

# TOWNSHIP OF UNION PUBLIC SCHOOLS CURRICULUM GUIDE



**English Department**

**EN502S  
Journalism**

**Adopted 06/19/2017**

Updated 1/22/19

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Township of Union Public Schools is to build on the foundations of honesty, excellence, integrity, strong family, and community partnerships. We promote a supportive learning environment where every student is challenged, inspired, empowered, and respected as diverse learners. Through cultivation of students' intellectual curiosity, skills and knowledge, our students can achieve academically and socially, and contribute as responsible and productive citizens of our global community.

## **Philosophy Statement**

The Township of Union Public School District, as a societal agency, reflects democratic ideals and concepts through its educational practices. It is the belief of the Board of Education that a primary function of the Township of Union Public School System is to formulate a learning climate conducive to the needs of all students in general, providing therein for individual differences. The school operates as a partner with the home and community.

## Course Description

Students discover how to evaluate information based on its primary purpose among seven main “Info Zones” (news, opinion, entertainment, advertising, publicity, propaganda and raw information). They will then have an opportunity to apply this skill to a compilation challenge of examples of news and information. Students explore how journalists “filter” information, or determine which events and issues to cover in a news cycle, by using four key criteria; they then apply them to both hypothetical and actual news events that present consistently difficult choices.

This course will also include learning a foundation of necessary skills to write for publishing and broadcast. Journalistic “Inverted Pyramid” writing style will be practiced, as well as targeting interesting topics, seeking and interviewing sources, drafting articles and editing copy. The students will maintain a portfolio of their work, some of which may be available to submit for publication. This course also will cover trends in professional mainstream media, the media’s effect on its audiences, and its place among our American constitutional rights. Journalism is available to sophomores, juniors, and seniors who are successful in required English courses.

## Standards At-A-Glance

	Reading	Writing	Speaking and Listening	Language
<b>Unit 1</b>	RI.11-12.2 RI.11-12.5	W.11-12.2 W.11-12.4 W.11-12.5 W.11-12.8	SL.11-12.1	L.11-12.3 L.11.12.6
<b>Unit 2</b>	RI.11-12.8 RI.9-10.9 RI.9-10.8	W.11-12.2 W.11-12.4 W.11-12.5 W.11-12.8 W.11-12.6.	SL.11-12.1.	L.11-12.3
<b>Unit 3</b>	RI.11-12.5 RI.11-12.6.	W.11-12.2 W.11-12.4 W.11-12.5 W.11-12.8 W.11-12.6.	SL.11-12.1.	L.11-12.3
<b>Unit 4</b>	RI.11-12.5 RI.11-12.6	W.11-12.7	SL.11-12.4	L.11-12.3 L.11.12.6

### Additional Standards

Unit	WIDA	Technology	21st Century / Career
1	ELP STANDARD 2: The Language of Language Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 8.1.12.A.2 Produce and edit a multi-page digital document for a commercial or professional audience and present it to peers and/or professionals in that related area for review.</li> <li>● 8.1.12.A.3 Collaborate in online courses, learning communities, social networks or virtual worlds to discuss a resolution to a problem or issue.</li> <li>● 8.1.12.D.1 Demonstrate appropriate application of copyright, fair use and/or Creative Commons to an original work.</li> </ul>	Standard 9.1 All students will demonstrate the creative, critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills needed to function successfully as both global citizens and workers in diverse ethnic and organizational cultures.
2	ELP STANDARD 2: The Language of Language Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 8.1.12.A.2 Produce and edit a multi-page digital document for a commercial or professional audience and present it to peers and/or professionals in that related area for review.</li> <li>● 8.1.12.A.3 Collaborate in online courses, learning communities, social networks or virtual worlds to discuss a resolution to a problem or issue.</li> <li>● 8.1.12.D.1 Demonstrate appropriate application of copyright, fair use and/or Creative Commons to an original work.</li> </ul>	Standard 9.1 All students will demonstrate the creative, critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills needed to function successfully as both global citizens and workers in diverse ethnic and organizational cultures.
3	ELP STANDARD 2: The Language of Language Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 8.1.12.A.2 Produce and edit a multi-page digital document for a commercial or professional audience and present it to peers and/or professionals in that related area for review.</li> <li>● 8.1.12.A.3 Collaborate in online</li> </ul>	Standard 9.1 All students will demonstrate the creative, critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills needed to function

