

Mark Twain Boyhood Home & Museum

Lesson Plan for *“Agricultural Paper”*

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School: Chariton County Schools City: Salisbury and Keytesville State:MO

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Hannibal, Missouri

LESSON PLAN *How I Edited an Agricultural Paper Once*

Concept or Topic: Editorials and Articles Fact vs. Fiction		Suggested Grade Level: 9 th Grade
Subject: Communication Arts		Suggested Time Frame: 3-5 days
Objective(s): Students will describe editorial style writing providing 3 supporting details. Students will create written material in the form of an article with newspaper features.		
State Standards: CA 7, CA 1.8, CA 1.10, CA 2.1, CA 2.3		
Assessment Options: To assess each student’s knowledge of editorial writing they will be assigned a homework assignment to find an example of and editorial after discussing its features in class. The next class period each student will present their find and explain supporting details of their editorial, and the class will discuss whether it is an editorial or not. To assess each student’s ability to prepare and write articles a rubric will be presented to them, and they will write their own article following that rubric.		

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Vocabulary:

Misgivings
Editorial
Article
Figurative
Cadaverous
Desolate
Rudiments
Superfluous

Subject Area Integration:

Agriculture science will be integrated in this lesson as the students research and present their own articles about factual or fictional agriculture.

Background Information: Before reading the story we will discuss the student's background knowledge of Mark Twain's use of humor in his writings and about their knowledge of news writing. After reading we will discuss their knowledge of the misguided information that Twain presents as the editor.

Materials:

The Best Short Stories of Mark Twain – How I Edited an Agricultural Paper Once
Internet Access

Technology:

www.mda.mo.gov

Missouri Department of Agriculture

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<http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/news/index.htm>

News writing with Scholastic editors

www.nytimes.com

The New York Times

www.time.com

Time Magazine

www.agriculturenews.com

Agriculture News

Related Twain Quotes/Passages:

I am personally acquainted with hundreds of journalists, and the opinion of the majority of them would not be worth tuppence in private, but when they speak in print it is the newspaper that is talking (the pygmy scribe is not visible) and then their utterances shake the community like the thunders of prophecy.

- speech, 2/1873

This shows the importance of the written word, specifically in news writing.

It has become a sarcastic proverb that a thing must be true if you saw it in a newspaper. That is the opinion intelligent people have of that lying vehicle in a nutshell. But the trouble is that the stupid people--who constitute the grand overwhelming majority of this and all other nations--do believe and are moulded and convinced by what they get out of a newspaper, and there is where the harm lies.

- "License of the Press" speech

This relates to the ability to identify fact versus fiction in newsprint.

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Lesson Sequence:

Hook/Intro:

The students will be introduced to two writings about Taylor Swift. One is an editorial (that they may disagree with) and one is an article. As a class we will make a Venn diagram including the similarities and differences of the topic focus.

The teacher will tell the students that one writing is an editorial and one is an article and the students must identify which one is which from recent vocabulary practice.

Teaching of the Concept:

Once the difference of editorials and articles is made the class will read the agriculture story to decide if it is an editorial or article. When it is clear to all why it is an editorial the class will then start a project to write their own editorials, using fact or fiction. (Define, give attributes, examples, etc.)

Suggested Questions:

What is the difference between an editorial and an article?
Is an editorial based in fact, fiction, both, or something else?
What is the difference between objectivity and subjectivity? Give examples.

Learning Activity:

The students will peer review their editorials and decide whether the other students work is fact or fiction along with reviewing their editorial skills.

Review/Closure:

As a class we will discuss the importance of editorial and opinionated writings in today's media and the ability to be informed so

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that such opinions can be critiqued in an objective manner.

Homework:

The students will be asked to find their own editorial and when they bring them to class the next day they will read them aloud and the class will discuss whether or not they are good examples of an editorial.

The students will also be asked to write their own editorial on a topic in which they are personally motivated using the attached rubric.

Strategies for Exceptional Students:

- Students may be asked to write a fact and fiction editorial on the same topic.
- Students may evaluate articles circling facts and drawing a box around opinions.
- Students may collaborate in pairs or groups to draw conclusions.

