

Focused Learning Lesson
Analyzing developments and issues in contemporary American Society
American History
Grade Level: 11th
H-1B-H17

Overview:

In this activity students will use a discussion chart activity to relate issues in contemporary American society with events that have happened in the past. This activity supports students' prior knowledge or students who have access and prefer to research the information. The event chart is intended to open a current events dialogue between the teacher and students.

Approximate Duration:

45 Minutes

Benchmarks with GLEs:

H-1B-H17 – Analyzing developments and issues in contemporary American society

GLEs:

- 54. Analyze contemporary issues in American society and suggest alternative solutions
- 55. Identify recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions and describe how they impact political and social institutions (e.g., presidential election of 2000)

Objectives:

1. Identify current events using print, audio, or visual media.
2. Compare historical events with current events by subject area.

Teacher Preparation:

- Read *Teacher Attachment 1*
- Review *Teacher Attachment 2*
- Make copies of *Student Attachment 1*

Materials/Equipment/Resources:

- Pen or pencils
- Copies of the attached students sheets for each student or group
- Class set of American History textbooks, magazines, newspapers, TV, etc.
- Optional – Computer resources for additional research using news websites

Lesson Procedures:

Set or Opener

Begin this activity by asking students what kinds of stories are currently in the news. If your students completed this activity at home, have them break into pairs and compare their events. If this is going to be a classroom activity, hold a brief discussion on current events and then begin your lesson by following the steps below.

Body of the Lesson

Give each student or group a copy of *Student Attachment 1*. Review the instructions with the students and explain to them that they will be using current events and historical events to analyze trends in America. They must read the directions and begin the activity individually, in groups, or with the teacher, depending on which you choose to assign. Allow the students to begin and monitor their progress for 15-30 minutes. If they do not finish the activity, they may take it home and finish or you may continue the next day.

Once students have complete the activity have them compare their answers with classmates or other groups. Have the students share their answers, review each answer, and discuss with the students how they arrived at their conclusions. Take your time and question students on some of the major topics that were covered with the charts and documents.

Closure

Have students correct their answers and keep the handouts for future reference.

Activities and Handouts:

- **Teacher Attachment 1** - *Teacher Notes*
- **Teacher Attachment 2** - *Teacher Resources*
- **Student Attachment 1** – *COMPARING PAST AND PRESENT EVENTS*

Assessment Items:

- Give students a current events quiz periodically in your class or remediation period
- Have students present their events activity to the class and create a quiz that assesses how well each student learned the presented material.
- Assign news or newspaper that students must watch or read each week and create quizzes that assess their knowledge of the resources.

Reference Links and Technology Connections:

- See *Teacher Attachment 1* and *2*

TEACHER NOTES

- This lesson is intended to open up a dialogue with students by using current events and comparing them to historical events that deal with the same topics.
- Make sure that students understand the connections of past and present events.
- This is an opened ended activity and may require that you assign students homework to complete this assignment. You may either assign the entire activity for homework or you may simply ask students to bring newspapers or magazines to use as prompts.
- If your school has internet access, many news websites now offer search tabs that will let the user find historical stories published on that site.
- The internet is one of the fastest mainstream ways to see updated news instantly. Many news sites are now offering complete news coverage that is current every thirty minutes.

