

STORM LAKE

A NEWSPAPER. A FAMILY. A COMMUNITY.

Curriculum Guide



Supported by Microsoft



Background Information

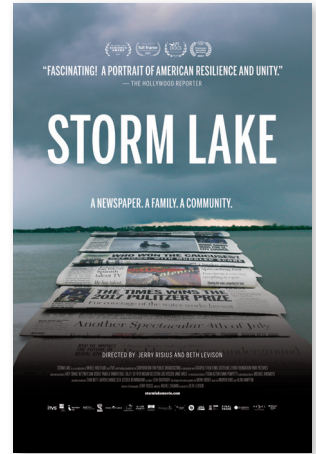
About the film

Newspapers are disappearing at an alarming rate, and more Americans are living in news deserts, or communities [“with limited access to the sort of credible and comprehensive news and information that feeds democracy at the grassroots level.”](#)

[More than one in four newspapers shut down between 2004 and 2020.](#)

At the same time, public opinion polls show a [lack of awareness](#) among Americans surrounding this trend and its wide-ranging effects.

The story of [The Storm Lake Times](#), a twice-weekly family-owned newspaper in rural Iowa, brings the struggles of sustaining local journalism to life and shows what these newsrooms mean to communities and American democracy overall.



About this guide

This guide serves as a map for teachers and students to accompany the PBS documentary *Storm Lake* to better understand the role news plays in our community and democracy. The education cut of the documentary is approximately 60 minutes long and organized in three segments that can be viewed in succession or individually. The guide has three main components: pre-viewing, during viewing and post-viewing activities. The “during” portion is subdivided into three sections to help teachers plan separate lessons for those topics.



- 1 The **pre-viewing activities** use one or more essential questions to focus on students’ engagement with news and their opinions about its relationship to their community and to American democracy.
- 2 The **during viewing portion** includes entrance/exit ticket questions, as well as discussion questions that can be completed as assigned, individually, in small groups or as a whole-class discussion.
- 3 The **post-viewing activities** return to the essential questions raised prior to viewing and seek to extend student engagement with local journalism.

The curriculum guide and educational screenings of *Storm Lake* are made possible with support from Microsoft.

Contents

Pages 2-3 [Background Information](#)

Pages 4-6 [Pre-Viewing](#)

Pages 7-12 [During Viewing](#)

Page 7 [Part 1](#)

Page 9 [Part 2](#)

Page 11 [Part 3](#)

Pages 13-14 [Post-Viewing](#)

Page 14 [Post-Viewing - Action Plan Extensions](#)

Pages 15-30 [Student Documents](#)

Background Information on News Deserts

Teachers may want to further explore the concept of news deserts and the effect on communities when local news is lost. Additional background information can be found here:

- [“The Expanding News Desert”](#) (UNC Hussman School of Journalism and Media)
- [“When the Student Newspaper Is the Only Daily Paper in Town”](#) (Dan Levin, The New York Times)
- [“The Lost Local News Issue”](#) (The Washington Post Magazine)

NOTE: A news desert is an area with limited or no access to local news coverage. Unlike the town featured in *Storm Lake*, some communities have no local news source at all. Though it isn't mentioned in the documentary, The Storm Lake Times was not the only newspaper serving the city of Storm Lake until after this film was produced. The Storm Lake Pilot-Tribune was founded in 1870 and served the community throughout the period depicted in the documentary. The Storm Lake Times announced on April 1, 2022, that it had [purchased the Pilot-Tribune](#) (archived [here](#)).

Standards

The guide is aligned with Common Core [anchor standards](#). Specific standards are linked to each lesson.

Pre-Viewing: Introduction



Duration: Allow approximately one hour for completion of activities and related discussion.

Summary

These classroom activities are focused on essential questions in which students define news in their own words and consider its role in their community and democracy overall. These questions will be reconsidered midway through *Storm Lake* and after viewing the full film. An anticipation guide asks students to consider their engagement with news as well as how they evaluate news in their community. These activities also will set the stage for potential extension activities.



Learning Objectives:

- I can define news and explain the role it plays in our community and democracy.
- I can describe how I access, engage with and evaluate news.

CCSS Primary Alignment:

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2](#)

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7](#)

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Essential Questions:

- What is news?
- What role does news play in a community?
- Is news important in a democracy? Why or why not?

Key Terms: news, news desert

Preparation:

(Suggested) Review background material on news deserts with students.