		<p>courses, learning communities, social networks or virtual worlds to discuss a resolution to a problem or issue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 8.1.12.D.1 Demonstrate appropriate application of copyright, fair use and/or Creative Commons to an original work.</li> </ul>	<p>successfully as both global citizens and workers in diverse ethnic and organizational cultures.</p>
<b>4</b>	<p>ELP STANDARD 2: The Language of Language Arts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 8.1.12.A.2 Produce and edit a multi-page digital document for a commercial or professional audience and present it to peers and/or professionals in that related area for review.</li> <li>● 8.1.12.A.3 Collaborate in online courses, learning communities, social networks or virtual worlds to discuss a resolution to a problem or issue.</li> <li>● 8.1.12.D.1 Demonstrate appropriate application of copyright, fair use and/or Creative Commons to an original work.</li> </ul>	<p>Standard 9.1 All students will demonstrate the creative, critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills needed to function successfully as both global citizens and workers in diverse ethnic and organizational cultures.</p>

## Pacing Guide

	<b>Anticipated Length of Time (days)</b>
<b>Unit 1</b>	20 days
<b>Unit 2</b>	20 days
<b>Unit 3</b>	20 days
<b>Unit 4</b>	20 days

### Suggested Modifications

- Modified assessment tasks/rubrics
- Additional time for completion
- Paired activities
- Reading written instructions
- Providing notes/study guides
- Modeling and providing examples
- Non-verbal cues
- Bilingual dictionary use
- Pairing visual prompts with verbal presentations
- Highlighting key words and key strategies
- Preferred seating
- RTI
- Scaffolding complexity level of questioning
- Differentiated assignment of novels and short readings
- Assist with organization/planning
- Provide graphic organizers/partially completed activities
- Others as determined appropriate by IEP/504/I&RS plan/RTI plan/classroom instructor

### Interdisciplinary Connections

Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4
various topics based on student articles	historical perspectives on journalism free speech first amendment	ethics	various topics based on student articles

## Overview of Required Activities

	Required Activities	Resources
<b>Unit 1</b>	Analyzing articles Analyzing ledes Drafting ledes Drafting articles	<a href="#"><u>The New York Times</u></a> <a href="#"><u>The Star Ledger</u></a> <a href="#"><u>The Associated Press Style Guide</u></a> <a href="#"><u>CNN.com</u></a>
<b>Unit 2</b>	Memorize the first amendment Analyze each freedom in first amendment Explore the impact of watchdog journalism in American history and current media	<a href="#"><u>Checkology.org</u></a> <a href="#"><u>The New York Times</u></a> <a href="#"><u>The Star Ledger</u></a> <a href="#"><u>The Associated Press Style Guide</u></a> <a href="#"><u>CNN.com</u></a>
<b>Unit 3</b>	Create code of ethics	<a href="#"><u>Checkology.org</u></a> <a href="#"><u>The New York Times</u></a> <a href="#"><u>The Star Ledger</u></a> <a href="#"><u>The Associated Press Style Guide</u></a> <a href="#"><u>CNN.com</u></a> <a href="#"><u>SPJ.org</u></a>
<b>Unit 4</b>	Analyze feature articles Analyze feature ledes Draft feature ledes Analyze editorials Analyze columns Analyze reviews Draft a feature or opinion article	<a href="#"><u>Checkology.org</u></a> <a href="#"><u>The New York Times</u></a> <a href="#"><u>The Star Ledger</u></a> <a href="#"><u>The Associated Press Style Guide</u></a> <a href="#"><u>CNN.com</u></a>

### **Unit Summary**

Skills include reporting and assembling information into a news story, basic interviewing techniques, inverted pyramid story structure, and the Associated Press style guide to writing in Inverted Pyramid. Journalistic writing style of subject-verb-object and how to attribute quotes will develop both reporting and writing skills that are basic to editorial, advertising, public relations, and broadcast journalism.

### **Essential Questions**

**What types of questions should be answered in a story?**

**How are various types of stories organized?**

**How is journalistic writing distinguished from writing an essay or a report?**

**How are quotes used in a news or feature story?**

**What leads to balanced, thorough reporting?**

## **READING**

### **Critical Knowledge and Skills**

Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

### **Standards**

RI.11-12.2

RI.11-12.5

### **Suggested Materials/Educational Resources**

[The New York Times](#)

[The Star Ledger](#)

[The Associated Press Style Guide](#)

[CNN.com](#)

## **WRITING**

### **Critical Knowledge and Skills**

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

### **Standards**

W.11-12.2

W.11-12.4

W.11-12.5

W.11-12.8

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.

