



Lesson: How Storytellers Shape the Story

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students will describe a film scene using two different styles, their own personal perspectives and that of a journalist. In the process they will pay attention to the role of word choice, focus and sentence structure in conveying perspective. They will also learn about the scene's context, the dispute between Israelis and Palestinians in the Occupied Territories.

The video clips provided with this lesson are from the film *5 Broken Cameras*.

POV offers a lending library of DVDs that you can borrow anytime during the school year—FOR FREE! Get started by joining our [Community Network](#).

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students will:

- Write descriptions of a film scene from their own points of view and also as if they were journalists covering the event
- Compare and contrast use of language (word choice and writing conventions) to indicate point of view
- Understand that they can adapt their writing to meet task requirements without losing their own “voices”
- See an example of nonviolent resistance to Israeli military occupation in the West Bank

GRADE LEVELS

10-14

SUBJECT AREAS

English/Language Arts
Writing
Global Studies
News Literacy/Journalism

MATERIALS

- Internet access and equipment to show the class online video

ESTIMATED TIME NEEDED

50 minutes, split between two class periods

FILM CLIPS

Clip 1: “Context: Setting the Scene” (10:00 min.)

This clip starts 1:37 with “I was born and lived all my life in Bi’lin.” It ends at 11:37 with a long shot of Israeli soldiers and military vehicles.

Clip 2: “Writing Prompt” (approx. 1:45 min.)

This is an excerpt from Clip 1 showing the initial confrontation between residents of Bil’in and Israeli troops. It begins at 9:24 with Phil leading people out to pick olives. It ends at 11:37 with a long shot of Israeli soldiers and military vehicles.

ACTIVITY

1. Tell students they are going to explore writing conventions by writing descriptions of a film clip from two different points of view. The clip will be from a 2013 Academy Award[®] nominee for Best Documentary Feature, **5 Broken Cameras**. To provide context for the clip they are going to write about, show Clip 1 (the first 15 minutes of the film).
2. Do a five-minute check-in to make sure students understood the basics of what they saw, perhaps locating the disputed land on a map and briefly reviewing the wars that resulted in the territorial dispute.
3. Tell students that they are going to watch part of the clip again, and after viewing they are going to do a free-write describing what they saw and their reactions to what they saw. Show Clip 2 and give students five to 10 minutes to do the free-write (depending on their skill level).
4. Briefly allow students to share what came up for them in the free-write, focusing on the types of words and writing conventions they used, as well as the issues and emotions underlying them.
5. Give students this homework assignment: Rewrite your description, but this time, describe the scene as if you were a journalist. If needed, review the basics of journalism (who/what/when/where/why, as well as the need for journalistic writing to be accurate, fair and complete).
6. During the next class period, ask students to compare the language they used in the two different descriptions. Have each student identify a specific difference in the way he or she described the clip initially and the way he or she wrote the description when reporting news. What types of words were included in the personal perspective that were absent from the news version and vice versa? Summarize what they learned from this exercise about “target audience” and how they might apply that knowledge to their next writing assignment.

7. You could assess the assignment by collecting the descriptions or by evaluating the quality of what students shared in step 6. Or you could focus assessment on students' understanding of the nature of journalism by asking them to defend or debunk the notion that good news reporting is "objective."

EXTENSIONS

1. Have students re-write their descriptions, but this time, ask them to imagine that they are 5 years old—the age of the filmmaker's son Gibreel at the end of **5 Broken Cameras**. What would the events in the film look like to a child that age?
2. Watch the first 15 minutes of **5 Broken Cameras** as a springboard to a discussion on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and U.S. policy related to the conflict.
3. Have students compare descriptions of the conflict from the Palestinian perspective with those from the Israeli perspective. Note which terms the descriptions share and where their language differs. Discuss how the use or exclusion of certain words or phrases shapes and reflects beliefs about events.
4. Ask students to evaluate the credibility of the sources on which they currently rely for information about the Middle East or U.S. foreign policy related to the Middle East.
5. Compare and contrast **5 Broken Cameras** with literature students have read that focused on attachment to place.

RESOURCES

Bil'in

www.bilin-village.org/

On this site, residents of Bil'in tell their own stories. Resources focus on the time period depicted in the film.

B'tselem

www.btselem.org/demonstrations/bilin

The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories provides background on the Bil'in protests.

POV: *5 Broken Cameras* Discussion Guide

www.pbs.org/pov/5brokencameras/

The discussion guide for the film provides a range of discussion prompts, activity ideas and links to additional resources.

POV: Media Literacy Questions for Analyzing POV Films

www.pbs.org/pov/educators/media-literacy.php

This list of questions serves as a useful starting point for leading rich discussions that challenge students to think critically about documentaries.

Project Look Sharp Curriculum Kit: Media Construction of the Middle East

<http://www.ithaca.edu/looksharp/?action=middleeast>

This media literacy kit is a great source for free, downloadable documents (maps, news, photos and more) from multiple perspectives.

STANDARDS

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects

(http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI_ELA%20Standards.pdf)

[W.9-10.2](#), [11-12.2](#) Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization and analysis of content.

[W.9-10.2d](#) Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic

[W.11-12.2d](#) Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary and techniques such as metaphor, simile and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.

[W.9-10.4](#), [11-12.4](#) Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization and style are appropriate to task, purpose and audience.

[SL.9-10.1](#), [11-12.1](#) Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade-level topics, texts and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

McRel (www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks/) a compilation of content standards and benchmarks for K-12 curriculum by McRel (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning).

Language Arts, Standard 1: Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process.

Language Arts, Standard 2: Uses the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing.

Language Arts, Standard 8: Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes.

Language Arts, Standard 9: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Faith Rogow, Ph.D., is the co-author of *The Teacher's Guide to Media Literacy: Critical Thinking in a Multimedia World* (Corwin 2012) and was past president of the National Association for Media Literacy Education. She has written discussion guides and lesson plans for more than 150 independent films.