

IS THERE A RIGHT WAY TO PROTEST?

THIS ACTIVITY SHOULD TAKE ABOUT 90 MINUTES. IF LEARNERS ARE ABLE TO REVIEW MEDIA PRIOR TO THE LESSON, ACTIVITY TIME SHOULD BE 45 TO 60 MINUTES.

INVESTIGATE

Read, watch, and listen to the three media resources on the Thinkalong module. Learners can use the Investigate graphic organizer to summarize each piece of media and record new information. Below are summaries of the three pieces of media curated in the Thinkalong module.

IS THERE A RIGHT WAY TO PROTEST?

Above the Noise | September 30, 2020 | Video
7:54 minutes

This episode of Above the Noise explores how people protest and whether there's a 'right' way to protest.

- It's difficult to navigate the balance between a protest being disruptive enough to gain the attention of those in power and being so disruptive that it loses the support of the public.
- More extreme actions get more media attention, but if a protest is perceived as TOO extreme, some people might be reluctant to support it.
- Although Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s are widely admired today, their protesting tactics were very controversial at the time.
- A poll from 1961 found that 57% of Americans thought the Freedom Riders and sit-ins at lunch counters hurt the chances of integration in the South.
- After the March on Washington, where MLK delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech, 74% of Americans believed this massive demonstration had harmed the fight for Civil Rights.

POLICING STRATEGIES TO KEEP PROTESTS PEACEFUL

NPR | October 3, 2020 | Audio
8:15 minutes

Former New Orleans police chief Ronal Serpas and researcher Edward Maguire talk to NPR's Michel Martin about strategies for policing protests to ensure they remain peaceful.

- According to Serpas, police have clear training as to how to handle riots, and they know how to monitor peaceful protests. The difficulty comes "when you have that gray zone in between, where you have protests that are largely peaceful, but you have people who are behaving in a violent or destructive manner."
- When police do perceive a threat, they frequently turn to tactical gear and equipment, which can feel overbearing to protestors. This can often lead to an escalation of violence.
- While the vast majority of protestors are peaceful, there are those who fundamentally believe that what they're fighting for is worthy of violence or property damage. This is important to consider when having these discussions.

Using public media — video, audio and digital reports — about newsworthy topics, these classroom-based exercises help learners to think critically about media messages, develop informed opinions, and practice how to take a stand.

SPEAKING AND PROTESTING IN AMERICA

American Archive of Public Broadcasting | 2016 | Virtual Exhibit

“Speaking and Protesting in America” is a virtual museum exhibit which presents public radio and television content including radio programs, local news, raw footage, and interviews that reveal the impact of the First Amendment.

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KEY WORDS

Look out for these important keywords in the news stories. Discuss the definitions with your learners and see how they affect the understanding of the story.

- Freedom of assembly
- Civil disobedience
- Public opinion

CONTEMPLATE

Learners will use media literacy questions to critically engage with news by thinking about its purpose, searching for bias and discussing missing perspectives. They will answer the 5 Key Questions of Media Literacy created by the Center for Media Literacy, which are:

1. Who created this message?
2. What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?
3. How might different people understand this message differently than me?
4. What values, lifestyles and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message?
5. Why is this message being sent?

A graphic organizer is included in this guide and the Thinkalong website to help learners answer these five questions about each piece of media.

DEBATE

Use the debate tool on the module webpage to help form evidence-based responses to the debate question.

Thinkalong is designed to help learners engage with real issues that are relevant to their lives. [Structured discussions](#) allow learners to practice their critical thinking skills through evidence-based debate with their peers. Discussions are designed to take about 30 minutes. Educators are encouraged to modify aspects that work best for their learners.

To encourage civil discourse, please review the [Code of Conduct](#) with your learners.

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