BUCK INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION
my PBLworks

World Languages | Grades 11-12

What in the World?

What can international media tell us about what is *really* happening around the world?

Project Summary

Students use the target language to explore a significant theme in current events (possible themes include migration and refugees, environmental sustainability, economic justice, public health, or human rights). They engage with authentic news sources in the target language—podcasts, television shows, magazines, newspapers, and blogs. Each team focuses on a different geographic region or issue connected to the class theme and produces a podcast segment or news report that describes and analyzes the issue/situation in an engaging format for teen native speakers of the target language.

Unless otherwise noted, all activities occur in the target language, with varying degrees of scaffolding.

Learning Goals

Key standards

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Standards

Interpretive Communication: learners understand, interpret, and analyze what is heard, read, or viewed on a variety of topics.

Presentational Communication: learners present information, concepts, and ideas to inform, explain, persuade, and narrate on a variety of topics using appropriate media and adapting to various audiences of listeners, readers, or viewers.

Acquiring Information and Diverse Perspectives: learners access and evaluate information and diverse perspectives that are available through the language and its cultures.

School and Global Communities: learners use the language both within and beyond the classroom to interact and collaborate in their community and the globalized world.

Making Connections: learners build, reinforce, and expand their knowledge of other disciplines while using the language to develop critical thinking and to solve problems creatively.

Acquiring Information and Diverse Perspectives: learners access and evaluate information and diverse perspectives that are available through the language and its cultures.

Key Vocabulary

This is a suggested list to get you started. (Note that all words should be in the target language.) Determine the key vocabulary words and terms you need to teach based on your focus content and the prior knowledge and needs of your students.

- Bias
- Media
- Message
- Perspective
- Propaganda

Literacy Skills

- Research
- Comparing, analyzing, and synthesizing multiple perspectives
- Informational writing

Success Skills

- Communication
- Critical thinking

Major Products

Individual Products

Reflective writing and research in the target language

Team/Whole Class Products

News report broadcast or podcast

Making It Public

Public presentation or asynchronous sharing of podcasts/news reports

Considerations

Consider Your Students

- What current issues/themes will be most compelling and/or relevant to your students?
- Do students in your class have personal or family experiences with these topics and themes?
- How can you leverage students' expertise in appropriate and sensitive ways?

Consider the Context

- How might you find opportunities to connect (locally or digitally) with speakers in the target language who have expertise and experience related to the issue or theme under discussion?
- Who might serve as an appropriate audience for the student product online?
- In what ways do the global issues your students are studying affect your local community, and in what ways do t policies, practices, or consumption patterns of your local community have global implications?

Consider the Content & Skills

- What resources will students need to effectively engage in this project? Specifically, how will you help them loca access, and evaluate credible news media sources in the target language?
- How will you scaffold students' comprehension and analysis of news media sources in the target language?
- How will you support students in planning and producing their podcasts or news broadcasts?

Project Milestones

Milestone 1: What is happening in the world, and what do we want to learn more about?

Students explore the class theme related to current events and generate need-to-know questions.

Estimated Duration
1–2 days
Assessment(s)

Need-to-know questions (whole group)

Key Student Question

What is happening in the world, and what do we want to learn more about?

