

# CURRENT EVENTS

# WEEKLY DISCUSSION SLIDES

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Full Year Resource | 36 Weeks  
Social Studies & Civics | Grades 6–12

- 36-Week Slide Templates
- SIFT Fact-Checking Strategy
- Leveled Discussion Frames
- Student Reflection Journal
- Teacher Facilitation Guide

**UM Printables**

Premium Classroom Resource

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## Review & Feedback

Share your experience!

# Teacher Facilitation Guide

## Part 1: Implementation & Routine

### How to Use This Resource

- This resource is designed to be low-prep and flexible. Print the weekly slide templates or display them digitally.
- Each week follows a consistent routine: Select an event, Guide students through SIFT, Discuss using sentence frames, Reflect in journals.
- The 36 weeks are divided into 4 quarters, each building on the skills of the previous one.
- Templates are categorized by focus area (News Literacy, Critical Evaluation, Civic Engagement, Action) to align with your curriculum.

### Suggested Weekly Routine

- Monday: Introduce the current event. Students read the article and complete the 'Stop' step of SIFT.
- Tuesday: Students 'Investigate' the source and 'Find' better coverage using the SIFT anchor chart.
- Wednesday: Students 'Trace' claims to the original source. Begin small-group discussions.
- Thursday: Whole-class discussion using the leveled sentence frames (Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced).
- Friday: Students complete their weekly reflection journal entry, focusing on personal bias and growth.

# Teacher Facilitation Guide

## Part 2: Scaffolding & Assessment

### Scaffolding for Grades 6–12

- Grades 6–8: Focus on the 'Stop' and 'Find' steps of SIFT. Use Level 1 (Beginner) sentence frames. Provide pre-selected, appropriate news sources.
- Grades 9–10: Incorporate all SIFT steps. Use Level 2 (Intermediate) sentence frames. Allow student-led source selection with teacher approval.
- Grades 11–12: Emphasize 'Trace' and critical evaluation. Use Level 3 (Advanced) sentence frames. Encourage independent research and civic action projects.
- All Levels: Use the reflection journal to metacognitively track bias and growth over the year.

### Assessment Tips

- Formative: Review weekly journal entries for depth of reflection and accurate application of SIFT.
- Discussion: Use a participation rubric based on the sentence frames to assess speaking and listening skills.
- Summative: Use the Quarter Reflection weeks (9, 18, 27, 36) as portfolio checkpoints to measure student growth.
- Self-Assessment: The bias reflection journal inherently acts as a student self-assessment tool.

# SIFT Strategy Anchor Chart

The 4-Step Fact-Checking Method

**S**

## Stop

- Pause and ask questions before sharing or reacting.
- Check your emotional response to the headline.
- Don't read further until you note what you already know or assume.

**I**

## Investigate the Source

- Who is the author or publisher of this information?
- What is their expertise, purpose, or agenda?
- Is this a trusted and credible source for this specific topic?

**F**

## Find Better Coverage

- Look for other reporting on the same claim or event.
- Is there a consensus among trusted, professional sources?
- What does the broader reporting landscape say about this?

**T**

## Trace Claims to Original

- Find the original source of the claim, quote, or media.
- Read the full context, not just a selected snippet.
- Was the original claim accurately represented in the new source?

Remember the SIFT Mindset

# Discussion Sentence Frames: Level 1

Beginner | Grades 6–8

## Agreeing with a Classmate

- *"I agree with what [Name] said because..."*
- *"My idea is similar to [Name]'s because..."*

## Disagreeing Respectfully

- *"I respectfully disagree because..."*
- *"I see it differently because..."*

## Adding to an Idea

- *"I would like to add that..."*
- *"Another thing to consider is..."*

## Asking for Clarification

- *"Can you explain what you mean by...?"*
- *"Could you give an example of...?"*

## Citing Textual Evidence

- *"According to the article, it says..."*
- *"The text states that..."*

# Weekly Journal Entry: Bias & Reflection

Student Current Events Journal

## Bias Check

**Author/Source Bias:** What perspective or agenda might the author have?

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**Personal Bias:** How do your own experiences shape your reaction to this event?

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**Impact of Bias:** How might bias affect the way this story is understood by others?

