

and then one night

THE MAKING OF DEAD MAN WALKING

PRODUCED BY
KQED
san francisco
OPERA

“You Decide” Companion Lesson

Grade Levels: 9-12

Subject Areas: Civics, language arts, thinking and reasoning

National Standards

<http://www.mcrel.org/>

Civics

Standard 13

Understands the character of American political and social conflict and factors that tend to prevent or lower its intensity.

Level: IV Grade: 9-12

2. Knows why people may agree on values or principles in the abstract but disagree when they are applied to specific issues such as the right to life and capital punishment.

Language Arts

Standard 7

Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts.

Level: IV Grade: 9-12

1. Uses reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of informational texts.

6. Uses discussions with peers as a way of understanding information.

8. Uses text features and elements to support inferences and generalizations about information (e.g., vocabulary, structure, evidence, expository structure, format, use of language, arguments used).

Thinking and Reasoning

Standard 6

Applies decision-making techniques.

Level: IV Grade: 9-12

2. Analyzes current or pending decisions that can affect national or international policy and identifies the consequences of each alternative.
5. Evaluates major factors that influence personal decisions.

Overview

These activities are to be used in conjunction with the **And then One Night: Making of Dead Man Walking** Web site. Students will conduct Internet research on the topic of capital punishment, complete the "You Decide" Web activity, and discuss how people's views on the death penalty can be challenged by an event such as the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to analyze the issues surrounding capital punishment.
Students will conduct research on the Internet, noting various views and sources.
Students will be able express views on capital punishment.

Time

Three 50-minute class periods

Materials and Teacher Preparation

Internet connections for students

Explore the **And Then One Night: The Making of Dead Man Walking** Web site:
<http://pbs.org/kqed/onenight>.

Some areas of note include the following:

- Inside Death Row: John Packard's visit to death row and statistics on the death penalty. <http://pbs.org/kqed/onenight/creativeprocess/deathrow/>

- Stories Behind Capital Punishment: Timelines tracing the lives of two people affected in very different ways by the death penalty.
<http://pbs.org/kqed/onenight/stories/families/>

Be sure to bookmark the “You Decide” activity at
<http://pbs.org/kqed/onenight/stories/youdecide/>

Bookmark Web sites related to capital punishment. Suggestions include the following:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/angel/>

<http://www.prodeathpenalty.com/>

http://w1.155.telia.com/~u15509119/ny_sida_1.htm

<http://www.aclu.org/death-penalty/>

<http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/just/death/>

<http://www.geocities.com/trctl11/thoughts.html>

Chart paper

Before Engaging in the “You Decide” Activity

1. Send students on an Internet search to find five pieces of information on the topic of capital punishment. Students might be given the Web sites listed above or the Web site for **And Then One Night: The Making of Dead Man Walking** as a starting point. That Web site offers links to many other sites for further information. Students can also search the Internet through www.google.com, www.yahoo.com or similar sites.

Remind students that Web sites, like all media, are human constructions. As they search the Internet, students may find pages with incorrect information and exaggerated statistics. Web sites containing clear outlines of both sides of issues are generally more reliable. Students should also look for “.edu” and “.org” sites instead of “.coms,” and they should be leary of sites with pop-up ads. With this topic, they should also be made aware that some “.org” sites may be sponsored by groups with a particular view, such as lobbies. Although these sites are good sources of arguments, students should try to decipher the general position that the author is taking so that they understand the context in which the facts are being presented. As always, students should note the sources of information used in their presentations.

2. Have students share their information with the entire class.

3.a. If possible, put numbers from 1—5 around the classroom and ask students to go to the number that describes their position on capital punishment. A number 1 position would indicate that they strongly believe in capital punishment. A number 5 position would indicate that they oppose capital punishment in every situation.

b. Instruct students to find someone who has a different number from their own and spend 10 minutes sharing their views on capital punishment. During the first part of the discussion, ask students to practice “active listening,” that is, listening attentively to their partners, only interrupting to ask clarifying questions. After five minutes, ask the students to switch roles and have each one clearly explain his or her partner's position.

“You Decide” Activity

Provide time for students to complete the “You Decide” Web activity.

In the activity, students will be asked the same question five times and, based on their responses, be presented with arguments that may challenge their point of view. Remind students that the activity is designed to react to their point of view as if it is an “interactive devil's advocate.” At the end, they will be asked to cast their final vote based on the information they’ve been given and their own opinions.

After Engaging in the “You Decide” Activity

1. Spend several minutes discussing the “You Decide” activity with the class.
 - Did your views on capital punishment change during the “You Decide” activity?
 - What do you think was the strongest argument for the use of capital punishment?
 - What do you think was the strongest argument against the use of capital punishment?
 - Do you think capital punishment should be legal?
2. After students have had an opportunity to express their views on capital punishment, ask them if they think Osama bin Laden, if found to be involved in the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, should receive the death penalty.
3. Provide time for students to look at the “You Decide” activity in order to understand how the site is formatted. Instruct them to go through the activity again, this time selecting the answer opposite to the one they selected the first time. For example, where they responded “YES” to capital punishment, this time, they should respond “NO.” This way, they will see that the designers had to build the twice—providing arguments for both sides of the issue.

4. Divide the class into small groups and explain to them that they are going to create their own paper version of a “You Decide” activity on the issue of capital punishment as it relates to Osama bin Laden. They could write arguments for each side and collate them into a pamphlet or book, following the logic of the online activity, or just discuss.
5. After students have completed their work or discussion, ask them to present their findings to the class.
- 6.a. Have students, as a class, decide on what the most compelling arguments were from all of the class presentations and create a class “You Decide” using these arguments. The class “You Decide” could retain the Bin Laden associations or be a more general argument.
- b. Invite other classes in your school to complete the activity
- c. After everyone has finished the activity, tally the votes and create a chart to display the results.

Extension Activities

1. Have students create a story about an imaginary meeting among individuals whose opinions represent various sides of the death penalty argument. For example, students might use a news article about a particular crime to write a script. Individuals mentioned in the story—e.g., the mother of a victim, the convicted criminal and the judge—would interact with each other. Students might also use the **And Then One Night: The Making of Dead Man Walking** Web site for other character ideas <http://www.pbs.org/kqed/onenight/>
2. Ask students to write diary entries from two different perspectives. One perspective could be someone waiting on death row for execution. The other might be someone whose family member has been murdered. Students should write as if they were that person, imagining how that person would feel, and what he or she might say in a diary.
3. Collect articles on the death penalty, the history of capital punishment and/or the terrorist attacks, and use them to create a class data resource.

ASSESSMENT

Students will be assessed on the quality of their participation in class discussions and the presentations they develop in small groups. In order to accommodate different learning styles, the extension activities might be applied so that students could be assessed on the quality of their writing and whether it demonstrates imagination and understanding of the issues. You may choose to create class rubrics for the activities. The following Web site is an excellent source of information on rubrics: <http://edweb.sdsu.edu/webquest/rubrics/weblessons.htm>.