

Media, collectively, refers to the organizations that communicate information to the public. A media channel is one method an organization uses to communicate, such as radio, television, website, newspaper, or magazine.
3. As you watch a clip from “News War,” a mini-series from PBS’s investigative journalism show *Frontline*, use the following guiding questions to consider how three critical lenses inform or are revealed by the show’s explanations of why the coverage—and even the definition—of *news* has changed since television news first took hold in the 1950s. As you watch the segments, focus on gathering claims and evidence that fit each lens.

**Guiding Question 1:** What do changes in media coverage reveal about changing cultural perspectives on “news”?

**Guiding Question 2:** How have historical developments influenced the role of news?

**Guiding Question 3:** How have economic or market factors affected news coverage in America?
4. In a group, share your observations regarding the lens you were asked to focus on. Then write a concise thesis that explains the change in how news is delivered and consumed in America, interpreted through your lens.

**Thesis:**

5. Read the following quotations. Use three colors to highlight the quotations by type: Marxist, Historical, Cultural. Then, in the box on the left, rank the quotes within each color category based on their potential usefulness as evidence. Which would best serve as evidence to support your interpretive take on *Frontline’s* coverage in “News War”? Why?

- “In the very early days of television news, the FCC still had teeth and still used them every once in a while, and there was that little paragraph—section 315 of the FCC code—that said ‘You shall operate in the public interest, convenience, and necessity.’”—Ted Koppel, former ABC reporter

- “Then in the 80’s, with Reagan-era deregulation, there was a series of corporate takeovers.”—Narrator

- “Here was a news program [60 Minutes] that was becoming a tremendous profit center and people in the corporate entity began to say, ‘Wow, you know what? News can make money. And not only can it make money, it can make big money.’”—Dan Rather, former CBS News anchor

- “And (CBS producer Larry) Tisch looked at a very fat CBS News and thought, ‘I bet that I can cut 33% of this organization out, and deliver a product that is 90% as good. And if I can do that I can make Wall Street incredibly happy, I can make my stockholders happy, and that’s what business is about.’”—Tom Bettag, former producer, CBS Evening News

- “News is what matters to people—true information about what matters to people is news. . . . The standard has changed and it’s broadened, not lowered. . . . It’s changed because there are a wider number of outlets. We have 31 hours of programming, plus we have radio 24 hours a day, plus we now have a website, so there’s a wider number of topics covered.””—David Westin, President, ABC News

- “I think what happened around the year 2000 was you had many more outlets—you could have dozens or more cable stations, you could have talk radio—and in order to stand out in an environment like that, you didn’t have to get a broad-based audience the way *CBS Evening News* with Walter Cronkite would do; you really just had to get a passionate and sometimes narrower audience, and to get that, it worked better to be opinion-based.””—Walter Isaacson, former CEO of CNN

- “You don’t see anybody between 20 and 30 getting their news from the evening news; you see them getting it online.””—Jeff Fager, executive producer of 60 Minutes

- “I think the biggest cause for tumult right now is that the economic underpinning for all these news organizations is changing.””—Larry Kramer, reporter and media consultant

- “In this new media world, consumers are demanding news and entertainment when and where they want it, often creating it themselves.””—Narrator
**Writing Prompt:** Use one of the critical perspectives to explain what catalyzed the transformation in the news industry. Be sure to:

- Include concise and well-reasoned interpretive statements.
- Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant examples from the text and citing them properly.
- Create cohesion using an appropriate organizational structure and effective transitions.
- Write a conclusion that follows from your interpretive statements and evidence.

**Language and Writer’s Craft: Citing Quotations**

Documentaries and other forms of nonfiction regularly use direct quotations to add immediacy and specificity to their accounts of events. Direct quotations use a speaker’s exact words, enclosed in quotation marks.

The narrator continues, “Then in the 80’s, with Reagan-era deregulation, there was a series of corporate takeovers.” This comment refers to an economic fact that was to have great consequences.

Writers may also paraphrase speakers, citing sources while making the words their own:

The narrator explains that deregulation during Reagan’s presidency led to several corporate takeovers.

Quotations are a great way to add color and alternate voices to your writing. They also help make a nonfiction work seem more authentic and less filtered. Paraphrases can be useful when you want to shorten or make plainer what a speaker has said. Your own nonfiction reporting most likely will include both.

Revisit your draft, and revise it to smoothly integrate the quotations, following the MLA standard for citation.

**Check Your Understanding**

What are some criteria for selecting quotations to support an interpretive claim?
Constructing Public Opinion

Learning Targets

• Evaluate the effectiveness of two competing arguments.
• Analyze the elements of argumentation in a text and evaluate their effectiveness.

Before Reading

1. Working with a partner, write definitions for the following terms in relation to media study. Leave space to add to/revise your definitions after completing this activity. Consult references—either print or online—to determine precise meanings and standard usage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target Audience</td>
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<td>Objectivity</td>
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<td>Perspective</td>
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<td>Agenda</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bias</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2. Quickwrite: With your definitions in mind, to what extent do you think media coverage shapes our perception of issues and events?

During Reading

3. The following texts present two dramatically different perspectives on media bias. As you read each argument, annotate the central claim, supporting ideas, and types of evidence used by the writer. Be prepared to evaluate how persuasively each text develops its position. What factors in each text contribute to its effectiveness? Be sure to use the title as a clue to the perspective of the author and the article.
**Article**

**How the Media Twists the News**

*by* Sheila Gribben Liaugminas

1. In a most ordinary moment on a normal day at work in the Chicago bureau of a major national newsmagazine, I came to a realization that has bothered me ever since. Everyone knows how much power the press has in shaping the news, how its choice of stories and words influence readers. But one afternoon, talking about a rather silly feature story we were doing on pop culture, someone joked, “You know, we can start a trend just by calling it a trend!”

2. I stopped dead. It was true. But I was the only one not laughing.

3. Of course, this was hardly an original insight. Walter Lippman—journalist, military intelligence specialist during World War I, propagandist, political scientist, author, and adviser to the presidents—made the same observation a generation ago. These words from his book, *Public Opinion*, bear repeating:

   Every newspaper when it reaches the reader is the result of a whole series of selections. . . . In order that [the reader] shall enter he must find a familiar foothold in the story, and this is supplied to him by the use of stereotypes. They tell him that if an association of plumbers is called a “combine” it is appropriate to develop his hostility; if it is called a “group of leading businessmen” the cue is for a favorable reaction. It is in a combination of these elements that the power to create opinion resides.

4. Why is it so easy to lead people into new behaviors, desires, and attitudes? Why don’t people think more critically and see through some of the airy media stories that have no real substance—the stories that are less news than public relations or marketing? As Lippman noted, it’s the result of “apathy, preference for the curious trivial as against the dull important, and the hunger for sideshows and three-legged calves.”

5. These days, sideshows and curious trivia have actually gained even greater importance in an industry that has become a confusing mix of news and entertainment. Still, there are people who would like to pay attention to the more consequential events and issues that used to be called news. These can be hard to discern when politics itself has become trivialized. Hence the need to become intelligent news consumers: to learn how to pick through massive fields of information for substantive and fair reporting.

6. This is a tall task. The manipulation of public opinion is of great importance to both the government and the media. And it takes on added urgency in the months before an election.


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**KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS**

Liaugminas uses a colon to introduce a rhetorical definition of intelligent news consumer, followed by a short transition sentence. How does the variety in her syntax (word order) affect the flow here?
networks and other 'media elites' have a liberal bias is so blatantly true that it's hardly worth discussing anymore,” he writes. “No, we don't sit around in dark corners and plan strategies on how we’re going to slant the news. We don’t have to. It comes naturally to most reporters. . . . When you get right down to it, liberals in the newsroom see liberal views as just plain . . . sensible, reasonable, rational views, which just happen to coincide with their own” (emphasis added).

Consider this exchange from [Cable News Network] CNN’s American Morning show. The panelists are talking about the quality of the reporting from the Middle East. Anderson Cooper says, “On both sides of this issue, people see this so clearly one way or the other. It’s really fascinating.” Paula Zahn: “And it clearly colors their reaction to reporting, and I think it’s, you know, very difficult for people to separate their own personal views from the way they interpret the news.” Jack Cafferty: “The news media is [sic] only objective if they report something you agree with.” Zahn: “Right.” Cafferty concludes: “Then they’re objective. Otherwise they’re biased if you don’t agree, you know.”

For these three CNN personalities, the news media themselves are impervious to the predispositions and prejudice that afflict their audience. But contrary to what CNN might have us believe, bias is a real problem. You can see it in all the ways the media interpret, frame, and produce the great issues of our day. They slant the news according to their ideologies and find sources who will back them up. Over my 23 years with a newsmagazine, it often did a good—sometimes very good—job of reporting and analyzing news and its impact. But sometimes it didn’t. Sometimes the editors assigned reporters to a story that had been preconceived in the New York headquarters—a story with a foregone conclusion. . . .

In a world of media spin, it’s not easy to keep one’s own balance. First, know what your core values are, what you hold to be objectively true. Be discriminating in your selection of news sources and carefully scrutinize everything you hear and read—see how it resonates with what you believe.

Note how news gatherers select subjects and how they cover them. What photographs do they choose? Do their accounts sound slanted, or do they present compelling voices from both sides of an issue?

Notice their sources: Do you hear from the same set of “experts” again and again? I find this especially annoying. The newsmagazine I worked for is still using some of the same old liberal “news analysts” they used when I first arrived in the Midwest bureau more than two decades ago. And you see them all over television news as well. When the topic is Catholicism, the networks all call on the same dissident priests and ex-priests, feminists, and “Catholics for a Free Choice”: Andrew Greeley, Eugene Kennedy, Charles Curran, Richard Sipe, Frances Kissling, and so on. Paula Zahn has continually used Sipe as the go-to expert on the troubles within the Church, always describing him as a “retired priest.” He’s an ex-priest, Paula. There’s a difference.

“They don’t want our new, fresh sources when they’ve got the regulars who give them the quotes they want,” Ruderman says, sharing my observation that the major media, like the newsmagazine we worked for, have all taken the easy route of using dog-eared Rolodexes to call on the same talking heads. “They never wanted my sources when they didn’t fit the mold of what they wanted the story to say. They had a preconceived idea of the status quo," and so they would always go to the status-quo sources for their standard comments.”

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3 impervious: not bothered or affected
4 status quo: the existing condition or state of affairs
KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS
In the context of her article, what does Liaugminas mean by “intelligent citizens”? How has the meaning of this term changed from her initial definition of intelligent news consumers? How effective is her call to action using this term?

14 It's interesting how much of Lippman's analysis from 70 years ago still applies to the media. In the foreword to the 1997 edition of Public Opinion, Ronald Steel recalls that from a young age, Lippman studied politics and the press. "In Liberty and the News he concluded that the newspaper stories of one of the seminal events of the century (the Russian Revolution) were distorted and inaccurate, based not on the facts but on the 'hopes of the men who composed the news organization.'"

15 Lippman then posed a more fundamental problem, as Steel relates: “How could the public get the information it needed to make rational political judgments if it could not rely on the press? Unbiased information had become essential, he argued, because decisions in a modern state tend to be made by the interaction, not of Congress and the executive, but of public opinion and the executive.’ . . . For this reason the accuracy of news reporting, the protection of the sources of public opinion, had become the 'basic problem of democracy.'"

16 The power of public opinion, which is supposed to be the driving force behind most important decisions in a democracy, can itself be driven or steered by the prejudices of unofficial opinion-makers. Vigilance and self-awareness are its only protection. Which is why, wherever they get their news, intelligent citizens will take nothing for granted except their principles.

Literary Terms
A paradox is a statement that contains two seemingly incompatible points.

WORD CONNECTIONS
Foreign Words
Lingua franca is a term describing a common language or mixture of languages used as a means of communication by people who speak different native languages.

Article
Why Partisans View Mainstream Media as Biased and Ideological Media as Objective
by Matthew C. Nisbet
July 21, 2011, 8:57 a.m.

1 We've reached a unique paradox in American political culture today: Both liberals and conservatives view the mainstream media as biased, yet tend to believe that their own ideologically-like minded outlets and commentators provide objective coverage. Claims of media bias have long been the lingua franca of the conservative movement with the creation of rival outlets first in the form of magazines such as the National Review, then political talk radio, and culminating with Fox News and right-wing blogs.