## Discussion Reflection

**Did your opinion change after the class discussion? Why or why not?**

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**What was the strongest counterargument you heard?**

## Civic Connection & Action

**Why does this event matter to your community or the world?**

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**What is one action step you could take regarding this issue?**

# Week 1: Introduction to Current Events

Quarter 1 | News Literacy Foundations

**Current Event Topic:**

**Source / URL:**

## Discussion Questions

**Q1:** ● What is a current event and why does it matter?

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**Q2:** ● How do current events connect to your daily life?

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**Q3:** ● Where do you typically get your news?

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## SIFT Focus of the Week

- Stop: Before reading, note your initial reaction to the headline.

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## Bias Reflection Journal

- What did you learn about how you consume news?

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# Week 12: Media Ownership & Influence

Quarter 2 | Critical Evaluation

**Current Event Topic:**

**Source / URL:**

## Discussion Questions

**Q1:** ● Who owns the news you consume?

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**Q2:** ● How might ownership affect what stories are told?

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**Q3:** ● Should there be limits on media ownership?

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## SIFT Focus of the Week

- Trace: Identify the parent company of a news source you use.

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## Bias Reflection Journal

- How does knowing who owns the news change your trust?

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# Week 13: Social Media as News Source

Quarter 2 | Critical Evaluation

**Current Event Topic:**

**Source / URL:**

## Discussion Questions

**Q1:** ● Is social media a valid source for news?

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**Q2:** ● What are the dangers of getting news from social media?

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**Q3:** ● How do algorithms affect what news you see?

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## SIFT Focus of the Week

- Stop: Before sharing a social media post, what SIFT steps should you take?

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## Bias Reflection Journal

- How will you change your social media habits?

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# Week 32: Structured Debate on Current Events

Quarter 4 | Action & Application

**Current Event Topic:**

**Source / URL:**

## Discussion Questions

**Q1:** ● Why is debate important in a democracy?

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**Q2:** ● How do you respectfully disagree with someone?

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**Q3:** ● What makes a debate argument strong and credible?

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## SIFT Focus of the Week

- Investigate: Gather evidence for both sides of a current debate.

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## Bias Reflection Journal

- How did debating change or strengthen your original opinion?

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# Week 33: Mock Press Conference

Quarter 4 | Action & Application

**Current Event Topic:**

**Source / URL:**

## Discussion Questions

**Q1:** ● What is the role of the press in holding leaders accountable?

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**Q2:** ● How do leaders use press conferences to shape their message?

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**Q3:** ● What makes a press question effective?

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## SIFT Focus of the Week

- Find: Watch a clip of a real press conference and note the techniques used.

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## Bias Reflection Journal

- What did you learn about the relationship between media and power?

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# Week 34: Student Choice: Deep Dive 1

Quarter 4 | Action & Application

**Current Event Topic:**

**Source / URL:**

## Discussion Questions

**Q1:** ● Why did you choose this specific current event?

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**Q2:** ● What is the historical context of this issue?

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**Q3:** ● Who are the key stakeholders involved?

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## SIFT Focus of the Week

- Apply the full SIFT method to your self-selected topic.

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## Bias Reflection Journal

- What surprised you most about your deep dive topic?

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# Week 35: Student Choice: Deep Dive 2

Quarter 4 | Action & Application

**Current Event Topic:**

**Source / URL:**

## Discussion Questions

**Q1:** ● How has this issue evolved over the past year?

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**Q2:** ● What are the opposing viewpoints on this issue?

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**Q3:** ● What is a potential solution or path forward?

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## SIFT Focus of the Week

● Trace: Find the earliest origin of this current event.

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## Bias Reflection Journal

● How has your understanding of this issue deepened?

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# Week 36: End of Year Reflection & Action Plan

Quarter 4 | Reflect & Reset

**Current Event Topic:**

**Source / URL:**

## Discussion Questions

**Q1:** ● What is the most valuable skill you learned this year?

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**Q2:** ● How will you stay informed about current events in the future?

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**Q3:** ● How will you actively participate in your community?

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## SIFT Focus of the Week

- Reflect on your SIFT growth from Week 1 to Week 36.

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## Bias Reflection Journal

- Write a letter to your future self about being an informed citizen.

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# Thank You!

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### How to Leave a Review:

1. Go to your 'My Purchases' page.
2. Find this resource and click 'Leave a Review'.
3. Share your honest feedback!

## UM Printables