



TEACHER WORKSHEET

CYCLE 4 • INFORMATION AND MEDIA LITERACY

THE 1936 OLYMPIC GAMES IN BERLIN: PROPAGANDA AND JOURNALISM

OVERVIEW

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES:

- Understand and decipher information through studying the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, using various media and formats (text, poster, film), in order to discern how information may have been manipulated.
- Learn about the values of the Olympic Games: promoting physical activity and brotherhood between peoples, rejecting all forms of discrimination.
- Know some of the Olympic disciplines and athletes from the 1936 Olympic Games.
- Participate in a cooperative multimedia production.

SPECIFIC SKILLS IN MORAL AND CIVIC EDUCATION:

- Use media and information on one's own.
- Utilize information in a reasoned way.
- Use media responsibly.
- Produce, communicate, and share information.

INTERDISCIPLINARY SKILLS:

- **English:**
 - Reading: Read and understand a variety of texts on one's own.
 - Writing: Communicate a point of view in writing.

- **Art:**

Familiarize oneself with art-related fields and questions.

- **Art history:**

Associate a work of art with a time period and civilization based on the elements observed (art and power: protest, denunciation, or propaganda).

- **History:**

Determine one's place in time: develop historical points of reference.

SCHEDULE FOR SESSIONS:

- Observation, reading, and comprehension questions.

DURATION:

- 3 sessions (3 × 1 hour).

ORGANIZATION:

- Do individual exercises.
- Share with class and review methods.

KEYWORDS:

OLYMPIC VALUES • OLYMPIC SYMBOLS • RECORD • ATHLETICS • JESSE OWENS • RACISM • SEGREGATION



CONCEPTS ADDRESSED

THE 1936 OLYMPIC GAMES IN BERLIN

The Weimar Republic was in place when, in 1931, the IOC designated Berlin as the host city for the 1936 Olympic Games. Hitler gradually installed a totalitarian and racist regime, and used the Games to promote propaganda about Greater Germany and the superiority of the "German race". Major construction projects were commissioned to host the Games and prove to the world that a new Germany had been born—with a new stadium, an ultra-modern Olympic Village, a triumphal avenue for the Führer's motor convey, and two new subway stations, among other developments.



The Ministry of Propaganda, headed by Dr. Joseph Goebbels, distributed postcards, badges, bulletins, and posters translated into more than 15 languages before the Games. More than 2,500 journalists made the trip to Berlin.

Sports tourism was also taking off, with more than 70,000 visitors, including 15,000 Americans. The USSR, which was not part of the Olympic movement at the time, was, in fact, absent from the Games.

The movement to boycott the Games failed, but not all press correspondents were fooled; some publications, like the French sports newspaper *L'Equipe*, ran headlines such as, "*Les Jeux défigurés*" ("The Disfigured Games").

OLYMPIC POSTERS

The first Olympic Games poster was designed for the 1912 Games in Stockholm.

The Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (OCOG) chooses the official poster from various proposals. An Olympic poster communicates information directly related to the Olympic Games. The graphic design makes it easy to identify the Olympic Games (the rings being featured), and so posters have become their own kind of ambassador for the event.

DOCUMENTARY / FICTION

A documentary film can be a cultural or educational film that shows real events, unlike fiction.

At Hitler's request, Leni Riefenstahl made a "reconstructed" sports documentary that extolled the superiority of German athletes and overlooked their failures, especially in athletics. The film, entitled "Olympia", was released in 1938 and was boycotted by the United States.

JOURNALISM AS A PROFESSION

Freedom of the press is the freedom to express one's ideas through various media, including newspapers, radio, and television. In France, freedom of the press was proclaimed a right in 1789, in Article 11 of the *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen* (Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen), which states that "every citizen may therefore speak, write and publish freely".

Key French laws on freedom of the press were passed in 1881, under the Third Republic.

A code of ethics is the set of specific moral standards that journalists must respect: morality, rigor, loyalty, protection of sources, copyright, the right of reply, and honesty.

French journalists must adhere to a charter of professional duties, drawn up in 1918 by a journalists' union and updated regularly.

FUN FACT!

The victories of Jesse Owens, an African-American athlete, at the Berlin Games contradicted the Nazi theory of "racial" superiority.

FUN FACT!

In hosting the Games, Adolf Hitler did not intend to celebrate key Olympic values. He used the Games as a means to promote Nazi propaganda, in an effort to prove the racist notion that the German race was superior. German-Jewish athletes were not allowed to compete in the Games.

FUN FACT!

Taken at face value, the Berlin Olympic Games were a tribute to the ancient Games.



STUDENT WORKSHEET OVERVIEW

VOCABULARY:

Argument, critique, opinion, discrimination, critical thinking, partial/impartial, propaganda, segregation.

ACTIVITIES:

▶ ACTIVITY 1: EXAMINE A POSTER

12–13 yr | 13–14 yr | 14–15 yr

Understand that a poster's design is closely tied to its time period, and understand the power of such imagery.

Learn how to read an image by distinguishing between objectivity and subjectivity.

Materials: Official poster for the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, Germany (color lithograph by Werner Würbel).

🔍 FIND OUT MORE:

Use the school library's resources to research Hitler's initiatives to prepare and organize the 1936 Games in Berlin, Germany, explicitly referencing ancient Greece and the Games of Olympia.

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Olympic posters.

https://stillmed.olympic.org/Documents/Olympic_Museum/Education/School%20Ressources/teaching_resources/ENG_Olympic_Games_Posters.pdf

▶ ACTIVITY 2: THE PROFESSIONAL DUTIES OF A JOURNALIST

12–13 yr | 13–14 yr | 14–15 yr

Learn about the professional duties of journalists through two contrasting points of view on the same topic: preparations for the 1936 Olympic Games.

