



# THE TEACHERS' REFERENCE GUIDE

## *How to use THE WEEK in the Classroom*

### Inside THE WEEK

In 1995, the idea for THE WEEK came to British journalist Jolyon Connell while he was walking through the Scottish hills. As a newspaper executive and one time White House Correspondent, Connell read dozens of news sources each day but still felt like he missed important stories. He assumed others might feel the same and wondered if it was possible to create a comprehensive digest of the week's news and commentary, highlighting the most interesting and original ideas in one succinct, easy-to-read package. And so THE WEEK was born.

Structured like a presidential briefing, the magazine's coverage is based on the best ideas and commentary from U.S. and international media. Unlike other newsmagazines, THE WEEK has no specific point of view. It doesn't dispatch reporters to cover events. Instead editors cull through hundreds of newspapers, magazines, and websites and distill the coverage into 42 pages each week. A range of

thinking is presented on every issue so readers can make up their own minds in an informed way.

The mission of THE WEEK is simple: Bring readers up to date and help them make sense of the most important, provocative stories of the week. And provide balanced coverage that shows all sides of important issues through concise articles that engage and hold interest.

This guide has been designed to give teachers an insider's look at THE WEEK: the people who put it together, the unique editorial process they use, the consistent features, and how to use those features to meet ever-changing curricular needs. While it won't tell all of our secrets, we hope it helps you make sense of what we do every week.

## INTERVIEW

Bill Falk, Editor in Chief of THE WEEK

### Who reads THE WEEK?

Intelligent, busy people who want to know what's going on but don't have hours to read multiple news sources every day. So we do it for them. We have 20 editors that read hundreds of newspapers, newsmagazines, and websites every week and summarize the best stories into cohesive, balanced articles.

### What is unique about THE WEEK?

THE WEEK is not your father's newsmagazine! It's not stodgy or boring; there's really a youthful spirit to the way we present information. Unlike other news and opinion magazines, our coverage is based on other sources rather than on our own. We don't share our point of view on any story. We find that our readers don't want to be told what to think. They want to know enough about the issues to draw their own conclusions. Our readers also

appreciate that we have a bit of fun and a twinkle in our eye as we report the important stories of the week.

### Tell us about the process your team goes through each week to determine story selection.

Every Monday morning our editors meet to discuss the most important news stories of the previous week. Stories that are getting a lot of buzz, stories that will stimulate our readers, and stories that we think are important for them to know about. We begin with a mountain of material and must find a way to frame that material in an accessible way. During the Monday meeting, we decide what will be on the cover and what it will look like, and we debate the major news stories we want to focus on. A researcher then finds everything that has been written about those stories in both domestic and international media and hands them off to editors who compress that information into

succinct, balanced articles. If you were to put our final product next to all of the media sources that are read and translated during our editorial process, you would have a ten-foot-tall stack of media boiled down into 42 pages. Imagine a friend telling you a long, rambling story and another friend saying, "Tell me what he said but do it in 15 seconds!" It's a real art and the folks on our team are supremely talented to be able to do it so well.



## Cover This!

One of the unique features of each week's issue is the cover. Virtually every cover includes a dominant illustration that reflects an important story from that week. The cover story and how it will be illustrated is decided at the Monday morning editors' meeting. Editors want to select an issue that readers will care about and find interesting when the magazine reaches them on Friday or Saturday. The illustration is typically a simple image that gives readers an idea of the debate that is being covered inside the pages of THE WEEK.

## What's Inside?

The news changes each week, but the format of THE WEEK stays the same so that readers always know where to find the content they are looking for. Each week's major sections include:

1. News
2. Arts
3. Leisure
4. Business
5. Obituaries
6. The Last Word
7. Puzzle Page



Feature	Section	What's Unique?	Quick Curricular Connection
The Main Stories ... and How They Were Covered	News	Three breaking and ongoing news stories that are getting the most buzz.	Create a web quest, Power Point presentation, or wiki to help students learn about a topic, person, or event featured in one of the main stories.
Controversy of the Week	News	Often a story from the previous week that columnists are still debating.	Hang four signs around the room that say "strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," and "strongly disagree." Read quotes from the article and have students move to the sign that represents their opinion of each quote. Challenge them to defend their points of view.
The U.S./World at a Glance	News	Also called the "map pages." Gives readers a geography lesson while opening a window into where these stories are happening.	Write the names of each featured city or country on separate index cards. Read each story aloud and challenge students to match each city/country to the story about it. Then have them identify what the stories illustrate about each place's government, citizens, or culture.