Activities

Activity Title	Description	Resource Link
Select a class theme on which to focus this project.	Search for possible themes such as migration and refugees, environmental sustainability, economic justice, public health, or human rights. Have student teams select and focus on subtopics within the class theme. Choose a theme that will have rich and varied information for students to explore in the target language.	
As an entry event, have students analyze the theme through images, articles, or videos.	Consider sharing photos from Unsplash Photos, National Geographic, or Pexels. Have students use the Question Formulation Technique (QFT) to brainstorm questions related to the theme in these pictures. Alternatively, share with students several examples of contrasting news coverage of the same topic or incident. Use examples from the *New York Times* World Section and BBC News World in the target language. Use a True for Who? or Red Light, Yellow Light thinking routine to unpack the conflicts and tensions among the different stories.	
Review the project information sheet, the rubric, and the driving question.	Discuss the expectations for the final performance. Capture students' need-to-know questions about the topic and the project. Ask questions such as these to prompt student thinking about what they know and need to know: • Why is this issue important? • What do you already know about how it shows up in different parts of the world? • What do you know about the causes and impacts of this issue? • What would you like to learn more about in order to communicate effectively about this theme to teenagers in other parts of the world? Authentic student curiosity should drive this process, but you may need to provide prompting and support to help students arrive at questions such as those listed here: • What major global issues are being covered by the global media today? • How will we research these issues across multiple news sites and languages? • How can we interpret and analyze the meaning of these sources in this language? • What are the underlying causes of these events? What are their impacts?	
Form teams and select subtopics.	Pre-curate a list of subtopics within the theme; for example, subtopics for the human rights theme in a Spanish class might include detention camps at the US-Mexico border, the coup in Venezuela, violence in El Salvador, or migration issues in Spain. Alternatively, consider giving students time to research the broad theme and generate their own subtopics. Create teams of four based on interest or ability.	
Assign team roles.	Have each team assign the following roles and focus questions for inquiry to team members:	

- **Historian:** what is the history of this issue?
- **Humanitarian:** how is this issue affecting specific groups in this region today?
- **Economist:** how is this issue affecting the local, regional, and global economy?
- **Policy expert:** how are institutions and international agencies responding to this issue?

Use the [Using Roles in Teams](#) strategy guide to support this process.

Have teams develop working agreements.	Have students document their shared agreements in a [project team contract](#) in the target language.

Notes

Support student reflection throughout this milestone with prompts such as the following. For more information about structuring reflection in PBL, see the [Reflection strategy guide](#):

- How can exploring news sources in languages other than English help you learn more about the world?
- Why are there discrepancies in media coverage of the same topic?
- How is journalistic coverage affected by the culture and perspective of the news source?

A sample editable project information sheet and rubric have been provided. Before sharing these documents with students, customize them to align with the standards/grade levels you teach, the resources you plan to use, and the pathway you plan to take through the project.

If you think it will be difficult for students to identify diverse and varied target language content within any one class theme, allow student groups in your class to each select their own theme to investigate.

If you have local connections with expertise in the focus theme or have contacts who can join the class via video chat invite these guest speakers to share with students about their experiences and to help launch the project.

If you find that the physical word wall doesn't seem to be large enough for new vocabulary, consider making it digital using Google Docs or an app such as [Padlet](#). Have students revisit and update the word wall as part of your daily classroom routines.

Consider having students practice digital flashcards of relevant vocabulary from the world wall using [Quizlet](#) individua and [Quizlet Live](#) as a class to help master the vocabulary. Additionally, encourage students to keep a visual thesaurus digital journal of new vocabulary or key phrases encountered during the research process.

Create a [project wall](#) to help visually scaffold this project and promote student self-management. Use a word wall section to track key vocabulary students learn throughout the project.

Milestone 2: What does the news media have to tell us about this issue?

Students conduct research on the theme using resources in the target language.

Estimated Duration
3–4 days
Assessment(s)

Draft issue summary report (team)

Key Student Question

What does the news media have to tell us about this issue?

Activities

Activity Title	Description	Resource Link
Introduce research expectations.	Introduce students to the [learning log](#). Explain the importance of reading articles in the target language and give students tools and scaffolds to help them understand the meaning of these sources. Consider providing a list of resources related to topics in the target language, such as [Paperboy](#) or [The BBC News](#) in the	

specific language. Explain to students the importance of reading the source in the target language. Emphasize that Google Translate might not always give the correct meaning of a source.

Allow students to generate other potential need-to-know questions based on their research role and then search for sources.

Give students time to document resources on their learning logs and then interpret the main idea of each source.

As students are compiling their individual learning logs, circulate and provide support, helping them to make meaning of challenging text as needed. Encourage teams to share their learning logs with each other so that they can collaborate on information and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the issue.