2 Yet over the past decade, harsh criticism of the mainstream media has also increasingly emanated from the left with claims of biased coverage a fundamental core belief of progressive advocates working on issues ranging from climate change to social policy. In turn these same progressives tend to prefer the "objective" coverage at magazines like the Nation, blogging platforms like the Huffington Post, and most prominently MSNBC which has positioned itself as the liberal counter-weight to Fox News.

3 Research in the field of communication has tracked the psychological underpinning of this societal trend, explaining why partisans view mainstream coverage as biased but perceive their preferred ideological outlets as fair and balanced. In a recently published book chapter on the social psychology of political communication, my colleague Lauren Feldman and I review and explain this research, drawing in part on Feldman's own work in the area.
Here is an excerpt on media bias, from that chapter.

Across national settings, there is an ever pervasive belief in various forms of media bias. In the U.S., over the past two decades, the dominant belief regarding media bias is that the mainstream news media favor liberal causes and political candidates. Yet, when researchers conduct content analyses to search for systematic patterns of partisan bias in coverage of elections, across studies they are unable to find definitive evidence (D’Alessio D. & Allen, 2000). If social scientists using the best tools available to them find it difficult to observe hard evidence of liberal bias, why are beliefs among the public so widespread? Moreover, across country settings and issues, what explains the difference between subjective perceptions of media bias and objective indicators relative to coverage?

In research on perceptions of the news media, credibility is understood as a subjective assessment, influenced by the partisan or ideological background of the audience and the claims about bias that might emanate from trusted sources such as political commentators or like-minded friends. In the U.S. context, these claims are typically focused on a liberal bias charged by conservative elites and reinforce a widespread belief among conservative-leaning audiences (Watts, Domke, Shah, & Fan, 1999). Audiences, then, do not typically assess story content on its own merits but rather on the basis of preconceived notions about the news media—often stemming from journalists’ tendency in many stories to cover and reflect on their own potential liberal bias. A number of other studies have also suggested that individuals’ expectations for bias in a news source or in the media, more generally, are likely to influence their perceptions of bias in news coverage (Arpan & Raney, 2003; Baum & Gussin, 2007).

Perhaps the most crucial determinant of perceptions of bias in the news, however, is the extent to which news coverage is seen as disagreeing with one’s own views. Individuals who feel most strongly about an issue tend to see their own side’s views as being more a product of objective analysis and normative concerns, and less influenced by ideology, than the other side’s views (Robinson, Keltner, Ward, & Ross, 1995). This human tendency translates directly to judgments about the media. In a range of studies, when news audiences who hew to opposing sides on an issue are given the same news coverage of the topic to evaluate, both view this identical coverage as biased in favor of the other side (Gunther & Schmitt, 2004; Vallone et al., 1985). The phenomenon is commonly referred to as the “hostile media effect.” Researchers believe that the explanation for this hostile media effect is selective categorization: opposing partisans attend to, process, and recall identical content from a news presentation but mentally categorize and label the same aspects of a story differently—as hostile to their own position (Schmitt, Gunther, & Liebhart, 2004).

The original hostile media effect assumes that news coverage is inherently balanced. The relative hostile media perception (Gunther, Christen, Liebhart, & Chia, 2001) relaxes this assumption, making it applicable to news that is slanted in favor of or against a particular issue. In the presence of the relative hostile media effect, supporters and opponents of a given issue perceive bias in a consistent direction (i.e., leaning toward one side), but each group perceives coverage as significantly more unfavorable to their own position relative to those in the other group. In other words, partisans perceive less bias in news coverage slanted to support their view than their opponents on the other side of the issue.

Interestingly, then, whereas the implication of the original hostile media effect is a partisan public perceiving media bias where none was present and thus...
potentially rejecting useful information, the implications of the relative hostile media effect are somewhat different. Of consequence here is that partisans will fail to recognize bias in news that is in fact biased, in instances when that bias is congruent with their pre-existing views. This bias against news bias is troubling. Americans’ trust in news sources has become deeply polarized in recent years—with Republicans, for example, attributing more credibility to the conservative Fox News and less to most other news organizations than Democrats (Pew Research Center, 2008). In other countries, similar perceptions of a left or right bias to news or alternatively a bias relative to national or ethnic identity exist.

In each context, as news—particularly on cable TV and online—is infused with increasing amounts of opinion and ideology, this may make it even easier for partisans to validate their personal political beliefs—by accepting at face value information that comports with their views while rejecting information that advocates for the other side. Thus, the relative hostile media effect may not only reflect partisan divides in news perceptions but may also contribute to the further polarization of political attitudes and knowledge across political systems.

After Reading
4. After discussing the two articles, reflect on the following questions.
   • How much did your existing personal opinions influence your perspective on which author was more persuasive regarding media bias?

   • How much did your existing personal opinions influence your perspective on which author was more correct regarding media bias?

   • What’s the difference between being persuasive and being correct?

   • In general, to what extent does our perspective on what is correct influence our perspective on what is persuasive and vice versa?

Check Your Understanding
Return to the definitions you wrote at the beginning of the unit, and revise them based on what you’ve learned through the readings and your class debate.
Learning Targets

• Identify and examine evidence of bias in a media text.
• Analyze the role of bias in contrasting news reports.

Slanting the News

Writers and directors can influence our perspective on a subject through the use of selection and omission, source control, and other manipulations of content, but rhetoric itself may be the most powerful tool through which our perceptions can be influenced. The following rhetorical slanters (adapted from Brooke Noel Moore and Richard Parker’s *Critical Thinking*, 8th ed., 2007) identify key techniques often used by writers.

- **Rhetorical analogy**: the use of a figurative comparison (sometimes a simile or a metaphor) to convey a positive or negative feeling toward the subject
  
  **Example**: “The environment needs this candidate like farmers need a drought.”

- **Rhetorical definition**: the use of emotionally charged language to express or elicit an attitude about something
  
  **Example**: Capital punishment is “government-sanctioned murder.”

- **Rhetorical explanation**: expressing an opinion as if it were fact, and doing so in biased language.
  
  **Example**: “Joe didn’t have the guts to fight back” as compared to “Joe did not take a swing.”

- **Innuendo**: the use of language to imply that a particular inference is justified, as if saying “go ahead and read between the lines”
  
  **Example**: “Think carefully about whom you choose; you want a president who will be ready to do the job on day one.”

- **Downplayers**: the use of qualifier words, phrases, or punctuation to make someone or something look less important or significant
  
  **Example**: “She got her ‘degree’ from an online university.”

- **Hyperbole**: the use of extravagant overstatement
  
  **Example**: “This school administration is fascist!”

- **Truth Surrogates**: hinting that proof exists to support a claim without actually citing that proof
  
  **Example**: “There’s every reason to believe that . . .”

- **Ridicule/Sarcasm**: the use of language that suggests the subject is worthy of scorn
  
  **Example**: “. . .the news media themselves are oh-so-clearly impervious to the predispositions and prejudice that afflict their audience.”
## Bias in News Reports

### News Source 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facts</th>
<th>Examples of Bias</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who?</td>
<td>Bias by Headline?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What?</td>
<td>Bias by Photos, Captions, Camera Angle?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When?</td>
<td>Bias through Selection/Omission?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where?</td>
<td>Bias by Source Control?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why?</td>
<td>Bias by Placement/Statistics/Crowd Control?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How?</td>
<td>Bias through Labels/Titles/Loaded Language?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
News Source 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facts</th>
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<tr>
<td>Who?</td>
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<td>What?</td>
<td>Bias by Photos, Captions, Camera Angle?</td>
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<td>When?</td>
<td>Bias through Selection/Omission?</td>
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<td>Where?</td>
<td>Bias by Source Control?</td>
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<td>Why?</td>
<td>Bias by Placement/Statistics/Crowd Control?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How?</td>
<td>Bias through Labels/Titles/Loaded Language?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Writing Prompt:** Write an argument exposing the bias evident in the way one of the news stories reports the event. Be sure to:
- Develop a precise and knowledgeable claim.
- Cite details and quotes from the news story to support your claim.
- Acknowledge and refute counterclaims fairly and thoroughly.
- Conclude with a clincher that evaluates how the bias affects the persuasiveness of the text.
- Check for correct spelling, punctuation, grammar, and usage.

**Check Your Understanding**
How does bias affect the credibility of a source?
Learning Targets

- Investigate how critical lenses both shape and reveal perspectives on real-world issues.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of texts independently and in collaborative groups.

Before Reading

1. In Grade 11, you studied the first ten amendments to the Constitution—the Bill of Rights. Reread the Bill of Rights (either from Grade 11 or online), and identify the various freedoms guaranteed to citizens.

2. Amendment 1 to the United States Constitution is repeated below. Analyze this amendment by thinking about what freedom of speech means to you. What is your interpretation of the phrase “abridging the freedom of speech”? As you read the texts about the Dixie Chicks controversy, apply this interpretation to help you analyze the texts.

Historical Document

U.S. Constitution

Amendment I, U.S. Constitution
Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.
3. As context for the Dixie Chicks controversy, read the following excerpt from President Bush’s speech about the decision to invade Iraq.

**Speech**

**President Bush’s Address on the Iraq Invasion**

March 19, 2003

by George W. Bush

My fellow citizens, events in Iraq have now reached the final days of decision. For more than a decade, the United States and other nations have pursued patient and honorable efforts to disarm the Iraqi regime without war. That regime pledged to reveal and destroy all its weapons of mass destruction as a condition for ending the Persian Gulf War in 1991.

Since then, the world has engaged in 12 years of diplomacy. We have passed more than a dozen resolutions in the United Nations Security Council. We have sent hundreds of weapons inspectors to oversee the disarmament of Iraq. Our good faith has not been returned.

The Iraqi regime has used diplomacy as a ploy to gain time and advantage. It has uniformly defied Security Council resolutions demanding full disarmament. Over the years, U.N. weapon inspectors have been threatened by Iraqi officials, electronically bugged, and systematically deceived. Peaceful efforts to disarm the Iraqi regime have failed again and again—because we are not dealing with peaceful men.

Intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised. This regime has already used weapons of mass destruction against Iraq’s neighbors and against Iraq’s people.

The regime has a history of reckless aggression in the Middle East. It has a deep hatred of America and our friends. And it has aided, trained and harbored terrorists, including operatives of al Qaeda.

The danger is clear: using chemical, biological or, one day, nuclear weapons, obtained with the help of Iraq, the terrorists could fulfill their stated ambitions and kill thousands or hundreds of thousands of innocent people in our country, or any other.

The United States and other nations did nothing to deserve or invite this threat. But we will do everything to defeat it. Instead of drifting along toward tragedy, we will set a course toward safety. Before the day of horror can come, before it is too late to act, this danger will be removed.

The United States of America has the sovereign authority to use force in assuring its own national security. That duty falls to me, as Commander-in-Chief, by the oath I have sworn, by the oath I will keep.
During Reading
4. As you read “The Dixie Chicks,” by Betty Clarke, use the My Notes section to annotate evidence that links to any of the critical lenses. Then use the following questions to analyze how the lenses are linked to any bias the article reveals toward its subject.

- What is being reported (the who, what, where, when, why and how of the event)?

- How is it being reported? How objective is the coverage? Identify and list (or highlight in the article) textual details (slanters, titles, labeling, omission, and so forth) that reveal the bias.

- What is the target audience for the publication/broadcast? How does the text’s rhetorical context affect what it talks about and its language and tone? What inferences can you draw about the writer’s expectations about the audience’s perspective?

- If you read only this article, what would you think is the key issue? In other words, how does the article frame the truth and significance of the news event (the Dixie Chicks controversy)?

- What critical lens or lenses are evident in how the text approaches the issue? Which dominate or are absent? What specific language reveals the lens(es) at work?
The Dixie Chicks

by Betty Clarke

1 The Dixie Chicks are the good-time girls the country establishment loves to hate. Too direct, too old-fashioned, too modern . . . you name it, it's been slung at the Texan trio. The old vanguard liked their women feisty but second-class, preferably wearing cowgirl outfits and a smile. But the Dixie Chicks were renegade ladies of country who sang gleefully about killing abusive spouses and dressed like an older Britney Spears. Add the success they have had selling a progressive bluegrass sound to fans ignorant of banjos and whistles and you have an emasculating threat.