**Suggested Materials/Educational Resources**

The New York Times  
The Star Ledger  
The Associated Press Style Guide  
CNN.com

**SPEAKING AND LISTENING**

**Critical Knowledge and Skills**

**Standards**

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL.11-12.1

**Suggested Materials/Educational Resources**

The New York Times  
The Star Ledger  
The Associated Press Style Guide  
CNN.com

**LANGUAGE**

Critical Knowledge and Skills	Standards
<p>Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.</p> <p>Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.</p>	<p>L.11-12.3 L.11-12.6</p>

**Suggested Materials/Educational Resources**

[The New York Times](#)  
[The Star Ledger](#)  
[The Associated Press Style Guide](#)  
[CNN.com](#)

**ASSESSMENT PLAN**

District/School Formative Assessment Plan	District/School Summative Assessment Plan	
<p>Students will learn to write news articles in the Inverted Pyramid style by drafting practice ledes based on data sets, reordering IP articles that have been presented out of order, and drafting and peer editing articles.</p>	<p>Writing Portfolio</p>	
District/School Texts	District/School Supplementary Materials	
<p><a href="#"><u>High School Journalism</u></a> by Homer L. Hall</p>	<p>Scholastic Upfront Magazine</p>	
District/School Writing Tasks		
Task	Primary Focus	Secondary Focus
<p>Writing Portfolio</p>	<p>Inverted Pyramid writing style</p>	<p>Sources and angles</p>

**INSTRUCTIONAL BEST PRACTICES AND EXEMPLARS**

New York Times  
Star Ledger

CNN.com

## Unit 2: The First Amendment

### Unit Summary

1. Not only does a free press play a vital role in a robust democracy, it also emphasizes the power and importance of information — and that, in turn, affirms the civic and personal value of being news-literate. By focusing on First Amendment protections in action, this unit gives students a deeper, more personal understanding of the First Amendment’s value to citizens, of the ways its protections have changed and evolved over time, and of their own First Amendment rights.

The lesson features six key First Amendment Supreme Court cases that make available for student inquiry such issues as student speech in school, defamation and libel, flag-burning and regulation of the internet. Grappling with these six precedents also guides students to a deeper understanding of how the law was interpreted to apply to these issues. In addition, it prompts them to think carefully about the larger civic significance of each ruling and, by extension, of the First Amendment itself.

2. Commonly referred to as “the fourth estate,” the press has historically, though imperfectly, served as a check on government and corporate power in the United States. By introducing students to iconic examples of watchdog journalists and their work, this lesson continues this unit’s concentration on the outcomes and impact of the First Amendment on American society, both historically and today.

In each example, students will learn about an injustice that was exposed by watchdog journalism. Like the Supreme Court cases in the this unit, they will also explore famous cases of watchdog journalism. The work of Nellie Bly raises enduring issues relating to mental health and gender inequity; Upton Sinclair’s exposé of lax early-20th-century meatpacking industry standards invites students to review today’s food safety standards and explore more recent controversies in this area. Seymour Hersh’s reporting about the My Lai massacre can open student inquiries into other examples of wrongdoing during wartime and fuel a search for other examples of investigative war reporting.

3. Though the term “watchdog” is commonly associated with the press, citizens can and often do play this role as well. Not to be confused with practicing journalism — which involves gathering and verifying information from multiple credible sources, providing the necessary context and aspiring to be fair — “citizen watchdogging” is an act that documents and helps draw attention to injustice. In short, this unit gives you numerous ways to engage students’ ideas about modern civic participation and the changing relationship between citizens and journalists in breaking news environments.

