

UNIT OVERVIEW

Unit	Everyday D.C. Photo Stories and Photography Exhibition (developed in partnership with the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting)
Close Study Focus	Other- us as consumers and creators of media
Discipline	Visual Arts

Unit Focus

This photography and exhibition-curation unit is inspired by the *Everyday Africa* project from journalists Peter DiCampo and Austin Merrill and is supported by the D.C.-based nonprofit Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting. *Everyday Africa*, a collection of images shot on mobile phones across the continent, is an attempt to re-direct focus toward a more accurate understanding of what the majority of Africans experience on a day-to-day basis: normal life. The project is a response to the common media portrayal of the African continent as a place consumed by war, poverty, and disease.

Everyday D.C. is an opportunity for students to apply photography, photo-analysis and interviewing skills to the creation of a photo essays that reflect their everyday realities in D.C. Students will also create group photo exhibitions that they feel more accurately and responsibly represent their communities. Participating schools will have the opportunity collaborate with DCPS and the Pulitzer Center to select students that will help curate a district-wide Everyday D.C. exhibition in spring 2017.

The Pulitzer Center funds independent journalists to examine pressing, underreported international issues and strives to connect students to world issues through in-class journalist visits and online education resources. To support this unit, the Pulitzer Center will provide sample lesson plans on its online Lesson Builder tool that guide students in learning photojournalism and curation skills from professional journalists. The Center is also excited to publish and promote the final photo essays and classroom exhibitions to Pulitzer Center's thousands of subscribers. Teachers will have the option to connect professional journalists with their classes in-person or over Skype, and can contact education@pulitzercenter.org at any time for support with the unit.

Essential Questions

- * Why do photographers take photos?
- * What is a photographer's responsibility to his/her/their subject?
- * In what ways do others perceive me? How does the way I'm represented in the media compare to how I view myself?
- * How do I perceive others and how does media influence how I perceive others?
- * How does a photo exhibition tell the story of a community?

Major Concepts

Vocabulary

broader ideas that can provide a frame for investigating the theme

*language that may be introduced during the unit
(some vocabulary is dependent on the technical/conceptual choices)*

Community
Place
Culture
Social media
Responsibility
Personal
Public
Truth
Perception
Observation
Identity/Identities of others

Journalist
Photojournalism
Landscape
Portrait
Object
Angle
Perspective
Focal point
Framing
Symbolism
Curation
Photo exhibition
Reporting

National Standards Addressed

VA:Cr1.2.8a	Collaboratively shape an artistic investigation of an aspect of present day life using a contemporary practice of art and design.
VA:Cr2.3.8a	Select, organize, and design images and words to make visually clear and compelling presentations.
VA:Pr5.1.8a	Collaboratively prepare and present selected theme based artwork for display, and formulate exhibition narratives for the viewer.
VA:Pr6.1.8a	Analyze why and how an exhibition or collection may influence ideas, beliefs, and experiences.
VA:Re.7.2.8a	Compare and contrast contexts and media in which viewers encounter images that influence ideas, emotions, and actions.
VA:Cn11.1.8a	Distinguish different ways art is used to represent, establish, reinforce, and reflect group identity.

Images from an Everyday D.C. workshop from 2014 with The Inspired Teaching Public Charter School



"A Girl Taking a Picture." This picture is very unique because it shows a girl taking a picture and the different kind of angles. In this workshop I learned how to make the pictures into a story and learning different angles. Image by Chaltu. Washington, D.C., 2014. [Add this image to a lesson](#)



"Snowfall: Bird's-Eye View." Taken on January 21. In this workshop I learned that you can take any picture of anything and make it wonderful. Image by Kayla, 2015.

Thematic Overview/Context

engagement with the theme/foundations of concept

The Pulitzer Center endeavors to engage students in thinking critically about global issues, while also empowering students as active consumers and producers of information. This unit connects directly to the Pulitzer Center mission by exploring the following themes:

1) We are all photographers:

- Students study *Everyday Africa* photos and make connections between the photos from the project and photos from their own social media platforms

2) We are all represented by photographers

- Students look at images from a Google search of Washington D.C. to compare how D.C. is represented to what D.C. looks like to the students

- Students look at a mix of photos and try to determine whether photos are from D.C. or not from D.C. (categorize)

- Students brainstorm first impressions of Africa and compare those impressions to what is presented in *Everyday Africa*: <https://www.instagram.com/everydayafrica>

- Students look through *Everyday Africa* images and pick a favorite. Students compare the image they have chosen to how Africa is represented in the media