2 And they don't know when to stop. "Just so you know," says singer Natalie Maines, "we're ashamed the president of the United States is from Texas." It gets the audience cheering—at a time when country stars are rushing to release pro-war anthems, this is practically punk rock.

3 Aside from courting controversy, the band has sold 25m LPs since their debut album, Wide Open Spaces, was released in 1998 and made the fiddle sexy. Featuring two sisters, Martie Maguire and Emily Robinson, along with the effervescent Maines, their passion for tradition and love for pop made the country genre a contender again. Their latest album, Home, won three Grammys.

4 Although their outfits are more New York than Nashville, the music is proud of its roots. "Long Time Gone" adopts the chatty style of Loretta Lynn and the poignancy of Hank Williams, Robinson's nifty banjo flowing beneath Maguire's sparky fiddle. "Tortured, Tangled Hearts" is similarly quick and quaint, Maines recalling Dolly Parton before she became Country Barbie.

5 Bluegrass's charm lies in its rappiness, but the Dixie Chicks have polished the mountain sound and made it palatable for a new audience. This does mean that "Truth No. 2" creeps into Celine Dion territory, Maines grabbing each phrase and shaking her head like a puppy with a toy. But it's in the giddy "Sin Wagon", which turns religious worship into a hymn for sex, that the Dixie Chicks hit their stride, shrieking, shouting, unrepentant.

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1 vanguard: the leaders of a movement
2 emasculating: destroying strength, making less masculine
3 m: million

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Unit 4 • Creating Perspectives 261
5. The following two statements were published on the Dixie Chicks’ official website. What differences do you note in the tone and the content of the two messages?

**Statement from the Dixie Chicks with respect to statements being reported in the British media, March 12, 2003:**

We’ve been overseas for several weeks and have been reading and following the news accounts of our governments’ position. The anti-American sentiment that has unfolded here is astounding. While we support our troops, there is nothing more frightening than the notion of going to war with Iraq and the prospect of all the innocent lives that will be lost.” Maines further stated, “I feel the President is ignoring the opinions of many in the US and alienating the rest of the world. My comments were made in frustration and one of the privileges of being an American is you are free to voice your own point of view.”

**Statement from Natalie Maines of the Dixie Chicks, March 14, 2003:**

As a concerned American citizen, I apologize to President Bush because my remark was disrespectful. I feel that whoever holds that office should be treated with the utmost respect. We are currently in Europe and witnessing a huge anti-American sentiment as a result of the perceived rush to war. While war may remain a viable option, as a mother, I just want to see every possible alternative exhausted before children and American soldiers’ lives are lost. I love my country. I am a proud American.

**After Reading**

6. In preparation for further investigation of the Dixie Chicks controversy, use the following process to develop focus questions to guide your research.

**Guiding Questions:**

- Review your understanding of the critical perspectives (archetypal, cultural, feminist, historical, Marxist, reader response). Which ones seem relevant to this topic? Why? Which ones do not? Why not?
• Based on background knowledge and your preliminary investigation of the topic, brainstorm connections between each relevant lens and the topic.

• Draft an initial closed (yes/no) question linking the lens to the subject.

• Modify the question to make it open-ended by using one of the following stems:
  To what extent did X influence Y?

  In what ways did . . . ?

• What does the controversy surrounding (this topic) reveal about attitudes towards the (underlying issue)?

• What recurring story patterns are evoked by . . . ?
Check Your Understanding

Writing Prompt: Choose a lens you think applies to the controversy, and explain what elements of the story may be most relevant through this lens. Be sure to:

- Use the guiding questions for your lens to frame your answer.
- Include an interpretative statement supported with relevant examples to support analysis.
- Vary your syntax to create contrast, and use a colon to introduce a dramatic statement.
Learning Targets

- Analyze how a director’s use of cinematic and narrative techniques affects viewers’ perceptions.
- Analyze the effectiveness of nonprint text in supporting a position.

Viewing the Film Trailer

1. **Documentary** filmmakers use both primary and archival footage to present their case. As you watch the trailer for *Shut Up and Sing* again, remember that directors of nonfiction films make choices similar to those made by fiction film directors. Such choices reveal bias, whether in subtle or blatant ways. Consider the choices Koppel and Peck make in light of Clarke’s article. Which voices do you expect to hear? Which stories will be told? What perspectives will be privileged? You may use the nonfiction viewing guide on the next page to take notes as you watch, or choose another note-taking approach to record key details of the trailer. Be prepared to support a claim regarding the level and nature of bias in the text after viewing the clip.

2. As you watch the trailer for *Shut Up and Sing*, respond to the guiding questions by making some predictions about potential issues that might be explored in the documentary *Shut Up and Sing*. You might not have answers for all lenses. Use the My Notes space for your predictions.
   - **Feminist Criticism:** What are some ways in which gender and gender roles might be a central issue in the film, based on the preview?
   - **Archetypal Criticism:** What archetypes (images, characters, or story patterns) are evoked in the preview?
   - **Cultural Criticism:** How might issues of race, age, or power be at the root of conflicts explored in the film?
   - **Marxist Criticism:** To what extent might questions of class be relevant in the film?
   - **Historical Criticism:** What contemporary trends, conflicts, or developments might provide important context for understanding the film?

Writing Prompt: After viewing the *Shut Up and Sing* trailer twice, write an essay that explains how Koppel and Peck’s use of cinematic and/or narrative techniques in the clip reveal their bias toward their subject. In particular, explain how the clip suggests/reveals the importance of a particular lens in the film. Be sure to:
   - Focus your answer around a single lens.
   - Use the guiding questions to inform your thesis and analysis.
   - Use vivid descriptions of elements of the film to support your claims.

Check Your Understanding

What are some key choices directors can make in order to influence how viewers interpret the subject of a film? How can these choices emphasize or suggest different critical perspectives?
## Nonfiction Film Viewing Guide

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**What Do We See** (primary or archival footage, interviews, still images, the filmmaker, cinematic techniques, narrative elements)?

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**What Do We Hear** (dialogue, narration, diegetic and non-diegetic sounds)?

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**What Do We Read** (subtitles, graphics, labels, and so on)?

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**How Is It Put Together** (editing sequence, transition devices, and so on)?

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**What Is the Effect?** (What is the theme/message of the film? What “truth” does it convey about the subject? What lenses are most helpful?)

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Learning Targets

- Synthesize connections between texts in support of an overall interpretive claim.
- Evaluate different organizational options.

Before Reading

1. To prepare for the work you and your group will do as you complete this unit’s Embedded Assessments, you will complete two tasks in this activity.

   - **Analyzing a Text:** First, you will analyze a text to see which lens(es) inform how that text constructs or contextualizes the meaning and significance of the struggles of the Dixie Chicks following the March 2003 concert in London. You will then present your findings to your classmates. Be sure to consider (and perhaps further research) the original publication context of your assigned article.

   - **Making Connections and Synthesizing Evidence:** Second, you will use the presentations of your peers to map connections with other texts, identifying textual evidence from those that are relevant to a lens of your choice. You will **synthesize** this evidence in support of an informal written analysis of what is revealed when looking at the controversy through that particular lens. Use the following questions to guide your group’s analysis of your article.

Questions for Analysis

Use the following questions as you analyze the article your group is assigned in this activity. You might, however, choose to use other reading strategies (such as SMELL, SOAPSTone, Diffusing the Text, or Questioning the Text) if they seem especially well suited to your text.

2. What is being reported (the who, what, where, when, why and how of the event)? Summarize the information covered in the article and how it links to the original news event.

3. How is it being reported? How objective is the coverage? Identify and list (or highlight in the article) specific textual details (titles, labeling, omissions, and so on) that reveal the bias in the article.
4. What is the target audience for the publication/broadcast? How does the text’s rhetorical context affect what it talks about and its language and tone? What inferences can you draw about the writer’s expectations regarding the audience’s perspective?

5. What is the writer’s point of view? How do the evidence and the rhetoric support that point of view?

6. If you read only this article, what would you think is the key issue? In other words, how does the article frame the truth and/or significance of the news event?

7. What critical lens or lenses are evident in how the text approaches the issue? Which dominate or are absent? What specific language reveals the lens(es) at work?
The Dixie Chicks
Keep the Heat on Nashville

by Bill Friskics-Warren

1 IN the early 1990’s, the Dixie Chicks were a cowgirl revival troupe playing for tips on the Texas dance hall circuit. By the end of the decade, they were Nashville, and pop, superstars. Their albums “Wide Open Spaces” and “Fly” sold more than 10 million copies each. They won a clutch of Grammys. Their 2000 tour grossed more at the box office than those of Bruce Springsteen and Britney Spears. Most striking of all, the Dixie Chicks achieved success not by cleaving to the conservative dictates of the country music industry but by taking risks that could just as easily have been big mistakes.

2 The three women—Natalie Maines and the sisters Emily Robison and Martie Maguire—cultivated their own sense of fashion, favoring post-punk, neo-hippie styles over the more conventional ensembles worn by their female counterparts. They insisted on playing their own instruments instead of employing the usual session musicians. They played banjo (Ms. Robison) and fiddle (Ms. Maguire), instruments often dismissed as quaint by country radio programmers. They sang about dicey topics like “mattress dancing” and doing away with an abusive spouse. Displaying a “love it or leave it” attitude like that of Waylon Jennings, Willie Nelson and the other “outlaws” of the 70’s, the Dixie Chicks reinvigorated the moribund Nashville music scene of the late 90’s.

3 “Home,” the album they’ll release on Tuesday on their new Open Wide Records label, an imprint of Sony Music, is likely to shake up and challenge the Nashville establishment further, suggesting that it has lost touch with its roots. Most of the record’s 11 tracks will no doubt be deemed too long for airplay, some running as long as six minutes. There are no drums on this bluegrass-steeped album, something that is virtually unheard of in commercial country music, and "Long Time Gone," the record’s first single, includes a punning jab at radio playlists.

4 Written by the Nashville singer-songwriter Darrell Scott, “Long Time Gone” all but dares country stations not to play it. “We listen to the radio to hear what’s cookin’,” goes one line. “But the music ain’t got no soul/ They sound tired but they don’t sound Haggard/ They got money but they don’t got Cash.”

5 The Dixie Chicks insist they weren’t trying to force the hands of radio programmers by releasing “Long Time Gone” as a single. “I don’t look at the song as a political statement,” said Ms. Maguire, seated on a wraparound sofa with Ms. Robison and Ms. Maines in a Tuscan-style bed and breakfast off Nashville’s Music Row. Ms. Maguire, 32, who was born in York, Pa., and Ms. Robison, 30, who was born in Pittsfield, Mass., spent their early childhood years in southeastern Pennsylvania, where they studied the violin using the Suzuki method of learning by ear. Ms. Maines, the lead singer, who will be 28 in October, was born and raised in Lubbock, Tex. Her father is Lloyd Maines, an esteemed producer and steel guitarist best known for his work with the charismatic roots rocker Joe Ely.

6 “We’ve had a lot of controversy in our career, and it’s never been intentional,” Ms. Maguire continued. “We didn’t release ‘Goodbye Earl’”—a comic tale of revenge

GRAMMAR & USAGE
Appositives
An appositive is a word, phrase, or clause that is in apposition to a noun or pronoun: that is, side by side with it. The purpose of an appositive is to identify or describe the noun or pronoun. If an appositive is nonessential, containing supplemental rather than essential information, it should be set off by commas.

Essential appositive: Their albums “Wide Open Spaces” and “Fly” sold more than 10 million copies each.

Nonessential appositive: ...“Long Time Gone,” the record’s first song, includes a punning jab at radio playlists.

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS
What information in this article seems to foreshadow the controversy that will erupt the following year? What does this information reveal about Friskics-Warren’s bias regarding the Chicks?
akin to “Thelma and Louise”—“to get back at wife beaters. We're more lighthearted than that. Everyone has their own opinion about what should be on the radio, and I think there's room for all different people.”

7 The Dixie Chicks also maintain that the bluegrass arrangements on “Home” don’t constitute that much of a departure from the bold, expansive music on their last two albums. "We still have our core sound,” Ms. Robison said. “We’ve peeled back a few layers, but I think people will still recognize it as us.” Indeed, in contrast to the Appalachian cast of the soundtrack to “O Brother, Where Art Thou?,” which despite sales of six million received a lukewarm response from country radio, the music on the Dixie Chicks’ new album evinces both traditional country and modern pop sensibilities.

