

Discovering the Arts Careers in Television

Teacher's Guide



Grade Level: 9–12

Curriculum Focus: Performing Arts

Lesson Duration: Three class periods

Program Description

Take a behind-the-scenes look at the art and craft of creating television programs, and discover the range of careers the medium offers.

Onscreen Questions

- What are the daily responsibilities of news reporters and producers?
 - How do food stylists and prep cooks work on a television cooking show?
 - What talents might a casting director look for in an actor?
 - What is the difference between a puppeteer and a puppet master?
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Lesson Plan

Student Objectives

- Describe the different tasks that need to be completed to create a news program.
- Focus on one of these tasks and collaborate with other students to develop a news program.
- Present a news program that is shared with at least one other class in the school.

Materials

- *Discovering the Arts: Careers in Television* video
- Computer with Internet access
- Newsprint and markers
- Paper and pencils
- Video equipment (optional)

Procedures

1. Begin the lesson by asking students to write down any ideas they may have about how a news program is produced. What kinds of jobs are involved? How is a news program created? Give students a few minutes to write down their thoughts. Then have students put away their papers until later in the lesson.
2. Tell students that they will create their own news program during the next two class periods. To give students some background on this topic, ask them to watch the segment entitled "Tonight at Six," part of the video, *Discovering the Arts: Careers in Television*.
3. As a class, discuss the different groups of people who are involved in developing a news program. Write down students' ideas on a sheet of newsprint. Make sure that students include the following teams:
 - *Producer and assistant producers.* Producers decide on the topics that will appear in the news program.
 - *Script writers and graphic designers.* Writers develop the script that newscasters read. Graphic designers provide graphics that support the script.
 - *Reporters.* Reporters explore news stories in-depth and present reports during the news program.
 - *Technical support.* The camera crew, the sound team, and other technical staff help broadcast the news program.
4. Divide students into three groups. Have one group take on the role of the producer and assistant producers; the second group, the role of the script writers and graphic designers; and the third group, the role of the reporters. Ask students to coordinate the different tasks of these groups to develop a coherent news program. (Note: If video equipment is available, create a fourth group, technical support, to set up and shoot the news program. Include this element if an adult is available to supervise the activity.)
5. Give students time in class to develop the news program. They can focus on school news, world events, or a combination of the two. Circulate among the groups to make sure that the producers communicate with the reporters so that they know what stories to cover. Make sure that the script writers communicate with both groups so that they can develop appropriate copy. Emphasize to students the importance of collaboration in this endeavor. Remind students that stories can change at the last minute if a newsworthy event takes place.
6. When students are ready, have them present their news program. If possible, invite another class to watch and critique the program. Have them consider the following questions:
 - Did students select appropriate topics?
 - Were the stories well written?
 - Was the program interesting and fast-paced? Did the reporters present the information in a compelling way?
 - How could the class improve the program?

7. Conclude the lesson by asking students to revisit their initial ideas about producing a news program. What have they learned? Give students a few minutes to modify their ideas. Suggest that students use the experience of producing a news program as an opportunity to think about whether they would enjoy a career in television.

Assessment

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- **3 points:** Students showed a clear understanding of the different tasks that need to be completed to produce a news program; collaborated effectively with their classmates in developing the program; and actively participated in the final presentation of the news program.
- **2 points:** Students showed some understanding of the different tasks that need to be completed to produce a news program; collaborated somewhat effectively with their classmates in developing the program; and participated in the final presentation of the news program.
- **1 point:** Students showed little understanding of the different tasks that need to be completed to produce a news program; had difficulty collaborating with their classmates in developing the program; and participated minimally in the final presentation of the news program.

Vocabulary

camera crew

Definition: The team that takes video footage of an event for a television broadcast

Context: The camera crew works behind the scenes to enhance the quality of the program.

graphic designer

Definition: A person who conveys information visually through the use of color, type, images, and animation

Context: Television stations employ graphic designers to create graphs, charts, and other kinds of visual displays.

reporter

Definition: A person who researches a topic, interviews key players, and presents his or her findings on a television news program

Context: During a crisis, such as a crime spree, reporters travel to the scene and keep the public informed about what is going on.

producer

Definition: A person who decides which stories to cover in a news program and coordinates the details of the program

Context: The producer may fill additional airtime with late-breaking stories.

script writer

Definition: A person who works with the producer and the reporters to develop a fluent narration that keeps the show moving

Context: Script writers use language carefully so that viewers can quickly grasp the most important issues of the day.

Academic Standards

Consortium of National Arts Education Associations

The Consortium of National Arts Education Associations has developed national guidelines for what students should know and be able to do in the arts. To view the standards online, go to artsedge.kennedy-center.org/teach/standards.cfm.

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- Analyzing, critiquing, and constructing meanings from informal and formal theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions
- Understanding context by analyzing the role of theatre, film, television, and electronic media in the past and the present

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)

NCSS has developed national guidelines for teaching social studies. To become a member of NCSS, or to view the standards online, go to <http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/strands/>.

This lesson plan addresses the following thematic standards:

- Culture
- Individual Development and Identity

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit <http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>.

