

ACTIVITY PLAN

Addressing Economic Inequality



Document

! NOTE: Please read “How To Use These Materials” for additional support in teaching and adapting this media literacy activity.

Grade Level: High School and College

Objective Options:

- Students will identify economic incentives proposed by candidates to benefit voters.
- Students will reflect on candidate positions on the impacts of economic globalization.
- Students will evaluate the persuasiveness of candidate rhetoric on economic plans.
- Students will cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of an author’s message.
- Students will determine who might benefit and who might be harmed by candidates’ economic proposals.

S

| Standards Options | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| C3 Framework Social Studies Concepts | D2.Eco.1.9-12 |
| | D2.Eco.15.9-12 |
| Common Core ELA Standards | CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.6 |
| | CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.6 |
| | CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1 |
| | CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1 |

Vocabulary:

income inequality, wealth inequality, jobs, taxes, trade, minimum wage, investment, debt

Media Type(s): website text

An economy that works for everyone
We need to build an economy that works for everyone, not just those at the top.

An Economy that Works, Hillary Clinton Webpage Campaign, 2016

ECONOMIC VISION: WINNING THE GLOBAL COMPETITION
Last week’s GDP report showed that the economy grew a mere 1.2% in the second quarter and 1.2% over the last year. It’s the weakest recovery since the Great

Economic Vision: Winning Donald Trump Webpage Campaign, 2016

ISSUES
Income and Wealth Inequality
Today, we live in the richest country in the history of the world, but that reality means that wealth is controlled by a tiny handful of individuals.
The issue of wealth and income inequality is the great moral issue of our time, it is the great political issue of our time.

Income and Wealth Inequality Bernie Sanders Webpage Campaign, 2016

Preparation and Materials:

*All materials can be downloaded from the PLS website <http://www.projectlooksharp.org>

Preparation:

- Download and review the *How to Use Materials* section associated with this activity.

Materials for the Lesson:

- Three *Student Handouts*

Additional Support:

- From the website, view [Media Decoding Examples](#) demonstrating classroom media analysis.
- Download the [Key Questions for Analysis](#) for supporting questions.
- [The Teacher's Guide to Media Literacy](#) and the [Do-It-Yourself](#) online guide are both available from the homepage.

Time: 40-60 minutes (dependent on number of questions used)

Activity Procedures:

- Select among possible questions on the next page based on your objectives in teaching to social studies content and/or ELA/media literacy skills.
- Use the selected questions to lead students through a constructivist media decoding process of the three handouts with informational text. Background information about the media documents is included at the bottom of the next page. Example student answers are included on the last page.

CONNECTIONS

Connections to Media Construction of Presidential Campaigns Lessons on Economics

1896 McKinley "The Real Issue" Poster
1900 Bryan "The Issue – 1900" Poster
1900 McKinley/Roosevelt "Promises" Poster
1936 "An Attack on the New Deal" Cartoon
1952 "Eisenhower Answers America" TV Commercial
1960 Nixon-Kennedy Debate
1984 Reagan "Morning in America" TV Commercial
1984 Mondale "Trade Deficit" TV Commercial
1992 Bush "What I am Fighting For" TV Commercial
1992 Bush "Arkansas 2" TV Commercial
1992 Clinton "Steady" TV Commercial
2000 Nader "Priceless" TV Commercial
2000 Gore-Bush 1st Debate
2004 Spin/Counter-Spin: Speeches, Articles, Ads & Web Sites
2004 MoveOn.org "Child's Pay" TV Commercial
2008 Obama "Out of Touch" TV Commercial
2008 McCain "Dome" TV Commercial

DECODING Q'S

Possible Questions for Media Document Decoding

Select among these based on your teaching objectives. Make questions document-based (i.e. According to this image or video...)

Social Studies

- What economic incentives does the candidate suggest that might benefit voters?
- According to the candidate, how will their global economic policies impact voters?
- How might citizens impact economic policy beyond voting in national elections?

ELA

- What are some ways that the candidate uses persuasive rhetoric?
- Which candidate's rhetoric is most persuasive and why?
- What additional information might you need to make an informed decision about this candidate's capacity to successfully manage the country's economy?

Media Literacy

- How does your own bias influence how you judge the credibility of each message?
- What questions should you ask to judge the credibility of each message?
- Who might benefit from these proposals and who might be harmed?
- Who is the primary target audience for these writings on the economy?
- What values are implied by these economic proposals?

Follow up Evidence Questions & Comments

- Where do you see that?
- Say more about that
- How do you know that?
- What makes you say that?
- Does anyone have a different idea?

BACKGROUND & SOURCES

These excerpts from three different campaign websites reflect only part of the candidate's statements and positions on economic policy. Clinton and Sanders offer webpages specific to the theme of economic inequality. The phrase "economic inequality" does not appear in Trump's campaign material. Teachers might want to suggest that student's access the original campaign webpages from which these texts were taken to analyze the full context including text, graphics and photos.

"Economic Vision." Make America Great Again! Web. 08 Sept. 2016.

"Hillary Clinton on Building an Economy That Works for Everyone." *An Economy That Works for Everyone*. 2016 Hillary for America, Web. 08 Sept. 2016.

"On the Issues: Income and Wealth Inequality." *Bernie Sanders RSS*. BERNIE 2016, Web. 08 Sept. 2016.

POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Social Studies

Question: What economic incentives does the candidate suggest that might benefit voters?

Possible Answers: *Clinton* – “make college debt-free, and provide relief for Americans with existing debt,” “reward companies that share profits...and raise the minimum wage to a living wage,” fight for equal pay and guarantee paid leave.” *Trump* – “simplify taxes for everyone and streamline deductions,” “lower taxes for everyone,” “limit taxation of business income,” “exclude childcare expenses from taxation,” “end the death tax.” *Sanders* – “increasing the federal minimum wage,” “investing in a youth jobs program,” “making tuition free at public colleges,” “expanding Social Security by lifting the cap on taxable income,” “enacting a single-payer healthcare system,” “requiring employers to provide paid family and medical leave.”

ELA

Question: What are some ways that the candidate uses persuasive rhetoric?

Possible Answers: *Clinton* – She repeats the words “family,” “child” and “work” often to suggest that she is in touch with the needs of middle class working people. *Trump* – He attacks Hillary Clinton repeatedly and links her with President Obama (“Obama-Clinton”) to urge voters who dislike Clinton or Obama to consider voting for him. *Sanders* – He focuses on issues of economic justice using phrases like “income and wealth inequality,” “wealthy and large corporations” and “pay equity” to appeal to voters who feel that they are at an economic disadvantage in the current economic system.

Media Literacy

Question: How might your own bias influence how you judge the credibility of each message?

Possible Answers: My personal political and economic views are likely to shape my judgment on the credibility of these position papers. If I am a Republican I’ll more likely consider Trump’s proposals to be credible. If I’m a Democrat I’m more likely to judge Clinton or Sanders as more credible. If I’m a democratic socialist I’ll see Sanders as believable whereas if I believe in flat tax rates and deregulation I’ll see Trump’s plans as the most credible.

Question: What questions should you ask to judge the credibility of each message?

Possible Answers:

On the authority of the message: Who are the economists who helped to shape this policy? What are their credentials?

On the accuracy of the information: Can the information be cross-checked with a reliable source? Is there a bibliography, footnotes or source references?

On the objectivity of message: Does the information show a minimum of bias? Who links to this site? Are there paid advertisements?

On the currency of the information: Is this page dated? If so, when was the last update?