8 Doubtless some will view the success of “Long Time Gone,” which was No. 2 on the Billboard country chart this week, as a sign that the strictures of country radio are loosening a bit. The Dixie Chicks’ next single, a cover of Fleetwood Mac’s “Landslide” done in the ambient bluegrass style of Alison Krauss and Union Station, will certainly test that notion.

9 But country stations can't afford to ignore any record the Dixie Chicks put out at this point. While Garth Brooks was feigning retirement and Shania Twain was off having a baby, the trio sold 21 million albums, doing more than any of their peers to see country music through its recent slump in sales.

10 “Do we have a choice not to play the Dixie Chicks?” asked Darren Davis, a program director for the Infinity Broadcasting network. “Sure, we have a choice, but one also has a choice to cut off one’s nose to spite their face.

11 “The Dixie Chicks are the biggest of the big right now. We play their music as often as we can get it on the air.”

12 Lon Helton, the Nashville bureau chief for the trade magazine Radio and Records, said he believes the ascendancy of the Dixie Chicks has as much to do with the integrity of their musical vision as with any demands of the market.

13 “The Chicks have to be given tremendous credit for knowing who they are musically, for saying, ‘This is what we do; anyone who wants to do so is free to play it,’ ” Mr. Helton said.

14 For a while, it appeared that no one would be playing the Dixie Chicks’ new album. Last summer, after the trio approached Sony about renegotiating their record deal, Sony filed a lawsuit against them for breach of contract. The Dixie Chicks responded with a suit of their own, charging that Sony had withheld $4.1 million in royalties. An 11-month legal battle ensued, along with speculation about whether the trio would leave Sony; then, surprisingly, the parties settled out of court. The terms of the agreement weren't made public, but The Los Angeles Times reported in June that the deal included a $20 million bonus for the group and an increase in its royalty rate to about 20 percent.

15 Had the Dixie Chicks’ suit gone to court and been settled in their favor, the decision might have had far-reaching implications, perhaps making it easier for artists to renegotiate long-term contracts. “That would have been so awesome,” said Ms. Maines. “We would have been in the history books if we’d have taken it to the end. We definitely meant to do more for the industry. It just got to the point where we had done as much as we could without jeopardizing our careers.
“We have families, we have kids now,” added Ms. Maines, who is married to the actor Adrian Pasdar, with whom she has a 1-year-old son. Ms. Robison, who is married to the singer-songwriter Charlie Robison, is six months pregnant.

“We also didn’t want to be the kinds of people who put our pride in front of our logic,” Ms. Maguire said. “Sony had to swallow their pride, too, and I think they had to swallow a bigger dose of pride than we did.”

Wrangling with a giant entertainment conglomerate is a long way from entertaining conventioneers on the street corners of Dallas, which is what Ms. Robison and Ms. Maguire did in 1989 as founding members of the Dixie Chicks. The original group, a neo-cowgirl quartet that took its name from “Dixie Chicken,” a song by the funk-rock band Little Feat, also included Laura Lynch and Robin Macy on guitars and vocals.

That incarnation of the band enjoyed considerable popularity in Texas in the early 90’s. The Dixie Chicks also played at Bill Clinton’s 1993 inauguration and released three albums on an independent label, the first of which they titled “Thank Heavens for Dale Evans.” Yet while amply talented, the group never really transcended its status as a regional or kitsch act until Ms. Maines replaced Ms. Lynch in 1995. (Ms. Lynch retired from performing and married a rancher and winner of the Texas state lottery. Ms. Lacy had left the group in 1992.)

Ms. Maines, who grew up watching her father play with Mr. Ely—who opened for the Clash during their 1980 tour—brought a rock ‘n’ roll swagger to the Dixie Chicks, and a big, brassy voice, that had been absent from the early edition of the group. Her arrival, however, didn’t sit well with the trio’s core fans or with the news media in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, both of which accused the women of selling out to a younger, pop-leaning audience. “We used to get hate messages on our voice mail,” Ms. Robison said.

The burnished production that galvanized the first two albums the Dixie Chicks made for Sony might have struck some as a compromise. But no one can accuse them of selling out on “Home,” a subtle but commanding record that is something of a return to the trio’s Texas roots even as it casts judgment on the slick, crossover aesthetic that now defines country music. The women recorded the project not in Nashville but, as its title suggests, at home, in Austin. (Ms. Robison and her husband live in San Antonio.) They produced the album, do-it-yourself style, with Ms. Maines’s father, who first introduced his daughter to Ms. Robison and Ms. Maguire.

Similarly, the updated mountain sound of “Home” recalls the albums the Dixie Chicks made before Ms. Maines joined the group. The sisters had sung behind Ms. Maines on the previous two albums, but this time the women recorded their vocals as a trio, in the fashion of the early Dixie Chicks. They also worked with first-call bluegrass musicians, including the guitarist Bryan Sutton, late of Ricky Skaggs’s band, as well as the mandolinists Adam Steffey and Chris Thile, the latter of the trio Nickel Creek.

The Dixie Chicks arranged most of the material on the album, much of it consisting of thoughtful and thought-provoking compositions from left-of-center singer-songwriters like Patty Griffin, Radney Foster and the team of Tim O’Brien and Gary Nicholson. Although they weren’t credited as producers on “Wide Open Spaces” and “Fly,” “they had a real good idea of how they wanted things to sound,” said Mr. Maines, who played steel guitar on the two earlier albums.

“They definitely know what they’re doing,” he said. “They’re really savvy about what they want to sing and how they want it to sound.”
In many respects, making “Home” validated the risk-taking ethos the trio has always embraced. “It was nice to test our producing skills and realize how involved we were in that aspect of the making of ‘Wide Open Spaces’ and ‘Fly,’” said Ms. Robison. “We knew we were, but we were still so new to Nashville. It was nice, this time, to know that we could trust our ears, and that we had total freedom to go anywhere we wanted.”

Editorial

Chicks Reap Whirlwind

by Mike Rosen

05/02/03 | Rocky Mountain News

1 McCarthyism, as the term was originally coined, was meant to describe the abuse and distortion of information by a government committee at the expense of an individual’s rights and reputation.

2 McCarthyism is characterized by false accusations, smears and extracting a pound of lie from an ounce of truth. Although a demagogue, Sen. Joseph McCarthy had the goods on some of his targets; others were innocent victims.

3 Whatever the Dixie Chicks are, they are not innocent victims.

4 They said what they said where they said it. Holding people to account for their words and actions isn’t McCarthyism. The Chicks are certainly free to oppose the Iraq war and to tell the world that they’re ashamed to hail from the same state as President Bush. Just as the rest of us are free to tell the Chicks that we think they’re idiots.

5 We’re also free to not buy their CDs and to not pay to see them in concert. Radio stations are in business to attract and please listeners in order to sell their advertisers’ products. If listeners are sufficiently turned off by the Chicks to tune out stations when they play their music, you can expect stations to play less of it. This is known as commerce, not McCarthyism.

6 The Dixie Chicks have no constitutional right to have their music played on commercial stations. And Tim Robbins and Susan Sarandon have no “right” to be invited to private functions like the Baseball Hall of Fame Dinner. Freedom of disassociation and freedom of association are opposite sides of the same coin. After Michael Moore’s boorish behavior at the Oscars, it’s understandable that the baseball folks would be leery of trusting this duo to refrain from indulging their anti-Bush, anti-war activism at a festive, nonpolitical affair.

7 Boycotting is a common tool of leftists and practitioners of racial politics. Conservative targets of such campaigns have included Rush Limbaugh, Laura Schlesinger and Anita Bryant.

8 Jesse Jackson has amassed a fortune extorting corporations. Gay activists organized a boycott of the entire state of Colorado after voters approved Amendment 2. Why is it a legitimate tactic when lefties do it, but McCarthyism when country music fans turn their backs on the Dixie Chicks?
9 When Wyoming Sen. Alan Simpson questioned Anita Hill at Clarence Thomas’ Supreme Court confirmation hearings, one columnist accused him of using McCarthy-like tactics. To which Simpson replied, “Accusing someone of McCarthyism is a McCarthyist tactic itself.”

10 It wasn’t just that the Chicks voiced their opposition to the war and dissed the president of the United States. Others have done that with impunity. It was how and where they did it. It might have been a principled, courageous act had they taken on a patriotic, flag-waving crowd in Lubbock, Texas. Instead, they pandered to an anti-American audience in London. When word got back home, all hell broke loose.

11 Then, the Chicks made matters worse with a pathetic, damage-control exercise, talking out of all sides of their three mouths in an incoherent interview with Diane Sawyer on ABC’s Primetime.

12 Robbins’ and Sarandon’s politics might cost them a gig or two while gaining them some new ones, but they haven’t damaged their careers.

13 They’re still heroes to the Hollywood left and the white-wine-and-brie crowd that supports the arts and contributes to National Public Radio.

14 But unlike Robbins and Sarandon, the Dixie Chicks aren’t all that political—they’re probably not smart enough. They’re in over their heads. And they made the perfectly stupid business move of alienating their core audience.

15 They angered white males from Texas, Oklahoma, Mississippi and Alabama who drive pickup trucks with bumper stickers emblazoned with American flags, the kind of people who admire the Marine Corps more than Jane Fonda.

16 Popularity is fleeting, and aspiring country groups are lined up around the block. The Dixie Chicks might have to wash off their makeup, swap the spiked high heels for sandals, learn some folksy protest songs and start working the coffee houses in Greenwich Village.

17 Free speech has consequences—good and bad—as well it should.

Online Article

No More Whistlin’ Dixie

*Diane Sawyer’s Indecorous Performance with the Dixie Chicks*

by Jim Lewis

1 Last night’s Primetime Thursday, which featured Diane Sawyer interviewing the Dixie Chicks about their recent woes, was one of those broadcast moments that make you want to put your foot through the television. In case you’ve been out working in the garden this past month, the occasion for the show was a relatively innocuous remark the Chicks’ lead singer, Natalie Maines, made at a concert in London just before the war. “Just so you know,” she said from the stage, “we’re ashamed that the president of the United States is from Texas.” The Associated Press picked up the line; country music stations fanned the flames; and within a few weeks the Dixie Chicks’ newest record, *Home*, which had been No. 1 on both the country and pop charts, was being boycotted across the country.
This is silly but not unpredictable. What followed was disgusting: CD-crushing radio promo events, vandalism of Chick Emily Robison’s home, threats on the Chicks’ lives, and a campaign of hatred directed at three of the most talented women in the music industry. Bruce Springsteen occasionally gets flack for his political remarks, but he doesn’t get called a slut.

The Chicks themselves may have inadvertently made things worse. When Jonathan Franzen ticked off the Oprah folks, it was as distressing to see his furious backpedaling as it was to see the arrant frenzy that his remarks occasioned. It would have been easier on him—and probably shortened the story’s news life—if he’d just insisted, “Yeah, I said it. Yeah, I meant it. If you want to talk about it, we can do that. If you want to scream at me, I’m going to have to tune you out and get on with my life.” God knows Maines and her two bandmates might have saved themselves a little heartache if they’d done the same.

Still, they have the burden to bear of being from Dallas, where women tend to be a) spirited and b) polite. Not always an easy balance to maintain, but last night Maines did her best. When Sawyer prompted the three of them to ask for forgiveness, in a gruesome moment of utterly fake primetime piety, the trio paused. You could see them struggling with their pride, their conviction, and their desire to get along; I was half-hoping they’d suggest Sawyer kiss their three asses (and I’d be surprised if the notion didn’t run through their minds). Instead, Maines kept her cool and her dignity. “Accept us,” she said. “Accept an apology that was made . . . but to forgive us, don’t forgive us for who we are.” And she went on to point out, as if it needed to be said, that the practice of dissent is fundamental to democracy.

That wasn’t good enough for Sawyer. She spent an hour trying to bend the Chicks with a combination of false sympathy and crass sensationalism. Time and again, she cut back to a typeset insert of Maines’ original remark, as if Maines had called for the pillage of Crawford. “Ashamed?” Sawyer said, incredulously. “Ashamed?” In the tradition of a Stalinist show trial, the women were forced to affirm their patriotism and their support for the troops. At every point they—who are, after all, entertainers with no particular training in political science—were thoughtful, modest, and firm. At every point Sawyer tried to force them into a crude, Manichaen choice. “Do you feel awful about using that word about the president of the United States?” she asked at the start of the interview—in a prime example of the sort of leading question no self-respecting first year AP stringer would ask. “Well,” replied Maines, carefully, “‘awful’ is a really strong word.” Later, when Maines was trying to apologize and clarify, Sawyer said, “I hear something not quite, what, wholehearted. . . .”

