

# CURRICULUM MATERIALS: III

## CURRENT EVENTS, HISTORICAL EVENTS, AND ARTISTIC REPRESENTATIONS

### Introduction & Objective

The following lesson plan was adapted from the PBS [“Beeswax: Current Events Lesson Plan”](http://www.pbs.org/teachers/beeswax/lessonplans/currentevents/) found at <http://www.pbs.org/teachers/beeswax/lessonplans/currentevents/>. Briggs’ exhibit is an artistic rendering or documentation of some of the more violent events and/or parts of life in Juárez. In this activity, students will examine multiple newspaper articles or other texts about local, national or international current events or historical periods. This is where the activity can be adapted to various courses or age groups. If the class is studying a specific period of history, country, or topic the articles can be chosen with this in mind. If the class is studying history specifically, then the lesson material wouldn’t pertain to current events, but instead to the content of the particular history lesson or course. Students can read these in small groups or individually. Once students have read and analyzed the given text, they will present what they learned to the class. Then, based on what they learned and the things discussed through the activity, students will create an artistic representation of an issue or current event that they believe needs to be more widely known, talked about, or documented. If the class is studying Juárez, you may want to introduce images from Briggs’ exhibit as a pre-reading activity to activate prior knowledge and encourage student engagement. Otherwise, it may be best to show images from Briggs’ exhibit after the reading activity.

### Materials

- ❖ Articles or texts on current events (if studying Juárez specifically, some potential articles or readings are listed in the resource section at the end of this guide)
- ❖ Paper
- ❖ Pencils, pens
- ❖ Art supplies for drawing, painting, or collage

### Procedure

1. If the focus of the activity is current events, begin by asking students what they know about current events—depending upon prior knowledge or activities, you may need to define the term “current events” as a class.

2. If the focus is a historical period, then the initial discussion should be based on reviewing what students know about the events pertinent to that period.
3. Hand out the previously prepared texts or current event articles. Students can complete this part of the project in small groups or individually, depending upon the desire of the teacher. Students or small groups are given different articles or texts so that all students are not reading the same material. Rotate around the room, working with individuals or small groups, helping and providing guiding questions to assure that they understand the material. They should be able to answer basic questions like: Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How?
4. Once students have read and discussed the text, they are ready to create a presentation on their text for the class. Using available materials (posterboard, computer programs, etc.) students will create a visual aid to help explain the content of their text to the class. This can be as simple as providing a summary of the article and the answers to the who, what, when, where, why and how; or more elaborate depending upon the grade level of the class and background knowledge of the topic.
5. As groups present on their texts, encourage students to discuss whether or not they already knew about the event or content of the text. Was the content of the text widely known? Locally? Nationally? Internationally? Ask students to think about, if the content wasn't widely distributed, why would that be? Does someone or some group benefit from keeping that knowledge contained? Ask students if they think it is important to document stories and knowledge like the ones shared in the texts. Why or why isn't this important?
6. If students are not familiar with Briggs' exhibit, show them samples of her art work from "In the Wake of Juárez" available on line at <http://aliceleorabriggs.com>. Some of the images contain violent and/or explicit content, so spend time in advance selecting the images you plan to share. Using the images, discuss with students the ways in which Briggs' work documents important events or parts of life in Juárez. Ask them to share anything they know, have heard, or read about Juárez. Discuss the ways in which Briggs' art represents stories like those we might read about in newspaper articles, or why these stories might be omitted from news coverage.
7. Once students have spent time discussing Briggs' images, explain to them that they are going to create their own artistic rendering of an important current or historical event. As a class, ask students to brainstorm events that they think are important and should be documented. Perhaps they've experienced an

event that they believe should be documented, or they have family members who have. If the class has studied any social justice issues, this could provide topics for inspiration. If the class is studying a specific historical period, have important parts of that period or relevant events been omitted from textbook coverage? Those could provide the topic for the students' art project.

8. Using available art materials students create their own artistic representation of the event they chose. Various art mediums can be implemented: drawing, painting, sculpture, collage, etc.
9. When completed, allow students to share or present their art with the class.