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# Teach with the *Times*

Learn from the pros – innovative ways to use the newspaper in the classroom from Tampa Bay Times Newspaper in Education teachers

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Teach with the *Times*

Ideas for middle school  
classrooms

## Teach with the *Times* – Middle

As a teacher of civics, one of my primary goals is to help my students learn how to become more informed and involved citizens. To achieve that goal, I use the *Tampa Bay Times* on a regular basis to help my students make connections between what they are learning in class and events that are unfolding in the real world. Each month, my students must summarize an article that has a connection to civics. In essence, they are taking on the role of a reporter, relaying information to their peers about topics that concern and interest them.

- *Laura Burns, Charles S. Rushe Middle School, Pasco County*

## Teach with the *Times* – Middle

When my students struggle with reading comprehension, I create activities that encourage students to read. For example: I have students find the who, what, when, where and why in a particular paragraph in the *Tampa Bay Times*. I also time them (5 minutes), and give the first 10 done “dragon dollars” that they can use in our school store. Students embrace this five-minute icebreaker and reading comprehension is evident when we go over their findings.

- *Michelle Chin, Marshall Middle School, Hillsborough County*

## Teach with the *Times* – Middle

I use the *Tampa Bay Times* in my science classroom to follow weather, NASA, landforms and discoveries. In my language arts classroom, we read articles for punctuation, conventions, and structure.

- *Lori Forsythe, Barrington Middle School, Hillsborough County*

## Teach with the *Times* – Middle

The *Tampa Bay Times* is an invaluable resource for the students in my TV production class. It is used to help create a daily news show for the students at our school. We use the weather and sports sections as a reliable source of information to share with others. My student reporters also use the newspaper to find events that are of interest to share, such as the Poynter Institute's journalism camp.

- *Caroline Heuermann, Bay Point Middle School, Pinellas County*

## Teach with the *Times* – Middle

My students find an article in the *Tampa Bay Times* relating to an important issue facing the world, nation or community today. They then complete the following on a sheet of paper: Topic of Article, Title of Article and Source. Who is the article about? What is the story about? When did the story take place? Where is the event or issue occurring? Why is the story important? Connect the article. What does it have to do with you? Can it be connected to anything we have learned or are learning about in class? Students use a rubric to guide them and explain how they will be graded on the activity. Certain articles will be selected for discussion in class.

- *Nicholas Leone, Stewart Middle Magnet School, Hillsborough County*

## Teach with the *Times* – Middle

As a self contained ESE teacher, I use the Sunday ads from the *Tampa Bay Times* for my students to "go on a shopping trip" weekly. They have to find a list of items at specific prices. They have to identify where they found them, including the page number. This activity allows students to work on skills including language, math, writing, reading, community based instruction and following directions!

- *Kay McDermott, Dr. John Long Middle School, Pasco County*



## Teach with the *Times* – Middle

To prepare for Socratic Seminars, students analyze the editorial cartoons from “Cartoons for the Classroom” on [tampabay.com/nie](http://tampabay.com/nie) and conduct a close reading of the suggested related articles. They then generate questions related to the article and participate in an inside-outside version of a Socratic Seminar. Students might also prepare for a Philosophical chairs lesson using the same types of resources.

- *Elicia McGuinness, Walker Middle Magnet School, Hillsborough County*

## Teach with the *Times* – Middle

I co-teach inclusion civics with a high population of ESE and 504 students. We bring in current events to help the students visualize new material and apply the lessons learned to daily life. For one project, students started by picking an article out of the *Tampa Bay Times* and examining it using a KWL Chart. Once the chart was completed, we had a Socratic Seminar (AVID Strategy) debating the issue discussed while at the same time each student had to defend which constitutional principle(s) their article covered. The goal of the project was to reinforce knowledge of constitutional principles such as checks and balances, separation of powers, limited government, federalism, due process and rule of law.

- *Donald Whitaker, Inverness Middle School, Citrus County*

## Teach with the *Times* – Middle

I use the *Tampa Bay Times* to teach writer's workshop lessons. I use the articles two to three times a week for exemplar writing to teach my students what "real" writers/authors/bloggers/journalists' techniques look like in action. We dissect the writing for different techniques and trends to analyze the format of successful writing. For example, we will discuss purposes, role of writers, audiences and formats of informational text. We will analyze the text as a close reading lesson to interpret craft and structure of work. I want to show my students that professional writing has a certain structure and format to it. I will have the kids read and analyze articles in groups so then we can discuss specific topics: sentence structure, thesis, word choice, logos, pathos, commentary, and hooks/leads. We make anchor charts of the best leads or certain powerful words that my students pick as their favorite. These discussions will lead to practice and the charts become reference tools in the classroom during independent writing time.

- *Audra Lewis, Young Middle Magnet School, Hillsborough County*

## Teach with the *Times* – Middle

At our school, we block out time each day for “drop everything and read.” My students love grabbing the *Tampa Bay Times* to read the comics or sports or even to do the crossword puzzle or check their horoscopes! When my students encountered the word zodiac in a fictional piece they were reading, I used the *Times* for a teachable moment about the meaning of the word zodiac. My students learned their zodiac signs, and we read each other’s horoscopes and discovered traits that they share with each other and myself. They were excited for the knowledge they gained while simultaneously connecting as a community of learners.

- Audra Lewis, Young Middle Magnet School, Hillsborough County

## Teach with the *Times* – Middle

Over the course of one week, students found articles in the *Tampa Bay Times* that demonstrate the skills they were studying: determining an author's purpose in a text; analyzing cause and effect; summarizing a current event; and learning new vocabulary. Students then created presentations in a variety of formats, including PowerPoints, video skits, booklets and posters, to present to the class. This project fostered inquiry and required reading to research the skills we learned.

- *Susan Terry, Carwise Middle School, Pinellas County*

## Teach with the *Times* – Middle

I use the *Tampa Bay Times* for a weekly “Article of the Week” assignment. Students are presented with an article from the *Tampa Bay Times* in class. They read the article, discern the important information and articulate a summary of main points of the article. The students are required to demonstrate their knowledge of summarization by using a solid introductory sentence, answering all six journalistic questions, using proper format, correct grammar, usage and mechanics and accurately citing the article. This is followed by a class discussion. The goal of the assignment is to not only have students demonstrate their understanding of the main idea of an article, but also to synthesize their own ideas about the world.

- *Diane Dove, Safety Harbor Middle School, Pinellas County*

## Teach with the *Times* – Middle

One way I use the *Tampa Bay Times* is for a peer teaching lesson project. Each student is given a copy of the *Times*. They pick an interesting newspaper article and use it to teach a literary standard from the chart in our room. Students have taught vocabulary, content clues, cause and effect, inference, central idea, sequence of events, trace and evaluate the argument pros and cons. When students present their lessons, they have to be able to evaluate the learning by asking questions at the end or by highlighting the information in the text.

- *Susan Terry, Carwise Middle School, Pinellas County*

## Teach with the *Times* – Middle

Each quarter, I design a current events project centered on a different theme. The projects include research, reading and writing assignments that all incorporate the *Tampa Bay Times*. The projects progress from individual in quarter one, to pairs in quarter two, to teams of four in quarters three and four. In quarter four, the teams of students complete an end of the year Historical Play Team Project. This project gives them an opportunity to apply what they have learned about reporting a current or past event using real news and supporting it with evidence. This project brings together many elements students study throughout the year, including knowing how to determine a valid, reliable and credible news source.

- *Cindy Bowen, Carwise Middle School, Pinellas County*