

The Inauguration and the Media

OBJECTIVE

Students observe, analyze and discuss the coverage of the presidential inauguration on different types of media (television, print, online).

MATERIALS

Newspaper articles, television news programs, internet news sites; paper; pens or pencils.

BACKGROUND

We live in a time known as the "Information Age." Information can be acquired through a number of sources that deliver events and ideas to us almost instantaneously. With so much information at our disposal, our democracy requires that citizens know how to consume, analyze, and filter information and its sources.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Have students choose two different news sources to compare coverage of the inauguration. Have them create a chart that compares the two. List the differences in how the two handle the following ideas:
 - How the president prepared for the inaugural ceremony
 - The ceremony itself: its symbols, traditions and people
 - How the new presidential administration will affect the American people
 - Reactions from people in the local community, statewide and nationwide
 - The opinions of people from around the world
- ✓ Have students summarize and/or discuss why they believe there are differences in the coverage and why they think one source is better than the other. Be sure students provide concrete reasons why they think one is better than the other, not just opinions.

MORE!

- Have the class look at a local newspaper from January 20 and a national newspaper ([The Washington Post](#), the [New York Times](#), the [Christian Science Monitor](#), [USA Today](#), etc.). Have students compare articles on the inauguration using the ideas listed above. Have the students read the op-ed page of both papers and summarize the differences, as well as state which one they find more convincing and why.
- Ask students to visit the websites of major news providers ([CNN](#), [MSNBC](#), [NPR](#), [FOX News](#), [U.S. News and World Report](#), etc.). Have them summarize and/or discuss how the web is a better or worse source than other media such as newspapers, television and magazines.
- Explore how international news media sources ([BBC](#), [The Times U.K.](#), [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation](#), [Jerusalem Post](#)) cover the inauguration. What differences and similarities exist between national and international coverage of the event?