**Essential Questions**

- **What five freedoms are protected by the First Amendment?**
- How do the five freedoms work together to strengthen American democracy?**
- What court cases have been most influential in shaping press protections and citizens’ rights to free expression under the First Amendment?**
- In what ways can a free press act like a “watchdog” on behalf of the public?**
- What are some of the most important examples of watchdog journalism in American history?**
- If the press sometimes acts like a watchdog, what is it protecting?**
- Who watches the watchdogs?**
- How can citizens play the watchdog role?**
- How do citizen watchdogs and journalists interact with one another?**
- What is the relationship between media technology and citizen watchdogs?**
- What issues or subjects are most in need of citizen watchdogs today?**
- Do particular issues or subjects lend themselves to “citizen watchdogging”? Are there some that do not?**

READING	
Critical Knowledge and Skills	Standards
Delineate and evaluate the reasoning in seminal U.S. texts, including the application of constitutional principles and use of legal reasoning (e.g., in U.S.	RI.11-12.8

Supreme Court majority opinions and dissents) and the premises, purposes, and arguments in works of public advocacy.

Analyze and reflect on (e.g. practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) documents of historical and literary significance, (e.g., Washington’s Farewell Address the Gettysburg Address, Roosevelt’s Four Freedoms speech, King’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail”, Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, etc.), including how they relate in terms of themes and significant concepts.

Describe and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and reasoning.

RI.11-12.9. Analyze and reflect on (e.g. practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) documents of historical and literary significance for their themes, purposes and rhetorical features, including primary source documents relevant to U.S. and/or global history.

Analyze and reflect on (e.g. practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) documents of historical and literary significance for their themes, purposes and rhetorical features, including primary source documents relevant to U.S. and/or global history.

RI.9-10.9.

RI.9-10.8

RI.11-12.9.

**Suggested Materials/Educational Resources**

[Checkology.org](http://Checkology.org)  
[The New York Times](http://TheNewYorkTimes.com)

The Star Ledger  
The Associated Press Style Guide  
CNN.com

**WRITING**

<b>Critical Knowledge and Skills</b>	<b>Standards</b>
<p>Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.</p> <p>Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</p> <p>Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.</p> <p>Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.</p>	<p>W.11-12.2  W.11-12.4  W.11-12.5  W.11-12.8</p>
<b>Suggested Materials/Educational Resources</b>	
<p><u>Checkology.org</u>  <u>The New York Times</u>  <u>The Star Ledger</u>  <u>The Associated Press Style Guide</u>  <u>CNN.com</u></p>	

**SPEAKING AND LISTENING**

<b>Critical Knowledge and Skills</b>	<b>Standards</b>
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Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.	SL.11-12.1
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**Suggested Materials/Educational Resources**

<a href="http://Checkology.org">Checkology.org</a> <a href="http://The New York Times">The New York Times</a> <a href="http://The Star Ledger">The Star Ledger</a> <a href="http://The Associated Press Style Guide">The Associated Press Style Guide</a> <a href="http://CNN.com">CNN.com</a>
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**LANGUAGE**

<b>Critical Knowledge and Skills</b>	<b>Standards</b>
Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.	L.11-12.3

**Suggested Materials/Educational Resources**

<a href="http://Checkology.org">Checkology.org</a> <a href="http://The New York Times">The New York Times</a> <a href="http://The Star Ledger">The Star Ledger</a> <a href="http://The Associated Press Style Guide">The Associated Press Style Guide</a> <a href="http://CNN.com">CNN.com</a>
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**ASSESSMENT PLAN**

<b>District/School Formative Assessment Plan</b>	<b>District/School Summative Assessment Plan</b>
<p>Students will gain a thorough understanding of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution by memorizing the amendment, debating legalities of article topics and content, and comparing U.S. press regulations to those of other countries.</p> <p>Students will learn about and analyze the court cases that helped shape the freedom of press and citizen's rights. They will present a powerpoint project on their</p>	<p>Writing Portfolio</p> <p>Completion of Modules on Checkology.org</p> <p>Powerpoint presentation</p>

assigned case.		
<b>District/School Texts</b>	<b>District/School Supplementary Materials</b>	
<u>High School Journalism</u> by Homer L. Hall	Scholastic Upfront Magazine Checkology.org	
<b>District/School Writing Tasks</b>		
<b>Task</b>	<b>Primary Focus</b>	<b>Secondary Focus</b>
Writing Portfolio	Thorough exploration of the First Amendment	Citizens Rights

<b>INSTRUCTIONAL BEST PRACTICES AND EXEMPLARS</b>		
New York Times Star Ledger CNN.com Scholastic Press Association		

## Unit 3: Practicing Quality Journalism

### Unit Summary

Students will be able to list and explain the seven major standards of quality journalism and apply them to differentiate between a credible news report and an unreliable news report. Students will be introduced to the major standard of quality journalism. It will help them understand their nature and rationale, provide them with the conceptual and analytical tools they need to evaluate the credibility of the information they encounter in their daily lives and, in some cases, critically respond to it. Acquire and use the skills and habits involved in critical and constructive thinking. Develop a pride in work and a feeling of self-worth, self-reliance, and self discipline. Develop a code of journalistic behavior based on moral and ethical principles. Work with peers to set rules for collegial decision making.