Technical/Formal Instruction

demonstrations of technique/integration of vocabulary and concepts

The *Everyday Africa* team collaborated with the Pulitzer Center, the Learning About Multimedia Project and the education team led by Tracy Crowley at Community Consolidated School District 21 in Wheeling, IL to create unit resources that can be found at pulitzercenter.org/education/everyday-africa-curriculum. They include resources to support teaching many of the following concepts:

1) Basic photography and portraiture

- Focus on angles and how different angles change how a subject is perceived (“bird’s eye,” low level, high level, tilted, “worm’s eye,”)
- Lighting and shadows
- Framing (rule of thirds, examining what is included/not included in a photo)

2) Interview skills and writing that engages all senses

- Writing open-ended questions that lead to stories
- Communicating an interview through photography
- Writing photo captions

3) Photo essay curation

- Telling a story through the selection and placement of photographs



everydayafrica [FOLLOW](#)

Everyday Africa Photographers living and working in Africa, finding the extreme not nearly as prevalent as the familiar, the everyday. facebook.com/everydayafrica
apjd.org

2,780 posts 287k followers 116 following

4) Photo exhibition curation

- Establishing anchor pieces for an exhibition
- Experimenting with how photos are placed and how various placements communicate different themes
- Writing exhibition titles and descriptions that introduce viewers to the context for an exhibition

Note: *Everyday Africa* creators Peter DiCampo and Austin Merrill will be creating a short video that outlines curation tips for students. The Pulitzer Center can also support teachers in setting up visits with photojournalists in person or over Skype to assist students in practicing these skills. Contact education@pulitzercenter.org to set up a free visit.

Practice

*student opportunity to
experiment with media*

*Activities and/or project that
will allow the student to apply
their learning from the unit to a
new problem or circumstance*

Application

The Pulitzer Center has written sample lesson plans to support this unit that will be posted on the Pulitzer Center Lesson Builder (www.pulitzercenter.org/builder). The sample exercises below can also be supported by in-class visits with photojournalists. Contact education@pulitzercenter.org to set up a visit.

1) Portrait photography:

- Students work with a partner to practice taking portraits while applying different photography skills (shooting at different distances, different angles, with and without flash, etc.)
- Students look at photographs from *Everyday Africa* and sort photos into categories based on the skill evident in the photograph (high angle, low angle, juxtaposition, etc.)

2) Reporting:

- Students break into pairs and each get a chance to interview his/her/their partner. Students practice listening for new information, for personality traits and other information that someone might not get from just seeing a photo of the person. Students analyze how to take a photograph that helps

an audience better get to know a person and then look at

1. **Individual photo story:** Students individually create five-photograph photo stories to share D.C. from their perspectives.
2. **Collaborative curation project:** In small groups, students work together to curate a class exhibition that uses one photo from each student.

3. Culminating opportunity: Everyday D.C. Exhibition

- A student representative is selected to work with a group of D.C. students to curate a photo exhibition representing a student perspective of D.C.

These performance tasks can be exhibited by the Pulitzer Center through posts on our education blog.

(www.pulitzercenter.org/education) The Center can also help promote an exhibition at an individual school.

IMPACT NOTE:

Schools in Santa Clara, CA and Wheeling, IL are also hoping to engage their middle school students in this

examples of this from the *Everyday Africa* project.

Resource opportunity: Everyday Africa journalists have created a video describing the techniques and the stories behind how the photos were taken. They will also model decision-making around how to select photos for an exhibition.

3) Photographing place and environment

Students use the techniques practiced in the portrait exercises to take photos of places and objects. Students analyze how a photo can capture a place and a community.

Students take three pictures that represent themselves (one portrait, one place, one object) and then go back to their partner from the portrait exercise to discuss how the partners interpreted the images (Did my partner see what I hoped to convey in the image?)

4) Exhibition Curation

- Students practice synthesizing a group of 20 Everyday Africa photos into an exhibition with 10 photos, an exhibition with five photos and an exhibition with three photos. They also practice writing exhibition titles and short descriptions that guide the viewer in examining the exhibition.

- Throughout the unit, students take turns reorganizing select images from the Everyday Africa project on a bulletin board to practice curation and sequencing photos in different ways to tell different stories. Students choose their photos from a bank that is also visible to the class. As different students get a chance to reorder the bulletin board “exhibition,” the class processes how ordering pictures differently changes the story told by the exhibition.

project. Classes that participate in the Everyday D.C. exhibition will also potentially be able to connect with students in those cities over Skype to compare exhibitions and engage in dialogue about the similarities and differences they experience in their daily lives.

Unit Level Assessment

criteria on which students will be evaluated on educational performance; reflects all aspects of the unit (attach separate assessment documents as needed)

Student success in the two performance tasks listed above will be determined using rubrics like the one attached.