Well, I heard something not quite—what—honorable in Sawyer’s presentation of the affair: an attempt to take a trivial matter that had blown up into an absurd controversy, and blow it up even more under the guise of simply covering the story. Essentially, she asked the women to choose between abasing themselves on national television or stirring up more hatred against themselves. It was a depressing moment in an ugly time.

For what it’s worth, I have profoundly mixed feelings about the war, and if I were to sit down with Natalie Maines, I’m sure we’d have much to disagree about. But, just so you know, I’m proud that the Dixie Chicks are from Texas. What’s more, I’m embarrassed that Diane Sawyer is a member of my profession.
The Dixie Chicks: America Catches Up with Them

by Jon Pareles


1 THE DIXIE CHICKS call it “the Incident”: the anti-Bush remark that Natalie Maines, their lead singer, made onstage in London in 2003. “Just so you know, we’re ashamed the president of the United States is from Texas,” said Ms. Maines, a Texan herself.

2 It led to a partisan firestorm, a radio boycott, death threats and, now, to an album that’s anything but repentant: “Taking the Long Way” (Open Wide/ Monument/ Columbia). The Dixie Chicks—Ms. Maines, Emily Robison and Martie Maguire—were the top-selling country group of the late 1990’s and early 2000’s. After country’s gatekeepers disowned them over politics, they decided to keep their politics and let country music fend for itself.

3 The Incident is very much at the center of “Taking the Long Way.” The album could have been “way safe and scared,” Ms. Maines said. “We could have pandered.” They didn’t. The new songs are filled with reactions, direct and oblique, to the Incident. There are no apologies.

4 “We had to make this album,” Ms. Maines said. “We could not have gotten past any of this without making this album. Even if nobody ever heard it.”

5 The Dixie Chicks were in New York this month to make media appearances and to perform at the party for this year’s Time 100, the magazine’s list of influential people, which includes them. Sitting around a dinner table in a Chelsea loft that Ms. Maines owns but hasn’t used much—a former gallery with artist friends’ paintings parked on the brick walls—the three Dixie Chicks dug into takeout Italian food and sipped red wine. “I’ve thought about all this way too much,” Ms. Maines said.

6 “Taking the Long Way,” due out on Tuesday, is the first Dixie Chicks album on which group members collaborated in writing all the songs. The first single, “Not Ready to Make Nice,” declares, “I’m not ready to back down/I’m still mad as hell,” and starts with a tolling guitar more suitable for a Metallica dirge than a honky-tonk serenade. The Dixie Chicks and their manager insisted to their record company that “we need to approach everything like not one radio station is going to play one single song,” Ms. Maines said. Asked about country radio, she said, “Do you really think we’re going to make an album for you and trust the future of our career to people who turned on us in a day?”

7 Instead the album wraps gleaming California rock around its raw emotions. Although there’s plenty of country in the music, “Taking the Long Way” reaches not for the lucrative yet insular country airwaves but for an adult pop mainstream. Meanwhile the core country audience may not be so hostile anymore. The album arrives at a time when approval for President Bush has dropped to as low as 29 percent, in a recent Harris Interactive poll.
On Amazon.com, preorders recently placed “Taking the Long Way” at No. 5 in a Top 10 that also includes albums with antiwar songs by Bruce Springsteen, Neil Young, Paul Simon and Pearl Jam.

For those who expect knee-jerk Republicanism from country singers, the Dixie Chicks never fit the stereotype to begin with. “I always knew people thought that about us, and it bugged me,” Ms. Maines said. “Because I knew who we were, and I knew who I’ve been my whole life. So to me it was such a relief for people to know.”

The Incident occurred on March 10, 2003, 10 days before the United States invaded Iraq. “It felt pretty trite to me to be doing a show on what was supposed to be the eve before war,” Ms. Maines said, “and not say anything about it. At that stage too everyone in Europe, or everyone outside of the U.S., talked about the U.S. like we all thought one way. So it was important for me to let them know that you can’t group us all into one.”

Her remark was reported in Britain and quickly picked up. Right-wing blogs and talk shows vilified the Dixie Chicks as unpatriotic and worse, and the Incident reached the nightly news. . . .

The complaint that she criticized the president on foreign soil has been a talk-radio talking point. Ms. Maines dismisses it. “It wasn’t like we played 20 shows in America and I was saving up this comment for London,” she said. “I was in London when the war was about to start. That’s where I said it. I would have said it anywhere, because I didn’t think that it was a bad thing to say or a controversial thing to say.”

Ms. Maines’s free speech was costly. Country radio stations were bombarded with calls demanding that the Dixie Chicks be dropped from playlists. Within days, songs from the Chicks’ 2002 album, “Home,” virtually disappeared from American airwaves. They had the No. 1 country single that week with “Travelin’ Soldier,” which mourns a soldier killed in Vietnam; it plummeted to No. 63.

The Dixie Chicks’ two previous albums, “Wide Open Spaces” (1998) and “Fly” (1999), had each been certified “diamond” for shipping more than 10 million copies in the United States. Without airplay, “Home” stalled that March at six million.

“I understand everybody was in a place of fear, and everybody’s nerves were on edge, and mothers were sending their sons and daughters off to war, and tensions were high,” Ms. Maguire said. “But you know when it continues and continues and people are still mad about it, I think back to those words and think: How is that bad, what she said? It’s so harmless. It’s so nothing.”

The United States concerts on the Dixie Chicks’ tour were already sold out. Promoters offered refunds, although there were more requests for new tickets than there were returns. Protesters showed up outside concerts; others burned Dixie Chicks albums.

“We have video footage of this lady at one of the shows protesting, holding her 2-year-old son,” Ms. Maines said. The woman commanded her son to shout along with an angry chant. “And I was just like, that’s it right there. That’s the moment that it’s taught. She just taught her 2-year-old how to hate. And that broke my heart.”

The band received death threats, including at least one, in Dallas, that the considered credible. A newspaper printed Ms. Maines’s home address in Austin,

vilified: defamed or slandered
Tex., and she ended up moving first outside the city and then to Los Angeles. On the American tour a handful of boos were drowned out by fervent cheers. Suddenly there was more at stake than toe-tapping tunes.

19 In a way there always had been. The Dixie Chicks were never a typical country act. They got started in Texas, not Nashville. And their music is built around a country rarity: female instrumentalists. Ms. Robison plays banjo, and Ms. Maguire plays fiddle; they are sisters, and they helped found the Dixie Chicks as a bluegrass band in Dallas in 1989. After Ms. Maines replaced the group’s lead singer in 1995, the Dixie Chicks became a voice of assertive, irreverent femininity in mainstream country. They also brought the sound of the banjo, once considered “too country,” back to country radio.

20 While the Dixie Chicks’ music was never confrontational, each album grew bolder. In the upbeat “Goodbye Earl,” a hit from “Fly,” an abused wife murders her husband and gets away with it. The album “Home”—made in Austin and produced by the Dixie Chicks themselves along with Lloyd Maines, Natalie’s father—deliberately set aside the slick, electric sound of current country for a largely acoustic, bluegrass-rooted production and some haunted songs.

21 After their own tour ended—it was the top-grossing country music tour of 2003—the Dixie Chicks joined the Vote for Change concert series supporting John Kerry. They had babies; Ms. Maguire and Ms. Robison both had twins. And they decided to record their next album in Los Angeles. The producer they chose was Rick Rubin, who has made albums with the Beastie Boys, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Johnny Cash and Shakira. The Incident had sparked Mr. Rubin’s interest.

22 “After the Incident everyone started taking what they said seriously,” Mr. Rubin said by telephone from Los Angeles. “To take a band that’s popular not for that reason and give them that power seemed very exciting.

23 “It’s the biggest thing that’s ever happened to them, and it rattled them and it changed them,” he added. “The pain of it is really lingering. I thought they needed to somehow address what happened in a way that was truthful about how they felt, whatever that was. I just wanted it to be an honest reflection of that, but also told in a way that if you didn’t know what happened to them and just heard the songs, you might relate to it anyway.”

24 On previous albums the Dixie Chicks wrote the more lighthearted songs and got serious material from other songwriters. This time, Ms. Maines said, “We knew we had things to write about.” Mr. Rubin brought in co-writers including Gary Louris, from the Jayhawks, and Dan Wilson, from Semisonic. “They took the fear out of us,” said Ms. Maines. “You know, ‘You need to say that because that’s the truth and that’s the way you feel.’ ”

25 . . . The Dixie Chicks sound determined not to whine on “Taking the Long Way,” and they focus on personal reactions, not protests. The album is a defiant autobiography of their career, and “Not Ready to Make Nice” mentions the death threats after the Incident. But until it does, the song could be about the resentment following any breakup or betrayal.

26 “Lubbock or Leave It,” a fierce country-rocker, describes Ms. Maines’s Texas hometown as a hypocritical “fool’s paradise” with “more churches than trees,” blind to its own problems. But there aren’t many other specifics on the album. Without the Dixie Chicks’ back story, the songs work as meticulous pop vows of loyalty and determination.
Still, the Incident keeps peeking through the pretty arrangements. The countryish mandolin and pedal steel guitar of “Everybody Knows” carry the confession: “All the things I can't erase from my life/Everybody knows.” An affectionate ballad, “Easy Silence,” praises a companion who provides a refuge when “Anger plays on every station/Answers only make more questions.” In the fiddle-topped waltz “Bitter End,” one verse mocks fair-weather supporters: “As long as I’m the shiniest star./Oh there you are.” The album’s finale, a gospel-soul anthem called “I Hope,” insists, “I don’t wanna hear nothin’ else/About killin’ and that it’s God’s will.”

Three years after the Incident the Dixie Chicks insist that it liberated them. “When, no matter what you do, everybody’s going to punch holes in it, then you just go and you do what you want,” Ms. Maguire said. “And that’s the most freeing place to be.”

Ms. Maines added: “It will mean a lot to me if people buy the album just sort of out of protest. The naysayers and the people who were so organized to take us down did a really good job. And they succeeded. So it feels good to let the music win out in the end and say, ‘Even your hatred can’t stop what people want to listen to.’”

A smiling Ms. Maguire had the last word. “See you at the diamond record party,” she said.

Three years into the Iraq War, the American public is making next week's election a national referendum on the policies that got us there and seem to offer no end in sight. In a democratic culture with free speech at its core, one of the earliest challenges to those policies came from an unlikely source: three Texas-bred women called the Dixie Chicks. They may not have seen themselves as a political band, or even political people, when they made their antiwar feelings clear on the eve of the invasion at a March 2003 concert in London. But they put themselves squarely against the momentum growing in the country music/red state community, which was lining up behind the government's march to war.

The story of what happened to the band after lead vocalist Natalie Maines’ fateful comment—“just so you know, we’re ashamed the President of the United States is from Texas”—is the subject of Shut Up and Sing, the latest documentary from Barbara Kopple and co-director Cecilia Peck. To tell their story, the band made sure their experience would be treated seriously by teaming up with Kopple, whose films include the Oscar-winning Harlan County USA (striking coal miners in Kentucky) and Bearing Witness (women war correspondents in Iraq). On her part, Kopple was drawn to a story that, she says, has “become the center of a larger political debate. Their personal transformation in so many ways has come to represent the political climate we have in the U.S. right now.”
3 The Dixie Chicks were country music superstars in 2003 and the best selling women's band ever. Having been named entertainers of the year by the Academy of Country Music two years before, their Top of the World tour sold out $49 million worth of tickets in one day, and they won eight Grammies including the 2003 best country album. But once Maines’ comment became known, and when the band refused to back down, the country community quickly turned against them.

4 Did the Dixie Chicks pay a higher price for speaking out because they were women? Kopple believes women get into trouble for speaking their minds when the expectation is that “men are the ones to speak out, to take a stand, and a woman’s role is to stand with her man. I think these ideas still permeate our culture.” Apparently to the country music world, seeming unpatriotic in a time of war is a far worse sin than being a convicted wife batterer like Tracy Lawrence, who has been able to rehabilitate himself with his fans.