### Essential Questions

- Is all information created equal? Why or why not?
- What rules should journalists abide by when reporting a story and why?
- Are any journalistic standards impossible to achieve? If so, should those standards be abandoned?
- What is required to make a piece of information credible?
- When a source of news makes a mistake, how should it handle that mistake to maintain its credibility?
- What rules should journalists follow to ensure that the information they report is credible?
  
- How many different types of sources are there for news reports?
- Why are documents so important to the practice of quality journalism?
- Why do different kinds of news reports require different kinds of sources?
- Why do news organizations have strict policies about the use of anonymous sources? When might it be necessary to keep a source anonymous? Should the government ever be able to force journalists who have anonymous sources to reveal who they are?
  
- Is it possible for a piece of information to be perfectly unbiased or objective?
- What are some of the ways a piece of information can be biased?
- What can creators of information do to minimize the influence of their

**personal biases?**

**-How is information that is produced to be as neutral as possible different from information that is openly biased?**

**-If you were in charge of a news organization, what policies would you implement to minimize bias in its news reports?**

### READING

Critical Knowledge and Skills	Standards
<p>Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.</p> <p>Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.</p>	<p>RI.11-12.5</p> <p>RI.11-12.6.</p>
<b>Suggested Materials/Educational Resources</b>	
<p><u>The New York Times</u> <u>The Star Ledger</u> <u>The Associated Press Style Guide</u> <u>CNN.com</u> <u>SPJ.org</u></p>	

### WRITING

Critical Knowledge and Skills	Standards
<p>Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.</p> <p>Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</p> <p>Develop and strengthen writing as needed</p>	<p>W.11-12.2</p> <p>W.11-12.4</p> <p>W.11-12.5</p> <p>W.11-12.8</p>

<p>by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.</p> <p>Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.</p> <p>Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, share, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information</p>	<p>W.11-12.6.</p>
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**Suggested Materials/Educational Resources**

[The New York Times](#)  
[The Star Ledger](#)  
[The Associated Press Style Guide](#)  
[CNN.com](#)

**SPEAKING AND LISTENING**

<b>Critical Knowledge and Skills</b>	<b>Standards</b>
<p>Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.</p>	<p>SL.11-12.1</p>

**Suggested Materials/Educational Resources**

[Checkology.org](#)  
[The New York Times](#)  
[The Star Ledger](#)  
[The Associated Press Style Guide](#)  
[CNN.com](#)

LANGUAGE	
Critical Knowledge and Skills	Standards
Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.	L.11-12.3
Suggested Materials/Educational Resources	
<a href="http://Checkology.org">Checkology.org</a> <a href="http://TheNewYorkTimes.com">The New York Times</a> <a href="http://TheStarLedger.com">The Star Ledger</a> <a href="http://TheAssociatedPress.com">The Associated Press Style Guide</a> <a href="http://CNN.com">CNN.com</a>	

ASSESSMENT PLAN		
District/School Formative Assessment Plan	District/School Summative Assessment Plan	
Students will prove an understanding of responsible journalism vs. irresponsible journalism by creating a code of ethics, and participating in quizzes about libel.	Writing Portfolio Students will complete the modules on Checkology.org	
District/School Texts	District/School Supplementary Materials	
<a href="#">High School Journalism</a> by Homer L. Hall	Scholastic Upfront Magazine Checkology.org	
District/School Writing Tasks		
Task	Primary Focus	Secondary Focus
Writing Portfolio	Adherence to ethics code Practicing quality journalism	Advanced Inverted Pyramid writing style

INSTRUCTIONAL BEST PRACTICES AND EXEMPLARS
Checkology.org New York Times Star Ledger CNN.com SPJ.org Code of Ethics AP Style Guide

## Unit 4: Alternative Writing Styles

### Unit Summary

As the amount of information in existence grows at an unprecedented rate, filtering information is an increasingly essential news literacy skill. The foundational concepts of Info Zones help guide students to the vital realization that not all information is created equal and that the credibility of different types of information is often correlated with their purpose. By helping students discover the seven major primary purposes of information, you can help activate questioning purpose as a habit of mind.

