Sensationalized!

Inspired by: Jon Kolkin, David A. Haughton, and The Good News Network

Giving Hands-Giving Heart, photograph by Jon Kolkin
Objectives

• Students will observe and compare artworks by Jon Kolkin and David A. Haughton.
• Students will define sensationalism.
• Students will analyze texts and identify techniques that create sensationalism in the media.
Warm-Up

alternative
Observe

1. With your group, carefully **observe** the work of your assigned arts (Jon Kolkin or David A. Haughton).
2. Discuss and **answer** questions 1-4, **record** your thoughts on this hand out.

### Notes

Circle which artist are you observing: **DAVID A. HAUGHTON** **JON KOLKIN**

As a group, discuss the following questions. Take notes on your discussion in the second column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. WHAT do you see?</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. WHICH mood or feeling do these works make you feel?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. HOW does the artist create this mood or feeling? Use at least two Elements of art in your answer:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jon Kolkin


Mugshot XXIV – Fellow Christian (Dylan Roof), 2017. Acrylic on hardboard.
OBJECTIVITY

Undistorted by emotion or personal bias. Based on observable phenomenon.

Sensationalism

the use of exciting or shocking stories or language at the expense of accuracy, in order to provoke public interest or excitement.
"Man choked on pork chop; hospitalized."

"Virologists estimate people with average immune systems have a 1 in 100 chance of catching the virus in Seattle at this time**"
Sensationalism Techniques

**False Novelty**

Making something look like news when, in fact, it has been known for a long time.

**False Urgency**

Making something look like it is happening quickly or developing, to add drama to the story.
Sensationallism Techniques

Exaggerated Risk
Reporting on a very unlikely danger without giving the chance of it actually happening.

Leaving Out Details
Skipping parts of the story that might make it less exciting.
Sensationalism Techniques

Emotional Language / Imagery
Using words or images guaranteed to excite or anger people.

Naming News
Giving titles or nicknames to people (especially unknown people) or events in the news to make the story seem more dramatic, like a movie.
Sensationallism Techniques

False Novelty
False Urgency
Leaving Out Details
Exaggerated Risk
Emotional Language / Imagery
Naming News
Think back to your notes on artists Jon Kolkin, and David A. Haughton. Do either of these artists approach their art through the lens of objectivity or sensationalism?
The Good News Network

Take a few moments to explore www.goodnewsnetwork.org.

Consider the following questions as you read:

a. How do you feel in your body after spending some time on the Good News Network versus how you felt after watching the “Sensationalism Montage” during warm up?

b. How do you feel emotionally?

c. Have you ever heard of the Good News Network before? If the answer is no, why do you think that is?

d. Why do you think we don’t normally see ‘good news’ stories on TV, in newspapers, or on the internet?
Who benefits from news media sensationalism?
## FLIPPED! Free Choice Assignment

Choose one column to complete. Be prepared to share your work with the class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visual Art: <strong>FRONT PAGE FLIP!</strong></th>
<th>Written Composition: <strong>FLIPPED JOURNALIST!</strong></th>
<th>Video Production: <strong>FLIPPED NEWSCASTER!</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Choose** a current news story or real headline/front page of a newspaper or magazine.

Is the front page sensationalized?  
*If yes, create* an objective illustration of the front page. This should include headline, subtitle, and imagery.  
*Take out* all sensationalism techniques.

*If it is already objective, create* an example of sensationalism of the article.  
*Use* identified sensationalism techniques to punch up the absurdity.

**Choose** a short, current news article.  
*Is it sensationalized?* If so, **FLIP** the article to be objective.  
**Research** the event to find all the facts, and **rewrite** the piece of journalism with all the sensationalism techniques stripped away.  
**Strive** to present the truest, version of the story.

*Is it objective?* If it is already objective, **FLIP** the article to be an absurd example of sensationalism.  
**Rewrite** the article **using** at least three sensationalism techniques discussed in class.

**Choose** a short, 1-2 minute news clip online.  
*Is it sensationalized?* If so, **rewrite** the newscaster’s script and **record** a completely objective version of the clip (starring YOU as the newscaster).  
Research the event to find all the facts, and strip all the sensationalism techniques away.  
**Strive** to present the truest version of the story.

*Is it objective?* If it is already true and without sensationalism techniques, **FLIP** the script and **rewrite** it to be an absurd example of sensationalism.  
**Re-film** the clip **using** at least three sensationalism techniques discussed in class, starring yourself as the newscaster.

Choose one column to complete. Be prepared to share your work with the class.