
IN THE NEWS

This week's Teacher's Corner prepares students to practice journalism skills. Many news stories follow a specific structure that makes writing and reading them much easier. This activity allows students to practice deconstructing, or taking apart, a news article to explore the sections of a news story. This activity can be used separately, or can build upon the ideas presented in Week 1 of this month's Teacher's Corner.

LEVEL

Intermediate to Advanced

LANGUAGE FOCUS

Reading, writing (primary focus); listening, speaking (secondary focus)

GOALS

During this activity students will:

- explore a news article
- develop their skills in analyzing a news story

MATERIALS

- Teacher: whiteboard/chalkboard, markers or chalk, computer and speakers
- Students: pencils or pens, notebooks, or writing paper

PREPARATION

1. Read through all the materials carefully.
2. Prior to class, read the story [Skateboarding: A Tool for Cultural Diplomacy?](#) The story includes a video at the top of the page as well as an audio transcript of the story. Both of these will be used in the activity.
3. Print out the *News Story Jigsaw Cards* in Appendix 1. Make one copy of the materials in Appendix 1 for each team of students. Be sure to cut out the text boxes and then mix up the sections before passing them out to students.

ACTIVITY PART ONE: WARM UP

1. Begin the class activity by asking students if they skateboard. If any of the students skateboard, have them explain to the class what skateboarding is. If none of the students skateboard, then go straight to the video.
2. Next, play the video *Naftalie Williams: "Skateboarding: A Tool for Cultural Diplomacy."* At this point the students do not need to take notes. Have them watch the video to see skateboarding in action and hear some of the details that will be presented in the news article.

- a. Note: If students are familiar with skateboarding, the video can be skipped. However, if students are not familiar with skateboarding, the video provides a helpful visual aid to show them the sport.

ACTIVITY PART TWO: NEWS STORY JIGSAW

1. Begin the class activity by having the students form pairs or small groups. Each group should be between two to four students. These groups will work as a team for the entire activity.
2. Give each team the *News Story Jigsaw Cards* in Appendix 1.
3. Provide the class a few moments to read through the sections of the story.
4. Next, play the audio version of the story.
5. Have the teams listen to the audio version of the story. As they listen, the teams should arrange the *News Story Jigsaw Cards* in the correct order.
6. After students have placed the parts of the story in order, play the audio again so students can listen and follow along.

ACTIVITY PART THREE: JUST THE FACTS

1. Begin this section of the activity by writing the following on the board:
 - a. Who?
 - b. What?
 - c. When?
 - d. Where?
 - e. Why?
 - f. How?
2. Tell the students that an effective news story includes the answers to those questions because they answer all the basic facts a reader will want to know.
3. Next, tell the pairs/small groups to take out a sheet of paper and a pen or pencil. Working in their pair/small groups, have the students read the story again and identify the answers to the “Wh” questions and the “How” question listed above.
 - a. Note: During this first step, the pairs/small groups can keep their answers simple. For example, in response to “Who?” students can write *Neftalie Williams*. For “What?” they can write *skateboarding*.
4. Once students have identified the basic answers to the questions listed in step 1, have them read through the story again. This time instruct them to underline parts of the story that answer the “Wh” and “How” questions listed above.
 - a. Note: The goal in this step is to get students to engage in *active reading*. In active reading, students do more than read and memorize the details of a story. Instead they work to understand the meaning and purpose of an article.
5. Once the teams have completed step 4, review the answers with the entire class. Go through the “Wh” and “How” questions one-by-one and have the different pairs/small groups share their answers with the class.



Homework Activity:

For homework, have the students write a paragraph or small essay. In the assignment, have students write about their own hobby or activity they would like to share with the world like Neftalie Williams does with skateboarding.

For more on working with the “5 Ws and H” questions check out [Using Journalism Skills in the Language Classroom](#).

Appendix 1: News Story Jigsaw

Skateboarding involves riding and performing tricks on a small oval board attached to four wheels. It can be considered a recreational activity, an art form, or a method of transportation.

Neftalie Williams says skateboarding is his passion.

“When I'm skateboarding, I feel free. It gives me the space to do what I want to do and sort of tune out the rest of the world. All I do is what feels good to me, what feels great under my feet and it lets me belong to a larger community. So I feel it all, all at the same time.”

As a young adult, Williams gained a larger view on skateboarding.

“Right when I got to be about 20 years old, that's when I decided that not only was skateboarding important, but it's something that I should really, really be involved in --- not just working on being an amateur sponsor skater, but that skateboarding meant more to more people and it was a way to sort of connect communities everywhere.

"So, for me, I started thinking about skating in a broader context. I ended up putting together my own skateboarding camp for kids in New England, because that was me wanting to give back to the sport that gave me so much life. And a lot of my good friends have now become pro skaters and they were counselors at my camp at that time. So, that was my first foray into making things bigger for skateboarding as a whole.”

