

PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING
IN LANGUAGE ARTS/SOCIAL STUDIES

Fit to Print

A Problem about Yellow Journalism and the Road to War with Spain

at 6 per cent. has been spent in improving the park and drive, for which adjacent property holders made such liberal gifts. This sum included \$140,000 of the \$1,000,000 appropriated by the Legislature last year to give work to laboring men. It is necessary to complete the retaining wall from Ninety-sixth to One Hundred and Nineteenth Street, so that the improvements that have been made will not be washed down into the river by the rains. The estimated cost of this is \$200,000. The plans and specifications for the work have been drawn by the Park Department, and have been approved and sent to the Board of Estimate and Apportionment, with a request for another issue of bonds to complete the work. The report has been in the hands of Controller Fitch for some time, but no action has been taken. It is also proposed to build a viaduct across the depression at Ninety-sixth Street, which will cost \$150,000. It is necessary to make some preliminary surveys to find out where abutments can be placed, for which the Park Department has asked an appropriation of \$1,000. Controller Fitch has taken no action about this. Last year the Legislature appropriated \$750,000 to complete the park and viaduct. Only a small part of this money has been used. Those who want to see the park improved as soon as possible would like to have \$200,000 of this money expended in completing the retaining wall to be applied on that part of the appropriation which can be used this year. They then want to have preparations made so that the viaduct can be built in 1896. A bill has been introduced

Problem Log

Royal Fireworks Press
Unionville, New York

right to acquire all the property west to the bulkhead line in the river, now submerged, and to add it to the park. The land at Seventy-second and Ninety-sixth Streets, the only places where the depression

Hospital, and many other institutions. The humanizing effect of residence in the West End is shown by the great number of charitable institutions. Among them are the Home for Aged and Infirm Hebrews, on One Hundred and Sixth Street; the Home for the Aged of the Little Sisters of the Poor, also on One Hundred and Sixth Street; the New-York Cancer Hospital, on Central Park West, between One Hundred and Fifth and One Hundred and Sixth Streets; the Home for the Relief of Respectable and Indigent Females, at the corner of Amsterdam Avenue and One Hundred and Fourth Street, and the Home for the Relief of the Destitute and Blind, on the opposite corner.

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People who do not live so far away from the business part of the city always bring up as an objection to residence in the West End the time necessary to reach offices and homes. But, as a matter of fact, the three-quarters of an hour which the business man spends on the train twice a day is a boon to him and his family. He reads his newspapers there instead of at the breakfast table and after dinner, and the time that would otherwise have been hours of disquiet for the wives and mothers and children are given up to pleasant and profitable intercourse. There is a certain amount of exercise obtained in the trip on the elevated or cable cars which is healthful, and many a man of sedentary habits appreciates this. There is much more to be said in favor of the ride than against it, notwithstanding the unquestioned discomforts of the crowded cars. The compensation for the disadvantage of the distance to be traveled is found in the comfort which awaits the homegoer at the end of the trip.

Problem Engagement

Dr. Ruiz Is Dead

Dr. Ruiz



In 1874, 23-year-old Ricardo Ruiz traveled from Cuba to America. He wanted to attend the Pennsylvania College of Dental Surgery to obtain a doctorate in dentistry. He graduated in 1878, and in 1880 he became a U.S. citizen. That same year, Dr. Ruiz decided to return to Cuba to open a dental practice. Shortly after his return, he married, and he and his wife had three children. They lived a quiet, comfortable life. Then, On February 4, 1897, everything changed....

“Us vs. Them”: Comparing *The New York Times* and the *New York Journal*

Directions: You have been asked to compare two articles about the death of Dr. Ricardo Ruiz. Use the chart below to analyze each one of them. Remember, you must think like a journalist: look for differences in the information reported, including details included or omitted. Consider word choice, and pay close attention to the adjectives and emotionally charged words. As you read, try to determine how all of these elements converge to create the overall tone for the article. Use this information to decide what the author’s purpose was in writing the article.