Materials:

[Essential questions graphic organizer](#)
[Anticipation guide](#)

Newspaper copies, if possible, examples of local, regional and national news publications. This might include printed copies or digital references that can be viewed by the class.

Educator Instructions

1. Tell the class they will be viewing the documentary *Storm Lake* to gain a better understanding of what news is and the role it plays in our community and democracy. Explain that before watching it, they're going to complete some activities to better understand the concepts in the film.
2. Provide students with the [Essential Questions graphic organizer](#). Tell students that their answers at this point should be considered a first draft, and they will be returning to them while viewing the documentary and when viewing is complete.
3. To complete the **Essential Questions graphic organizer**, use "[Think, Pair, Share](#)," in which students first

answer the questions individually, then share their answers with a partner and discuss in pairs, and conclude by sharing as a whole class, refining their answers at each step.

4. Pivot to a discussion about the students' own engagement with news. Define the word "engagement" with students in general and then specifically, as it relates to news. Students engaged in lessons at school, for example, may mean they are actively paying attention, participating in activities and asking questions. *What sorts of activities might qualify as being engaged with news and current events?*

Additional questions include:

- *Are there degrees of engagement?*
 - *What might stand in the way of this?*
 - *What connections can students draw between engagement with news and personal empowerment? Or between engagement with news and a strong democracy?*
 - *What can go wrong if people are deeply engaged with inaccurate or highly unreliable news sources?*
5. Discuss and examine the types of news available in the students' community. For example, students may have access to national news and local or regional news via local and cable television networks. Alternatively, they can search to [find newspapers in their state](#) or to determine if they live in a [news desert](#) (an area with limited or no access to local news coverage). Whether a newspaper is available as a news source may differ based on location or by individual student. The type of newspaper may also differ – is it local to the area, is it more regional, or is it a national paper?
 6. Newspaper samples can help students distinguish between different types of publications and recognize those they may know and read. Digital samples also may be viewed.



Print-based news sources might include:

Local:

Columbia Daily Tribune (Columbia, Mo.),
Elbert County News (Elbert County, Colo.),
The Daily Gazette (Schenectady, N.Y.)

Regional:

St. Louis Post-Dispatch, The Colorado
Sun, Times Union

National:

USA Today, The New York Times, The
Wall Street Journal



Television news might include:

Local:

KOMU (Columbia, Mo.), KJCT News
(Grand Junction, Colo.), WENY News
(Horseheads, N.Y.)

Regional:

KSDK (St. Louis, Mo.), CBS Denver (Denver,
Colo.), ABC News 10 (Albany, N.Y.)

National:

NBC News, CBS News, ABC News



Radio news might include:

Local:

KBIA (Columbia, Mo.), KBUT Radio
(Crested Butte, Colo.), WSKG (Vestal, N.Y.)

National: NPR

Regional:

St. Louis Public Radio (St. Louis, Mo.),
Colorado Public Radio (Denver, Colo.),
Northeast Public Radio (Albany, N.Y.)

7. Provide students with a copy of the [Anticipation Guide](#). The goal is for students to begin thinking about their relationship with news, whether and how they evaluate sources, and whether and how they engage with the news.
 8. **Note:** Later, you may choose to have students return to the **Anticipation Guide** for review following the film. Blank copies can also be used for students to interview family or friends about their own engagement with the news as an extension activity.
-

During Viewing Activities start on next page.

During Viewing Activities

Storm Lake - Part 1 (0:00 - 23:59)



Duration: Allow approximately 45 minutes to one hour in total, which includes approximately 23 minutes of viewing time, work time and discussion.

Summary

These classroom activities are designed for use with the first part of *Storm Lake*. The activity starts with an entrance ticket focused on the difference between news articles and opinion articles or editorials. Students will see examples of both in this segment, as well as throughout the full documentary. In addition, discussion questions and quote interpretations are provided, with timestamps that chronologically follow the film. The questions and quotations focus on the role the newspaper plays within the community of Storm Lake, the newsgathering process, and the impact of changes on residents as well as the newspaper.



Learning Objective:

I can identify the difference between news articles and opinion articles, and I can accurately label each.

CCSS Primary Alignment:

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1](#)

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.6](#)

Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Essential Questions:

- What role does news play in a community?
- What is the difference between news articles and opinion articles?
- Should a newspaper include both? What role does each play in a community?

