



Using the Media

Overview

In this lesson, students learn about the importance of the media in setting the public agenda. First, they read about and discuss how the media help set the public agenda and how citizens can influence the media and even create their own media to help change the public agenda. Then they brainstorm ideas and develop a plan to do one action using or affecting the media. Finally, they begin to implement their plan. As homework, they complete their action.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explain how the media help set the public agenda.
- Give examples of how citizens can influence the media.
- Brainstorm ideas for influencing or using the media.
- Develop a plan to influence or use the media to advance their issue.

Preparation & Materials

- [Handout 12A: Using the Media](#)—1 per student
- [Handout 12B: Media Strategy](#)—1 per student

Procedure

I. Focus Discussion

A. Hold a discussion by asking students:

- What is the public agenda?
- How does something become part of the public agenda?

B. Explain that the media play a large role in setting the public agenda.

II. Reading and Discussion—Using the Media

A. Tell students that they are going to take a look at how they might use the media to get attention to their issue. [Distribute Handout 12A: Using the Media](#) to each student. Ask students to read the article and think about how they might use the media to get support for their issue.

B. When students finish reading, hold a discussion using the questions on the handout:

1. How can the media help set the public agenda?
2. What do you think might be the benefits of trying to get a news organization interested in covering your issue? What might be the downside?
3. What do you think are the benefits of using new media? The downside?
4. What other ideas do you have for using the media?

III. Small-Group Activity—Media Strategy

A. Tell students that they are going to create a media strategy for the issues they are working on. Distribute [Handout 12B: Media Strategy](#) to each student. Review it and answer any questions students may have.

B. Divide the class into groups of 4–5 students. Give them time to brainstorm.

C. Ask students to share some ideas they have brainstormed to ensure students understand the task. Ask students to use the best ideas from their brainstorm to develop their media strategies. Circulate, give advice, and approve plans.

D. Encourage students to implement their plans as civic actions, making sure they check with parents first.

E. After completing this lesson, have students return to the Citizenship Brainstorm, identifying and adding to the lists.