

THE
SITUATION ROOM
★ ★ ★ EXPERIENCE

HOW TO READ A DOCUMENT WORKBOOK

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Teaching the Pre-Situation Room Experience with Primary Source Documents

The following documents and questions will be available prior to visiting the Situation Room Experience for use by teachers and students. The curriculum can be used as worksheets, group activities, as a prompt to interactive discussions, or integrated into a classroom game.

DOCUMENT 1

Joint Resolution Proposing the Twenty-Fifth Amendment to the United States Constitution

SOURCE: "The National Archives Experience: DocsTeach." *Joint Resolution Proposing the Twenty-Fifth Amendment to the United States Constitution*. N.p., n.d. Web. 20 July

Eighty-ninth Congress of the United States of America

AT THE FIRST SESSION

Begun and held at the City of Washington on Monday, the fourth day of January, one thousand nine hundred and sixty five

Joint Resolution

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relating to succession to the Presidency and Vice Presidency and cases where the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled (two thirds of each House concurring therein), That the following article is proposed as an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the Constitution when ratified by legislatures of three-fourths of the several States within seven years from the date of its submission by the Congress:

"ARTICLE -

- "SEC. 1. In case of the removal of the President from office or his death or resignation, the Vice President shall become President.
- "SEC. 2. Whenever there is a vacancy in the office of the Vice President, the President shall nominate a Vice President who shall take office upon confirmation by a majority vote of both Houses of Congress.
- "SEC. 3. Whenever the President transmits to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House Representatives his written declaration that he is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, and until he transmits to them a written declaration to the contrary, such powers and duties shall be discharged by the Vice President as Acting President.
- "SEC. 4. Whenever the Vice President and a majority of either the principal officers of the executive departments or of such other body as Congress may by law provide, transmit to the

President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives their written declaration that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, the Vice President shall immediately assume the powers and duties of the office as Acting President. ..."

Speaker of the House of Representatives

Vice President of the United States and President of the Senate

DOCUMENT 1 - QUESTIONS

1. Find the author(s) of the document and underline.
2. Circle the date that the document was written.
3. Highlight the information showing where the document was presented.
4. List four key points presented in the text:

A _____

B _____

C _____

D _____

DOCUMENT 2

"Awful Event" News Report

SOURCE: Stanton, Edwin M. "Awful Event." *The New York Times* 15 April 1865. n. pag. Print.

AWFUL EVENT

President Lincoln Shot by an Assassin

The Deed Done at Ford's Theatre Last Night

THE ACT OF A DESPERATE REBEL

The President Still Alive at Last Accounts.

No Hopes Entertained of His Recovery. Attempted Assassination of Secretary Seward.

DETAILS OF THE DREADFUL TRAGEDY.

War Department, Washington April 15, 1:30 A.M. - Maj. Gen. Dis.: This evening at about 9:30 P.M. at Ford's Theatre, the President, while sitting in his private box with Mrs. Lincoln, Mr. Harris, and Major Rathburn, was shot by an assassin, who suddenly entered the box and appeared behind the President.

The assassin then leaped upon the stage, brandishing a large dagger or knife, and made his escape in the rear of the theatre.

The pistol ball entered the back of the President's head and penetrated nearly through the head. The wound is mortal. The President has been insensible ever since it was inflicted, and is now dying.

About the same hour an assassin, whether the same or not, entered Mr. Seward's apartments, and under the pretence of having a

prescription, was shown to the Secretary's sick chamber. The assassin immediately rushed to the bed, and inflicted two or three stabs on the throat and two on the face. It is hoped the wounds may not be mortal. My apprehension is that they will prove fatal.

The nurse alarmed Mr. Frederick Seward, who was in an adjoining room, and hastened to the door of his father's room, when he met the assassin, who inflicted upon him one or more dangerous wounds. The recovery of Frederick Seward is doubtful.

It is not probable that the President will live throughout the night.

Gen. Grant and wife were advertised to be at the theatre this evening, but he started to Burlington at 6 o'clock this evening.

At a Cabinet meeting at which Gen. Grant was present, the subject of the state of the country and the prospect of a speedy peace was discussed. The President was very cheerful and hopeful, and spoke very kindly of Gen. Lee and others of the Confederacy, and of the establishment of government in Virginia.

All the members of the Cabinet except Mr. Seward are now in attendance upon the President.

I have seen Mr. Seward, but he and Frederick were both unconscious. Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War.

OTHER HEADLINES

European News: Two Days
Later By the Europa: The Insult
to our Cruisers by Portugal: The
American Minister at Lisbon
Demands Satisfaction: Dismissal
of the Commander of Fort Belan
Requested: Farther Advance in
Five-Twenties: Financial and
Commercial.

DOCUMENT 2 - QUESTIONS

1. List three words to describe what the article looks like.
2. Underline what you think are the three most important words in the article.
3. Why did you choose these words?
4. How do you feel when you read the article? Explain.
5. Who wrote the article?
6. When was this article written (be as specific as possible)?
7. Briefly summarize the main points of the article.
8. Why do you think this article written/what is its purpose?
9. Does the writer have any kind of bias or lens through which he writes the article?

DOCUMENT 2 - SAMPLE ANSWERS

1. List three words to describe what the article looks like.

Answers will vary – student must have listed three words. Example: Loud (Headlines), brief, old.

