Truth on Screen: Unit Overview

ENG3U, Grade 11 English (University), Unit 6. 10 classes of 75 minutes (about two weeks).

The big question

How do documentaries and podcasts shape what we believe is true?

Students study how documentaries and podcasts construct truth: the six documentary modes, editing (including an editing-room experiment where the same twelve clips tell opposite stories), sound design, interview ethics and the ethics of true crime. They analyse a teacher-chosen documentary, including who made and funded it. Then, in groups, they pitch, record, edit and share their own podcast episode or mini-documentary about a local issue, with a production log, a code of ethics and an individual reflection. All texts are original; documentary and podcast clips are chosen by the teacher (many NFB films stream free in Canada).

Lessons

#	Lesson	Classes	Question	Expectations	What's inside
1	**What Is True on Screen?**	1	Can a documentary just show reality?	M 1.1, M 2.1, OC 1.7	Grierson; six documentary modes; mode spotting
2	**The Editing Room**	1	How does editing make meaning?	M 1.2, M 2.2, M 1.5	Kuleshov effect; same footage, two stories
3	**Sound and Voice**	1	How does sound shape truth?	M 2.2, M 1.3, OC 1.9	Two versions of a podcast; listening log
4	**The Interview**	1	How do we interview ethically?	M 1.4, M 3.3, OC 1.7	Consent, OCAP, question types, practice
5	**Documentary Case Study**	1	Who made it, and why?	M 1.5, M 1.6, M 1.3	A teacher-chosen documentary; funding and perspective
6	**Truth, Story and Harm**	1	When does a true story hurt?	M 1.3, M 1.5, OC 1.9	Six ethics cases; a code of ethics
7	**Pitch and Plan**	1	What's our story?	M 3.1, M 3.2, W 1.3	Local issue; pitch; treatment; storyboard or script
8	**Production Day**	1	Can we get the material?	M 3.3, M 3.4, OC 1.7	Interviews, b-roll, ambient sound, clip log
9	**Edit and Review**	1	Where is the story in the edit?	M 3.4, M 4.1, OC 1.9	Rough cut; peer feedback; fine-cut plan
10	**Listening and Screening Party**	1	What did we learn about truth?	M 4.1, OC 1.9, M 1.3	Screenings; peer review; submit (summative)

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Assessment

Type	In this unit
Assessment for learning	Mode spotting, two edits, two versions, listening log, question lab, case study guide, ethics cases, pitch sheet, treatment, clip log
Assessment as learning	Peer feedback, unit reflection
Assessment of learning	Podcast episode or mini-documentary, production log and individual reflection, with a rubric in the Summative Task file

Texts

Included:

- **Original texts:** a fictional shot log and two edits (the skatepark debate), two versions of a podcast script (the Route 9 bus) and six ethics cases
- **Production Kit:** interview release form, production log, storyboard and podcast script templates
- **Teacher choice:** documentary and podcast clips, for example free NFB documentaries

All interviewees sign release forms (with a parent or guardian's signature if under 18). Students avoid topics involving crime, trauma or health, follow school rules for recording, and use only original, public domain or properly licensed music and images. Projects involving a community students are not part of are planned with that community, through the teacher, from the start.

What's in each lesson

- Teacher lesson plan with expectations, timed sequence, differentiation, look-fors and answer guides
- Slides with speaker notes
- Student handouts and organizers
- Editable Word and PowerPoint files, plus PDFs

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