Looking at Patterns in Stories: Agenda Setting

Objective

Consider how news stories reflect agenda setting.
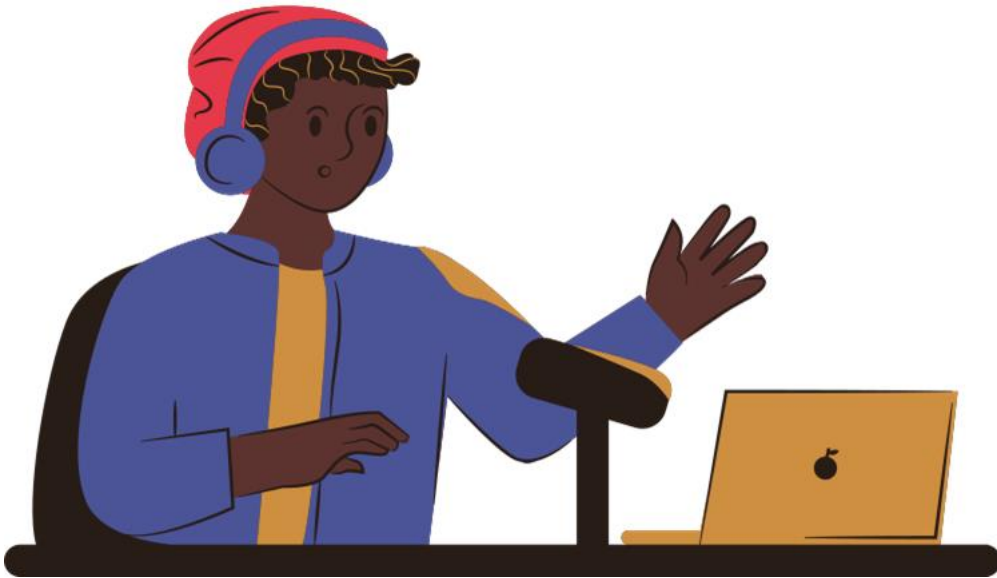
Standards

- <u>CCSS ELA R.3</u>: Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

- <u>CCSS.ELA R.5</u>: Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

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Connect

If you were to write for a newspaper, what would you write about and why?

Agenda Setting

Deciding what to cover has traditionally been a concern of journalism and is reflected in the theory of agenda setting. Agenda setting is the power to influence public perception regarding which stories and issues are most important.

Agenda Setting in Action

We can see agendas in the fact that some stories are given more coverage, and more prominent coverage, than others. We can observe this with stories that are given bigger headlines or are positioned to catch readers' attention first. These are often the same as stories highlighted by other outlets (though sometimes presented in very different ways).

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Activity

- Conduct a search in Mucktracker for a topic. Use the timeline feature to see the coverage over time

- Select five stories that best reflect the agenda and place them on the canvas. Group similar stories together.

- Write a response: Which stories are getting most of the coverage? Which agendas do they reflect? Why do you think this is?

- Launch Mucktracker now.

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Wrap-Up

- Agenda setting is the power to influence public perception regarding which stories and stances are most important.

- What makes up the "news" has changed over time and continues to change, as news media can reach global audiences. What do you think the news should look like?

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