MINNESOTA PUBLIC RADIO®

SAMPLE READING COMPREHENSION LESSON USING RSS FEEDS

Prep Time:
- about 35 minutes of initial prep work,
- 5 minutes thereafter.

Instructional Time:
- one, 45-minute period
- 5 - 10 minutes thereafter for individuals or small groups of students

RSS feeds are a convenient technology for keeping up-to-date on a topic or large amount of content. You utilize the technology by "subscribing" to MPR news streams and Weblogs (also called blogs) that will keep you and your students current on topics applicable to your course. Aside from a computer with an Internet connection, you'll need software called a "RSS reader" or "aggregator" to subscribe to a RSS feed. There are several RSS readers / aggregators available, many for free, at these Webpages:

RSS Readers for Windows: http://www.rss-specifications.com/rss-readers.htm

RSS Readers for Macintosh: http://www.rss-specifications.com/rss-reader-mac.htm

You might use this lesson template with Minnesota Public Radio's RSS feeds or blogs to develop a routine for practicing reading comprehension while learning about current events related to a topic you are teaching.

In the lesson, students will apply a method for reading comprehension that is transferable across the curriculum as they process a news story or blog entry. The method may be best presented to your entire class first and then assigned to individuals or small groups for later sessions.

Materials for all lessons:
- Computer with RSS reader
- Paper or copy of the attached "5W + H Map" for each student.
- "5W+H Map" transparency or drawn on the board.

Materials for the initial, whole-class lesson:

- Enough copies of the news story for each pair of students.

Optional:

- Projector to display RSS reader and MPR Websites.

Objectives for Middle and High School Students:

- Compare the points of view represented by a story's subjects.
- Apply a strategy for monitoring reading comprehension.
- Create and identify connection between what a student reads and topics presented in classroom lectures.

Correlations to Minnesota Academic Standards Benchmarks:

Grades 6 - 12: Social Studies:

Many stories will have connections with the Economics and Government and Citizenship strands.

Grades 6 Language Arts – Comprehension:

1. Summarize and paraphrase what is read.
4. Apply a range of monitoring strategies and self-correction methods.

Grades 7 Language Arts – Comprehension:

3. Use knowledge of narrative and expository text structures and subject specific texts to summarize content.
4. Make inferences and draw conclusions based on explicit and implied information from texts.
5. Create outlines, logical notes and summaries across content areas.

Grades 8 Language Arts – Comprehension:

3. Comprehend, interpret and evaluate information in a variety of texts using a combination of strateg[...] before, during and after reading.
4. Make inferences and draw conclusions based on explicit and implied information from texts.
8. Create outlines, logical notes, and summaries of text in various content areas.

Grades 9 – 12 Language Arts – Comprehension:

1. Monitor comprehension and know when and how to use strategies to clarify the understanding of a[...] selection.
4. Analyze a variety of nonfiction materials selected from journals, essays, speeches, biographies an[...] autobiographies.

ABOUT RSS FEEDS

MPR's news feeds and Weblogs (also called blogs) utilize a technology called RSS, which stands for Really Simple Syndication. RSS provides an easy way to keep up with a large amount of news and information. Each RSS feed contains headlines and summaries that allow you and your students to quickly identify content that is applicable to the topic you're teaching as well as links to full news stories. However, to take full advantage of an RSS feed, you may need one of the free and readily available RSS readers (also called "RSS aggregators"). These are available as stand-alone computer programs (similar to an email program) or as a plug-in that provides additional features for the browser you're using.

Before you plan to use RSS feeds with your class, you should check whether the machines your students will use are configured to handle RSS feeds. Apple's Safari Web browser has RSS support built in (see www.apple.com/safari) so your can work with RSS feeds right within Safari. Other browsers like Internet Explorer and Firefox will require plug-ins or stand alone applications.

There are several RSS readers / aggregators available, many for free, at these webpages:

> RSS Readers for Windows: http://www.rss-specifications.com/rss-readers.htm

> RSS Readers for Macintosh: http://www.rss-specifications.com/rss-reader-mac.htm

Tips for using RSS readers / aggregators can be found at NPR's Frequently Asked Questions for RSS Feed: http://www.npr.org/help/index.html

Alternatively, you may access any MPR news stream or Weblog that use RSS feeds. You and your students just won't be able to advantage of the subscription feature.

INITIAL PREP: Trying Out the RSS Feeds and Weblogs

Estimated time: 20 - 30 minutes

Once you've checked your computers ready to work with an RSS feed, follow this procedure:

1) Go to MPR's RSS feed and Weblog page, http://minnesota.publicradio.org/about/site/rss/. Identify which stream or Weblog might be applicable to the topics you want your students to read.

2) Click on the orange button, 🔲. You may see a page of computer code or a message stating that the browser you're working with doesn't support RSS. If you're using Apple's Safari browser, once you click on the orange button you can start to work with the RSS feed so skip to step 5.

