

COMMENTARY

Teacher Tips and Extension Activities

Use these tips and extensions to expand on the mini-lesson. Keep in mind that the mini-lessons are designed to engage all learners, so that they feel confident and see the purpose of analyzing primary sources.

Source check activity: Journalistic standards (rules) dictate that a journalist must attribute or include their sources of information. No doubt you have to do the same when you write an essay for school. Sometimes information comes in the form of a caption below an image or a list of references at the end of the piece.

- **Ask students:** What piece of information about the source of an op-ed is the most important to know and why? Title, author, publisher, place of publication, or year of publication? More challenging: How can these details help you understand the origin, reliability, or perspective of the media source?

Extension activities:

1. Go to bit.ly/jia-cronkite to complete the full activity on Walter Cronkite using the magnifier tool on the Journalism in Action Website
2. More Practice: Go to the Introduction page of Journalism in Action's Vietnam War case study at bit.ly/jia-vw. Choose one of the primary sources and complete the See, Think, Wonder questions.
3. Who else would you want to hear from to learn more about the story? Whose perspective or opinion was missing from the examples provided?

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Teacher Tips and Extension Activities (cont.)

Further investigation: How do you think Walter Cronkite eventually got to the point where he delivered a full monologue about his thoughts on Vietnam? Cronkite, like most journalists during Vietnam, were supportive of the war and reported the news based on what information the government gave them. This practice continues today through press conferences led by White House and Pentagon officials. However, the journalists' duty is to sift through official reports and press releases to discover the full story.

Take a look at the following two videos and answer the following questions, which might help you answer the question about Cronkite above and why some journalists end up becoming opinion columnists after years of news reporting. Watch the first 2:40 minutes of the government-produced video "Why Vietnam?" at bit.ly/jia-whyvietnam. Then go to bit.ly/jia-atissue read an excerpt of the transcript from WNET's "At Issue; The Stakes in Vietnam," which brought together journalists and professors to share their opinions about the war.

1. Use the See, Think, Wonder questions from the mini-lesson.
2. What important information do the two pieces present that might help you understand why most of the public including journalists supported the war? What did you hear that might change people's opinions about the war?
3. Whose perspectives did you notice were absent from the pieces?