Key Terms: editorial, news, news desert, opinion

Preparation:

Prior to viewing, students should complete the Essential Questions graphic organizer and the Anticipation Guide, as well as related discussions.

Materials:

Storm Lake documentary

[Part 1 entrance ticket and discussion questions](#)

Educator Instructions

1. Have students complete the [entrance ticket](#) at the start of class. Remind them that this relates to the Essential Questions organizer and Anticipation Guide previously completed.

ENTRANCE TICKET

What is the difference between news articles and opinion articles?

Should a newspaper include both? What role does each play in a community?




Differentiation options include:

- Include just the first question.
 - Structure as a partner, small group or whole class discussion.
2. Provide students with the [discussion questions](#) as you prepare to start the film. Tell students that questions can be answered as they watch the film, but can be more fully completed once viewing is complete. Time stamps are included and questions are labeled below by type, based on [Arthur Costa's](#) three levels of questioning. Note that some questions are listed in two levels as the question includes and extends beyond the initial level.

Level	Question
1 (gather/recall)	1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13
2 (process/infer)	1, 3, 6, 9, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17
3 (extend/apply)	3, 9, 11, 15

Differentiation options include:

- Assign specific questions to the entire class, rather than the whole set.
 - Assign a mix of questions to all students.
 - Assign specific questions to individual students or groups and have answers shared through whole class discussion.
3. Stop the video at 23:59. 
 4. Return to the entrance ticket questions after viewing Part 1 as a discussion or exit ticket.

Storm Lake - Part 2 (24:00 - 38:05)



Duration: Allow approximately 45 minutes total, which includes 14 minutes of viewing time, in addition to work time and discussion.

Summary

These classroom activities are designed for use with the second part of *Storm Lake*. The activity starts with an entrance ticket focused on why a community newspaper like The Storm Lake Times should work to cover an array of topics of interest to its entire audience. This segment of the film includes interviews with politicians, a meeting about recipes that the newspaper plans to feature, and discussion about a potential partnership with La Prensa, a local Spanish news source. The entrance ticket and the discussion questions focus on the different coverage and how each relates to the newspaper's role in the community. These activities also include a check-in with the essential questions answered prior to viewing to assess student growth and understanding.



Learning Objective:

I can explain why a variety of news coverage within a community is important.

CCSS Primary Alignment:

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1](#)

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Essential Questions:

- Why is it important for a community newspaper to cover a variety of topics of interest to its entire audience?
- How does this relate to the newspaper's role in the community?
- What is a newspaper's role as a "watchdog" in the community?

Key Terms: News coverage, watchdog

Preparation:

Prior to viewing, students should complete the Essential Questions graphic organizer, Anticipation Guide and related discussions. The first part of *Storm Lake* and related activities may also have been completed.

Materials:

Storm Lake documentary

[Part 2 entrance ticket and discussion questions](#)

[Essential Questions graphic organizer](#) (from pre-viewing activity)

Educator Instructions

1. Have students complete the [entrance ticket](#) at the start of class. Remind them that this relates to the Essential Questions organizer and Anticipation Guide previously completed.

ENTRANCE TICKET

Why is it important for a community newspaper to cover an array of topics of interest to its entire audience?




Differentiation options include:

- Structure as a partner, small group or whole class discussion.
2. Provide students with the [discussion questions](#) as you prepare to start the film. Tell students that questions can be answered as they watch the film, but can be more fully completed once viewing is complete. Time stamps are included and questions are labeled below by type, based on [Arthur Costa's](#) three levels of questioning. Note that some questions are listed in two levels as the question includes and extends beyond the initial level.

Level	Question
1 (gather/recall)	1, 4, 8, 12
2 (process/infer)	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13
3 (extend/apply)	2, 3, 5, 7, 11

Differentiation options include:

- Assign specific questions to the entire class, rather than the whole set.
 - Assign a mix of questions to all students.
 - Assign specific questions to individual students or groups and have answers shared through whole class discussion.
3. After completing the discussion questions, have students return to their **Essential Questions graphic organizer**. Questions that might be considered here include:
- *So far, how has this documentary changed your views on what news is?*
 - *So far, how has your view on the importance of engaging with news changed?*
 - *So far, how has your view of evaluating news changed?*
 - *So far, has the film changed your opinion of local newspapers and their importance to communities? What about their importance to democracy?*
4. Stop the video at 38:05. 
5. Return to the entrance ticket questions after viewing Part 2 as a discussion or exit ticket.