5 The least discussed piece of this story is how the continuing consolidation of media into the hands of a few large corporations created a situation that allowed the Dixie Chicks to be literally erased from the airwaves. “Travelin’ Soldier” was the number one single when it was removed from playing rotation. Cumulus Media, a consortium of 306 radio stations, told their affiliates not to play the Chicks’ music. Several disc jockeys who broke the ban were fired according to press reports. First denying there was a blacklist against the band, Cumulus CEO Lewis Dickey was forced to admit the truth during a Senate Commerce Committee hearing on July 8, 2003. Commenting on the dangerous effect of media consolidation, with enormous power and influence falling into very few hands, Kopple says, “too often those hands are attached to men more interested in the bottom line and blind ‘patriotism’ than creativity, risk-taking and progress.”

6 The hate pouring onto these women was clearly sexist. Fans trashed their CDs. At arenas, protestors’ signs and slogans ranged from the ugly to the ridiculous—“strap her to a bomb and drop her over Baghdad” and “try the chicks for treason” to “free speech is ok except in public.” Kopple points out an irony: “Women’s voices are often considered dangerous. Ours are often the voices of change, of peace, of moderation, and of forgiveness.”

7 While shut off from their country fan base, the Dixie Chicks were propelled into a completely different musical and political universe. On the cover of Entertainment Weekly and interviewed by Diane Sawyer, the band was introduced to an audience that fell in love with the music and the message. The recording of their new “comeback” album is highlighted throughout the film. Recording it and writing their own songs for the first time functioned as a catharsis for the hell they went through. Their dismay with the country world is clear in the first single, “Not Ready to Make Nice,” an anthem of unrepentant anger.

8 Theirs is the best sort of feminist story: all about what happens when women stand up for what they believe in. At the end of the documentary, Kopple shows the Dixie Chicks returning to the arena in London where the controversy began. Maines restates her comment, this time with a big smile on her face. Kopple got to know her subjects well while following them around for over a year. “I think, more than anything,” she says, “their experience has highlighted that—although the cost of speaking your mind and being yourself can be high—the cost of being silenced is much higher.”
Dixie Chicks Among Esteemed Outlaws

by Ashley Sayeau

1 On Sunday night at the 49th annual Grammy awards, the Dixie Chicks took home five awards, including best album, record and song of the year.

2 It was a long road, indeed, for the Chicks, whose enormous fan base and ticket sales famously plummeted in 2003 after lead singer Natalie Maines remarked on the eve of the Iraq war that the group was "ashamed the president of the United States is from Texas." Within days, radio stations were refusing to play their music, and fans were demanding refunds. Death threats were later issued.

3 Throughout the ordeal, the group remained admirably unapologetic, insisting that dissent is (or at least should be) a vital liberty in America. They further maintained this position in their album Taking the Long Way (which won the Grammy for best album) and especially in the song "Not Ready To Make Nice," in which they directly addressed their critics: "It's too late to make it right/ I probably wouldn't if I could/ Cause I'm mad as hell/ Can't bring myself to do what it is/ You think I should."

4 Despite the group's successes, the grudge has held, particularly among the Nashville music establishment. The Country Music Association completely snubbed the Chicks at its awards ceremony in May.

5 Such an affront on the part of country music is not only cowardly, but also quite antithetical to the genre's history. For, while country music today is often equated with pickup trucks, rebel flags, and men with mullets, it also has a brave and, dare I say, liberal streak in its closet.

6 Take Johnny Cash, for instance. Not only did many of his most famous lyrics center on "the poor and the beaten down," including a poignant attack on this country's treatment of American Indians, but also Cash was a vocal critic of the Vietnam War, as in his famous song "Man in Black": "I wear the black in mourning for the lives that could have been/ Each week we lose a hundred fine young men."

7 And then there is Willie Nelson, who on Valentine's Day 2006 released a love song about gay cowboys, titled, "Cowboys Are Frequently, Secretly (Fond of Each Other)." Perhaps more seriously, he has been an avid supporter of presidential hopeful Dennis Kucinich, who, while arguing for universal health care and a swift withdrawal from Iraq, is probably the furthest left of any Democratic candidate.

8 Women in country music—like the Dixie Chicks—have a long tradition of being particularly bold in speaking out against some of the very conventions their record labels and conservative fan base celebrate. Back in 1933, the Carter Family, which consisted of A.P. Carter; his wife, Sara Doughtery Carter; and her cousin, the groundbreaking guitar player Maybelle Addington Carter, sang about a young woman who chose to commit suicide rather than marry. In Sara's sorrowful croon, we hear her say, "I never will marry/ I'll be no man's wife/ I expect to live single all the days of my life." Needless to say, she later divorced A.P.

9 Perhaps most memorable are some of Loretta Lynn's lyrics, particularly from the 1960s and 1970s. Released in 1966, her song "Dear Uncle Sam" was an early
anti-Vietnam protest song. And though she once feigned dozing off while listening to feminist advocate Betty Friedan speak as a fellow guest on *The David Frost Show*, Lynn was a pretty controversial women’s advocate. In “I Wanna Be Free,” she wrote of the liberating effect of divorce: “I’m gonna take this chain from around my finger/ And throw it just as far as I can sling ‘er.” She did the same thing for birth control in “The Pill”: “The feelin’ good comes easy now/ Since I’ve got the pill.”

10 As daring as some outlaw artists have been, the country music establishment has often proved even more dogged in its conservative views. Lynn has purportedly had more songs banned than any other country music singer. And Cash, never completely at home in the country music world, once said that “the very idea of unconventional or even original ideas ending up on ‘country’ radio” was “absurd.” No wonder, then, that in his gay cowboy song, Willie Nelson lamented that “you won’t hear this song on the radio/ Not on your local TV.”

11 With the November election, particularly with strong Democratic gains in Virginia and Missouri, Republican politicians may have to rethink their long-standing Southern strategy. Similarly, with last Sunday night’s awards, country music should embrace the fact that its greatest assets have never been scared of controversy or doing the right thing.

12 To quote the great Dolly Parton—who has sung a few feminist, antiwar, and progressive anthems herself—“You’ll never do a whole lot unless you’re brave enough to try.”

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**A Tired Old Song**

by Jonah Goldberg

1 WHAT do Jimmy Carter and the Dixie Chicks have in common? They’re southerners who’ve traded “up” on their southernness. They hit their best moments long ago, but have ridden positive press far beyond their natural shelf life. They think a lot of themselves. Good teeth. What else, what else . . .? Oh, right—they’re all 2007 Grammy winners!

2 Jimmy Carter won the Grammy for the Best Spoken Word Album of 2006, sharing the honor with actress Ruby Dee. Carter and Dee beat out nominees Al Franken and Bill Maher for this year’s Grammy. Yet Carter isn’t the first ex-president to win this cutthroat competition. Bill Clinton actually won two Grammys back to back in 2004 and 2005, the first for his memoirs, *My Life*, sharing the second with Mikhail Gorbachev in the coveted Best Spoken Word Album for Children category.

3 In 1997, Clinton’s wife of record, Hillary, won a Grammy for reading aloud her book *It Takes a Village*; last year that honor went to Barack Obama for his memoirs. In 2004, Franken won for his book Lying Liars, and the year before that Maya Angelou won her third Grammy in the category. Other winners include Jesse Jackson and Garrison Keillor.

4 But let me stop you right there. Politics has nothing to do with the selection process. This was a straightforward judgment based solely on merit, damn it. So if you’re listening, Ted Kennedy, you’d better bring your A-game if you hope to beat the likes of Rush Limbaugh!
Which brings me to the Greatest Band of All Time. The Dixie Chicks won five Grammys in the Stick It to the Fascists category, including for their Best Song, “Not Ready to Make Nice,” a poignant reminder that the Chicks weren’t going to be cowed by the war-lusting American public.

Recall that in 2003, on the eve of war, Natalie Maines, the middle one in most pictures, said in London that she was “ashamed” President Bush was from her native Texas. She quickly apologized, saying, “As a concerned American citizen, I apologize to President Bush because my remark was disrespectful.” “I love my country,” she continued. “I am a proud American.” When this didn’t improve sagging sales among the bloody jingoists who made them rich in the first place, the Chicks decided to appeal to a different audience. “The entire country may disagree with me,” Maines told Britain’s Daily Telegraph, “but I don’t understand the necessity for patriotism.” Through ‘gritted teeth’ she asked, “Why do you have to be a patriot? . . . You can like where you live and like your life, but as for loving the whole country . . . I don’t see why people care about patriotism.”

On Grammy night, Maines proclaimed, “I think people are using their freedom of speech with all these awards. We get the message.” Of course, the “people” in question were members of the record industry, and only someone with a thumbless grasp of free speech would think it was at issue in the first place. The people who criticized the Dixie Chicks in the first place were people too, exercising their free speech. They just weren’t the ones who mattered—at least to those nonpartisan adjudicators of raw talent who award Grammys.

After Reading

Planning Your Presentation: Now that you have completed your analysis, come up with a plan for how to present the article to the class. Your group’s presentation to your peers should include the following:

- The most significant information from your article related to the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the event: In particular, discuss how it portrays the original incident. Does it defend, critique, or objectively report what happened? What new insights or later events does it emphasize?
- A discussion of how the article frames the controversy: What issue(s) does it focus on? What does it say about the issue(s)? How biased is it in the way it discusses the Chicks? The backlash? How slanted is the language?
- An analysis of what lens(es) you connected to the text: To construct your commentaries, begin with one of the following stems:
  a. As a(n) _________ text, this article reveals that _________.
     Use such a stem if you think the article itself explicitly discusses the subject through a particular lens.
  b. The author(s) of this article examine(s) questions of ________, ________, and ________ related to the topic.
     Use such a lens if you think the article explicitly discusses the subject through several lenses.
  c. When we read this article through a ________ lens, we notice that _________.
     Use such a stem if you are applying the lens to the article to focus on reading it from a particular perspective.
- Quotes from the text to support your claims about its rhetoric and its perspective.
9. With this information in mind, brainstorm a list of different organizational strategies your group could use to present your article to your classmates, keeping in mind that the goal of this presentation is to help them find evidence of different critical lenses that link these texts together. Then evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each of these approaches relative to the purpose of your presentation.

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10. Based on your evaluation of your options, which approach will you use to present your article and why?
Analyzing Presentations

11. As you listen to the presentations of the other groups, use the space below to create a concept map. Record titles, ideas, and page numbers as you make connections between your guiding question and the information presented in the other groups’ presentations.

My Guiding Question

12. As you listen to each group’s presentation, evaluate the following:
   - What are the speaker’s tone and point of view?
   - Is the speaker’s reasoning sound and well supported by evidence?
   - How does the speaker’s rhetoric support his or her point of view and the perception you have of the topic/reasoning?
   - How does the speaker link ideas and make connections to the premise of the piece?
   - What points does the speaker emphasize, and how do they support the overall premise?

Writing Prompt: Write a paper in which you use evidence from the various articles you have discussed to answer your guiding question. Be sure to:
   - Choose an organizational approach that will engage your audience.
   - Integrate quotations in a variety of ways to create syntactic variety in your writing.
   - Tailor your rhetoric to your target audience.
   - Punctuate your paper correctly, and check for spelling errors.

Check Your Understanding
When writing or presenting a critical interpretation, what key questions should guide your decision about what to include and how to organize it?
Looking for Trouble

Learning Targets
• Generate criteria for evaluating potential topics.
• Collaboratively refine a plan for investigating a shared topic.

Before Research
To define a preliminary topic and issue for your individual and group assessments, work with your group members to complete the following steps.
1. Based on the different ways in which the class explored the Dixie Chicks controversy in this unit, generate a list of criteria for evaluating potential issues as topics for your own essay.

2. With these criteria in mind, brainstorm a list of potential topics and issues. Consider topics and issues that are of broad interest and that provoke inconsistent or opposing reactions.

3. With your group members, discuss the possible topics and issues you might explore. Then use the chart below to consider what approaches each of you might individually take to complete Embedded Assessment 1. Help one another craft guiding questions.
ACTIVITY 4.8
continued

Looking for Trouble

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<th>Criticism</th>
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<td>Marxist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feminist</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Using Technology to Write and Publish

4. As you prepare your group project, consider using document-sharing sites to write drafts of your essay and to complete it. Using such a site would allow you to change the essay in response to ongoing feedback and include new information and arguments as you complete your research and analysis.
Writing Prompt: The research proposal is a one-page expository essay that informs the reader about your group’s chosen issue, discusses information you have already learned, explains which critical perspective you plan to use to examine the issue and why, defines your guiding question, and indicates where and how you will continue to conduct research to answer it. Be sure to:

- Write a clear thesis for your issue.
- Provide significant details that support the critical perspective and identify additional research needed.
- Identify your guiding question.

