

# LESSON PLAN 8

## Media Influence

By

Dr. Samantha Averett

**Rationale:**

Media (social or print) is a political influencer and an active partner in political and social decisions. This lesson will ask students to evaluate the print media during President Wilson's term to determine the implicit and explicit bias that exist and the influence the consumer.

**Standard(s):**

C3 NCSS

1. D2.Civ.2.9-12. Analyze the role of citizens in the U.S. political system, with attention to various theories of democracy, changes in Americans' participation over time, and alternative models from other countries, past and present.
2. D2.Civ.6.9-12. Critique relationships among governments, civil societies, and economic markets.

**Objectives:**

1. Examine newspaper articles to identify implicit and explicit bias.
2. Evaluate the impact media has on the consumer.
3. Determine the motivation of the United States citizens and organizations actions.
4. Demonstrate knowledge and practical application of historical skills (analysis, sourcing, and corroboration).

**Activity:**

1. Students will analyze the documents.
2. Students will group and corroborate the sources.
3. Students will respond to examination prompts.

**Guiding Questions:**

1. To what extent are the expressed ideas implicit and explicit.
2. How media outlets convey implicit and explicit bias?
3. To what extent does media serve as an influencer?
4. What roles can or does media play in influencing the consumer?

**Sources:**

1. Newspaper Article
  - a. Excerpt from Unknown, "Jim Crow at Washington," c. 1914 November, CS29, Race and Segregation Collection, *Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum, Staunton, Virginia*
  - b. Unknown, New Orleans newspaper, "Boston Negro is Insulting to President; Ordered Out," 1914 December 12, CS105, Race and Segregation Collection, *Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum, Staunton, Virginia*.
  - c. Special to the, Chicago Defender. "Editor Trotter Gets President Wilson Informed: AFRO-AMERICANS DO NOT CRINGE;" *The Chicago Defender (Big Weekend Edition) (1905-*

1966), Nov 21, 1914. <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/editor-trotter-gets-president-wilson-informed/docview/493276071/se-2>

- d. Excerpt from Washington Times, “Colored Delegate Rebuked by Wilson,” 1914 November 12, SC111214, Race and Segregation Collection, *Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum, Staunton, Virginia*.

### **Suggested Lesson Plan:**

1. Warm Up –
  - a. Lead a whole group discussion on the terms below using the suggested PowerPoint
    - i. Perspective
    - ii. Bias
    - iii. Implicit
    - iv. Explicit
2. Examine – We will discuss and analyze the 2020 election newspaper headlines.
3. Examine – Teachers can choose the focus based on the needs of the students (individual work or group work)
  - a. Suggestion - Students will examine all the documents individually and answer the guided questions for each document.
  - b. Suggestion – Students will work as a small group to examine all the documents and answer the guided questions for each document.
4. Evaluation –
  - a. Students will complete the analysis questions and corroboration of the documents.
5. Possible Extension Activity-
  - a. Have students to analyze two different media outlets that they consumer and determine what ideas, opinions, or attitudes are expressed implicitly or explicitly by those media outlets. Then determine how those expressions influence them and other consumers of those media outlets.

### **Suggested Grade Level:**

This lesson is suggested for middle to high school age children.

### **Suggested Lesson Pace:**

Schedule Type	Rationale
80 minute Block Schedule	This lesson structure may take two class periods. Students will complete step one, step two and part of step three during the first class period. Then the students will complete the remainder of step three, step four, and step five during the second class period.
45 minute Block Schedule	This lesson structure may take three class periods. Students will complete step one and two in the first class period. Then step three and four in the second class period. Finally step five in the third class period.

## **Document A**

### JIM CROW LAW AT WASHINGTON

President Wilson, with good cause, resented and rebuked the offensive spokesman of the delegation of negroes who went to the White House to protest against the Administration's policy of segregation in the executive departments at Washington. The wonder is that such a poor representative of his race as the impudent mischief-maker from Boston was permitted the privilege of an interview with the President, and his exclusion for the future is well deserved.