Of course, most pieces of information have more than one purpose — a television show that is produced to be entertaining can also be informative, for example, or an advertisement produced to sell a product or service can also entertain — but this unit helps students understand that almost all the information they encounter has one primary purpose that has a significant effect on its level of credibility.

Skills include identifying and analyzing feature writing and opinion writing. Students will broaden their definition of the tenets of newsworthiness. Style rules will be relaxed to allow for more personality in the writing, while keeping within boundaries of ethical and responsible reporting.

### Essential Questions

**Does the purpose of a piece of information affect its credibility? Why or why not?**

**What are some of the main reasons that people create and share information?**

**What types of topics can most interest an audience?**

**What does it mean for something to be “newsworthy”?**

**What makes an issue or event “news,” and who decides?**

**What factors should be used to determine which issues and events get covered by journalists?**

**How should news organizations decide which news reports to feature as the top stories of the day?**

**When and how can we veer from Inverted Pyramid style writing?**

**How is journalistic writing distinguished from writing an essay or a report?**

**How is research used in forming an opinion?**

**What leads to balanced, thorough opinion writing?**

**When is commentary appropriate?**

**How do columns, reviews and blogs differ from Editorials?**

READING	
Critical Knowledge and Skills	Standards
Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.	RI.11-12.5 RI.11-12.6
Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.	
<b>Suggested Materials/Educational Resources</b>	
<a href="http://Checkology.org">Checkology.org</a> <a href="http://TheNewYorkTimes.com">The New York Times</a> <a href="http://TheStarLedger.com">The Star Ledger</a> <a href="http://TheAssociatedPress.com">The Associated Press Style Guide</a> <a href="http://CNN.com">CNN.com</a>	

WRITING	
Critical Knowledge and Skills	Standards
Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.	W.11-12.7
<b>Suggested Materials/Educational Resources</b>	
<a href="http://Checkology.org">Checkology.org</a> <a href="http://TheNewYorkTimes.com">The New York Times</a> <a href="http://TheStarLedger.com">The Star Ledger</a> <a href="http://TheAssociatedPress.com">The Associated Press Style Guide</a> <a href="http://CNN.com">CNN.com</a>	

SPEAKING AND LISTENING	
Critical Knowledge and Skills	Standards
Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear	SL.11-12.4

and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.	
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**Suggested Materials/Educational Resources**

[Checkology.org](http://Checkology.org)  
[The New York Times](http://The New York Times)  
[The Star Ledger](http://The Star Ledger)  
[The Associated Press Style Guide](http://The Associated Press Style Guide)  
[CNN.com](http://CNN.com)

**LANGUAGE**

<b>Critical Knowledge and Skills</b>	<b>Standards</b>
<p>Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.</p> <p>Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.</p>	<p>L.11-12.3 L.11-12.6</p>

**Suggested Materials/Educational Resources**

[Checkology.org](http://Checkology.org)  
[The New York Times](http://The New York Times)  
[The Star Ledger](http://The Star Ledger)  
[The Associated Press Style Guide](http://The Associated Press Style Guide)  
[CNN.com](http://CNN.com)

**ASSESSMENT PLAN**

<b>District/School Formative Assessment Plan</b>	<b>District/School Summative Assessment Plan</b>
Students will write ledes for feature articles based on data sets, and will prove ability	Writing Portfolio

to write features and opinions by drafting a feature article based on hallway observation, and an opinion article based on their choice of topic as appropriate to our newsworthy topics lessons.	Students will complete modules on Checkology.org.	
<b>District/School Texts</b>	<b>District/School Supplementary Materials</b>	
<u>High School Journalism</u> by Homer L. Hall	Scholastic Upfront Magazine Checkology.org	
<b>District/School Writing Tasks</b>		
<b>Task</b>	<b>Primary Focus</b>	<b>Secondary Focus</b>
Writing Portfolio Modules on Checkology.org	Feature writing style Determine primary focus of a publication.	Sources and journalistic research

**INSTRUCTIONAL BEST PRACTICES AND EXEMPLARS**

New York Times  
Star Ledger  
CNN.com