3) From your browser, copy the URL (page address) that appears in your Address Bar. For example, the URL you would copy for MPR's Campaign 2006 is: http://minnesota.publicradio.org/tools/rss/campaign_2006.php.

4) In your RSS reader, select 'Add New Channel' or "Add Subscription". Paste the URL you copied and you should be good to start using the RSS feed. The RSS reader will begin to display the feed and regularly update the headlines for you as well as keep track of which stories have been read.

5) Click on a linked story of interest. If you're using an RSS reader that's separate from your browser, notice that the story may be displayed in your browser's window and not in the RSS reader. You may need to remind your students that they will be switching between the two applications as they use the MPR RSS feed or Weblog.

6) Determine how you'll use the RSS feed with your class. Once you've taught your students a routine for accessing the RSS feed and a method for quickly analyzing a news story or blog entry, you may use the feature all year long for individual, small group, or whole class instruction. The sample lesson below outlines one possible use for RSS news feeds and Weblogs in your classroom.

Whole Class Introductory Lesson

PREP
Estimated time: 15 - 20 minutes

1) Go to MPR's RSS feed and Weblog page, http://minnesota.publicradio.org/about/site/rss/. Find a story or blog posting applicable to the topic you're teaching.

2) Preview the story to identify possible key vocabulary words your students might need help understanding.

3) If you are using the 5W + H Map, type or write the vocabulary words into the 5W + H Map. Print it off and make enough copies for each of your students.

4) Walk through the story once more, this time filling out the 5W + H Map to help you determine how to model each section: subject and subject's point of view (who), the story's key events (what), the story's location (where), when the story occurred (when), the circumstances that created the events (why), and how the story relates to the topic you're teaching (how).

5) Determine the student pairs and arrange your classroom accordingly.

INSTRUCTION
Estimated time: 30 - 50 minutes, depending on story length and your students ability.

1) Explain to your students that during your course they'll use MPR news streams and/or blogs to keep current on a topic you're teaching. They'll also learn a method for analyzing a story that will help them monitor and compare what they've read during your course.

2) Distribute the news story. If you flagged any vocabulary or key terms, review those now.

3) Introduce the "5W + H" method and distribute the optional map as you explain the method. Explain that as students read through the story, they should note the story's subjects and each subject's point of view (this may have to be inferred), what happened, as well as when, where, and why it happened. Finally, they should note how the story is related to what they're studying in your course.

4) Allow students enough time to read the story themselves. Instruct them to fill out the 5W + H Map with their partner. Be sure to encourage your students to mark up the news story to cite or otherwise note specific statements in the story to support what they write in their maps.

5) If some students are having trouble identifying what to include in their 5W + H map, display the map you filled out during the prep stage. Have them locate the story passages or Weblog entry that correspond to the choices you made in your map. Discuss with them why the passages answer

6) After an appropriate amount of time, review with your class the story's topic. Add student input to the 5W + H map you created as a transparency or on your board.

7) Have students reflect independently or discuss with their partners whether they agree or disagree with any of the points of views or solutions presented. Encourage students to think how the issues covered in the story might apply to what they're studying in your course. For students having trouble making connections, encourage them to refer to the notes added to the 5W+H Map in step 6.

8) Discuss with your students what they think the final outcome of the story will be and how that will impact those affected by the story's event or issue. What future stories might occur because of what transpired in this story?

9) If time allows, have your class evaluate the story for objectivity and accuracy of information. Ask for any specific examples of bias, being sure to make the distinction between a source's opinion and a reporter's bias.

10) Close by explaining that they'll be using the same method throughout your course for independent or small group study of MPR articles. They'll use this method each time they work with an MPR story or Weblog.

INDEPENDENT AND/OR SMALL GROUP WORK:

Once your students have become proficient with using the 5W + H method to analyze news stories and/or Weblog entries, you may choose to assign this lesson for students to follow on their own, perhaps once a week while you take attendance and perform other logistics. Alternatively, you might assign students to use the 5W + H method to analyze a certain number of articles during your course.

EXTENSIONS & ADAPTATIONS:

1) About 5 minutes: If your students are over the age of 13, have personal reactions or connections to the story, and your district's AUP allows filling out and submitting online forms, consider having your students post their reactions to the MPR News Forum – http://news.forum.publicradio.org/

2) About 20 – 30 minutes: Assign students, individually or in pairs, to write a summary for the story using only one of the presented points of view.

3) About 5 – 10 minutes: Encourage your students to contribute to the reporting. Click on the link "Help us cover this story" in the "Respond to this story" sidebar, if available.

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Name: _____   **Date:** _____   **Time:** _____

5W + H Map

Who:

Point of View:

Who:

Point of View:

Who:

Point of View:

Who:

Point of View:

Summary:

What:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

When:

Where:

Why:

How:

		Key words to know:		