But neither the offensive conduct of his caller nor the President's justifiable indignation will dispose of the issue raised by the protesting delegation. Until the Wilson Administration came into power there was no segregation of negro clerks at Washington; there was no necessity for it, there was no demand for it, in short there was no "segregation issue." The trouble began when the Secretary of the Treasury and the Postmaster General, with the aid and encouragement of the former's assistant, John Skelton Williams, gave ear to the agitation of a small group of Southern Democratic office holders and proceeded to fan into flame the fire of race hatred by quietly setting about the segregation of the negro clerks. The transcript, as soon as the fact leaked out, protested against that procedure on the ground that it was un-American, unfair and unconstitutional. To a protesting delegation who visited the White House more than a year ago, the President promised an investigation of their charge that segregation was being enforced and left upon them the impression that he was wholly out of sympathy with such a scheme.

How at variance with that attitude, appears his confession of yesterday in which the President, for the first time, admits the enforcement of a policy of segregation and seeks to defend it with sort words about the "humanity" of its purpose. Had the conditions at Washington called for any such segregation as this Administration is enforcing, why were Presidents Cleveland, McKinley, Roosevelt and Tatt blind to that necessity? Why was there no demand for It? If, as the President contends, there is nothing political about this discrimination against the negro clerks, why has the enforcement of that policy been so often denied?

The truth is that segregation began soon after Mr. Wilson entered the White House; that it has been completed in at least two departments with his knowledge and his belated and reluctant admission of the fact is as condemnatory as the fact itself is in- defensible. The President's feeble resort to evasive rhetoric about the non-political character of the segregation issue is enough to tax the patience and affront the intelligence of even his heartiest well wisher. The segregation of the negro clerks is not only political, but it is sectional and partisan, and as unnecessary as unconstitutional.

President Wilson and Secretary Garrison continue to carry out their excellent policy of promoting army officers of merit. On Saturday there were announced the selections of Brig.-Gens. Frederick Funston, Hugh L. Scott, and Tasker H. Bliss for the one existing and the two coming vacancies among the major-generals; of Gen. Scott, as Chief of Staff, in succession to Gen. Wotherspoon, retired, and of Cols. Henry A. Greene, William A. Mann, of the infantry, and Col. Frederick S. Strong, of the Coast Artillery, to be brigadier-generals. These are all worthy officers whose fitness can hardly be questioned. Gen. Funston has not, of course, the standing of a regularly trained officer, but his service at Vera Cruz, with the fact that he has served thirteen years acceptably as brigadier-general, and has for years been the senior in rank in that grade, makes his advancement altogether justifiable. The army will, we believe, agree with us in asserting that it has had under no other President so square a deal in the matter of the distribution of high honors. The Wilson custom has been to promote those

colonels who are recommended by a majority of the existing generals, and it would be hard to devise a fairer method. For one thing, it wholly eliminates political pressure. If Gen. Scott's rise to the position of Chief of Staff has been rapid, it is merited, for he has served long with troops and in the field, and has in addition acquired certain lore, about our Indians, for instance, which is unequalled by any other officer. Best of all is the fact that President Wilson absolutely refuses to countenance the promotion of any officers as generals who have not served acceptably as colonels.

Source: Unknown, "Jim Crow at Washington," c. 1914 November, CS29, Race and Segregation Collection, *Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum, Staunton, Virginia*.

#### Guided Questions:

1. What are the issues and demands of the spokesman of the delegation of African Americans (Negroes)?
2. How did the Wilson Administration change the lives of African American (Negro) federal employees?
3. What policies were created by the Wilson Administration that supported the issues?
4. In your opinion, how and why might the spokesman of the delegation of African Americans (Negroes) have offend President Wilson?

