

Teaching Current Events with Packback

Overview: In this activity, students will read a current event article, write a summary for their classmates, and ask an open-ended question for further discussion about the article or topic.

Many teachers incorporate current events into their weekly lesson plans to connect the classroom to the larger world. Leveraging Packback for current events can encourage more analysis and critical thinking for students as they learn about current events. For teachers, Packback can streamline the process of analyzing current events.

Learning Objective or Goal (Applicable Common Core Standard):

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.10

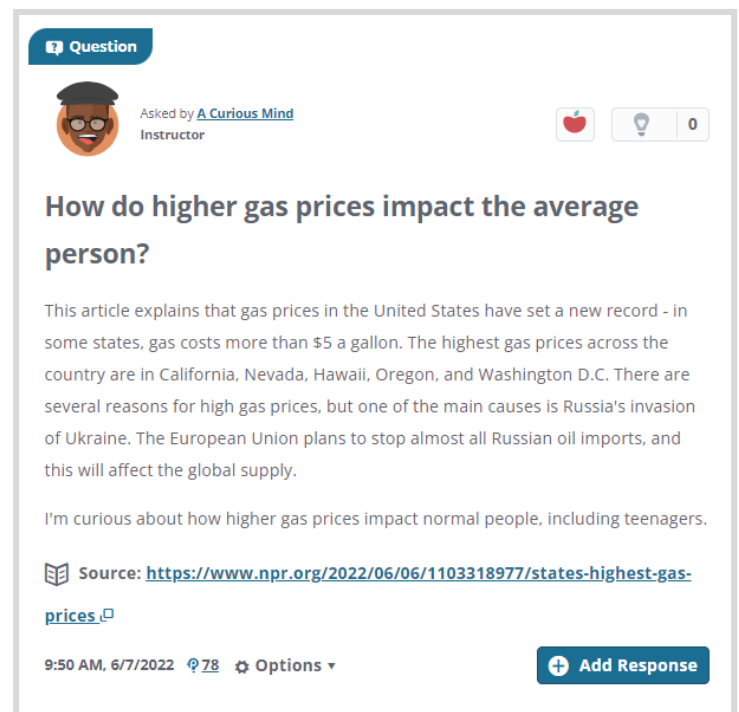
Approximate Time: 10-60 minutes, depending on how much you want students to do in class

Prep, set up, and/or materials needed before class:

- Prep: select 3-4 quality news articles that cover current events from the past month. Print the articles if needed.
- If you haven't already, you can [create deadlines and posting requirements](#) in Packback, including selecting a minimum curiosity score for posts to receive credit. Depending on your LMS, you may also want a new assignment detailing the expectations of the assignment. **Did you know your students' Packback scores can automatically sync with your gradebook? Reach out to your Curriculum Consultant to get set up!*

Activity:

- Using the example here, model for students what their end product for this activity will be. Explain how to write a summary and set expectations for doing so. Point out to students they should link their news article as a source on Packback.
- Give students 5-10 minutes to review the different article options and select theirs.
- Next, give students quiet time to read the article. Another option- sort students into groups based on the article they chose, and have them read the article together.



The screenshot shows a Packback question card. At the top, it says "Question" with a speech bubble icon. Below that is a profile picture of a person with glasses and a black cap, with the text "Asked by A Curious Mind Instructor". To the right of the profile are icons for an apple, a lightbulb, and a zero. The main question is "How do higher gas prices impact the average person?". Below the question is a short article excerpt: "This article explains that gas prices in the United States have set a new record - in some states, gas costs more than \$5 a gallon. The highest gas prices across the country are in California, Nevada, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington D.C. There are several reasons for high gas prices, but one of the main causes is Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The European Union plans to stop almost all Russian oil imports, and this will affect the global supply." Below the excerpt is a user comment: "I'm curious about how higher gas prices impact normal people, including teenagers." At the bottom, there is a source link: "Source: <https://www.npr.org/2022/06/06/1103318977/states-highest-gas-prices>". At the very bottom, it shows the time "9:50 AM, 6/7/2022", a notification bell icon with "78", and "Options" with a dropdown arrow. There is also a blue button that says "Add Response".



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- In class or as a take-home assignment, students should click "Ask a New Question" on Packback. Here are the directions for the different sections:
- **What is your question?:** Include an open-ended question that allows for your classmates to share their opinion or ideas
- **Add a Description:** Include a 3-4 sentence summary of the article you read. It should give an overview of the main points for your classmates that did not read the article.
- **Cite your source:** Link the article you read.

The next day as a bell ringer, have students review their classmates' questions and add two responses.

Modifications: to add rigor, you could have students select their own article and/or share their viewpoint on the article. Providing sentence starters for each part of the Packback post can help to scaffold.