PLS Newsletter at a Glance

**New** Lesson for Civics and Math: ***Graphing the Vote: Age, Gender, and Time***
Lessons for MLK Day (January 20th) **and Black History Month** (February)
Decoding Challenging Topics: The January 6th Insurrection

New Media Decoding Lesson for Civics + Math:

[Graphing the Vote: Age, Gender, and Time](#) Middle and High School

Students tell the stories behind political graphs by analyzing graphs about generational voting, asking questions about the sourcing and target audience, and reflecting on patterns in youth voting.
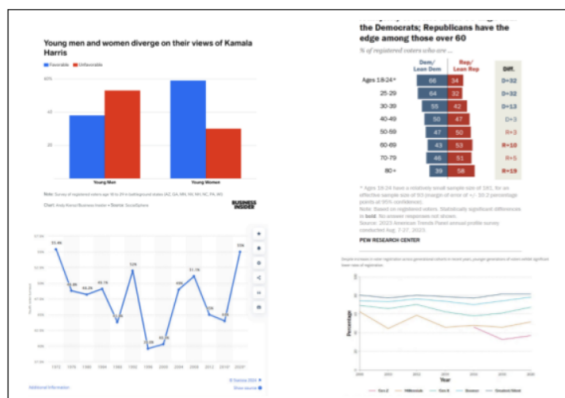
- What is the story that each graph is telling?
- What are the messages about youth voting?
- What source published this graph and who is their target audience?
- What questions should you ask to evaluate the credibility of the source of this graph?
- What does this lesson teach us about the stories told by graphs?

This lesson was co-created with high school math teacher, **David Ebert**. See other media

decoding lessons for integration into [mathematics](#) and filter by level, media type, etc.

Lessons for MLK Day and Black History Month

Media Constructions of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.


See our [14 lessons about MLK](#) including:

- [Sculptures of Dr. King](#)
  - Elementary
- [Media Constructions of King](#)
  - Middle School - College
- [Three Speeches](#)
  - Middle School - College

Search our lessons for [Black History Month](#) and filter by level, keyword, subject, duration, etc.

Resources for Addressing Challenging Issues Through Media Decoding

Contemporary [politics](#), [race](#), [gender](#), [climate](#), [censorship](#), [American history](#) – these are just some of the hot-button issues for which we provide free media decoding lessons. Here is one example from the media decoding lesson: *[Storming the Capitol: Front Page Constructions](#)*
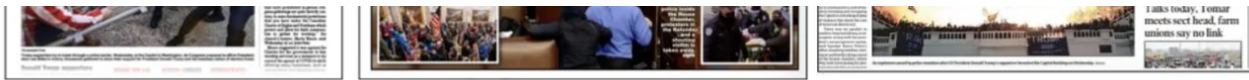
- What are the messages in the headline and the images about the storming of the Capitol? Give evidence from the document to support your answer.
- Are these front pages editorial opinion or factual news or a combination of both?
- How are the national newspaper front pages different from international front pages?
- How does your own bias influence your analysis of these media messages?

Student centered, question-based, curriculum driven Constructivist Media Decoding (CMD) can provide a more boundaried classroom methodology than open-ended discussion when dealing with potentially polarizing issues. CMD enables the educator to keep the discussion academic, focused on analyzing documents rather than student opinions. The educator chooses the media documents, questions and timing for the decoding. They choose how to respond to student comments (e.g.,"Say more about that") or where to move on (e.g., "Let's get back to analyzing the document"). While the teacher facilitates the discussion, and occasionally adds information, it is the students who provide the analysis, not the teacher.

This 8 minute demonstration video shows Mary Kate Lonergan leading her 8th grade students through a decoding of the lesson: *Storming the Capital: Front Page Constructions*.

Notice how Mary Kate keeps the discussion focused on analysis of the texts (newspaper front pages) while building student voice and agency. The issue may be fraught, but the decoding is quite academic and uncontroversial.

Consider using CMD for safely addressing other potentially challenging issues.

Project Look Sharp is currently working on developing **guides** for using media decoding for addressing challenging issues at different levels. You will be hearing more from us in future newsletters about this important pedagogical concern.