

Reading Comprehension and Analysis

The Top U.S. News Stories of 2008

There are many ways teachers can use this issue’s top-news feature in the classroom. This suggested lesson plan comes from Lisa Arce, who teaches seventh- and eighth-grade students at Selden Middle School in Centereach, New York.



OBJECTIVES

Students will review some of the major events of 2008 by engaging in a series of activities, which will reinforce summarizing, sequencing, reading-comprehension, writing, and analysis skills.

DO NOW

Skim “The Top U.S. News Stories of 2008” (pp. 3-5) to find the following information:

- 3 negative events, what they are and why
- 2 positive events, what they are and why
- 1 new vocabulary word that you learned while skimming the article.

ACTIVITY

Have students choose three mini assignments from the choice board at right. Every student must choose the assignment in the middle box. The other two assignments must come from boxes that form a straight line (vertically or horizontally) with the central box, as in tic-tac-toe. Students can work on these assignments in pairs or individually, in class or at home.

REVIEW

Teachers will issue “exit tickets” that require students to answer the following question: Name one topic that was newsworthy in 2008, and make one prediction relating to that topic for 2009.

Using item #3, “Olympic Games,” create a graphic organizer that asks and answers these basic news-story questions (who, what, when, where, and why).	Using item #4, “Wars,” create a list of successes and remaining challenges in Iraq.	Using item #5, “Mother Nature’s Fury,” create a causes-and-results list.
Using item #4, “Wars,” create a two-column chart with the headings Iraq and Afghanistan. Take notes in bullet form, summarizing the main points relating to each.	Summarize Election 2008 in a short paragraph, noting the winners and losers for the presidential and vice-presidential slots.	Using item #3, “Olympic Games,” and other information you can find, create a score card showing the top five countries in medals earned.
Using item #2, “A Slumping Economy,” write a paragraph in which you describe a personal connection to the poor economic times.	Using item #2, “A Slumping Economy,” and other sources, create a chronology of key economic events that took place in 2008.	Using item #5, “Mother Nature’s Fury,” make a bulleted list of the devastation caused by Hurricane Ike. Entitle your list “The Devastation of Ike.”