Components of the Proposal

Event/Topic:

Review of the Issue: Write a summary of what you currently know about your chosen issue.

Which critical perspective will you apply while exploring the issue? What are some ways in which it is particularly appropriate for your topic?

Initial Guiding Question (open-ended or specific):

Research Plan: Where and how will you further explore/research the issue?
Learning Targets

• Analyze the impact of bias on the credibility of sources.
• Evaluate the credibility of sources based on evidence of bias.

Researching Your Topic

1. As you investigate sources, keep in mind you are trying to find articles that link to your critical lens and that also (as with the articles on the Dixie Chicks) may reflect multiple lenses—and which could thus serve as resources for others in your group. As you identify sources, use the following chart to evaluate them for use in your project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for Evaluating Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who is this author? How can you determine the credibility of this author? Consider the author’s occupation, reputation, and credentials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent and in what ways does the author establish credibility in the text? (For instance, is the writing objective? Is the writing logical? Is there personal testimony? Are other examples or experts cited to support the author’s position?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is bias evident in the text? Consider the author’s rhetoric: Are slanders used? To what effect? To what extent? How does this affect the author’s credibility?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does the text link to your critical perspective? Explain. What quotations might you cite as support for your claims?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does the text’s publication context reveal about its agenda? How might you use its context to reinforce your claims about the text or about your subject itself?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LEARNING STRATEGIES: Graphic Organizer, Note-taking
After Research

2. Use the samples below as models for the annotations you write for your five sources. Note that the examples include a summary of the source, an assessment of the usefulness of the source in providing information about your topic, and a reflection on how the source might be used to help inform your research.

Article from a Periodical (Magazine or Newspaper)

**Author(s). “Title of Article.” Title of Periodical, Day Month Year: pages. Medium of publication.**

**Rosen, Mike. “Chicks Reap Whirlwind.” Rocky Mountain News, 2 May 2004: 8D. Web.**

Rosen examines the fallout following the Dixie Chicks’ criticism of President Bush in the days preceding the Iraq war. He uses a variety of entertainment world and political examples to suggest that rejecting someone for expressing views you disagree with is not the same thing as censoring them. Although this source includes heavily slanted language, it offers a strong conservative perspective and spins the controversy as an issue of free speech. It might be helpful in revealing how language is used to reinforce the legitimacy of a source’s bias.

Website Entry

**Author(s). “Article Title.” Name of Site. Name of institution/organization affiliated with the site, date of resource creation (if available). Medium of publication. Date of access.**


Silverstein presents a feminist reading of the controversy surrounding Maines’ criticism of President Bush. Written at the time of the release of the documentary *Shut Up and Sing*, Silverstein’s essay suggests that the vehement backlash against the Chicks was due largely to sexism. Her article also links the documentary’s release to a changing political climate. Thus, while it primarily offers a feminist perspective, it could also be used to support a Historical analysis of the issue and a Marxist analysis as well. It would be particularly useful to support claims that women can overcome societal barriers by standing up for their convictions.
Assignment
Your assignment is to write an argumentative essay, including an annotated bibliography, that argues for the use of a particular critical lens to interpret an event, supporting your argument with evidence from at least five texts, gathered alone or with your group members.

Planning and Prewriting: Take time to make a plan for your essay.
• Which insights gained from learning about this event from multiple viewpoints can help you form a critical interpretation?
• Which evidence from your sources will you need to support your interpretation and show the different ways the event is represented in the media?
• Which organizational pattern will best allow you to reveal how a particular critical perspective is supported by the way your articles construct the truth of the subject?

Drafting: Determine the structure and how you will incorporate your evidence.
• How will you craft a thesis so that your audience will understand your critical perspective, as well as how that perspective influences your response to the texts you are analyzing?
• How can you use evidence to support your analysis of the event and how it is depicted?
• How can you use varied and appropriate diction and syntax to enhance the rhetorical effectiveness of your claims?

Evaluating and Revising the Draft: Make your work the best it can be.
• How will you use the Scoring Guide and peer responses to help guide your revision?
• How can examining another writer's essay help you evaluate your own use of evidence and analysis?

Checking and Editing for Publication: Confirm that your final draft is ready.
• How will you check for grammatical and technical accuracy?
• What sort of outside resources can help you to check your citations and annotated bibliography?
• How can you do a final read-through of your essay?

Reflection
After completing this Embedded Assessment, think about how you went about accomplishing this assignment, and respond to the following:
• How did your own perspective on your chosen issue affect your work on this essay? Consider how you responded to each of the sources and their varied interpretations of the event.
### SCORING GUIDE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scoring Criteria</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Incomplete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideas</strong></td>
<td>The essay • effectively combines the sources and the writer’s position to argue for using a particular lens to interpret a single event discussed in multiple texts • contextualizes the event and presents the critical lens in a clear thesis • includes a conclusion that suggests the larger significance of the writer’s position on the event.</td>
<td>The essay • adequately combines the sources and the writer’s position to argue for using a particular lens to interpret a single event discussed in multiple texts • briefly contextualizes the issue and identifies the critical lens in a straightforward thesis • concludes logically but repeats the thesis somewhat.</td>
<td>The essay • inadequately argues how a particular lens can be used to interpret a single event discussed in multiple texts • presents a weak thesis or one that is lost in a summary of sources • concludes by returning directly to the attempted thesis, or offers no conclusion.</td>
<td>The essay • provides a confusing argument on how a particular lens can be used to interpret a single event discussed in multiple texts • presents an incomplete thesis that summarizes rather than describes a position • offers no conclusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structure</strong></td>
<td>The essay • sequences material to aptly reinforce the ideas of the argument • uses transitions that enhance the essay’s coherence • includes an extensive annotated bibliography.</td>
<td>The essay • sequences material to support the ideas of the argument • uses transitions to move between ideas • includes a complete annotated bibliography.</td>
<td>The essay • organizes ideas in an effective manner or jumps too rapidly between ideas • lacks effective transitions • includes an incomplete or inaccurate annotated bibliography.</td>
<td>The essay • organizes ideas ineffectively or jumps too rapidly between ideas • does not use transitions • does not include an annotated bibliography.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of Language</strong></td>
<td>The essay • demonstrates a mature style that advances the writer’s ideas • employs precise diction and a skillful use of syntax and punctuation to create an authoritative and engaging voice • follows standard writing conventions, including accurate citation of sources.</td>
<td>The essay • demonstrates a style that adequately supports the writer’s ideas • employs logical diction, clear syntax, and effective punctuation to create a suitable voice • largely follows standard writing conventions, including accurate citation of sources; minor errors do not interfere with meaning.</td>
<td>The essay • demonstrates a limited style that ineffectively supports the writer’s ideas • includes lapses in diction, syntax, or punctuation which may make the writer’s voice inconsistent • is affected by errors in standard writing conventions, which interfere with meaning.</td>
<td>The essay • demonstrates a limited style that ineffectively supports the writer’s ideas • includes significant lapses in diction, syntax, or punctuation that reflect a confused writer’s voice • contains numerous errors in standard writing conventions, which seriously interfere with meaning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning Targets

- Reflect on and make connections between the role of the media and information sources.
- Analyze the skills and knowledge needed to complete Embedded Assessment 2 successfully.

Making Connections

In an information society, some element of media is always available to provide facts and figures and stories. The quality and accuracy of that information varies considerably by media type and specific source. The wary media consumer evaluates potential bias and checks multiple sources to find credible information. As you prepare to create your own documentary text, you will want to check reliable sources for the information that you present.

Essential Questions

Based on your study of the first part of this unit, how would you answer these questions now?

1. How do media sources influence our understanding of the truth and significance of an issue?

2. How are media texts constructed to support an agenda or interpretation?

Developing Vocabulary

Review the vocabulary terms you have learned thus far in this unit. Which ones need further study?

Unpacking Embedded Assessment 2

Closely read the assignment for Embedded Assessment 2: Creating a Documentary Media Text.

Your assignment is to create a documentary text in a media channel of your choice (TV news magazine, short documentary film, network news broadcast, podcast, etc.) in which you transform the information you gathered from your research into an argument concerning the topic/issue you have chosen. Your presentation should last 10 to 15 minutes. It may be recorded or presented live.

With your classmates, identify the skills and knowledge you will need to complete this assessment successfully. Create a graphic organizer listing all the specific skills and knowledge.
Learning Targets

• Interpret the relationship between narrative mode and audience engagement.
• Evaluate what narrative mode(s) will best meet the rhetorical objectives of a writing task.

Modes and Styles in Nonfiction Film and Television

When we watch films and television shows that are fictional, we are aware that the creators/writers are not showing us reality. However, when we watch nonfiction films and television shows, we tend to assume that what we see is an accurate and objective presentation of reality. Yet nonfiction films and television programs, like nonfiction books and articles, are shaped by their creators.

One way to analyze nonfiction films and television programs is to look at the documentary modes, or methods, the creators use to shape their creation. One critic has identified four modes—expository, observational, interactive, and reflexive—that the creators of nonfiction films and television shows use. Read the explanation of each mode below, and consider the questions that follow each explanation.

1. Expository Mode: The film explains a subject to the viewer. Think of a historical documentary or nature show. In direct address, a voice-over narrative tells us information about the subject. In indirect address, no central narrator talks directly to the audience, but we are shown (or hear) other people talking about the subject as we look at images of it. With either form of address, the filmmaker or creator is making choices about what to explain and how to explain it, but the viewer is not necessarily aware of those choices.
   • How does the speaker's tone influence perception of the subject?
   • What do you notice when you compare what is heard with what is shown at the same time?

2. Observational Mode: This is a “fly on the wall” mode, in which the camera seems to follow the subject without commenting on it. This mode features minimal editing or cutting, little or no use of non-diegetic sound, and no voice-over or interaction between the filmmaker and what is being filmed. It comes across as exclusively “showing,” rather than “telling,” which suggests extreme objectivity. The camera is merely recording reality instead of constructing it. Nevertheless, the filmmaker/creator chooses what reality the camera records.
   • What is not shown?
   • How do framing, angle, and lighting influence our perceptions of the subject?

3. Interactive Mode: The filmmaker’s or creator’s presence is evident; we may hear the questions being asked or see the filmmakers engaging with the subjects. We also get the sense that those on film are aware of being filmed and are perhaps modifying how they present themselves as a result of this awareness. Think “reality” TV: the situations themselves only exist because the film/show is creating them. Again, the filmmaker or creator is making the choices, and the viewer may be a little more aware that those choices are being made.
   • Is the filmmaker provoking reactions for the sake of entertainment or to make a persuasive point? Or both?
   • How much does the filmmaker’s presence affect our sense of reality?
4. Reflexive Mode: The text calls attention to itself as a constructed text, through deliberate editing or sound effects or satirical self-examination. It may expose its own apparatus via shots of the film crew at work. When using this mode, the filmmaker or creator is saying, “Look, I’m creating this film/show. Watch me.” The viewer is aware of some if not all of the choices being made.

• How does the text’s reflection on itself influence our willingness to consider the film’s message?
• Can a text be reflexive and still claim to be objective? Truthful?

Adapted from John Golden’s book Reading in the Reel World, NCTE, 2006.

Modes of Nonfiction Film and Television
5. As you watch each of the clips your teacher will show, try to determine which documentary mode is most prevalent. The modes may change between and within scenes, but which one seems to be dominant in the clip? Then identify a list of stylistic features you notice in the clip, before ending with an analysis of how the clip’s mode contributes to its interpretation of the subject.

Use the chart on the next page to capture your notes.
### Modes of Nonfiction Film/Television:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Mode and stylistic features</th>
<th>Effect on viewer’s perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>CBS News: “A Dixie Chick: Natalie Maines”</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Shut Up and Sing, Trailer</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Shut Up and Sing, Trailer</em></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>News War</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Language and Writer’s Craft: Using Hyphens to Create Compound Modifiers

Hyphens are very often used with word breaks at the end of lines and in nonsequential numbers such as phone numbers and serial numbers. Hyphens are also used to create compound modifiers:

Marshall’s feel-good, must-see, not-too-sappy movie is a hit of the summer.

