



ELA Virtual Learning

English IV

April 13, 2020



Lesson: Monday, April 13

Objective/Learning Target:

1. Interpret visual elements of a text and draw conclusions from them.
2. Produce clear and coherent writing.

Quickwrite: 4/13/2020

Look over this brief article from Pew Research titled [“Five Facts About Crime in the U.S.”](#) Focus specifically on fact #3, about halfway down the page. Examine the two graphs given discussing the crime rate in the U.S. versus public perceptions about crime, and respond thoughtfully to the following question on a separate sheet of paper or Google Doc:

What is the best explanation for the [discrepancy](#) between these two graphs? Why do you think so?

New Information

How did you answer the question on the previous page? There is certainly more than one right answer, but let's get more specific: what role does *the mass media* play in the discrepancy between the crime rate and perceptions about crime in the U.S.?

Another question: how many news stories (on TV, in print, etc.) involve crime? It should come as no surprise that [a huge percentage of media coverage](#) (check out the section titled "TV") involves stories about crime at the local, national, and global level.

The reason why news outlets focus on crime so much isn't much of a mystery either. Think about how many non-news TV shows are devoted to crime drama! Media outlets focus on crime because it's profitable!

“Big Question”

All of this information begs a highly important question, especially as we are now largely dependent on mass media for facts that directly concern our health and safety:

How do we *prevent* our perspective from being negatively influenced by mass media?

Think through your initial reactions to this question. How many of us have seen bias in a media presentation before? How might we determine if the media is trustworthy or not? All of these smaller questions are important to keep in mind.

Guided Practice

On a separate sheet of paper or a Google Doc, respond thoughtfully to the “big question” mentioned on the previous page:

How do we *prevent* our perspective from being negatively influenced by mass media?

In your response, cite evidence from the sources linked in earlier pages, and use your own inferences and judgment in the process.

Guided Practice: Answer Key

The following is a valid response to the question on the previous page:

Mass media clearly influences our perception of the world in both positive and negative ways. For example, the public's perception of the crime rate in the U.S. correlates with the amount of time spent focusing on crime in the mass media. One way that we could prevent this negative effect is by being self-aware in our consumption of media; if a news story starts to make us anxious, we should keep the scope of the story in mind, and perform research to determine the broader context of the story. We could also mitigate certain negative effects of mass media by being aware of the biases of the specific source of our news.

Additional Resources

We know that bias on a broad scale has a profound impact on the media that we consume, but it's not nearly as obvious which news sources consistently exhibit bias, and which ones may be more reliable.

This [live, interactive chart](#) is a great way to see which sources are more routinely biased, and which ones tend to be more objective.