## **Document B**

### Colored Delegate Rebuked by Wilson

Warm words passed today between President Wilson and a delegation of colored men who called at the White House to protest against the continuation of segregation at the Treasury and other departments of the Federal Government.

Declaring that never since he has been in office has he been addressed in such an insulting fashion, the President told William Monroe Trotter, of Boston, a colored man, secretary of the National Independence Equal Rights League, that if ever again he consented to receive representatives of the league, that body would have to select another spokesman.

The delegation will hold a mass meeting at the Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church here next Sunday to protest against what the members declared on leaving the White House was an "entirely disappointing" expression from the President as to his position on the matter.

The delegation is the same which sought unsuccessfully before the recent elections to see the President, and then threatened to advise all colored voters of the country to vote against the Democratic ticket.

TALKED NEARLY AN HOUR.

The delegation was supposed to be with the President only fifteen minutes. As it was closed with him for nearly an hour, while the Secretary of Commerce and other callers on the list were compelled to wait.

In the meantime the members of the delegation, after delivering their set speeches and hearing the President's reply, attempted to cross-examine him. He answered several of the questions put to him by the secretary of the league, but as these grew more objectionable in character, the President showed his indignation.

Previously, however, he had told the delegation that, while he believed that segregation in the departments was for the best interest of both races in order to overcome racial friction, and wished in every way to assist the colored race toward its independent development, he would investigate any individual cases of discrimination which they might from time to time present to him.

Shows Indifference.

The President refused to regard the matter from a political standpoint, and indicated his indifference toward the previously conveyed threats of the league that it would oppose all Democratic candidates in the future. The problem, he declared, was a human one and one which the best thought of the Administration had decided to be best solved by segregation, but segregation under such circumstances that the colored civil service employees would have equal advantages in the way of working conditions.

"What the President told us," said Secretary Trotter, as he left the White House, "was entirely disappointing. His

statement that segregation was intended to prevent racial friction is not supported by facts. For fifty years colored and white employees had worked together. It was not until the present Administration came in that segregation was drastically introduced, and only because of the racial prejudices of John Skelton Williams, Secretary McAdoo, and Secretary Burleson.....

He declared that the public was so against the Administration because of its attitude on segregation, that the voters protested at the last election. President Wilson expressed great regret that the colored men should consider such a question a political one, and he practically told them that if the colored race was dissatisfied with what his Administration was doing, they could register their disapproval at the next election.

The President pointed out to the delegation that the race is making progress in the United States, and that it should not consider segregation here in other than a friendly light.

The delegates protested, specifically against segregation in the Treasury and Post Office Departments.

Source: Washington Times, "Colored Delegate Rebuked by Wilson," 1914 November 12, SC111214, Race and Segregation Collection, *Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum, Staunton, Virginia*.

### **Guided Questions**

1. What are the issues and demands of the spokesman of the delegation of African Americans (Negroes)?
2. How did the Wilson Administration change the lives of African American (Negro) federal employees?
3. Which amendment and what part of that amendment supported the members of the delegation in seeking audience with President Wilson?
4. How might the delegates' understanding or interpretation of their rights and governmental responsibilities stated in amendment one and fourteen, have led to the delegates feeling "entirely disappointed" after their meeting with President Wilson?
5. What societal power dynamics might have led to President Wilson's agitation with the delegates' "attempt to cross-examine him"?

## **Document C**

Boston Negro Is Insulting to President; Ordered Out

Mr. Wilson Resents Conduct of Chairman of Massachusetts Delegation "Demanding Rights," Not Charity.

Committee Told To Get New Head

Chief Executive Said He Had Not Been Spoken to in Such a Way Since Taking Office.

Washington, Dec. 12.- President Wilson, while receiving a delegation of negroes to-day who came to the white house to protest against segregating the races in government departments, objected to the tone adopted by their spokesman, W.M. Trotter, of Boston, and told the committee that if it called on him again it would have to find a new chairman. The president added he had not been addressed in such a manner since he entered the white house.