Storm Lake - Part 3 (38:06 - 60:00)



Duration: Allow approximately 45 minutes to one hour total, including 20 minutes of viewing time, work time and discussion.

Summary

This final act of the film focuses on the work and role of the newspaper during an election and while the community is in crisis as COVID-19 emerges. A related financial crisis also occurs, affecting whether the newspaper can survive. The entrance ticket question, therefore, focuses on the role a newspaper plays in times of crisis and uncertainty. Discussion questions focus on the newsgathering process, how it differs from other information shared, as well as steps The Storm Lake Times takes to survive.



Learning Objective:

I can recognize and evaluate the role of a community newspaper during big events (election season) and in crisis situations (COVID-19 pandemic).

CCSS Primary Alignment:

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1](#)

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3](#)

Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Essential Questions:

- What role does a newspaper play when a community is in crisis?
- What can newspapers do to survive?

Key Terms: advertising, press freedoms, journalism, news desert

Preparation:

Prior to viewing, students should complete the Essential Questions graphic organizer, Anticipation Guide and related discussions. The first and second parts of *Storm Lake* and related activities may also have been completed.

Materials:

Storm Lake documentary

[Part 3 entrance ticket and discussion questions](#)

Educator Instructions

1. Have students complete the [entrance ticket](#) at the start of class. Remind them that this relates to the Essential Questions organizer and Anticipation Guide previously completed.

ENTRANCE TICKET

What role do newspapers play during big events and in crisis situations?

Differentiation options include:

- Structure as a partner, small group or whole class discussion.
2. Provide students with the [discussion questions](#). Tell students that questions can be answered as they watch the film, but can be more fully completed once viewing is complete. Time stamps are included and questions are labeled below by type, based on [Arthur Costa's](#) three levels of questioning. Note that some questions are listed in two levels as the question includes and extends beyond the initial level.

Level	Question
1 (gather/recall)	1, 2, 6, 12, 13
2 (process/infer)	2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11
3 (extend/apply)	3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11

Differentiation options include:

- Assign specific questions to the entire class, rather than the whole set.
 - Assign a mix of questions to all students.
 - Assign specific questions to individual students or groups and have answers shared through whole class discussion.
3. Return to the entrance ticket questions after viewing Part 3 as a discussion or exit ticket.
-

Post-Viewing Activities



Duration: Allow approximately 30 to 45 minutes to reconsider essential questions and discuss. Additional time will vary depending on extension activities.

Summary

In this post-viewing section, students will return to their [Essential Questions graphic organizer](#) and revise based on what was learned from the documentary. Repeat the “Think, Pair, Share” strategy used prior to viewing or any other class discussion approach. In addition, students can extend their learning by choosing an additional activity designed to increase their engagement with the news.



Learning Objectives:

- I can define news and explain the role it plays in our community and democracy.
- I can describe how I access, engage with and evaluate news.

CCSS Primary Alignment:

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2](#)

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7](#)

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Essential Questions:

Students will return to the original essential questions of:

- What is news?
- What role does news play in a community?
- Is news important in a democracy? Why or why not?

Key Terms: news

Preparation:

Prior to these activities, students should complete the Essential Questions graphic organizer, Anticipation Guide and related discussions. The students should have also viewed and completed activities for some or all parts of *Storm Lake*.

Materials:

[Essential Questions graphic organizer](#) completed by students in pre-viewing activities, as well as additional copies for revision.

[News log](#) for potential extension activity.

Blank [Anticipation Guide](#) for potential extension activity.

Educator Instructions

After viewing the documentary and answering discussion questions, direct students to return to their **Essential Questions graphic organizer**. Pose the following questions and tell students their answers may be revised (additional copies of organizer may be needed):

- *How has this documentary changed your views on what news is?*
- *How has your view on the importance of engaging with news changed?*
- *How has your view of evaluating news changed?*
- *Has the film changed your opinion of local newspapers and their importance to communities? What about their importance to democracy? If so, in what ways?*

The “Think, Pair, Share” activity completed in the pre-viewing activity may be repeated here, or use any other discussion practices.

Action Plan Extensions

Use one or more of these activities to extend student engagement with news.