Neftalie Williams is a researcher and lecturer with the Annenberg School of Communication and Journalism at the University of Southern California (USC). He teaches a course called “Skateboarding and Action Sports in Business Media and Culture.”

Williams studied skateboarding in college and received a master’s degree in Public Diplomacy from USC. He is the first professor in the United States to teach the sport.

“I am the first professor of skateboarding and action sports here in the U.S., especially at a major university, USC. I've been looking at how skateboarding can be used as a tool for cultural diplomacy. So, when it came time to bring the class together, they knew that I'd been working out in the field in Cuba and Brazil and South Africa and that we were trying to find new ways to engage youth all over the world.

"So, when it came time to propose having a class that talked about it, they looked at the fact that I had the experience, that I also had all the ties within the skateboarding network to bring in great people -- leaders in the field -- and that we were really also looking at the role of gender in new sports and how to actually make inroads and communicate with our youth. They thought it was a really great idea and we went forward.”

The course has proven to be popular among students. But Williams has kept the class size small, permitting just 25 students to officially register for the course.

Examining skating as a tool for cultural diplomacy worldwide, Williams joined forces with the U.S. State Department, becoming the first skateboarding and academic sports envoy in U.S. history.

“One of the things I'm the most proud of is being the first skateboarding envoy for the U.S. government. We worked with the embassy in the Netherlands to engage the Syrian refugees who'd been granted asylum in the Netherlands. It was an amazing project. And, not only was it engaging the Syrian refugees, but it was also engaging the youth of the Netherlands. Both of those groups are going to be the future of the Netherlands populace.

"So, by having them both together they got to know one another, be totally engaged with each other and to spend time knowing what the future of the Netherlands was going to look like. And it wasn't just, 'this is a project for those kids' or 'this is just something for the elite.' For some of those kids it was the first time they ever got to see skateboarding up close. And they all became immediate parts of the skateboarding community.”

Because the skateboarding diplomacy project was so successful in the Netherlands, the State Department has asked for Williams’s help in creating skateboarding projects in other countries.

“So we're creating a plan right now to take skateboarding globally as an envoy. Some of the other countries that the U.S. government would like to engage using skateboarding as a tool for cultural diplomacy are Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, Cambodia and Ethiopia.”

In addition to his work empowering and uniting skateboarding communities, Neftalie Williams is chairman of Cuba Skate, designed to create people-to-people exchange between communities in Cuba and the U.S.

“Cuba Skate is our nonprofit that's based in D.C. and here in L.A. and what we do is we bring boards back and forth to the kids that are in Cuba and we also promote educational exchange between the skaters that are here, skaters globally and the skaters that are in Cuba.

"So one of the main things that are important with our working with Cuba Skate is that there are no skate shops on the island. So, what we want to do is foster entrepreneurship in the youth so that they can create their own skate shops, their own cooperatives, give them a blueprint to look at how businesses are run here in skateboarding, [and] how they can run their own educational facilities there in Cuba.”

A major issue in the Cuban skateboarding community is its growing female membership.

“Cuba has a very large skate population and it's growing all the time. With skateboarding being moved to the Olympics hopefully in the future, it's nice to see that so many women are starting to take up skateboarding there and that there is no disparity between the men and women on the island.”

However, Williams says there are a few barriers Cuba Skate faces.

"The biggest obstacles that we face in Cuba skate is that we still have travel restrictions, there's still an embargo in place and that makes our work a little difficult. The good thing, though, is that we have our hearts in a light place because we know that progress is being made on both sides."

Neftalie Williams believe skateboarding teaches self-expression, among other things.

"One of the most amazing thing that skateboarding teaches you is how to re-imagine yourself and the world around you. That's very important because we have skaters all over the world who, particularly in Cuba, don't have access to resources. So, they've got to now look at themselves and figure out, 'how do I exist in this space?'"

"[What] skateboarding also teaches you is how to persevere. Because there aren't people to teach you how to do tricks or having large teams involved in the skate, you learn how to do it on your own. The other thing is skateboarding teaches you is to build a family and to build a community. That's amazing because most sports don't do that. This is something that's just inherent in skateboarding."

Neftalie started in skateboarding as a teenager. He says he, and other neighborhood kids, chose skateboarding because bicycles were too costly.

"Skateboarding was something that all the kids in my building started doing after we looked at how expensive it was to get bikes and so it was really something great to be involved in. So it didn't matter what part of town you were from; skateboarding was something that everyone got into."

Williams says the sport has given him so much. He says he hopes his work in skateboarding and the community will help ensure that the next generation of leaders is smarter and more culturally aware.

"Skateboarding to me is freedom. It's family. It's education. It's transportation. It's really the most amazing thing in the whole wide world. It gives us the freedom to do whatever we want anywhere. And that's something that...that's the most important thing to me. That freedom and that ability to communicate globally."