The delegation charged that Secretary McAdoo and Comptroller Williams, in the treasury, and Postmaster General Burleson had enforced segregation rules in their offices. President Wilson replied that he had investigated the question and he had been assured that there had not been any discrimination in the comforts and surroundings given to the negroes. He added he had been informed by officials that the segregation had been started to avoid friction between the races and not with the object of injuring the negroes. The president said that he was deeply interested in the negro race and was greatly admired its progress. He declared the thing to be sought by the negro people was complete independence of white people and that he felt the white race was willing to do everything possible to assist them.

Trotter and other members at once took issue with the president, declaring the negro people did not seek charity or assistance, but that they took the position that the negroes had equal rights with the whites and that those rights should be respected. They denied there had been any friction between the two races before segregation was begun.

President Wilson listened to what they had to say, and then told the delegation that Trotter was losing control of his temper and that he (the president) would not discuss the matter further with him.

After leaving the president's private office Trotter, Maurice V. Spencer and others of the delegation declared their talk had been "thoroughly disappointing."

They declared they would hold a mass meeting in Washington Sunday to discuss the question.

Mr. Wilson is understood to have told the committee the question was not a political one and that he would not take it up on political grounds.

Talk That Offended.

Trotter came to the white house with a prepared speech to which the president listened. It was after delivering this address, however, that Trotter made remarks in a tone which displeased President Wilson.



In the address Trotter reminded the president that the delegation called on Mr. Wilson a year ago, at which time he had promised to investigate the question.

“We stated,” said Trotter, “that there could be no freedom, no respect from others, and no equality of citizenship under segregation for races. For such placement of employees means a charge by the government of physical indecency or infection, or being a lower order of beings, or a subjection to the prejudice of other citizens, which constitutes inferiority of status.

“We stated that such segregation was a public humiliation and degradation entirely unmerited and far-reaching in its injurious effects. Now after the lapse of a year we have come back, having found that all the reforms of segregation of government employees of African extraction are still being practiced in the treasury and post office department buildings, and to a certain extent have spread into other government buildings.”

The delegation presented a resolution of the Massachusetts legislature and letters from several Massachusetts Democratic members of congress protesting against race segregation in federal government departments.

Source: Unknown New Orleans newspaper, “Boston Negro is Insulting to President; Ordered Out,” 1914 December 12, CS105, Race and Segregation Collection, *Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum, Staunton, Virginia.*

### **Guided Questions**

1. What are the issues and demands of the spokesman of the delegation of African Americans (Negroes)?
2. How might the objection to tone by President Wilson be an example of racial and/or class discrimination?
3. How might President Wilson’s statement “the thing to be sought by the negro people was complete independence of white people and that he felt the white race was willing to do everything possible to assist them” reflect his personal beliefs regarding racial segregation?
4. How might President Wilson’s statement “the thing to be sought by the negro people was complete independence of white people and that he felt the white race was willing to do everything possible to assist them” support or oppose racial segregation?
5. How does the historical context of this meeting (second meeting after a year, failed promise of presidential investigation) help you understand the tension between the two parties?

### **Document D**

Washington, DC, Nov. 20. – Thursday afternoon of last week President Wilson became indignant when William Monroe Trotter, editor of the Boston Guardian, as chairman of a committee of protest from the National Independence Equal Rights League against the segregation of Afro-American employees in the government departments in Washington plainly told the nation’s chief executive about it.

Waits Two Years.

The committee met the president by appointment after waiting a year for a personal interview with him. Mr. Trotter was the spokesman, and in the fervor of his plea for equal rights for his people he forgot the servile

manner and speech once characteristic of the Afro-American and he talked to the president as man to man, addressing the head of the government as any American citizen should especially when discussing a serious matter, But the president did not like Mr. Trotter's attitude and told the committee that if it called on him again it would have to get a new chairman. The president added he had not been addressed in such a manner since he entered the white house.