*Feel-good* and *must-see* are fairly common compound adjectives. The compound adjective *not-too-sappy* expresses a more exact meaning.

How do you know whether to hyphenate modifiers? First of all, if the compound is fairly common, you should look it up in a good dictionary to see if it is typically hyphenated. Words such as *up-to-date* and *so-called* are typically hyphenated; they will be in the dictionary as hyphenated terms.

Also, if you are using two or more words to modify another word, you may need to hyphenate them to prevent confusion. For instance, these sentences mean different things:

*We watched two-hour-long* movies. (We watched movies that were each two hours long.)

*We watched two hour-long* movies. (We watched two movies that were each one hour long.)

You can use hyphens to build your own, specific compound modifiers and to create a specific effect, such as using them to create a conversational tone and a very particular meaning.

Check Your Understanding

Think of something very unusual or something that is hard to describe. Write a sentence about it, using two hyphenated compound modifiers.

Writing Prompt: Evaluate how one of the texts uses the different narrative modes to engage viewers. Be sure to:

- Define criteria for what “engage” means.
- Support your evaluative claim with detailed, descriptive evidence from the film.
- Explain the effect of specific choices in the film on viewers’ perceptions of the subject.

Check Your Understanding

How did each mode influence the way you felt as you watched the information being presented? Based on your answer, quickwrite an explanation identifying which mode you might use in your group’s project and why you might use it.
Learning Targets

• Explain how music and visual rhetoric contribute to the tone in a media text.
• Collaboratively plan to construct a media text.

Elements of a Documentary Text

Long before you actually develop your documentary, you have to begin thinking about some of the basic components of a good plan. You need to carefully consider the rhetorical context: your topic/issue, who you are writing/creating for, why you are writing/creating a work on this particular topic or issue, and so forth. Below are some questions you should ask and answer before you go further in planning your documentary.

• **Topic/Issue**: What is your topic/issue? What event, person, text, or conflict are you focusing on? What critical lens(es) are you using to illuminate that subject for your audience? What messages or interpretation do you wish to convey?

• **Purpose**: What is your purpose? What do you want your audience to think/feel/know/do as a result of viewing your text?

• **Audience**: Decide on an audience to whom you’d like to address your argument. You must settle on an identifiable audience that you expect will have some interest in your topic. Your audience may not be “my teacher” or the other students in your class.

• **Speaker**: Who are you as the speaker? Think about the various documentary modes: will you be observational, expository, interactive, or reflexive in your text? To what extent? Why?

• **Occasion**: What is the occasion for your media text? Are you developing it in response to an incident or event, or to celebrate or acknowledge a situation? Would this be shown in a theater, on television, or on the Internet?

• **Tone**: What tone will best help you achieve your desired purpose? What specific music, visual text, voice-over narrative, sound effects, and so on could you use to establish your tone? What images will best evoke the desired response in your viewers?

1. Develop preliminary answers to each of these questions. Then revise them after completing the rest of this activity.
During Viewing

1. You will be watching a film clip twice. The first time, you will view it without sound; the second time, you will view it with sound.

2. As you watch the film clip, make a list of the visual images you see.

3. How does the sequencing of images/scenes contribute to the connotations and tone of the clip?

4. Based on these images, what do you think the tone of this scene is? Brainstorm some possible tone words. Choose the one that seems to fit best, then describe what kind of music or sounds you would expect to hear that would support this tone.

5. As you watch the clip a second time, make a descriptive list of all sound elements in the scene (music, dialogue, background sounds, and so on).

6. How does sound affect the tone of the scene? How is the tone similar to or different from what you expected?
Writing Prompt: After closely analyzing the audio and visual elements of the scene, write a paragraph beginning with the following stem:

In this scene from ________ (film title), the director uses sound to establish a ________ tone in order to suggest __________________________.

Be sure to:
• Consider the specific rhetorical context of the film clip.
• Support your claim with specific evidence from the clip, such as illustrative examples, vivid descriptions, or comparisons.
• Include commentary that explains how specific choices contribute to the tone.

Check Your Understanding

Explain how you now plan to use diegetic and non-diegetic sound to establish a particular tone and various effects in your text.
Learning Targets

- Generate a clear plan for synthesizing a range of sources and information to create a coherent text.
- Select and organize elements for rhetorical effect.

Developing Your Media Text

1. Revisiting Your Guiding Questions: Review the guiding questions you previously generated as a group, and write the questions each of you used in the space below.

2. Defining a Common Question: Work together to define a common guiding question. The goal is to identify a question that is broad enough to be an umbrella under which each of your individual questions falls.

3. Writing Thesis Statements: Once you have your central question, write thesis statements that answer the questions for each of the lenses that will be used by members of your group.
4. **Identifying Characters and Roles**: Using your collective research on your issue, decide who your subjects or main characters will be. These may be actual people who were involved in or influenced by the event, or they may be composite characters that represent particular points of view. Decide in your group who will play each character as well as who will be the narrator/host/interviewer (one or more may be included).

5. **Choosing a Media Channel and Identifying Its Conventions**: Brainstorm a list of media channels that you might use to present your various points of view. Choose the option you think would best allow your group to explore your subject. Then make a list of typical structural and stylistic conventions of that channel. You might dissect a professional model to help you identify key features to emulate.

6. **Evaluating Organizational Options**: Revisit the presentation you and other groups delivered for Activity 4.7. What organizational approaches worked best? Why? Which approaches might work best for your current text? What other options might work?
## Turning Facts into Narrative

### Nonfiction Film Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our thesis:</th>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our media channel/format:</th>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Conventions of this format:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What will the audience see? What images or “characters” will be shown? What mode(s) will be used? What angles, framing, composition, etc., will be used to show our subjects?</th>
<th>What will the audience hear? (include dialogue/voice-over, music, diegetic sounds). What tone are we striving for?</th>
<th>What will the audience think/feel? What perspective will our lens provide? What will the audience learn about the subject? What will they believe/know after each segment?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Learning Targets
• Collaboratively evaluate a text created by peers.
• Reflect on feedback from peers in order to improve the effectiveness of a planned media text.

Juror Ballot
1. You will exchange nonfiction film treatments with another group of students in your class, and you will collaborate with your own group members to evaluate the other group’s plan. As you complete the following Juror Ballot, your task is to assess the quality of the argumentative text they have planned and the degree to which you think it can successfully engage and persuade the intended audience.

Section 1: Dialectical Journal
As you encounter evidence of the critical perspective(s) the presenter (in this case, the group) uses, make a note of what you see or hear, and record a response using the same reading skills that you would normally bring to bear on a written text.

Critical Perspective(s)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What evidence do you see or hear?</th>
<th>Your response:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

Section 2: Argumentative Thesis
Paraphrase the group’s thesis statement. If there are more than one, be sure to include each.

My Notes
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
**Section 3: Quickwrite**

After viewing the film, quickwrite your overall impressions. Be sure to praise the parts of the presentation that are done well.

---

**Section 4: Evaluating the Text**

For each of the areas listed below, discuss the choices made by the group. How effective are these choices at supporting their argument with their target audience?

- **Mode(s)**

- **Style and Conventions**

- **Tone (Images and Sound)**

2. As a group, collaborate to write a review of the other group’s proposed plan, emphasizing evaluation of the likely effectiveness of the proposed plan and suggestions for how to make it more effective. You might reference the Scoring Guide for Embedded Assessment 2 as you evaluate their proposal.

**Check Your Understanding**

Based on the feedback your group received, explain what changes will make your planned text more effective.
Assignment
Your assignment is to create a documentary text in a media channel of your choice (TV news magazine, short documentary film, network news broadcast, podcast, etc.) in which you transform the information you gathered from your research into an argument concerning the topic/issue you have chosen. Your presentation should last 10 to 15 minutes. It may be recorded or presented live.

Planning and Prewriting: Take time to plan for your research and the structure of your presentation.
- What roles are necessary for the media text, and who will take on each role?
- How will you divide up the writing tasks so that everyone has an equal share of work to do?
- What other tasks will you need to plan besides the writing process (rehearsal, filming and editing if recording the performance, and so on)?

Drafting: Write a script and a plan for supporting information (visuals, media, etc.).
- What genre conventions will you follow as you create your script?
- How will you appropriately document your use of sources?
- How can you ensure that the group works successfully to maintain its purpose and achieve its goals?

Evaluating and Revising: Create opportunities to review and revise your work.
- What changes or additions do you need to make in order to ensure that the work of the different group members becomes one coherent script?
- How can you use the feedback of others to improve your work?
- How can you use the Scoring Guide as a resource to evaluate your draft?

Checking and Editing for Publication: Confirm that your final draft (or media version) is ready for publication.
- How will you check for grammatical correctness and technical accuracy?
- What sort of outside resources can help you to check your work?

Reflection
After completing this Embedded Assessment, think about how you went about accomplishing this assignment, and respond to the following:
- This assessment involved working as a team and combining the ideas of several people. How did the presence of multiple perspectives provide advantages for your group? How did it make the process more difficult?
Juror Ballot
As you view a group’s documentary media presentation, you will complete this Juror Ballot. Your task as a juror is to assess the quality of the media text you’re viewing and the degree to which you believe it will successfully reach the intended audience.

### Section 1: Dialectical Journal
As you encounter evidence of the critical perspective(s) the presenters use, make a note of what you see or hear. Record a response using the same reading skills that you would normally bring to bear on a written text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Perspective(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What evidence do you see or hear?</td>
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### Section 2: Argumentative Thesis
Paraphrase the group’s thesis statement. If there are more than one, be sure to include each.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
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<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
### Section 3: Quickwrite

After viewing the film, quickwrite your overall impressions. Be sure to praise the parts of the presentation that are done well.

### Section 4: Evaluating the Text

For each of the areas listed below, discuss the choices made by the group. How effective are these choices at supporting their argument with their target audience?

- **Mode(s)**

- **Style and Conventions**

- **Tone (images and sound)**

### Section 5: Evaluating the Product

Write a review of the group’s final product, focusing on its effectiveness at engaging the audience while presenting a compelling argument regarding the ideological meaning(s) and critical significance of their subject.
**SCORING GUIDE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scoring Criteria</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Incomplete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideas</strong></td>
<td>The presentation • reveals an insightful analysis and mature understanding of the topic through a script and an annotated bibliography • demonstrates thorough investigation, insightful application of the lenses, and thoughtful understanding of the topic • includes a reflective text that demonstrates a thorough and detailed analysis of the entire process.</td>
<td>The presentation • demonstrates careful analysis and clear understanding of the topic • demonstrates adequate investigation, application of the lenses, and clear understanding of the topic • includes a reflective text that demonstrates adequate analysis of the process.</td>
<td>The presentation • reveals a limited analysis and understanding of the topic • demonstrates inadequate investigation and/or misunderstanding of the lenses or how they apply • includes a reflective text that demonstrates inadequate analysis of the complete process.</td>
<td>The presentation • reveals little or no analysis and/or understanding of the topic • demonstrates inadequate investigation and/or misunderstanding of the lenses or how they apply • does not include a reflective text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structure</strong></td>
<td>The presentation • is organized in a precisely appropriate way that enhances the intended message for the target audience • features a polished performance that creates focus and maintains energy • demonstrates equal sharing of responsibility.</td>
<td>The presentation • is organized appropriately for the media channel and makes clear the intended message • features an organized, coherent performance • demonstrates sharing of responsibility that is mostly balanced.</td>
<td>The presentation • is organized inadequately for the media channel and may convey an unclear message • includes a disorganized presentation • demonstrates an unequal division of responsibilities.</td>
<td>The presentation • does not use the chosen media channel appropriately • includes a confusing and disorganized presentation • demonstrates an unequal division of responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of Language</strong></td>
<td>The presentation • demonstrates a mature style that advances the group’s ideas • crafts language that is precisely appropriate to the media channel.</td>
<td>The presentation • demonstrates a style that adequately supports the group’s ideas • crafts language that is appropriate to the media channel.</td>
<td>The presentation • demonstrates a limited style that ineffectively supports the group’s ideas • includes language that is inappropriate for the media channel.</td>
<td>The presentation • demonstrates confusing language that does not support the group’s ideas • includes language that is inappropriate for the media channel and presents the topic inaccurately.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>