Feature	Section	What's Unique?	Quick Curricular Connection
Briefing	News	Deeper coverage on a topic that is related to the week's news. Designed to help readers understand the issue a little better.	Direct students to choose 10 unfamiliar words, phrases, events, or people from the story. Then ask them to create hypertext links for each one that would help deepen understanding for readers. Links can be fact- or opinion-based, using text or visual images.
How They See Us	News	Summary of what foreign commentary is saying about an issue in the U.S. Not surprisingly, they have a lot to say!	Ask students to select one of the journalists featured, and write a letter to him or her from someone who likely would have an opposing view.
Talking Points	News	Simulates a roundtable of commentators discussing/debating a variety of topics.	Have students simulate an online chat about one of the featured topics by assuming the identities and perspectives of the different journalists featured.
Pick of the Week's Cartoons	News	Cartoons that mirror content in the issue to give readers another perspective or voice. The Editor in Chief Bill Falk personally selects cartoons that make a pungent point, or make the reader think or laugh. He can often be heard laughing from his conference room as he makes his selections!	Challenge students to identify how different techniques used in this week's cartoons help to express each cartoonist's point of view. Then ask them to express a point of view about a controversial topic in their school or community by drawing a cartoon about it.
Health & Science	News	The latest research and findings that scientists are learning about human health, science, emotion, anthropology, the environment, space, and a host of other topics.	Have students identify which article most impacts their life or your community. Ask them to list the possible benefits and tradeoffs of the innovation or discovery featured.
Reviews	Arts	A variety of reviews of books, art, the stage, music, film, and television.	Identify the elements of a good review. Have student groups select one show, movie or book to review. Have each group member share his or her opinion about the subject. Then combine all opinions into one article.
The Last Word	Last Pages	The "final course" of the magazine and the only feature that is presented verbatim rather than summarized. Can be about anything but typically gives readers something about which to think.	Direct students to retell the article using storyboards, a technique used by filmmakers and artists to visualize certain scenes before filming. They can do this by graphically representing the main parts of the article on each board, and including a caption that captures each scene.



## EVERGREEN ACTIVITIES

### Activities that can be used with any issue of THE WEEK

- **Page One Meeting:** Have students simulate an editorial meeting to decide which stories will be featured in the “Main stories ... and how they were covered” section. List each story from the magazine on the board. Divide the stories among student groups and have them research and then lobby for the ones they think should be prominently featured. Challenge students to reach consensus about the top three.
- **Venn Diagram:** Have students select two separate news stories or images in this week’s issue. Using a Venn diagram, ask students to research and illustrate similarities and differences between the people, places, events, conflicts, or themes in both of the stories. Have students present their articles, and challenge the class to create a visual that illustrates the multiple connections among all of the articles selected.
- **Get Personal:** Ask students to identify an article on a topic about which they care. Direct them to conduct a personal inquiry into the topic by listing at least five questions they’d like to answer and then conducting research to gain a deeper understanding. Cite all sources used. Then challenge students to write a blog that summarizes what they’ve learned, reflects their impressions on the topic, or does both.
- **What’s the Source:** Have students read through the magazine and identify articles that likely would have corresponding primary source documents. Direct students to the primary source document collections of either the National Archives (<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/>) or the Library of Congress (<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/>). Challenge them to identify a primary source document that relates to one of the articles they have chosen. Ask them to describe their document and to identify connections between the document and the article. Encourage them to speculate about the original purpose of, and audience for, the document. Have them share how the document deepens their understanding about the issue, what most surprises them about the document, and what additional questions the document raises. Finally, have students use what they have learned to support or refute the notion that history repeats itself.
- **Amendment Search:** Direct students to list and explain each of the constitutional amendments in the Bill of Rights. Then challenge student teams to look through an issue of THE WEEK and find at least one article, graphic, or image that relates to each amendment. Have students draw conclusions about how each amendment continues to impact the nation.
- **Academic Structure Debate:** Divide students into groups of four. Have each group select one article that represents multiple points of view. Direct two of the students to research evidence that supports one point of view and the other pair to research evidence that supports the opposite point of view. Once research is complete, ask each pair to present their evidence. Ensure understanding by having the other pair summarize what they heard. Then challenge all four students to try to reach consensus about the issue using what they have researched.
- **Cover Me:** Divide the class into two groups. Distribute the magazine to both groups, directing one group to keep it closed so they are looking at the cover and the other group to open the magazine to the article that corresponds with the cover. Encourage students to form smaller groups with others that share their materials. Direct the students with the article to use information from the story to create a cover illustration and headline that helps readers understand the debate. You may want to refer to previous covers and explain that the cover illustration typically has a headline and dominant image, both of which help readers understand the debate they will read about inside. Direct students with the cover to interpret the illustration and corresponding headline and write a one- to two-paragraph article that describes the debate, based on what they see. Have each group present their article or cover illustration. Then reveal the actual cover and article to the class. Which group best captured the material?