TEACHER RESOURCES

WEBSITES

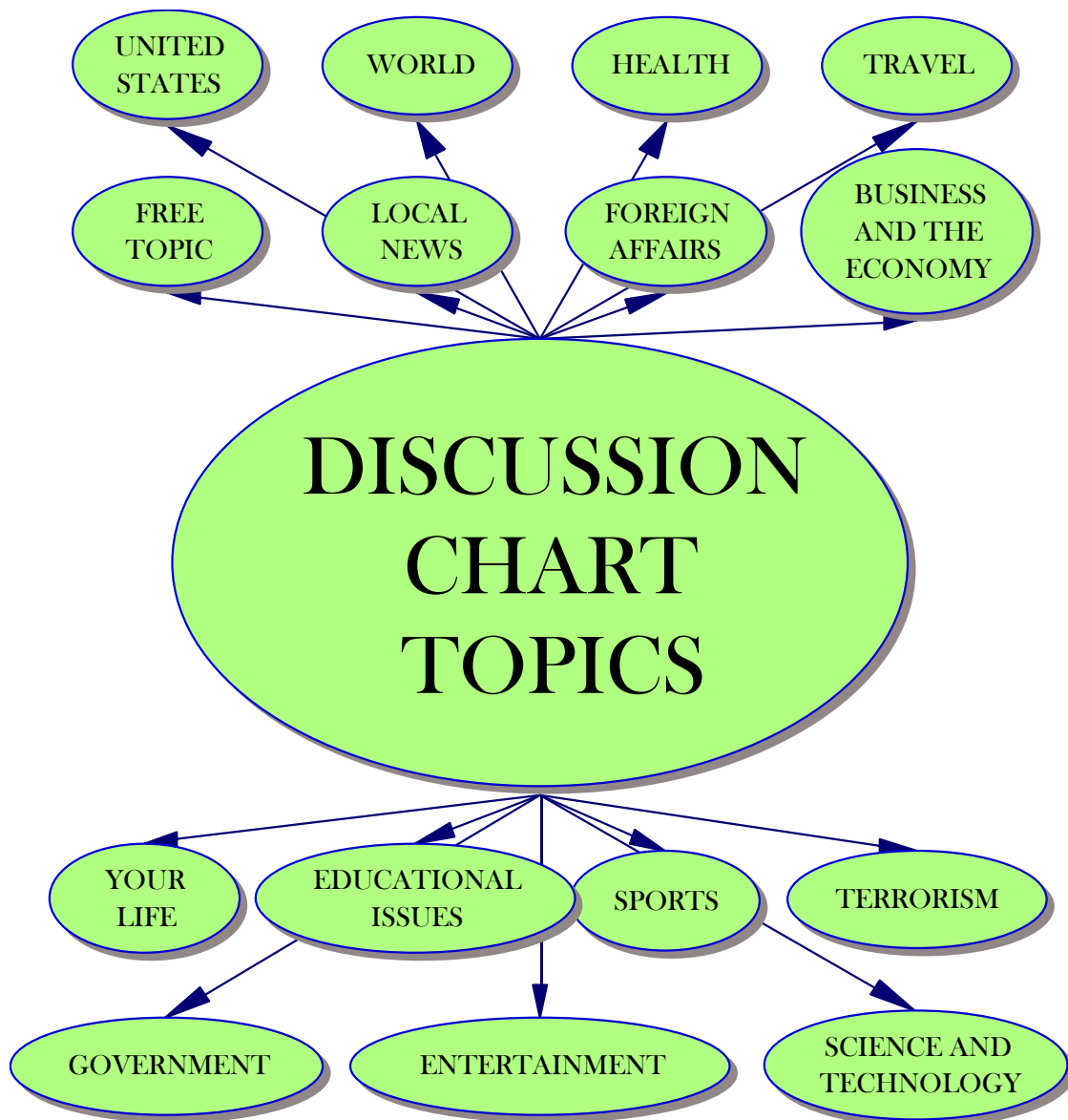
<http://www.cnn.com/> - Great overall news site that can be used for any topic.
<http://www.foxnews.com/> - Good overall news site that can be used for any topic
<http://www.2theadvocate.com/> - Local Baton Rouge news
<http://abcnews.go.com/> - Network television news site
<http://www.usatoday.com/> - Internet version of the national newspaper
<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/> - Internet version of the newspaper
<http://www.nwlouisiana.com/> - Local Shreveport news
<http://www.americanpress.com/> - Local Lake Charles news
<http://www.neworleanstribune.com/> - Local New Orleans news

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Have students do this activity over a period of weeks and use this activity as a current events discussion during the first five or ten minutes of class.
- Use the discussion chart to randomly choose one topic each day to discuss as a whole group.
- Have students create more specific categories to research and discuss. Example: One news category could be “Women’s Rights” instead of just civil rights.
- Have students predict how people during each time period felt when certain events happened. Example: How do you think the average American felt when the Korean War started?

CONNECTING PAST AND PRESENT EVENTS

INSTRUCTIONS: In this activity you will use the chart below to research or find one current event from each of the topic areas and write a brief summary of that topic. After you complete each current event topic, you will then use prior knowledge or resource material to list historical events that happened in the same topics.



EXAMPLE

GOVERNMENT:

- TODAY – *Yesterday, President Bush made an announcement that the United States would invest billions of dollars to send Americans back to the moon and maybe even Mars over the next twenty years.*
- IN HISTORY – *In the early 1960's, President Kennedy made a speech and announced that the United States would send a man to the moon, and in 1969 America reached that goal.*

GOVERNMENT:

- TODAY –

- IN HISTORY –

ENTERTAINMENT:

- TODAY –

- IN HISTORY –

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY:

- TODAY –

- IN HISTORY –

YOUR LIFE:

- TODAY –

- IN HISTORY –

EDUCATIONAL ISSUES:

- TODAY –

- IN HISTORY –

SPORTS:

- TODAY –

- IN HISTORY –

TERRORISM:

- TODAY –

- IN HISTORY –

FREE TOPIC:

- TODAY –

- IN HISTORY –

LOCAL NEWS:

- TODAY –

- IN HISTORY –

FOREIGN AFFAIRS:

- TODAY –

- IN HISTORY –

BUSINESS AND THE ECONOMY:

- TODAY –

- IN HISTORY –

UNITED STATES:

- TODAY –

- IN HISTORY –

WORLD:

- TODAY –

- IN HISTORY –

HEALTH:

- TODAY –

- IN HISTORY –

TRAVEL:

- TODAY –

- IN HISTORY –