	Reported “Facts” Include at least five for each article.	Word Choice Include at least three for each article. Label them by marking appropriate descriptions “+,” and misleading ones “-.”	Tone (Formal, informal, dramatic, solemn, accusing, serious, ironic, superior, etc.)	Other (Visual elements, text style, etc.). Are these used to inform or persuade?
<i>The New York Times</i> Article Headline:				
<i>New York Journal</i> Article Headline:				

Conclusions: What differences did you find between the articles? What is the reason for those differences?

What do you think were the underlying goals of each author that led to his selection of facts, words, and tone?

Cartoonists' Persuasive Techniques

Visuals

Symbolism: Using simple or common objects to stand for more global concepts

Example: A picture of Humpty Dumpty could stand for something important yet fragile.

Exaggeration: Amplifying and distorting the physical characteristics of people or things in order to make a point

Example: All the king's men could be drawn smaller than Humpty Dumpty to suggest that they are not powerful.

Analogy: A comparison between two unlike things to reveal common underlying characteristics

Example: Humpty Dumpty might represent something else that is broken—for instance, an idea or a system.

Irony: The difference between the way things are and the way they should be or are expected to be; often used in cartoons to express an opinion or to depict an issue

Example: Politicians are supposed to be powerful. In a political cartoon they could be represented as all the king's men to stand for people who should be powerful but are not because they can't reassemble Humpty Dumpty.

Words

Labels: Used to identify objects or people to make it clear exactly what they stand for

Example: The words "American economy" might be written over Humpty Dumpty so the reader knows what Humpty Dumpty is supposed to represent.

Captions: Used outside the cartoon box to give words to characters, to send an ironic message to the reader, or to present the overall message of the cartoon

Example: The caption "Humpty Dumpty falls again" might suggest a repeating problem.

Cartoon Analysis

Level 1

Visuals

1. What objects or people are central to the meaning of this cartoon?
2. Which of the objects are symbols?
3. Which of the people are symbols representing a larger group or institution? What group or institution does each represent?

Words

1. Record the cartoon caption and/or title.
2. What are the important words or phrases? Why are they important?

Synthesis

1. What do you think you are supposed to think or feel about the situation in this cartoon?
2. The editor-in-chief seemed to be glad that the *Times* was not portrayed in this cartoon. What does that tell you about the philosophy that guided *The New York Times* in 1897?

Cartoon Analysis

Level 2

Visuals

1. Which elements of persuasion do you see used in the cartoon?
Select at least two:

Symbolism Exaggeration Analogy Irony Labels Captions

2. What do you think each element in the cartoon represents?

Words

1. Which words or phrases (labels, captions) in the cartoon appear to be the most significant? Why do you think so?

2. List some adjectives that describe the emotions portrayed in the cartoon.

Synthesis

1. Write a sentence that expresses the overall message about the relationship between the press and the public presented in this cartoon.

2. The editor-in-chief seemed to be glad that the *Times* was not portrayed in this cartoon. What does that tell you about the philosophy that guided *The New York Times* in 1897?

Cartoon Analysis

Level 3

Visuals

1. Describe how the cartoonist used elements of persuasion in the cartoon. Choose from among the following: symbolism, exaggeration, analogy, irony, labels, captions.

2. What do you think each element in the cartoon represents?

Thoughts and Feelings

1. How did the cartoonist blend intellectual (thinking) and emotional (feeling) appeals? How does the combination affect the impact of the cartoon?

Synthesis

1. Write a sentence that expresses the overall message about the relationship between the press and the public presented in this cartoon.

2. The editor-in-chief seemed to be glad that the *Times* was not portrayed in this cartoon. What does that tell you about the philosophy that guided *The New York Times* in 1897?

 **Problem Log**

Reflective Moment: Responsibility, Option A

Directions: What does it mean to be responsible? Here are some related words. Look up at least three of these words, and provide a definition for them.