Suggested Follow-Up Activities:

- Follow-up activities could include completing a full newspaper so the students could learn different styles of news writing and learn the technological aspect of news layout.
- Compare and contrast two local newspapers and determine which is more objective, which is more opinionated.
- Watch youtube news clips and compare/contrast Fox News and MSNBC. Identify facts and opinions.

Taylor Swift Editorial

Taylor Swift can't sing **Country Standard Time Editorial, December 2008**

Taylor Swift can't sing live. That is the unfortunate truth after seeing her perform on the Country Music Association awards in November and again at the Grammys concert this week. She offered by far the worst performance at the CMAs with her take on her hit single *Love Story*. And at the Grammys, she butchered Brenda Lee's *I'm Sorry*, which morphed into her own better sounding *White Horse*.

This is not meant as any sort of personal bash against Swift. For non believers, check out the positive review given ["Fearless"](#), although that review makes clear that her biggest liability by far was her singing. Swift does well on the CD when the pace is more uptempo. Her writing is of quality whether with others or solo. She deserves a lot of credit for that.

But like the awards show and Grammy concert, when she sticks to ballads, she exposes herself badly as someone who is not a top notch singer. It really is amazing how poor the live televised performances were given how popular a singer she has become. And while we have not seen her live in concert, the reports are about the same from those who have.

Swift, whose not exactly hard core country in a pop world, certainly is talented - she writes good songs as evidenced by "Fearless." She sticks to themes she knows something about - teen love. (although she is soon going to get beyond her teen years and have to figure out how to gracefully age while keeping/expanding her fan base.) And that is why she attracts a young, female audience.

What may have propelled her career is a big marketing campaign and her reaching out to fans on the internet as a key component of the strategy (myspace.com for those living on another planet with regard to Swift). Remember, it's not always the best songs or movies or books that do the best at the cash register. Sometimes other forces are at play.

Maybe that's the case here as well with Swift. Nice, friendly, clean girl persona (well, she did slightly veer into a he said/she said spat with brother Jonas about the end of their relationship) and songs that are commercially appealing and resonate with her fans.

But it sure would be nice if the girl could sing.

<http://www.countrystandardtime.com/d/editorial.asp?xid=304>

Taylor Swift Article

Taylor Swift and Other Stars Perform for a Waterlogged BamaJam Crowd
Blake Shelton, John Anderson, Luke Bryan Also Perform During First Day of Festival
June 5, 2009; Written by Melissa Loncaric Miller



Taylor Swift

Photo Credit: Melissa Loncaric Miller

ENTERPRISE, Ala. -- Day one of the second annual BamaJam Music and Arts Festival kicked off on Thursday afternoon (June 4) here with a fantastic performance by [Jamey Johnson](#). Or so I heard. Unfortunately, I -- and thousands of others -- missed his entire set while sitting in traffic en route to the festival grounds.

In addition to Johnson, Thursday's lineup included [Luke Bryan](#), [John Anderson](#), [George Jones](#), [Blake Shelton](#) and headliner [Taylor Swift](#).

Hopefully, the traffic snarls will ease for Friday and Saturday's shows. However, attendance figures for last year's BamaJam were well over 100,000, and this year is expected to be even bigger, with folks traveling from throughout the U.S. and at least six other nations.

Bryan, a Georgia boy, had no trouble at all relating to the Southern masses, wasting no time finding out the local team of choice

-- Alabama or Auburn. (For the record, it was 'Bama.)

Bryan was rolling through his list of hits, including, ["We Rode in Trucks"](#) and "Good Directions" (the [Billy Currington](#) hit he co-wrote), when the black clouds came rolling in. By the end of ["Country Man,"](#) those with umbrellas had them up while those without them were singing along in the rain.

Before long, Bryan announced, "It's gonna be getting dark soon," as the band kicked up "Fishin' in the Dark." The song became something of a metamorphosis that included Collective Soul's "Heaven Let Your Light Shine Down," back to "Fishin' in the Dark" and then into [Brooks & Dunn's "Hillbilly Deluxe"](#) before returning for the ending of "Fishin'" -- and all without missing a beat. He finished up his set with ["All My Friends Say."](#)

Even before Anderson took to the stage, rumors of a surprise guest began spreading through the crowd. As feisty as ever, Anderson belted out one hit song after another including, "I've Got It Made," ["Money in the Bank"](#) and ["Straight Tequila Night."](#) And before we knew it, one of Anderson's old friends, George Jones, greeted the crowd and proceeded into "He Stopped Loving Her Today" while Anderson provided guitar support and cheered along with the crowd.

