



Spanish American War- Yellow Journalism “Remember the Maine”

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85066387/1898-02-18/ed-1/seq-1/>

Overview/Prior Knowledge

In prior lessons, students received background information on the Spanish American War and the relationship between Cuba and the United States. Students are also familiar with vocabulary words from this unit including: *muckrakers*, *yellow journalism*, and *imperialism*. Yellow journalism is a type of reporting that emphasizes the sensational over accurate, fact-based reporting. Yellow journalism was one of the many factors that contributed to the outbreak of the Spanish American War. The sinking of the battleship, the U.S.S. Maine in the Havana harbor, demonstrates yellow journalism’s influence on events of this historical period and beyond.

Objective

- The students will identify words and terms used by yellow journalists to sensationalize events.
- The student will apply yellow journalistic techniques to sensationalize reporting on the Spanish American War.

Time Required

50 minutes

Recommended Grade Range

6-8; 9-12

Subject/Sub-Subject

U.S. History, World History, English Language Arts

Standards

Social Studies

Mississippi: 1. Understand the role of the United States in the world geo-political system.

- a. Recognize the effects of U.S. public opinion and U.S. policies on other peoples and countries around the world. (DOK 1)

Mississippi: 4. Understand civil rights and human rights in the contemporary world.

- a. Identify and describe the social and economic circumstances of the world’s indigenous peoples

and assess the causes and effects of those circumstances. (DOK 2)

Mississippi: 5. Understand economic development, economic globalization and global resource use.

- a. Use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to explain the geographic reasons of economic interactions among people, places, and environments of the world.
- d. Identify and analyze the ways in which innovations in transportation and communication networks impact the world. (DOK 3)

English Language Arts

CCSS HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES

ELA-L-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.

ELA-L-RH.6-8.6 Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g. loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

Library of Congress - Teaching with Primary Sources Skills:

- Identify who created the primary source, when, and for what purpose
- Use previous knowledge to place primary sources into historical context
- Examine primary sources closely to form conjectures about their meaning and intent
- Investigate issues of cause and effect, causality, context, and continuity and change

Highlighted Strategies:

- Headlines
- Photographic Analysis/Spiraling Questions
- KWL
- Quick Write

Credits:

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Materials:

- Primary Sources – See Resource Guide at the end of this document.
- KWL Chart
- Projector
- Strips of paper
- Tape

Procedures

Introduction

The teacher will use a Know, Want to Know, and Learn (KWL) chart to determine how much the students know and want to learn about the Spanish American War and yellow journalism. At the end of the lesson, the students will record what they learned in the last column of the chart.

During

Visual Discovery: Spanish American War Yellow Journalism Newspaper

- The teacher will use images of historical newspapers to teach about yellow journalism and the outbreak of the Spanish American War.
 - The lesson will begin with a projection of the front page of the *San Francisco Call* newspaper (**primary source 1**). The students will analyze the headlines to find specific words used in the newspaper headline and various article headlines and make predictions about newspaper and article content.
- The teacher will project the primary source image so it is large and clear, visible for all students in the classroom. The students will need to be able to notice details in the images to properly analyze them.
- The teacher will ask carefully sequenced questions that lead to discovery and deeper analysis of primary source 1. The teacher will encourage the students to think of themselves as detectives, which will help foster analysis and understanding the image. The teacher will ask questions that focus on students' direct observations and gradually guide students to higher-orders of thinking questions.
 - The teacher will begin with the gathering evidence level of questioning (have students find details or evidence they can touch). The teacher will ask:
 1. What do you **see** in this image?
 2. What is the first thing that jumps out at you?
 3. What do you **notice**?
 4. Describe the location.
 5. What are the people wearing?
 - The students will interpret the image (have students make inferences based on evidence previously gathered from the image). At this level of questioning, the teacher will encourage students to **think** about the scene. Students will be asked to support their interpretations by citing evidence from the image. The teacher will ask:
 1. What do the people appear to be doing?
 2. What does it look like is happening in this image?
 3. Who do we think was involved in this incident?
 4. What do the words in this headline mean?
 5. What event are the writers of the headline referring to?
 6. What do you think this image could be?
 - After gathering evidence and making interpretations based on the evidence, the students will make hypotheses about the "**motives**" behind the creation of that day's lead headlines and articles. The teacher will ask:
 1. Why do you think the headlines are worded this way?

2. What emotions might American citizens feel after reading these headlines?
3. How do these headlines impact your thoughts about the events?
4. How would you feel reading these headlines in this time period?

After completing a thorough analysis of primary source 1, the teacher will present additional examples of yellow journalism (**primary sources 2, 3, & 4**) and critiques of this journalist approach and the media's role in politics through political cartoons (**primary sources 5 & 6**) by projecting images of these sources. The teacher will facilitate a discussion of these images (**primary sources 2, 3, & 4**) by returning to the four questions used previously:

1. Why do you think the headlines are worded this way?
2. What emotions might American citizens feel after reading these headlines?
3. How do these headlines impact your thoughts about the events?
4. How would you feel reading these headlines in this time period?

Next, the teacher will explain the critiques offered of yellow journalism the media's role in politics through two political cartoons (primary sources 5 & 6).

