Objective: Students will be able to:
- Identify changes in news media over time.
- Understand how those changes impact the producers and receivers of news.
- Use primary and secondary source material to investigate and report on an historical event, taking into account multiple perspectives.

Time Required: 1-3 class periods

Materials Needed:
- Computer(s)
- Tape Recorder (optional)
- Curtain or divider in classroom (optional)
- Video Camera (optional)
- Classroom or school website (optional)

Vocabulary:
Bias – A prejudiced tendency or inclination.
Blog – A personal website that is updated to include information on a specific topic of interest, like news or a hobby.
Broadcast – To spread widely, especially over the radio or television.
Media – The means of communication, such as radio, television, or newspapers, that reach people widely.
News – A report of a recent event.
Town Crier – A person whose job is to make public announcements, usually by shouting in the streets.
Relevant National Learning Standards
(Based on Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning)

**Historical Understanding. Standard 1.** Understands and knows how to analyze chronological relationships and patterns.

**Historical Understanding. Standard 2.** Understands the historical perspective.

**Language Arts. Standard 1.** Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process.

**Language Arts. Standard 8.** Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes.

**Language Arts. Standard 10.** Understands the characteristics and components of the media.

**Arts and Communication. Standard 1.** Understands the principles, processes, and products associated with arts and communication media

**Arts and Communication. Standard 4.** Understands ways in which the human experience is transmitted and reflected in the arts and communication.

**Arts and Communication. Standard 5.** Knows a range of arts and communication works from various historical and cultural periods.
1. Ask students, “How do you find out that something has happened in the world?”

2. Record student responses on the board or a sheet of chart paper. (newspapers, television and cable news, the Internet and blogs.)

3. Reference student responses as you ask students the following questions:
   - Which of these sources do you use most frequently to keep up on world events?
   - What sources of news do you consider most reliable?
   - What is “news” or what makes an event newsworthy?
   - What other types of information do you use these sources for?
   - How did people get news in the past?

4. Develop a historical chronology from the brainstorm. Which methods are most recent? What allowed for the development of each new form of communication? (ex: the printing press and improved literacy led to the rise of newspapers)

5. Discuss how the methods differ. (read/heard/seen, length of report, etc.) How are they similar? (Strong lead to capture audiences’ attention, research for accuracy, etc.)

6. Discuss with students:
   - How do reporters find out what happened?
   - What kinds of questions do they ask?
   - What is a reporter’s goal in covering a news event?
   - What perspective should a reporter take? How do they do this?
   - Is all information a reporter uncovers fit to be published? Why might you not include information in a news report?
1. Divide class into 5 groups to create a news story on an historical event. You may assign an event (ex: Boston Massacre) or a time period (ex: Revolutionary War).

2. Assign each group a mode of news reporting:
   - **Town Criers**: Create a written account of the news event that will be posted in the classroom and delivered orally in a public (classroom) setting.
   - **Newspaper Writers**: Write and print a newspaper article. Include a drawing or political cartoon to illustrate the event.
   - **Radio Reporters**: Create and record a radio news report.
   - **Television Reporters**: Create and record a television news report.
   - **Bloggers**: Write a short blogpost about the event.

3. Explain that each group will write and present a news report on the same event in a different style. They may use their textbook and other resources to research the event, but should include information from at least two or three primary sources.

4. Allow groups to work independently to research and produce their report, but provide support if they have questions.

5. All groups should write their report, but make sure that the Town Criers, Radio Reporters, and Television Reporters know they will have to read their story out loud. Newspaper Reporters and Bloggers will publish their stories, so they should take, find, or draw pictures or political cartoons to go with their reports.

6. Once all groups have finished, have each group present their report.
   - **Town Criers**: Will both post a written report and read their report out loud to the class.
   - **Newspaper Writers**: Pass out copies of their newspaper report. Have all students read the newspaper article, and compare to a real newspaper.
   - **Radio Reporters**: Play their radio broadcast recording OR have students simulate broadcast by reading script from behind a curtain or divider so classmates only hear their voice.
- **Television Reporters**: Play television broadcast recording OR have students simulate a news broadcast by sitting at desks at the front of the room.
- **Bloggers**: If possible, post to the classroom or school website and show class the blogpost online.

7. Have students discuss the presentations and come to some conclusions as to which method of reporting was the most effective.
   
   - What characteristics make each method of reporting effective?
   - Which forms of media seem more reliable?
   - What impact does the source of information have on an event?
   - How do events in history shape media?
   - Are radio, newspapers and television in decline as sources of information? Why or why not?

**Conclusion**:

To conclude this lesson, discuss that changing technologies have impacted not only how people receive news, but also how quickly news becomes available. What does this mean for the producers of news? How does this impact the work of journalists, as they strive to produce accurate, unbiased reports? What advantages and disadvantages do different types of media face, in this regard?

To check for understanding, have students write a short essay using this prompt: Why is it important to be informed about news that impacts you and/or your community both directly and indirectly?