2. Underline what you think are the three most important words in the article.

Answers will vary – student must have underlined words.

3. Why did you choose these words?

Justification of choosing words. Example: I chose the words "President, assassin, and mortal" because they can easily summarize the events reported.

4. How do you feel when you read the article? Explain.

Answers will vary. Example: The article leaves a feeling of alarm, distress, emptiness, and yet a curiosity as to why and how this could have happened.

5. Who wrote the article?

The article was written by the Secretary of War, clearly a politician who may have had a close relationship with the President.

6. When was this article written (be as specific as possible)?

1:30 AM, a couple hours after Lincoln was shot at 9:30 PM, on April 15th, so clearly a quickly written article.

7. Briefly summarize the main points of the article.

The article points out that Lincoln was shot while watching a play, that the assassin quickly escaped, and that his injuries to the head seem as if they will be fatal. The article also reports that another assassin entered Mr. Steward's chamber and attacked him.

8. Why do you think this article written/what is its purpose?

This article was written to inform the public about the events surrounding the assassination of Lincoln.

9. Does the writer have any kind of bias or lens through which he writes the article?

The author definitely favors the Union and the United States in his report of the crime, because he is the Secretary of War. However, this is also evidenced by the way that he gravely reports the news about the president. If this had been a Southern newspaper it might have been celebratory of Lincoln's death.

DOCUMENT 3

Photograph - Johnson Takes the Oath of Office

SOURCE: Lyndon Baines Johnson Takes Presidential Oath of Office. Jay Gildner, Judge Sarah Hughes, Jack Valenti, Congressman Albert Thomas, Lady Bird Johnson, Lyndon Baines Johnson, Jacqueline Kennedy, Congressman Jack Brooks, Others. Aboard Air Force One. 1963. National Archives, Washington, D.C. N.p.:n.p., n.d. N. pag. Web.



DOCUMENT 3 - QUESTIONS

1. What is this picture of?
2. Where is this picture set?
3. What do the expressions of the people in the picture tell you about the situation?
4. What does the camera angle tell us about the subject of the photo or the situation in which the photo was taken?
5. How is the subject framed within the photo? What does this tell you?
6. What does the lighting in the photo tell you?

DOCUMENT 3 - SAMPLE ANSWERS

1. What is this picture of?

In this picture, Johnson is sworn into office after President Kennedy's assassination.

2. Where is this picture set?

The picture was taken in Air Force One.

3. What do the expressions of the people in the picture tell you about the situation?

No one in the picture is smiling; everyone seems very somber and serious, implying the shock and sorrow of President Kennedy's assassination.

4. What does the camera angle tell us about the subject of the photo or the situation in which the photo was taken?

The camera angle is straight and looks slightly down upon the people pictured. A high camera angle reduces the importance of the people in the frame and makes them appear timid and humbled by what they are experiencing.

5. How is the subject framed within the photo? What does this tell you?

Johnson is almost completely in the center of the photograph. Photographers usually like to place their subjects slightly off-center because this is pleasing to the eye, but this rule seems intentionally broken here. That could imply the gravity of the moment or chaos surrounding the moment (if the photographer was unable to get the angle that he wanted).

6. What does the lighting in the photo tell you?

The photo is lit so that we can see everyone's face, but it is kind of dim so there is some shadow on some people in the back, etc. It does not seem like there was a lighting set-up. This makes the situation appear more "real" in my opinion.

DOCUMENT 4

News Report Video

SOURCE: BBC World News. British Broadcasting Corporation. BBC, London. 4 June 2014. Web.

Teacher will be provided link to share with class or project in front of classroom.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-radio-and-tv-27689645>



BBC World News Ann Soy

4 June 2014 Last updated at 08:45 BST

Ann Soy, BBC World News correspondent in Kenya, was one of the first journalists on the scene at the 2013 shopping centre siege in which 72 were killed.

Here she describes how she broke the story on BBC World News.

DOCUMENT 4 - QUESTIONS

1. What is breaking a story and why is this so important in journalism?
2. Why does this report use text against a black background at first? Why did they select the video footage that they did?
3. What questions are you left with after watching the segment?
4. Impact of breaking news/breaking a story versus being late to report it?

DOCUMENT 4 - SAMPLE ANSWERS

1. What is breaking a story and why is this so important in journalism?

Breaking a story happens when a journalist is one of the first on site to report news as it is happening. This means that they must dictate events almost as they occur. It is important in journalism because it exemplifies bringing news to the public as soon as it occurs, and important to a news agency because it shows them to be valuable.

2. Why does this report use text against a black background at first? Why did they select the video footage that they did?

The use of text against a black background emphasizes how dramatic the story and situation that Ann Soy was taking part in was at the time. They selected the video footage of her reporting in Nairobi for their promotional clip because she is very obviously risking her safety in order to bring the latest news.

3. What questions are you left with after watching the segment?

The short clip leaves me wanting to see more of the report, and I wonder what has happened since then to the territory that she was on.

4. Impact of breaking news/breaking a story versus being late to report it?

Breaking news often evokes raw emotions because there is little editing and the news reporter is often reporting on the fly. This makes it dramatic. Having breaking news/breaking a story also contributes to the popularity and possibly the ratings of a news station, so breaking news is valuable to them from a business point of view.