

RECORDING A CHANGING NATION

Lesson Extension: Shifting the Lens

Duration: 30 minutes

Grade Level: 6th-12th grade

About this Resource:

Each person sees the world slightly differently because we each have a unique combination of roles, identities, and lived experiences. We might consider each of these individual parts of ourselves to be individual lenses through which we could see images, issues, or events.

Materials:

This activity will require access to print or electronic reproductions of the images you used in the Visual Analysis.

Preparation:

After completing a Visual Analysis, select one photograph from that set. Consider, also, exploring the idea of 'lenses' in advance. You might connect this with the concept of literary lenses or to facets of personal identity.

Consider inviting students to create a vision board that documents who they are now and what they hope for their future. This might simply be a digital collage or something more in-depth. The purpose is to activate for students how images capture the here and now *and* tell others a bit about the creator.

Protocol:

Conduct the protocol below, focusing on the single photograph you selected. After each step, bring students back together so that they may share their discoveries and you can check their understanding.

1. *Inventory:* Working with a partner, make a long list of possible 'lenses' you use to understand the world. Consider, for instance: academic interests, gender, race, relationships to others, sexuality, belief system, and many more.
2. *Try on a lens:* Working independently, choose one lens from the list you and your partner created. Examine the photograph again but this time use that metaphorical lens to guide your observations and interpretations. Look at the familiar photograph for something particularly relevant to that issue or idea. For example, you might look at the photograph through the lens of gender and consider how gender is presented within.
 - Through your lens of choice, what things in the photograph seem particularly important to notice? Make a list of at least five things.
 - Through your lens of choice, what message(s) does the image convey? Write a 3-5 sentence paragraph that captures your thinking.
3. *Share:* Compare your thinking with a classmate's and be prepared to share your discoveries with the whole class.

- Partner with a classmate who looked at the photograph through the same lens. What did each of you note as being particularly important in the photograph? How do your synopses of the photograph compare? Why might you see things differently, through the same lens?
 - Partner with a classmate who looked at the photograph through a different lens. What did each of you note as being particularly important in the photograph? How do your synopses of the photograph compare? Why might you see things similarly, through a different lens?
4. ***Reflect:*** Review your documentation from the different types of analysis. Pay particular attention to how and when your thinking about the photograph shifted.
- How did “trying on a lens” affect your thinking about the photograph?
 - What are the challenges and opportunities of viewing an image, issue, or event through a single lens?
 - What ideas does this give you about research, writing, or even voting?

Summative Assessment: Consider assigning the questions in Step Four as writing prompts, giving students an opportunity to consolidate their thinking and build clear, nuanced connections to the real world.