After a day or two of research, facilitate a small-group discussion (in the target language) about media bias.

Have students divide into a new small group of three with members from multiple teams. In this small group, give students time to answer Common Sense's 5 Questions about media in the target language:

- Who created this article?
- Why was this message made?
- Who paid for this message?
- How is this message trying to get your attention?
- Who's represented in this message? Who is missing?

Give individual students time to respond to these questions on dry erase boards by having them use Word Reference or digital dictionaries on an app such as i Translate. Encourage students to draw pictures or images, if necessary, to help communicate their message to peers with varying vocabulary or language proficiency.

Then, have each person explain to their small group what they have learned about the message of a given source or sources.

After this activity, encourage small groups to develop a set of criteria for evaluating the quality of news sources and then apply this criteria to their own work, which could end up looking something like this list for evaluating criteria.

In their original teams, have students discuss the findings from their small group. Encourage groups to discuss how to respond to bias during their research process by finding authentic sources that include a greater variety of voices in the story.

Give students time to finalize their research and learning logs.

Allow students time to return to their research, editing and modifying it based on the evaluation criteria and expectations about a proper analysis.

Encourage students to continue to share important resources within teams. Continue to check in with individuals who encounter questions during the research process.

Throughout this milestone, review vocabulary on the word wall and add new vocabulary.

As students work, invite them to add new words they encounter and to illustrate each word with an image, creating a visual dictionary.

Revisit the list of need-to-know questions with students.

For more information about revisiting the need-to-know questions, see this strategy guide. Identify questions that have been answered, as well as new questions that have emerged.

Notes

Support student reflection throughout this milestone with prompts such as the following:

- What message is your resource portraying about this issue?
- What discrepancies exist across sources about this issue?
- How do you evaluate bias in the media?
- How do you evaluate the quality and credibility of a resource?

Depending on your students' speaking proficiency in the target language, consider providing a list of sentence stems and phrases to support student discussions.

As an alternative to the learning log, encourage students to take notes on a digital graphic organizer such as this to record the who, what, when, where, why, which provides a scaffold for students who are not as proficient with the language.

If time permits, consider using the Inside and Outside Circles strategy to facilitate a short conversation about the common-sense questions with several classmates.

Consider using this video and abridged version of the worksheet included to discuss the bias within individual resourc

As a scaffold, consider engaging the class in a shared reading of a news article about a specific issue. Read the article together as a class several times out loud and discuss its meaning to provide a framework for students in their resear Or, implement the visualizing the text technique in the target language to allow for a deeper meaning of the topic.

Milestone 3: What differences are there in coverage of this issue around the world and why?

Students analyze and evaluate multiple perspectives on the issue.

Estimated Duration
3–4 days
Assessment(s)

Mind map or circle map (team)

Socratic Seminar questions (individual)

Key Student Question

What differences are there in coverage of this issue around the world and why?

Activities

Activity Title	Description	Resource Link
Reflect on major findings and share within teams.	Begin class with an individual journal activity in which students respond to questions in the target language about their research: - What important findings did you discover about the topic from your role-based research? - How will this information help your group? - What questions do you still have about the topic?	
Have students represent their information visually.	Give teams butcher paper to create a concept map or mind map of the major findings each team member encountered related to their topic. If you have extra time, have teams brainstorm the issue on a blank version of a cause-and-effect graphic organizer to summarize the information. Encourage students to use key vocabulary and phrases in the target language and to incorporate images that help illustrate the meaning of the issue. Have students participate in a gallery walk to gain a better understanding of all the issues globally before beginning their final product.	

Facilitate a whole-class discussion about perspective and the voices that are left out from the coverage of an issue.	Structure this discussion as a [Socratic Seminar](). Give students time to reflect on their own topic about whose voice might be missing from the present coverage and bring questions and comments to a discussion. Then have students share their thoughts about these questions in either a digital or live discussion.	
Add new words from the conversation to the word wall.	Based on the conversation in the Socratic Seminar, encourage student teams to add one or two new vocabulary words and their meanings to the word wall.	
Revisit the list of need-to-know questions with students.	Identify questions that have been answered, as well as new questions that have emerged.	