- [News Log](#): Students will commit to reading/watching/listening to a news source for a week and keep a log of what they read/view/listen to. Next, they will evaluate the source to determine what role it plays in their community, the quality of the news coverage and what topics they would like to be covered more. This activity can link to NLP lessons “[Practicing Quality Journalism](#)” and “[Understanding Bias](#).”
 - Students interview a family member or friend about their news habits, using a copy of the [Anticipation Guide](#) included in this document. Compare the interviewee’s responses to their own. Why might they be similar? Different?
 - Connect with a local journalist using NLP’s [Newsroom to Classroom](#) program. Students might interview the journalist to learn about the job, what they do and why and their views on the future of journalism.
 - Students engage directly with local news by following local news organizations on social media or writing a letter or email to an editor with a story idea. Show them where they can find this contact information. What sorts of stories would they like to see covered? This activity can link to NLP lessons “[What is News?](#)” and “[Be the Editor](#).”
-

Student Documents

Storm Lake Curriculum Guide



Page 16	Essential Questions graphic organizer	(editable version)
Page 17-18	Anticipation Guide	(editable version)
Pages 19-28	Entrance Ticket and Discussion Questions	(editable version)
Page 19	Part 1	
Page 23	Part 2	
Page 26	Part 3	
Page 29-30	Post-Viewing Activity: News Log	(editable version)

Essential Questions

Graphic Organizer

Directions: First, consider each question on your own. Remember, your answers are likely to change. Consider this a draft. Next, meet with a partner and refine your answers. Finally, use the last column to reflect the answers shared during whole-class discussion.

DATE: _____

NAME: _____

Learning Objective

I can define news and explain the role it plays in our community and democracy.

Questions

Individual

Write your individual thoughts, prior to sharing with a partner or the class.

Partner/Small Group

Rewrite your answer based on your discussion with a partner or small group.

Whole Class

Capture answers shared during whole-class discussion.

What is news?			
What role does news play in a community?			
Is news important in a democracy? Why or why not?			

Anticipation Guide

Directions: Answer the following questions based on your current level of engagement with local news.

DATE: _____ NAME: _____

Learning Objective

I can describe how I access, engage with and evaluate news.

1. Which of the following sources do you use to get news? Add a percentage that reflects its role in your news diet (such as 30%). Provide a more specific name for this source (such as Chicago Tribune, local NBC News, Facebook).

TV	Print	Radio	Social Media
LOCAL Percent: Name:	LOCAL Percent: Name:	LOCAL Percent: Name:	Percent: Name:
REGIONAL Percent: Name:	REGIONAL Percent: Name:	REGIONAL Percent: Name:	
NATIONAL Percent: Name:	NATIONAL Percent: Name:	NATIONAL Percent: Name:	

Other (explain): _____

2. In general, how often do you read, watch or listen to news? (*circle one*)

_____ Daily _____ Weekly _____ Less than Weekly _____

- a. Approximately what percentage of your news consumption is deliberate, meaning you are fully focused on the news? _____ %
- b. Approximately what percentage of your news consumption is less deliberate, when maybe the TV is on while you do something else, or news appears on your feed while you scroll through social media? _____ %

-
3. Does your community have any local news organizations? If so, examine some of their recent news coverage. Do you think they do a “good” job? Why or why not?
 4. How do you evaluate news sources?
 5. What news coverage is important to you? What topics do you think receive too much coverage? What topics don’t receive enough?
 6. Would you or have you engaged with the news beyond reading, watching and/or listening? For example, would or have you:
 - a. Discussed the news (in general or specific coverage) with family and/or friends? Explain.
 - b. Reacted/responded to a news story? How?
 - c. Shared a news report on social media?
 - d. Use what you learned about current events and issues from news coverage to comment or reply on social media?
 - e. Suggested an event or issue to be covered? Explain.
 - f. Written or otherwise produced a news story? Explain.

Entrance Ticket and Discussion Questions

Part 1 (0:00 - 23:59)

NAME: _____

DATE: _____



Entrance ticket

What is the difference between news articles and opinion articles?

Should a newspaper include both? What role does each play in a community?

Discussion Questions

1. (2:32) Is profit a motivation for the Cullen family? Why or why not?
2. (3:08) Describe the Cullen family members and the roles they play at the newspaper:

Art Cullen:
Dolores Cullen:
Tom Cullen:
John Cullen:
Mary Cullen:
3. (3:32) Art Cullen: *"A pretty good rule is that an Iowa town will be about as strong as its newspaper and its banks. And without strong local journalism to tell a community's story, the fabric of the place becomes frayed."*
 - a. In your own words, what point is being made in this quote?
 - b. Do you agree? Why or why not?
 - c. How does this quote fit into your definition of news and its role in the community?

