

Investigating 'Humanities' in the news

It is important that current news issues, whether **local, national or global** are brought into the classroom to make the Humanities relevant and interesting. However, it can be difficult to build this into planning to ensure that Humanities is investigative and develops the range of skills. These sessions use the '**5W's and 'Thinking Hats'** to give some investigation frameworks that can be applied to a wide range of 'news' topics.

5 WMs = Humanities AoLE

(Learning descriptions – Progression steps 2 & 3)

What will you need:

Depending on the topic/issue:

- Newspaper articles
- Photographs
- Atlases
- Maps
- Websites

Some background of information of your own about the issue. You may wish to have your own set of 'hats' for pupils to use and a poster in the room explaining the different hats and types of thinking.

What are the 6 thinking hats?

Put simply – 6 different ways of thinking about a question or issue.

- **White** hat = Factual information. What you know/can see.
- **Yellow** hat = What are the good points/ advantages?
- **Black** hat = What are the bad points/ disadvantages?
- **Red** hat = Feelings – what is your emotional response?
- **Green** hat = Creative thinking – asking questions/suggesting answers.
- **Blue** hat = Reasoning/justification

Preparation and prior knowledge

Pupils should understand that:

- Depending on the issue/topic being investigated pupils should have enough background knowledge/understanding to enable them to carry out the investigation/enquiry.

They might also have:

- Used and become familiar with the 'thinking hats' as a strategy for developing and organising their thinking.
- Collected some materials of their own relating to the topic.

Generating the investigation/enquiry

The format for generating investigation is the **5Ws template (please see Resource Sheet 1)**. Whatever the topic, this is an effective framework to produce focused enquiry.

This can be done:

- in isolation as a stand-alone mini enquiry,
- as part of individual or group research
- as a stimulus for a more in-depth enquiry of the issue.

What types of stories could you investigate?

- Local development (houses, windfarm, new roads, new shops etc.)
- Weather
- Natural disaster (volcano/ hurricanes/floods)
- Environmental issues (cutting/planting trees)
- Sporting/ cultural event
- Archaeological dig (new evidence)
- Industrial accident (oil spoilt)

Doing the enquiry

- For undertaking more in-depth investigation of an issue, De Bono's thinking hats is a useful framework.
- Use the **vision frame (Resource sheet 2)** for this.
- Photocopy on A3 and place a news article or a photograph relating to the issue in the middle of the frame. Ask pupils in groups of 3 to complete each of the 3 top segments which represent the **white, yellow and black hats** of **de Bono's 6 thinking hats**.
- You may wish to explain a bit more about de Bono's hats at this point.
- Pupils can complete either complete each segment as a group or each individual can take responsibility for the white, yellow or black hat.
- To share and gather ideas you could carry-out this activity as a **jig-so** and ask all the white, yellow and black hat pupils to come together to share their ideas/findings before returning to their groups and feeding back.
- They can all contribute their ideas to the **red hat** segment.

Analysing the enquiry

To investigate the issue in more depth, guide the pupils to mind-map their ideas using the **compass rose mind-map (Resource sheet 3)**. The compass rose divides issues up to 4 aspects:

- N = Natural (What are the impacts on the natural environments?)

- E = Economic (What will the costs be?)
- S = Social (How will the people be affected?)
- W = Who decides (Who are the people who can influence what happens?)

This is '**green hat thinking**' and asks the pupils to think more creatively in generating their ideas. How exactly you use it will depend upon the topic/issue. For example, some of the ideas relating to an issue about a new road might be:

Natural

- Loss of greenery
- Trees cut down
- Loss of habitats
- More pollution on new road (less on old)

Social

- Danger from crossing road
- Local shopkeepers losing customers
- Traffic moves quicker so people can travel faster

Economic

- Cost of building road
- Job for builders
- Less money for schools, etc.

Who decides?

- Planners
- Councillors
- Public

This same format can be used for shower thought solutions to issues.

Reflecting on the enquiry

The final hat, **blue hat thinking (Resource sheet 3)**, is about reasoning, justification and reflecting on their thinking. This gives an opportunity for pupils to consider all the information and decide whether they think the changes are good or bad and to explain their reasoning.

What other information would they need to find out?

Next steps

This will depend to some extent on the nature of the news being investigated. If it is being done as a class topic a next step might be for pupils do more independent research using similar frameworks to help guide their planning and thinking. They could also consider what they can do as active citizens to address the issue.