Notes

Support student reflection throughout this milestone with prompts such as the following:

- What voices are frequently included and what voices are usually missing from the coverage of an issue?
- How can you hear from the missing voices in the media?
- What differences are there in how the media covers this issue within the target language and in English?
- Why do you think a discrepancy exists in the message across languages?

Instead of creating a visual mind map to integrate research, consider using the [circle of viewpoints]() to share the topic from various perspectives. Note that this exercise might enable students to practice explaining their topic in the target language within teams.

If technology is easily accessible in the classroom, consider having students collaboratively create an infographic on their topic using [Canva]() or a similar tool.

If you haven't facilitated a Socratic Seminar in the target language, read [Edutopia's advice]() on integrating Socratic Seminars into world language classes.

To help students practice speaking in front of their peers, assign students homework to practice speaking about their issue. Use [Apple Clips]() to have students record themselves speaking briefly about an idea or question they have related to this topic.

Depending on your goal with the discussion, consider facilitating the discussion online so that students can more actively participate in the conversation through writing with confidence and having time to preplan their ideas and build their writing and reading comprehension. See [Parlay Ideas](), which is a great platform for students to do so anonymously.

Milestone 4: How can we develop our own in-depth, well-rounded coverage of this issue in an engaging format?

Students interview stakeholders or listen to a podcast about the issue.

Estimated Duration
2–3 days
Assessment(s)

Podcast or news broadcast script (team)

Key Student Question

How can we develop our own in-depth, well-rounded coverage of this issue in an engaging format?

Activities

Activity Title	Description	Resource Link
Guide a reflection on		

power and perspective relevant to students' focus issues.	Use the following questions and the Think, Pair, Share technique to guide student reflections:
	- How do power, oppression, and resistance show up in the stories of the issue you are exploring? - Who's voices are not yet included in the coverage? - How might you learn more about these perspectives and integrate them into your podcasts?
	Encourage students to answer the questions with words, phrases, or even images to help support their thoughts about this topic.
	At the end of the discussion, have students submit their ideas in the target language on a sticky note or note card. Then facilitate a whole-class discussion and debrief by submitting these thoughts digitally via a Poll Everywhere question.
	Emphasize the major ideas and convert individual student ideas into a digital word cloud for students to visualize the overarching ideas of the class discussion and which ideas are most important to integrate into their final product.
	As you review these findings, make certain to revisit and explain how particular vocabulary, language features, or idioms are connected to the project.
Using a video chat service or another online tool, connect students with native speakers of the target language who can provide a more personalized perspective on the topic.	Explain to students the etiquette behind journalistic interviews by referencing several ideas from Scholastic in the target language. Then encourage each team member to write specific questions connected to the issue for the interview.
	Give time for students to refine their questions through peer feedback and practice reading the questions aloud in small pairs.
	Allow students time to interview the stakeholders and take notes on the conversation. Provide them with a list of key phrases, sentence stems, and new vocabulary as support during these conversations in the target language. During the interview, advise students to record their conversations so that they can review them later in case they miss any part of the story or message on a first listen.
Review with students the product requirements and expectations for the digital podcast or video with a real-world example.	As a homework assignment, give students a short podcast to listen to that is related to a theme of choice with these guiding questions:
	- Who was interviewed and why? - What was the message of the podcast? - How did specific features, organization, and language help improve the message of this podcast? - How might a podcast or broadcast appeal to listeners my age?
Give students time to organize their podcasts or digital broadcasts into a collaborative, digital script.	Provide students with a template that includes key phrases, sentence stems, and argumentation linking words to integrate into their scripts.
	Check in with groups as they organize their scripts to ensure that they are clear on the expectations and know how to best communicate their ideas in the target language.
	At the end of class, reflect with students about strategies to engage teen viewers and listeners throughout the product.