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- Arts and Communication: Aesthetic Experiences – Understands the principles, processes, and products associated with arts and communication media; Practice Creativity: Uses critical and creative thinking in various arts and communication settings
 - Language Arts: Viewing – Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media; Writing: Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process, Gathers and uses information for research purposes; Reading: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts
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DVD Content

This program is available in an interactive DVD format. The following information and activities are specific to the DVD version.

How to Use the DVD

The DVD starting screen has the following options:

Play Video – This plays the video from start to finish. There are no programmed stops, except by using a remote control. With a computer, depending on the particular software player, a pause button is included with the other video controls.

Video Index – Here the video is divided into sections indicated by video thumbnail icons; brief descriptions are noted for each one. Watching all parts in sequence is similar to watching the video from start to finish. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the remote for TV playback; on a computer, click once to highlight a thumbnail and read the accompanying text description and click again to start the video.

Curriculum Units – These are specially edited video segments pulled from different sections of the video (see below). These nonlinear segments align with key ideas in the unit of instruction. They include onscreen pre- and post-viewing questions, reproduced below in this Teacher's Guide. Total running times for these segments are noted. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the TV remote or click once on the Curriculum Unit title on a computer.

Standards Link – Selecting this option displays a single screen that lists the national academic standards the video addresses.

Teacher Resources – This screen gives the technical support number and Web site address.

Video Index

I. Tonight at Six (9 min.)

A news producer finds hot news stories and keeps a live show on track. See how one woman does her job amidst the buzz in the newsroom.

II. Hot on the Stove (11 min.)

Join a food stylist as he prepares meals for a popular televised cooking show. Learn what goes on behind the scenes of the show.

III. Playing to Win (9 min.)

To attract and keep an audience, a game show needs positive, energetic contestants. Get an inside look at the day-to-day job of a game show contestant coordinator.

IV. The Search for Stars (11 min.)

A former child actor, casting director Joey Paul understands the joys and disappointments of the children she auditions. Join Paul as she auditions children for television shows.

V. King of the Toy Chest (9 min.)

Stroll through the magical and zany world of puppetry with professional puppeteer and puppet master Tim Lagasse. Learn the ins and outs of this unique profession.

Curriculum Units

1. Working as a News Producer

Pre-viewing question

Q: How is a news program different from other television programs?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What factors determine where a producer may put a particular story in a news program?

A: A producer determines where to put a story by gauging how important the story is and how



many people it may impact. If the producer thinks a story will be easy to promote and will fascinate a broad audience, she may put it later in the program in order to maintain the viewers' interest. Throughout the program, producers may rearrange stories to keep the show on track.

2. Prepping for a Food Show

Pre-viewing question

Q: What do you like or dislike about televised cooking shows?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What does the job of a food stylist for a television show entail?

A: In addition to making most of the dishes, food stylists prepare shopping lists, break down recipes, and create easy-to-learn steps for viewers to follow.

3. Behind the Scenes: Shooting a Cooking Show

Pre-viewing question

Q: What are some of the stresses of working on a live cooking show?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: Do you think you would be a good food stylist? Why or why not?

A: Answers will vary.

4. Searching for Game Show Contestants

Pre-viewing question

Q: What kinds of characteristics do you think a game show contestant should possess?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What does Beverly look for in a game show contestant?

A: Beverly looks for energy and enthusiasm. She wants to make sure a contestant will be open to anything she asks. If the person is responsive, warm, and friendly, he or she will make the cut.

5. The Life of a Casting Director

Pre-viewing question

Q: Have you ever auditioned or interviewed for anything?

A: Answers will vary.



Post-viewing question

Q: How do Joey Paul's assistants help her?

A: Paul's assistants review pictures and weed out candidates who may be inappropriate for certain parts. This helps Paul focus on other aspects of her job. Her assistants also arrange and maintain her schedule.

6. Casting Cartoon Voices for "Hey Arnold!"

Pre-viewing question

Q: Do you think it would be more difficult to cast actors in a cartoon or a TV show?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What do you think makes Joey Paul so good at her job?

A: Answers will vary.

7. Styles of Puppetry

Pre-viewing question

Q: Have you ever worked with puppets?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: Describe the different kinds of puppetry.

A: A puppeteer can manipulate a hand puppet by placing his hand inside the puppet and moving its hands and arms with his fingers. A rod puppet has a rod that goes to the puppet's head and other moving parts. A Muppet-style puppet is a combination of the hand and rod puppet. Puppeteers maneuver a marionette or string puppet using a string from above. A shadow puppet is a piece of paper cut into a shape or a silhouette and attached to a straw or wire. Puppeteers manipulate a shadow puppet behind a piece of paper with some light behind it. The last type of puppet is actually a mask.

8. A Special Puppet: Paz the Penguin

Pre-viewing question

Q: Name some famous puppets.

A: Answers will vary.



Post-viewing question

Q: What does Tim like best about his line of work?

A: Tim likes to help children. He feels good about working on shows that teach children something rather than selling toys or products. He thinks his job is great because he gets to have fun and get paid for it.