Amenable _____

Obligated _____

Trustworthy _____

Answerable _____

Liable _____

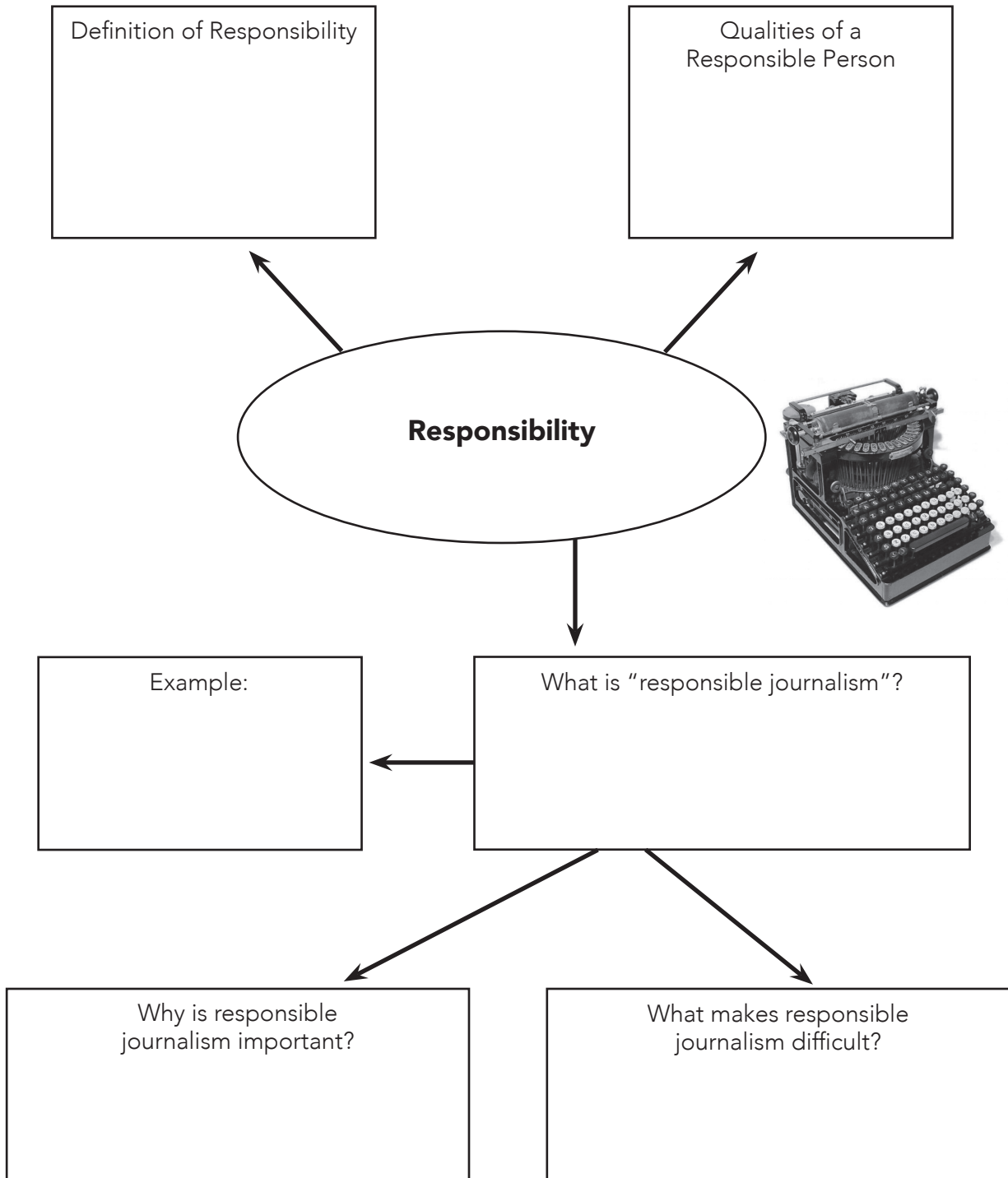
Creditworthy _____

Accountable _____

Now describe responsibility in your own words:

Reflective Moment: Responsibility, Option C

Directions: Many people rely on the news. They count on newspapers to give them the information they need to know in order to decide what issues to support and how to vote. It is essential that we understand what it means to be a responsible journalist. Complete the graphic organizer below to identify the most important elements of responsibility as it relates to journalism.



Journalism Guidelines

Directions: Now that you've compared one of our articles with an article by our competitor, the New York Journal, it is time to create a set of guidelines. What makes a piece of news "fit to print"? Create a list of five criteria. Then circle the one you think is most important, and briefly state why.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Why do you think the criterion you circled is the most important?