Revisit the list of need-to-know questions with students.	Identify questions that have been answered, as well as new questions that have emerged.

Notes

Support student reflection throughout this milestone with prompts such as the following:

- What additional information from podcasts can you find to help provide a more well-rounded message?
- Whose voice can you integrate into your product that might otherwise be left out of this story?
- How can you integrate multiple perspectives into your product to provide more comprehensive coverage?

Consider starting this milestone with a song to introduce an issue through music. Find songs that might be useful to p in English here or in Spanish here. Use this BBC list to find songs that changed the world. Use this resource to find French songs.

If finding people to interview in the target language proves difficult, integrate podcasts into the classroom to enable students to home in on their listening comprehension. Note that doing this can be useful for students of all levels, because they can rewind and replay parts of the podcast to gain a better understanding of the message. Use a good resource such as News in Slow Spanish, which is also offered in other languages, and Yes Japan for Japanese language learners. See Business News Daily, which includes a list of essential podcasts for language learners.

Consider using Pen Pal Schools for students to study their theme or issue with another classroom internationally and/ interview students their age about their knowledge or experience of the theme.

Milestone 5: How can we refine our news coverage and make it airtight?

Students review and finalize their product for the presentation.

Estimated Duration
3–4 days
Assessment(s)

Revised podcast or news broadcast (team)

Key Student Question

How can we refine our news coverage and make it airtight?

Activities

Activity Title	Description	Resource Link
Review the attributes of an engaging, high-quality product based on the rubric and the previous class discussion.	With teams, have students return to their rubric to highlight key aspects of the at-standard qualities and then brainstorm what an advanced product might look like. Answer any remaining questions about expectations for the final product.	
Review scripts with the tuning protocol.	Divide each team in half and then pair these partners with another group of two. Explain the protocol to the new groups of four. With this new group of four, have students explain their topic and ideas for their product with the partners in another team.	
Introduce students to one or more podcasting or news broadcast creation tool(s) (see "Notes") and provide time for students to rehearse and record.	Give students time to practice within this platform and encourage student experts to help show the tools of these applications to their peers. Encourage students to use props, sound effects, and/or graphics to create an authentic and engaging product.	

Remind students to upload their team products for viewing onto the chosen public podcasting platform or video platform.	Have one student per team upload their product the morning before the presentations. Make sure to view them before each class to ensure they are in the correct format for viewing.
Revisit the list of need-to-know questions with students.	Identify questions that have been answered, as well as new questions that have emerged.

Notes

Support student reflection throughout this milestone with prompts such as the following:

- What are your requirements for the final product?
- What remaining questions do you have about the overall product requirements?
- How can you help your peers to improve their news coverage of their topic?
- How can you best prepare for responding to questions about your topic?

Consider modifying the tuning protocol by adjusting the time limits or modifying the process of receiving feedback to match the needs of your students and class.

Use these tools for recording podcasts or news broadcasts:

- GarageBand, Voice Thread, Sound Trap, Simple Booth, or iMovie
- One of the free web-based tools listed here

Publish the products on existing media platforms and/or have students share their work via social media. Consider us a tool such as Flipgrid, which organizes content by class or topic and enables any viewer to see all presentations in on space.

Consider using this News Reporter activity from Fluent U to have students practice speaking in front of peers and buil comfort speaking about their issue.

Milestone 6: How can we share our learning about this topic with others?

Students share their news coverage or broadcast to physical or virtual audience members.

Estimated Duration
2–3 days
Assessment(s)

Handout on findings and/or question (individual)

Key Student Question

How can we share our learning about this topic with others?

Activities

Activity Title	Description	Resource Link
Host a synchronous or asynchronous news forum.	Have students and other interested members of the community who speak the target language view students' broadcasts or listen to their podcasts. As students view and listen to the products, have them use a graphic organizer to take notes on the issue, identifying three important findings about the issue and crafting one question related to the issue. If the viewing is live, have the team members answer questions from the audience. If conducting the viewing asynchronously, give time for students to view these products individually with headphones in class. Encourage students and community members to leave a question so that each team can respond to it.	

