

Media Project: Reporting the Tom Robinson Trial

In groups of 3-4 people, you will write and record a news report on the Tom Robinson trial in *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Chapters 16-21). You will need to include both an overview of the case and contrasting opinions. Although you may choose the style of reporting you wish, you do need to make sure it is a professional news video. These videos should be 3-5 minutes long. Everyone must participate in both writing the script and creating the video.

Format

You will write and film in the style of a T.V. news broadcast.

A typical news piece begins with a neutral reporter laying out the facts, while the camera shows clips or images of the event. Witnesses and participants are interviewed, usually showing both sides of an issue. The reporter then concludes the piece.

Examples:

Ted Bundy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Zb0Aa4fsgQ>

OJ Simpson: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WcsGZyeBo-s>

If however, you wish to use a different style—for example, a retrospective (people reflecting years after the trial) or having a pundit offer his commentary (like on Fox news or MSNBC)—that's fine, too.

Overview of the Trial

You must provide a **summary** of the events of the trial. In order to do so, consider the following questions:

- Who are the key figures in the trial?
- Where are you reporting from?
- When is this report taking place? (At the start of the trial, in the middle, or at the end?)
- What facts of the case are known to the public at the time?
- What is the most dramatic event that happened now? What are some of the events leading up to it?

You do not need to be neutral during this report.

Along with this overview, you must include either **3 images** of the trial **or a short clip re-enacting** an important moment (for example, the closing arguments).

Opinions on the Trial

You must **two characters** voicing **differing opinions** on the trial. This can take the form of a press conference, an interview, or a debate between pundits. You can use characters from the book or make up new ones, but they should have a connection to the trial which you must

make explicit. (In other words, introduce the character and tell the audience why he/ she was chosen to speak.) Consider the following questions:

- Based on the kind of news program you're creating, who would be in the best position to offer differing opinions? How would you go about asking for an opinion?
- Does the news cast have a bias? If so, would that affect who gets to speak, how long they can speak, and how the information is presented?
- Consider the characters voicing their opinion. What are they arguing for? What is their rationale? How do they try to convince others to see their point of view? What are their assumptions, beliefs, and prejudices? How does their background influence their opinion?

Script

All members of the group will participate in **writing a script** for the newscast. The script does not need to be memorized. You may paraphrase or deviate from the script if you need to, but the key points should appear in your video.

Please label who wrote what part of the script.

Props, Costumes, and Scenery

In your video, you will assume different roles, and your props and costumes should reflect this. They need not be elaborate or accurate to the time period, but they must communicate to the audience the character and situation you are portraying. For example, a reporter might wear formal clothes and hold a microphone.

Media Skills

You will film this project on your class set of iPads or, if you prefer, on your own smartphone or tablet. You will then edit the videos into a coherent piece and post it on the internet.

If you are not sure how to begin, check out this tutorial: "How to Film + Edit on Your Smartphone | TECH TALK" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vpZvc8vtHvo>

To edit your video you can use the following apps:

- iMovie
- AudioBoo
- Magistro

Once your presentation is edited, you will publish the video on YouTube and send me the link.

(If you need trouble uploading, see this video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hlxqk0iHp5w>)

Grading Rubric

Category		Points
Format	Is it presented in the style of a news report?	20
Overview	Are the key facts of the case summarized? Have you included 3 images or a re-enactment of a key moment?	25
Opinions	Are there two people with different opinions on the trial? Are these two people introduced and is it made explicit how they are connected to the trial? Are their opinions consistent with their character and believable?	25
Script	Is there a script written by all members of the group? Are the members credited for their specific contributions? (Do you tell me who wrote what? Does the script, on the whole, follow the news report?	10
Props, Costumes, Scenery	Do the props, costumes, and scenery communicate to the audience the roles and scenarios being portrayed?	5
Media Skills	Is the presentation filmed in a way that can be clearly seen and heard? Is the presentation edited into a cohesive whole? Is the presentation published on YouTube and has the link been sent to the teacher?	15
Total:		100