**Current Events Year Long Unit** – class meets one time per week (though some learning activities may occur outside of that weekly time)

This course meets one time per week from October through the end of April. The idea I am trying will involve a monthly written assignment and presentation for each student [(a little like the unit shown here)](http://sites.sandiego.edu/globaleducation/case-studies/current-events-middle/). In addition, I wanted to introduce some of the concepts we have learned about in class, so each month will have a theme that will focus my lessons, their presentations and offer deeper opportunities for exploring perspective and connecting globally.

Global Competencies

1. *Investigate the World*
2. *Recognizing Perspectives*

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| **Stage 1 Desired Results** |
| ESTABLISHED GOALS CSSU Curriculum FrameworksSocial Studies Content Curriculum**Guiding Questions:**-How are events and time periods viewed from another nation’s perspectives?-What is the impact of interconnectedness within a global community? -What is the role of international relations on domestic events?-What/where are the current “hot spots” (current events connections)?**5th-8th Grade Inquiry Benchmarks****Conducting Research**An eighth grade student should be able to…-locate relevant materials such as print, electronic, and human resources**Analysis and Interpretation**An eighth grade student should be able to…-choose and implement appropriate methods for interpreting data, such as compare/contrast, infer, deduce, summarize, illustrate, generalize, sequence, synthesize, evaluate or justify.**Conclusions**-Identify similarities between past experiences and current investigations-explain relevance of findings to a local environmentEnglish Language Arts Standards – History/Social Studies-Grade 6-8* [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/6-8/2/) Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
* [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/6-8/7/) Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

English-Language Arts - Writing – Grade 8* [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.4](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/8/4/) Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
* [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.8](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/8/8/) Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

English Language Art Standards – Speaking and Listening – Grade 8* [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.4](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/SL/8/4/) Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
 | ***Transfer*** |
| *Students will be able to independently use their learning to…* Identify current events and issues around the worldExplain connections between specific historical trends and current eventsDescribe the way media perspectives influence newsRecognize the way a person’s perspectives influence views on events and trends.  |
| ***Meaning*** |
| UNDERSTANDINGS *Students will understand that…*World events (past and present) can be connected. Local, national and global events are often related to each otherWorld events are complex and complicated by multiple perspectivesSeparate skill sets are needed to report out on current issues in writing and speaking | ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS How do global, national and local events connect? What is the impact of interconnectedness within a global community?What are some varied perspectives from which we can view global issues?What is the role of international relations on domestic events?How do I effectively share about a current news event or issue both in writing and speaking?How do I effectively share my opinion in writing and speaking? |
| ***Acquisition*** |
| *Students will know…* Research options and strategies to find current events articlesClose reading and note taking strategies to use with news stories The key parts of a summary paragraphOrganizational components of a LEAF paragraphSpeaking skills that will communicate their topic, analysis and connectionsConnections between chosen issue or event (by teacher) and multiple issues and events around the world (chosen by students).Global events and issues are complex and there are many different views on any one event | *Students will be skilled at…**Making good choices in research**Reading for understanding with close reading strategies**Writing summary paragraphs that have sufficient information and solid organization in their own words.**Writing opinion paragraphs that answer questions with direct evidence and effective analysis**Writing summary and LEAF (analysis) paragraph effectively from sources**Speaking clearly about their chosen current issue and event**Public speaking strategies**Making connections between local, national and global events and issues.**Discussing and understanding different perspectives on current events and issues.*  |
| **Stage 2 - Evidence** |
| **Evaluative Criteria** | **Assessment Evidence** |
| * **Summary of article**

Summary shares key events clearly and coherently and is organized effectively with a lead, evidence and finisher. Summary is in student’s own words avoiding plagiarism. * **Opinion or Analysis of Article**

Student response uses LEAF organization style. In strong responses students make a claim and support them with evidence and their own words. * **Presentation to class**

Presenter shares information with the class using strong eye contact, volume and clarity. Presenter answers questions thoughtfully. * **Research and Notes**

Notes are organized using one of the shared structures. Citations for multiple sources included in MLA format.*Social Studies Assessment (Rounds two through 7)***Month One – Written Assessment Focus*** See criteria above

**Month Two – Exploring Media perspectives*** Written reaction demonstrates how varied perspectives affect news stories. Student’s comments show depth of thought and connection on at least three of their classmates’ posts.

**Month Three – Then and Now*** Each student presenter effectively explains the link between past and present in their monthly written response.
* Students connect presented events to historic trends or events the class has studied accurately and with evidence to back up their claim.

**Month Four - Local, National, Global Connections*** Investigated story is placed correctly and rationale for placement is clearly shared.
* Reflection demonstrates understanding of connections between local, national and global events.