Guide a post-project reflection and feedback process.	Have students return to their need-to-know questions and identify changes and new understandings.
	Closing reflection activities and resources might include the following:

- My Thoughts About the Project
- I Used to Think . . . , Now I Think . . .

Use this strategy guide to support the post-project reflection process. You may want to have students reflect on what they did in the project and how well the project went using the Self-Reflection on Project Work.

Notes

If possible, have students bring headphones from home for the viewing/listening event.

Have students plan and rehearse their responses to questions in advance, drawing from the research they found durin the workshop. Have students practice during a 20-questions partner activity as described here on Edutopia.

Invite attendees to this discussion, including other students, community members who speak the target language, and/or experts in the focus issue.

Consider posting these ideas to Flipgrid for more people to view them asynchronously and provide authentic feedback

Resources

Project Files
What in the World__ Rubric.docx
What in the World__ Project Information Sheet.docx
What in the World?: Rubric Google Doc
What in the World?: Project Information Sheet Google Doc

Adapting This Project For At-Home Learning

Launch Project

Introduce this project by having students explore texts, images, and/or contrasting news coverage related to the class theme. Gather student need-to-know questions on a shared digital document. Have teams or individual students (if yo choose not to make this a team project) identify subtopics to explore.

Build Knowledge, Understanding, & Skills

Have students conduct online research and record their learning on digital versions of a learning log. Meet with students/teams via video chat to support and guide them as they research. Use a combination of videos, live video lessons, and text-based discussions to build student knowledge about their focus topic. Use tools such as Parlay Ideas Flipgrid to support student discussion of these issues in the target language. Have students use video chat to intervie speakers of the target language.

Develop & Critique

Have students/teams draft manuscripts for their podcasts or videos, and share peer feedback in written comments or a formal critique protocol via video chat. Have students one or more of the tech tools listed in the "Notes" section of Milestone 5 to develop and edit their podcasts or videos.

Present Products

Have students publish/share their podcasts or news broadcasts and host a synchronous or asynchronous event in whi students and other speakers of the target language engage with the content and discuss the focus topic.

Additional Resources

News Sources

- Paperboy - a list of multiple newspapers globally sortable by country; could be useful for selecting your theme
- The BBC News - articles in multiple languages; can be used in the research process
- World Wide Internet TV - multiple news broadcasts in different languages

- [MIT Library Guide](#) - a list of resources by language for accessing news sources; could prove useful during the resource process
- [Online Newspapers](#) - additional international news sources for the research process

Instructional Strategies for Language Development

- [Business News Daily Podcasts](#) - simple podcasts for helping students learn a language; integrate these into this project or throughout the year to improve listening comprehension
- [Fluent U](#) - a list of recommended podcasts by language and videos for students to hear speakers discuss various themes
- [Apple Instructions for Podcasts in Another Language](#) - explains how to change the podcast country so that you can find podcasts in your target language
- [Edutopia's Authentic Activities for World Language](#) - activities that could be integrated into this project to allow for more authentic learning for your students
- [Fluent U Speaking](#) - a blog post explaining several creative speaking activities to help students improve their speaking proficiency before presenting their final product
- [Fluent U Reading](#) - strategies for improving reading comprehension in the world language classroom
- [Innocent Voices](#) - trailer to be played in a Spanish classroom before the Socratic Seminar to help show the children's voices who are frequently overlooked in the coverage of an issue or potentially to discuss human rights violations and child soldiers
- [Visualize the Text](#) - a strategy to help build reading comprehension, which could be useful during the research process or before the Socratic Seminar

Interview Resources

- [Scholastic Interview](#) - describes important etiquette to consider before conducting an interview to help students prepare for their interviews with native speakers
- [StoryCorps](#) - a lesson for teaching effective interviewing skills that might be useful before the interviewing of speakers in the native language

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