Closure

The students will interact with this image applying what they have learned about yellow journalism by creating their own headline of the U.S.S. Maine explosion. The students will create headlines of their own about the explosion of the U.S.S. Maine to demonstrate what they have learned about yellow journalism and the outbreak of the Spanish American War. Specifically, the students will sensationalize headline. The teacher will then encourage students to generalize this learning experience by asking the following discussion questions:

1. Can you identify any recent events, which the media has sensationalized?
2. In your opinion, which media outlets are most likely to sensationalize the reporting of an event?
3. What are indications that an event is being sensationalized?

Finally, students will complete a one paragraph Quick Write Exit Ticket based on this prompt: How does social media contribute to the sensationalizing of events?

Assessment

Formative:

- Visual Discovery: Students will be graded on their participation in the spiraling questions about the newspaper image (primary source 1).
- Headlines (Making Thinking Visible): Students will be graded based on their application of yellow journalistic techniques in the creation of their headline.
- Exit Ticket (Quick Write): Students must write a paragraph answering the following prompt:

Differentiation

- The primary source documents used have different levels of difficulty to accommodate different Lexile levels.
- This lesson uses visual, verbal, and hands on ways to learn to accommodate most learning styles.



- Other forms of differentiation can be giving students more time to work on the exit ticket.

Supplementary Materials

- Textbook

Teaching with Primary Sources Resource Guide

Title: Spanish American War- Yellow Journalism “Remember the Maine”

Historical Background:

The lesson purpose was to explore the concept of yellow journalism and the impact it had on the United States’ involvement in the Spanish American War.

Primary Source 1:



Title: The San Francisco Call. April 12, 1898

Link:

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85066387/1898-04-12/ed-1/seq-1/>

Purpose: This photo illustrates the use of yellow journalism related to the events of the explosion of the U.S.S. Maine. The headline states the president’s feelings about the explosion.

Primary Source 2:



Title: Maine Exploded in Havana Harbor

Link:

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85066387/1898-02-16/ed-1/seq-1/>

Purpose: The purpose of this newspaper article is to show the way media portrayed the explosion of the U.S.S. Maine in Havana Harbor.

Primary Source 3:



Title: Did an Agent of Spain Destroy the Battle-Ship?

Link:

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85066387/1898-02-17/ed-1/seq-2/>

Purpose: The purpose of this section of the newspaper is to show the speculation that was rampant after the explosion. The questions of Spanish involvement in the headline is evidence of yellow journalism. Use of the words “indications” and “believes” are further evidence that the newspaper was sensationalizing the event to attract the reader’s attention.

Primary Source 4:



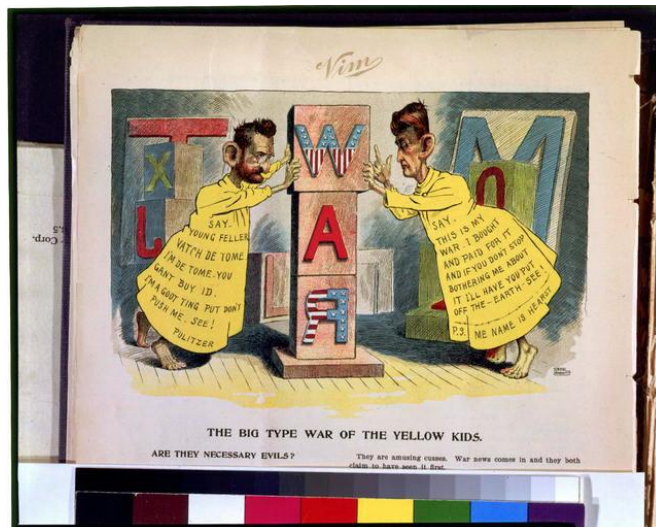
Title: A Floating Torpedo Destroyed the Maine

Link:

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85066387/1898-02-18/ed-1/seq-1/>

Purpose: This article is used to illustrate the continued speculation about the explosion of the U.S.S. Maine. This article discusses the possibility that the U.S.S. Maine was destroyed by a torpedo from the shoreline.

Primary Source 5:



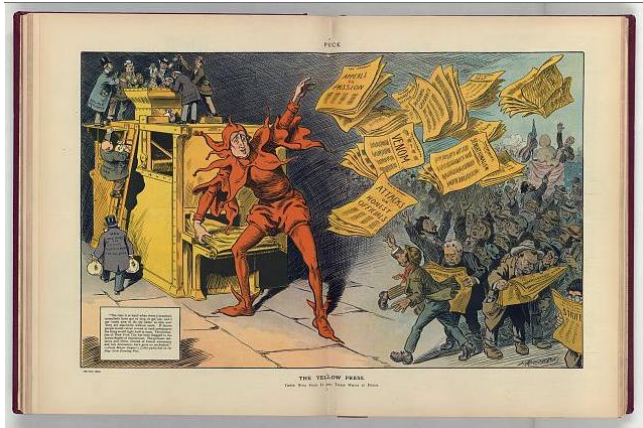
Title: Big Type of War of the Yellow Kids

Link:

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/95508199/>

Purpose: This cartoon is used to offer a critique of yellow journalism, specifically it depicts the competition between two publishers, William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer.

Primary Source 6:



Title: The Yellow Press Puck, October 12, 1910

Link:

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2011647630/>

Purpose: This cartoon is used to offer a critique of the role the press plays in politics. The students will learn the symbolism used in this cartoon, such as the people in power putting money into the printing press and the joker throwing the papers to the masses. In the far back right corner, the students will observe the man standing with the two flags to his side. This man represents politicians in United States using the press to help gain support.

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