**Month Five – Here and There*** Student clearly and coherently shares perspectives from “here” (U.S.) and “there” (global location of event) on assigned topic.
* Comparison chart clearly demonstrates understanding

**Month Six and Seven – Geographical Perspectives*** Students participate in online forum respectfully and thoughtfully
 | *Language Arts Assessment – Student Monthly Assessment (rounds 1-5)** **Summary of article**

Effectively share the key pieces of information in the news story. * **Opinion or Analysis of Article**

Respond effectively, and with depth, to one of the five given analysis, interpretation or significance questions. * **Presentation to class**

Present their article to the class articulating the key components of the event or issue, then share their analysis or opinion with the group. * **Research and Notes**

Students take effective notes on researched topic. Citation(s) included for sources researched.*Social Studies Assessment (Months two through 7 – each round represents one month’s worth of classes)***Month One – Written Assessment Focus*** Assessment and feedback of responses is focused on the writing, researching and speaking expectations above. This is designed to give students a clear understanding of the basic written expectations prior to more in depth current events study.

**Month Two – Exploring Media Perspectives*** Write a reaction to how different news agencies reported on your chosen topic this month. Record your reaction in Young Writer’s Project Blog platform. Students review and comment on their classmates’ posts.

**Month Three – Then and Now*** Presented current event is linked to one of the historic events, trends or themes we have studied this year.
* Complete then and now notes form as audience members.

**Month Four - Local, National, Global Connections*** Create a class ripple chart where students must place their investigated story and describe the connection it has to the theme. Write a reflection on the completed chart at the end of the round using Young Writer’s Project Blog platform.

**Month Five – Here and There*** Student written assignments show perspectives from “here” (U.S.) and “there” (global location of event) on assigned topic.
* Fill in a comparison chart comparing views on the assigned topic from “here” and “there”

**Month Six and Seven – Geographical Perspectives*** Consistent digital response to peers in global classroom about assigned event, trend or issue.
* Final Assessment – Students collaborate between classrooms to share viewpoints on issue(s) or events decided on by teachers in both classrooms.
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| **Stage 3 – Learning Plan** |
| *Summary of Key Learning Events and Instruction***October Focus: Introduction and Practice** **Lesson One (week 1)**1. Introduce rubric and current events schedule walking through basic expectations.
2. Research and Notes Practice: Students are handed an article (I used a Dogo News piece on mammoths this fall). They close read the article making tracks. We watch a short video about the news story. Student then flip over the article and write key pieces of information from memory. When finished we review plagiarism expectations and reasoning for using this note taking strategy Students will return to the article in future steps.
3. Summary: Students type a rough draft summary from their notes in class. When finished, students copy and paste created summary and go back to the article filling in key pieces of information, details and direct evidence they may have missed, bolding new information they added. Teacher copy of steps is projected. Student groups compare their work to teacher steps – class discussion on similarities and differences.

**Lesson Two (week 1)**1. Analysis: Class reviews analysis/opinion questions. Table groups choose one question they would answer and complete a LEAF paragraph organizer together based on their discussion. Table groups project their work and share out to the class. Wall chart filled out based on student feedback of what makes a strong analysis/opinion response.
2. Resources: Teacher introduces the current events resources page on the LA/SS page of our website. Linked here are documents and teacher sample that were already shared in class. In addition, there is a webpage multiple digital news resources. Teacher will introduce each one quickly, then students will explore for about half the class in pairs. At the end of the period pairs report back to the class which sites they found helpful and why.

 **October Presentations (weeks 2, 3, 4)** – Students present and submit assignments. Teacher focus is on constructive feedback on their presentations and detailed feedback on their written work. One class period at the month students will review their feedback from their written assignments and we will look at exemplars. Teacher focus is to kick start student thought about how they will write improved pieces for their November assignment.**November Focus: Media Perspectives** **Lesson Three (week 1)**1. Begin with a seven minute write. Choose an object for each table group. Students then use their writer’s notebooks to use two different perspectives when writing “about” the object. When finished, groups share out and discuss which perspectives they used.
2. Connect ideas to current issues – use a current topic (Debt ceiling debate worked well this fall) and use a jigsaw to explore the topic. Each table gets one article (three, four or five in each room). They read and take notes on the piece. When finished, students who read each of the articles are paired together. On a group concept map students discuss and organize key points their articles had in common and key differences. At the end, full class discussion on the different perspectives from different sources.

 **November Presentations** **(weeks 2, 3, 4)**: Students submit assignments and present their work to the class. Continued attention by teacher to both presentation skills and written content. Feedback given regarding use of multiple sources.**Lesson Four (after final presentations in week 4)** At the end of the month students will use their Young Writer’s Project (school blog platform) time to respond to the following prompt:* How did different news sources report on your chosen news story this month?
* What did you notice about different perspectives in other students’ presentations?
* How can an individual benefit from reading, hearing or viewing multiple sources on the same topic?

 Students will be expected to comment on at least three different responses throughout their grade. **December Focus: Then and Now****Lesson Five (week 1):** 1. Students will respond to the following seven minute write to start class. How do past and present events connect for over time? Choose one event from your family’s past and describe a connection to your life today. Students will Discuss as a group sharing ideas. Hand out list of trends, terms and issues we have studied thus far in our twentieth century curriculum. Some examples I have collected from our World War I unit (militarism, alliances, imperialism, nationalism, chemical weapons). Have students discuss list and come up with concrete examples we have studied for each term using class resources and table group discussion.
2. Introduce then and now connections form – this will be a notes table where they record connections between current stories and past trends/events. Students, as audience members, will be filling this out as they listen and participate in presentations over the course of the month.