4. (4:05) Why did the newspaper win the [Pulitzer Prize](#), one of journalism's most prestigious awards?
5. (5:53) Following the newspaper's Pulitzer Prize, The Storm Lake Times received increased attention from presidential candidates this primary season; Art Cullen interviewed multiple candidates. Is this attention good for the community? Why or why not?
6. (8:00) Describe the processes you see in the newsroom. What do you notice about the newsgathering process and how stories are selected and finalized? Use this "[Standards of Journalism](#)" infographic to help form your answer.



7. Describe the difference between the articles Art Cullen writes and the articles Tom Cullen writes.
8. (10:23) Art Cullen: *"We did that presidential forum, but that's not the reason we get up in the morning. Most people in Storm Lake care a lot more about whether garbage is getting picked up than whether Elizabeth Warren is in town."*
- a. In your own words, what point is being made in this quote?

-
- b. Do you agree? Why or why not?
- c. How does this quote fit into your definition of news and its role in the community?
9. (10:57) How has the town of Storm Lake changed in Art's lifetime so far? Why does he call it a "microcosm" of the nation?
10. (11:18) Art Cullen: *"It's important to know who had a baby and who died in a community of 10 to 15,000 people. And it's important to know what the city council is up to, so I think it is important to have real news... The question is, how long does a community support journalism?"*
- a. In your own words, what point is being made in this quote?
- b. Do you agree? Why or why not?
- c. How does this quote fit into your definition of news and its role in the community?
11. (12:12) What is a "news desert"?
12. What is the impact of a "news desert" on a community?
13. (12:57) What happened to the "mom and pop" stores in Storm Lake, and how did this impact the newspaper?

14. (13:37) Art Cullen: *"If you don't have readers, you got nothing. But now people want to get their news for free, because apparently looking at their breakfast on Facebook is all the information they need to live as an informed voter in America, and that's not how you sustain a democracy, you know. You need people who can talk about facts and deal in facts, and that Iowa's getting warmer and wetter, through the decades, those are facts. That's what we're here for, and people are saying, 'Oh well, that's not worth a dollar.'"*

- a. In your own words, what point is being made in this quote?
- b. Do you agree? Why or why not?
- c. How does this quote fit into your definition of news and its role in the community?

Use the following ["What is News?"](#) infographic to help form your answers to the next two questions.

15. (18:16) Explain Julio Barroso's story. Why did the newspaper choose to follow up on it? Does this matter for [others](#) to know? Why or why not?

16. (21:05) Explain Big John's story. Why did the newspaper choose to tell it? Does this matter for others to know? Why or why not?



Entrance Ticket and Discussion Questions

Part 2 (24:00 - 38:05)

NAME: _____

DATE: _____



Entrance ticket

Why is it important for a community newspaper to cover an array of topics of interest to its entire audience?

Discussion Questions

1. (24:47) Why does Tom Cullen question Sen. Grassley and write about his visit to Storm Lake?
2. What does the presence of a reporter signal to those in powerful positions? How does this fit into the "watchdog role" newspapers play in our democracy?
3. (27:10) Tom Cullen discussing the family business: *"The prospect of the newspaper not being around terrifies me, because not only is it a newspaper, which is, in my opinion, the most important pillar of the community; it's the family."*
 - a. In your own words, what point is being made in this quote?
 - b. Do you agree? Why or why not?
 - c. How does this quote fit into your definition of news and its role in the community?

4. (27:26) Describe Tom Cullen's interview with Tom Lane, the candidate for city council.
5. (29:00) Why do you think the newspaper includes this coverage, but also recipes? How does this fit the newspaper's role in the community?
6. (29:37) Why is it important to have ads for downtown businesses in the paper?
7. (31:50) John Cullen: *"The best stories in the world aren't any good if you don't get them out on the street so people can read them."*
 - a. In your own words, what point is being made in this quote?
 - b. Do you agree? Why or why not?
 - c. How does this quote fit into your definition of news and its role in the community?
8. (32:05) What do readers say about the paper?
9. Does this reader feedback show the impact of the paper's presence in the community? Explain.
10. (33:02) Lorena Lopez, the editor of La Prensa, visits The Storm Lake Times and talks about the two papers collaborating. How would this benefit the community?

