

Current Events: 10th - 12th Grade Series

Lesson 3: Local News in the Making

Estimated Lesson Length:	50-90 minutes
Recommended Grades:	10-12th Grade
Related LifeKnowledge Lesson:	LifeKnowledge AHS 40
	
Objective(s): The student will be able to:	
✓ Identify local agricultural current events ✓ Summarize a local agricultural current event	
Materials, Supplies, Equipment, References and Other Resources:	
Course text Computers with Internet access Instructor list of local issues Newspapers and local agricultural publications Letter to the Editor activity sheet (AS 1.5)	
 	

Lesson Plan:		
STEPS (What to Do)	Procedures (How to Perform the Step)	Time*
1. Interest Approach: Refreshing prior learning.	<i>For this lesson, the instructor will need to generate a short list of 5-10 local, regional or state current topics for the students to consider.</i>	5-10 minutes
2. Research local agriculture stories	Ask the students to take out the newspapers or agricultural publications you asked them to bring at the end of yesterday's lesson. If they were not able to bring a newspaper or other publication allow them to follow the search procedures in Current Events – Lesson 1 or review the list generated by their instructor as a last resort. Allow twenty to twenty-five (20-25) minutes for the students to find a local/state issue in which they are interested and research it.	15-20 minutes
3. Letter to Editor  	Ask the question, "Does everyone in this community understand this issue?" Accept responses. Most likely they will respond, "No." Ask how we might change that. Guide student response to the looking for ways to share opinions in the newspaper. Guide them to the Letters to the Editor section. The students will now use their research to construct a letter to the editor for their local newspaper. They need to follow the steps on the activity sheet. Distribute activity sheet (AS 1.5). Allow fifteen (15) minutes for students to write their letter.	10-15 minutes

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Lesson Plan cont.:		
STEPS (What to Do)	Procedures (How to Perform the Step)	Time*
4. Summary, review and projects to collect	If time allows, ask for volunteers to share their letters. If you are not continuing on with Current Events 10-12 Lesson 4, collect the Letters to the Editor and challenge the students to continue to stay current with the news and share positive messages about agriculture. If you are continuing with Lesson 4 and 5, thank the students for their work today and ask them to bring all of their work so far with them to the next class.	5-10 minutes

Activity Sheet for Writing a Letter to the Editor

Steps to Locating a National Agriculture Current Event

- Address your letter "To the Editor." You don't need a name for the inside address. Letters should include your name, address and day/evening phone numbers. Sign your letter, then type or print your name. This authenticates it.

- Start your letter with the key message, and then add two or three paragraphs that offer examples or supporting evidence.

"There is a school funding crisis."

"In the past three years, _____ school district has had to..."

Increase class size

Postpone purchase of materials, technology or books

Freeze wages or benefits

Lay off staff

Charge parents for extracurricular activities..."

- Write like it's a conversation. Use simple words, short sentences and frequent paragraph breaks. Don't use inflated words like "utilize" or "employ" when you really mean "use."

- Tell readers what you think needs to happen.

"Elected officials need to do the job they are elected for."

"Responsible decisions need to be made to fund our schools. These decisions should be based on what is best for educating our children, not what is best for special interest groups."

"With the passage of Proposal A, the legislature assumed the responsibility to fund schools; they need to live up to that responsibility. We have lived up to our responsibility by cutting (insert for last three years) out of our budget. We can't cut any more, we can't wait for the economy to turn around, and we need to educate our children today."