**December Presentations (weeks 2, 3, 4):** Students submit assignments and present their work to the class. Continued attention by teacher to both presentation skills and written content. Student presentations will include their past and present connection – this will be presented as a mystery. Can you guess my historical connection? Students will record their guess, offer ideas and presenter will then reveal the correct response. At some point in December I hope to make a global connection to another classroom. I will not be presenting this to students at this point, but the work on my end will need to happen sooner rather than later to set up activities for midwinter and spring. **January Focus: Local, Global, National Connections****Lesson Six** (Week 1):1. Seven minute write for today will involve the following prompt: Draw a visual that shows the differences and the connections between global, national and local. Discuss what students came up with in table groups and as a class. Bridge discussion to current events.
2. Introduce the global issue we will be focusing on for this month. All current events articles must fit into this theme (still working out possibilities – sustainability, conflict).

**Lesson Seven** (Week 1):1. In class students will read or view a resource that defines and describes the global issue or issues they will be working with over the course of the month. On a graphic organizer students will define the issue(s) and draw out possible connections from their own background knowledge. Students will be assigned either a local, global or national perspective. Their story must come from the assigned location (Local – Vermont/New England, National – U.S., Global – outside the United States)
2. Introduce the ripple chart by giving a sample or two to students (teacher created or online sample). This large wall chart will be the place we will record all stories shared with the class.

 **January Presentations** (weeks 2, 3, 4): Students submit assignments and their work to the class. Continued attention by teacher to both presentation skills and written content. At the end of each presentation they will place their event in the appropriate ripple location. **Lesson Eight** (after week 4 presentations)For their seven minute write students will respond to the following prompt. Look for connections on our ripple chart across local, national and global lines. Choose one link of three. How are they connected? Students will discuss their choice at their table. As a group they will choose the connection they feel best about. Using string table groups will connect events on the chart and describe why they made those choices.  **February Focus: Here and There****Lesson Nine (**Week 1):Seven minute write will focus on the following prompt. What do you know about (teacher insert issue)? Students will discuss at their table briefly. Teacher will share links to two (or more) articles from different sources (These may be video, article or another type of source) in different parts of the world. Student pairs will explore the two (or ore) sources. On a notes sheet they will fill in what the articles have in common and how perspectives differ. This month’s work also fits well with a mini-unit on the war in the Pacific. If timing works, I may use lessons on Japanese and American perspectives as an introduction or complement to this work. **February Presentations (weeks 2, 3, 4**): Students submit assignments and their work to the class. Continued attention by teacher to both presentation skills and written content. Student work will focus on here and there perspectives in their opinion paragraph this week. **Class Connections**: I envision some time during January or February that early classroom connections will be made. Ideas that I have for this connection between classes are using Skype or video sharing for some early introductions. A pen pal (digital, most likely) connection between students could also begin connections. These will be more general and personal – not necessarily on content – in order to build rapport prior to work. **March Focus: Specific Global Issues****Lesson Ten**: Introduce students to technology options for this month. Prezi, ExplainEverything and Imovie will be presented as possible presentation platforms to use for their remaining work. Technology Educator and teacher will spend the first part of class showing each option. Students will choose one to work with in class to create a quick presentation responding to a prompt. These will be started in class and shared with the teacher digitally by the end of the week. This will give students an opportunity to practice with the platforms.**Lesson Eleven**: Introduction to topic(s) class will be focused on over the last month. With the idea that collaborative work will be coming with students from another place, topics will be chosen based on their geography or cultural relevance. I hope we will look to find issues that are relevant to my students and their counterparts, whether these are cultural, regional or global in nature. As classrooms prepare for the collaborative work, we will spend at least one class period exploring the topic(s). One example of a connection that could work:Issue – Energy or Nuclear Power, Connecting nation – Japan, Reasoning – This is a local (VT Yankee just closed), national (Energy debate) and global (Tsunami-Nuclear) issue that could spark thoughtful conversation.**March Presentations** (weeks 2, 3, 4): Presentation focus will outweigh the formal paragraph assessment this month as students will be expected to use a digital format to present their news story summary and their opinion. The assessment of their work will be made solely as they are presenting. **Lesson Twelve**: This will be several lessons or work sessions focusing on the collaboration between my classroom and a room in a different global location. Due to time differences, I anticipate giving students time in class to work on the digital collaboration, but their counterparts may not be available at that time. The final product – a digital presentation delving into perspectives on a global issue (or issues) will be worked finalized sometime in April.  **April Final Assignment**: Students will present their collaborative work to our class. In a best case scenario, both connected classrooms could be “present” as part of this final sharing. **Lesson Thirteen**: Using Young Writer’s Project, students reflect on their experiences in current events over the course of the year, particularly the global connections piece. Focusing Question: How did multiple perspectives on current events this year change the way you viewed world events?Students will use blog forum to comment and discuss perspectives.   |