"I learned a lot about this business from watching him," Anderson said of Jones. "He is truly a living legend."

Shelton, in all of his 6-foot-5 glory, was next on the main stage and joined the party with ["The More I Drink,"](#) "The Baby" and his latest single, "I'll Just Hold On." Before even 15 minutes had passed, the Alabama heat had the Oklahoma native in a sweat, but it soon washed away by the on-again, off-again rain.

Not one to pass up the chance to sing a good song, even if he didn't write it, Shelton treated the crowd to [Hank Williams Jr.'s](#) "If Heaven Ain't a Lot Like Dixie," [Conway Twitty's](#) "Tight Fittin' Jeans" and even the "Free Credit Report Dot.com" song we all seem to know.

As security guards watched thousands of kids, preteens and teens started making their way to the front of the stage, the production crew was sweeping water from the performance area in preparation for the night's finale -- an appearance by Taylor Swift.

I must say, it was quite strange to see a huge production -- complete with a complex stage, wardrobe changes, a massive video screen and slew of dancers -- while looking into the mass of rained-on, shivering folks with muddy toes and flip-flop-clad feet.

With the white stage in place, the red curtains were lifted, revealing Swift's band all decked out in band uniforms. Dressed in the same style, complete with a hat, Swift appeared at the top of the stage singing her latest hit, "[You Belong With Me.](#)" She approached the end of the catwalk while three cheerleaders helped create one of the most-photographed moments of the night as Swift revealed a sparkly dress she had hiding beneath one of those rip-away outfits she's becoming famous for.

Swift has transformed from a sweet, slightly shy gal onstage into a woman providing a solid hour and a-half of photo-op after hair-flinging photo op. There was no lack of feisty onstage banter, dramatic moves, wardrobe changes and drama in the form of videos, dancers and even a little furniture-throwing on Swift's behalf. (Was that a real chair she tossed?)

Not one to leave her fans without an encore, she finished the night off with her famous water-drenched performance of "[Should've Said No.](#)" By the end of the evening, it was hard to tell the drenched country stars from their waterlogged fans.

The BamaJam Music and Arts Festival continues with performances through Saturday night with [Kid Rock](#) closing out the festival.

<http://www.cmt.com/news/country-music/1613379/taylor-swift-and-other-stars-perform-for-a-waterlogged-bamajam-crowd.jhtml>

Balderdash

Research Report: Fact or Fiction Article

Student Name: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Internet Use	Successfully uses suggested internet links to find information and navigates within these sites easily without assistance.	Usually able to use suggested internet links to find information and navigates within these sites easily without assistance.	Occasionally able to use suggested internet links to find information and navigates within these sites easily without assistance.	Needs assistance or supervision to use suggested internet links and/or to navigate within these sites.
Graphic Organizer	Graphic organizer or outline has been completed and shows clear, logical relationships between all topics and subtopics.	Graphic organizer or outline has been completed and shows clear, logical relationships between most topics and subtopics.	Graphic organizer or outline has been started and includes some topics and subtopics.	Graphic organizer or outline has not been attempted.

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Paragraph Construction	All paragraphs include introductory sentence, explanations or details, and concluding sentence.	Most paragraphs include introductory sentence, explanations or details, and concluding sentence.	Paragraphs included related information but were typically not constructed well.	Paragraphing structure was not clear and sentences were not typically related within the paragraphs.
First Draft	Detailed draft is neatly presented and includes all required information.	Draft includes all required information and is legible.	Draft includes most required information and is legible.	Draft is missing required information and is difficult to read.
Mechanics	No grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors.	Almost no grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors	A few grammatical spelling, or punctuation errors.	Many grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Quality of Information	Information clearly relates to the main topic. It includes several supporting details and/or examples.	Information clearly relates to the main topic. It provides 1-2 supporting details and/or examples.	Information clearly relates to the main topic. No details and/or examples are given.	Information has little or nothing to do with the main topic.
Partner Work	Students worked well with their partners, read entire article, and discussed article with the author.	Students worked well with partners, skimmed articles, and discussed with author.	Students did not work well with partners, and skimmed articles.	Students did not work well with partners.

Comments:

Score: _____