#### No Discrimination Intended.

The delegation charged that Secretary McAdoo and Comptroller Williams in the treasury and Postmaster General Burleson had enforced segregation rules in their offices. The president replied that he had investigated the question and had been assured there had been no discrimination in the comforts and surroundings given to the Afro-American workers. He added he had been informed by officials that the segregation had been started to avoid friction between the races and not with the object of injuring the Afro-American employees. The president said that he was deeply interested in the negro race and was greatly admired its progress. He declared the thing to be sought by the negro people was complete independence of white people and that he felt the white race was willing to do everything possible to assist them.

#### Seek Charity Nor Aid.

Trotter and other members at once took issue with the president, declaring the negro people did not seek charity or assistance, but that they took the position that the negroes had equal rights with the whites and that those rights should be respected. They denied there had been any friction between the two races before segregation was begun

President Wilson listened to what they had to say, and then told the delegation that Trotter was losing control of his temper and that he (the president) would not discuss the matter further with him.

The president is understood to have told the committee the question was not a political one and that he would not take it up on political grounds.....

#### Denies Disadvantage Was Intended.

The president said he thought his leagues in the government departments were not trying to put the employees at a disadvantage, but simply to make arrangements which would prevent friction. He added that the question involved was not a question of intrinsic qualities, because all had human souls and were equal in that respect, but that for the present it was a question of economic policy whether the Afro-American race could do the same things that the white race could do with equal efficiency. He said he thought the Afro-American people were proving that they could, and that everyone wished to help them and that their conditions of labor would be bettered.....

"Two years ago," said Mr. Trotter, "you were thought to be a second Abraham Lincoln." The president tried to interrupt, asking the personalities be left out of the discussion. Mr. Trotter continued to speak, and the president finally told him that if the organization he represented wished to approach him again it must choose another spokesman. The president told Mr. Trotter that he was an American citizen as fully as anybody else, but that

he, Trotter was the only America citizen who had every come into the white house and addressed the president in such a tone and with such a background of passion.

Denied that he had passion.

Here Mr. Trotter denied that he had any passion, but the president told him he had spoiled the cause for which he had come and said he expected those who professed to be Christians to come to him in a Christian spirit.

Source: Special to the, Chicago Defender. "Editor Trotter Gets President Wilson Informed: AFRO-AMERICANS DO NOT CRINGE; " *The Chicago Defender (Big Weekend Edition) (1905-1966)*, Nov 21, 1914. <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/editor-trotter-gets-president-wilson-informed/docview/493276071/se-2>.

### **Guided Questions**

1. What are the issues and demands of the spokesman of the delegation of African Americans (Negroes)?
2. How might the term "indignant" which was used to describe President Wilson, influence the consumer of the media?
3. Why was Mr. Trotter ability to speak to President Wilson as a regular American citizen, man to man, seen as offensive to President Wilson?
4. Why might President Wilson believe that race relation is not political and therefore not a responsibility of government officials?
5. Why might Mr. Trotter's refusal to be silent when President Wilson interrupted him be seen by President Wilson as offensive?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Part 1:

Instructions: Use two of the four documents to respond to the prompts below.

1. To what extent does the location of the newspaper articles you selected influence the reporting of the event.
2. How does the language/ vocabulary in your selected newspaper articles influence the consumer?
3. What is the perspective of your selected articles and how are those perspectives different or similar?
4. What implicit or explicit messages did your selected articles convey to the consumer?

#### Part 2:

Instructions: Use the articles to respond to one of the document based questions below.

1. Determine what perspectives, bias, or points of view were explicitly and implicitly express in the media outlets and how those expressions influence the consumers of those media outlet.
2. Determine what perspectives, bias, or points of view were explicitly and implicitly express in the media outlets and how might the practice of consuming one media source/ outlet limit the consumer's understanding of an event.