11. (33:57) Lorena Lopez, La Prensa editor discussing collaboration: *"Fifteen, 20 years ago, we probably wouldn't be talking right now."*

- a. In your own words, what point is being made in this quote?
- b. Do you agree? Why or why not?
- c. How does this quote fit into your definition of news and its role in the community?

12. (35:23) Tom Cullen suggests the newspaper start a podcast. What is Art's response? Do you think it's a good idea? Why or why not?

13. (36:32) What is the significance of Art's holiday letter? Why do you think he writes them each year?

Entrance Ticket and Discussion Questions

Part 3 (38:06 - 60:00)

NAME: _____

DATE: _____



Entrance ticket

What role do newspapers play during big events and in crisis situations?

Discussion Questions

1. (39:15) What specific role does The Storm Lake Times play in news coverage of the presidential election?
2. (41:37) Describe Tom Cullen's coverage of the caucus at the cafe. Why is it important that the newspaper gather this news?
3. (43:35) Art, Tom and Dolores Cullen spend a good deal of time in the community and in the newsroom waiting for news about the caucuses and checking facts and details. Explain what role their coverage plays in the community and how it extends beyond the community.
4. How does the newsgathering followed by The Storm Lake Times differ from information shared by other sources, such as a post on social media by a friend or neighbor or information shared by a political candidate? What does the newspaper do that sets it apart as an information source? Use this "[Standards of Journalism](#)" infographic to help form your answer.



-
5. (48:50) Art Cullen looks at a photo from one caucus and says, *"Look at this picture. This is democracy working...It's just kind of too bad that we can't be more patient with democracy."*
- In your own words, what point is being made in this quote?
 - Do you agree? Why or why not?
 - How does this quote fit into your definition of news and its role in the community?
6. (50:25) What impact does COVID-19 have on the newspaper's finances?
7. (52:03) Why is the paper's reporting during the pandemic important, particularly as it relates to the Tyson plant and the lack of testing for the workers who are primarily undocumented immigrants? If The Storm Lake Times didn't advocate for these workers and expose this issue, do you think it would have still come to light? Why or why not?
8. (53:55) Storm Lake becomes the "hottest spot" for COVID-19 cases in Iowa and one of the top 10 spots in the country. The newspaper is trying to report accurate numbers, but it's hard to get confirmed figures. Describe this coverage and how it evolves. How does this relate to the role the newspaper plays in the community overall?
9. (56:35) Art Cullen: *"Tyranny prevails whenever the press is not free. Stand guard."*
- In your own words, what point is being made in this quote?
 - Do you agree? Why or why not?
 - How does this quote fit into your definition of news and its role in the community?

10. (56:57) Art Cullen: *"Nobody gives us license. We draw it from the Constitution...Readers decide our future. Not any branch of government."*

- a. In your own words, what point is being made in this quote?
- b. Do you agree? Why or why not?
- c. How does this quote fit into your definition of news and its role in the community?

11. (58:04) Art Cullen: *"The pay is lousy and the hours can be terrible, but you can change the world through journalism. That's the only good reason to get into this trade."*

- a. In your own words, what point is being made in this quote?
- b. Do you agree? Why or why not?
- c. How does this quote fit into your definition of news and its role in the community?

12. (58:32) What was the result of the GoFundMe campaign? What else has The Storm Lake Times done to survive?

13. (58:58) How many Americans live in "news deserts"?

News Log

Post-Viewing Activity

Overview: In this activity, you will commit to reading/watching/listening to a news source for a week and keep a log of what you read/view/listen to. In Part 1, you will gather this news data. In Part 2, you will evaluate how this source covers your community, what stories you found worthwhile and how the news source can improve/increase its readership.

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Part 1

Follow a local news source for a week and note specific articles/stories that you read, what you learned and what questions you have.

Name of News Source: _____

Date	Stories I followed	What I learned	Questions I have

Part 2 Evaluate Your Source

1. What role does this news source play in your community?
2. Do you feel that your community was covered accurately and fully by this source during this time period? Why or why not?
3. What stories did you connect with? Why?
4. Were any stories inaccurate or misleading in your opinion? Why? How do you know?
5. What stories do you think should be covered more?
6. What ideas do you have that could help the newspaper increase its readership in your community?