

Meet a Journalist

Overview

While it is increasingly difficult for teachers to take students on field trips, inviting guest speakers into your classroom is much easier. In this civic experience, students get to meet a local journalist and investigate the important job of investigating a story, fact-checking sources, and breaking through the noise.

Teacher Directions

1. First, as a class, read some of the background sources and articles in [this week's Current Event](#) on Freedom of the Press.
2. Ask students if they know their local news sources. On the board, list all the ones you hear. This can include tv, radio, websites, and newspapers. Then take a look here to see what publications are available in your region: [Newspapers Published in Oregon](#). OPB has regional reporters so one may live near your school.
3. Separate students into small groups and have them brainstorm what questions they would like to ask a journalist if they were to meet one. Provide the [Seven Standards for Quality Journalism](#) handout from the News Literacy Project to them as a stimulus for their questions. Make sure one student is writing down all the questions they generate.
4. Have each group report out on their 3 favorite questions as you compile them, creating an interview question bank for the class.
5. Reach out to a local news source and invite a journalist to be a guest speaker in your class. Explain that your students are studying Freedom of the Press and have some questions about how journalists do their work.
6. Once you have a speaker lined up, prepare the students by discussing how to make a classroom visitor feel welcome and how to tactfully word tough questions. Have students fill out the first part of the activity sheet below.
7. On the day of the visit, identify a student to escort the speaker to the classroom from the front office. Depending on your guest's comfort working with students, you may or may not need to moderate student questions.
8. Follow up by having students fill out the second part of the activity sheet.
9. Make sure to send your guest a personalized thank you message from your class. Journalists are extremely busy.



Meet a Journalist

What do you think would be difficult about being a journalist?

What do you think would be interesting about reporting?

What would you like to know about the journalist who is coming to your class?

List some things you learned from the guest speaker:

What are you wondering about now, after having met a journalist?

Why does journalism matter in a democracy?

Why must the press be independent of government influence in a fair society?

How can citizens be responsible consumers of information?