Materials: – Text from the BNF website about how the French press reported on the 1936 Olympic Games, published by Isabelle Copin and Laurent Arzel on October 9, 2016 in *Collections*.
– Excerpt from the 1918 Charter of Professional Duties of Journalists.
– Article from the 1971 Charter of Munich.

🔍 FIND OUT MORE:

Find the full article "*Les Jeux olympiques de 1936 dans la presse française*" ("The 1936 Olympic Games in the French Press") on the BNF website (in French):

<http://gallica.bnf.fr/blog/09102016/les-jeux-olympiques-de-1936-dans-la-presse-francaise>

▶ ACTIVITY 3: DOCUMENTARY FILMS: BETWEEN INFORMATION AND PROPAGANDA

12–13 yr | 13–14 yr | 14–15 yr

Define the characteristics of a documentary film.

Distinguish between documentary and propaganda films using Leni Riefenstahl's 1938 film *Olympia*, commissioned by Hitler.

Materials: – Document 1: A brief history of documentary film (source: Larousse Collège 2016)
– Document 2: Excerpt from "*Petite note sur le film documentaire*" ("Short Note on Documentary Films") by Albain Michel Ikomb (Le collège au cinéma 2002, CNDP Clermont) http://www.cndp.fr/crdp-clermont/upload/_25_1_2012-11-16_16-31-21_.pdf
– Document 3: Video from the France TV Éducation website: "*Le cinéma de Leni Riefenstahl au service du III^e Reich : Les champions d'Hitler (1936–1945)*" ("Leni Riefenstahl's films for the Third Reich [1936–1945]") <http://education.francetv.fr/matiere/epoque-contemporaine/premiere/video/le-cinema-de-leni-riefenstahl-au-service-du-iiieme-reich-1>

🔍 FIND OUT MORE:

Research Leni Riefenstahl's life and work in the school library.



FOR FURTHER STUDY:

- Although Riefenstahl’s film may not be a standard sports documentary, it is nevertheless an artistic masterpiece.
- When it was released in theaters, the film *Olympia* was boycotted by a large number of nations, as shown in the video *L’Après-Jeux Olympiques : échec de la propagande dans le reste du monde* (The Post-Olympic Games: Propaganda’s Failure in the Rest of the World).

<http://education.francetv.fr/matiere/epoque-contemporaine/premiere/video/l-apres-jeux-olympiques-echec-de-la-propagande-dans-le-reste-du-monde>

► ACTIVITY 4: READ A FILM REVIEW

12–13 yr | 13–14 yr | 14–15 yr

Know the characteristics of a film review and understand its role, focusing the biopic about Jesse Owens, *Race* (Stephen Hopkins, 2016).

Materials: – Trailer for *Race* (2016) by Stephen Hopkins

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eZ2eFxFVIMXQ&ab_channel=FocusFeatures

–Film review by a journalist for France Info: “La Couleur de la victoire :un film en hommage à la légende Jesse Owens” (“*Race*: A Film in Homage to the Legend Jesse Owens”) (07/24/2016)

http://www.francetvinfo.fr/culture/cinema/la-couleur-de-la-victoire-un-film-en-hommage-a-la-legende-jesse-owens_1561543.html

► FIND OUT MORE:

Write a film review.



STUDENT WORKSHEET ANSWER KEY

► ACTIVITY 1: EXAMINE A POSTER

1) What features make the poster identifiable as an official Olympic poster?

The location and date of the Games are specified. The Olympic rings can be seen at the top of the poster.

2) Describe the poster’s composition and content:

The poster has two visual planes separated by a diagonal in contrasting colors.

In the foreground, in darker colors, the four-horse chariot of the goddess of Victory is depicted atop Brandenburg Gate, an emblematic monument in the city of Berlin. The Prussian eagle can also be seen.

In the background, in bright colors, the face and chest of a crowned winner can be seen.

3) What elements allude to the ancient Games? What do you think they mean?

The four-horse chariot (a quadriga) brings to mind the chariot races in the ancient Games. The muscular, bare-chested athlete, with a laurel wreath on his head, brings to mind ancient marble sculptures. In the eyes of the Nazis, the Greek models represented perfection. Drawing inspiration from that reinforced the theory of a superior German race. German propaganda combined Nazi imaginary with revisited Greek mythology; the poster is indeed propaganda.

TO HELP YOU:

A new stadium commissioned by Hitler for the 1936 Olympic Games was also inspired by ancient Greece, with colossal statues specially made for the occasion. An amphitheater modeled on the one in Delphi was also built. Hitler also decided—behind the backs of the Olympic authorities—that the Olympic flame would be lit in Olympia, Greece, before traveling across Europe in a relay to Berlin, inspired by the torch race in ancient Greece. He decided that the Olympic flame, lit in Greece at the site of Olympia, would be carried by 3,075 torchbearers along a 3,075 km route from Olympia to Berlin.



► ACTIVITY 2: THE PROFESSIONAL DUTIES OF A JOURNALIST

Check your reading skills

- 1) Based on that definition, what do you think about the point of view expressed in the newspaper *L'Excelsior* from July 31, 1936?
The newspaper *L'Excelsior* is only interested in the athletic aspects of the event.
- 2) What essential quality in journalism should have been expected of the author?
He showed a lack of critical thinking by not taking into account the political situation in Germany in his article. He was biased.

► ACTIVITY 3 DOCUMENTARY FILMS: BETWEEN INFORMATION AND PROPAGANDA

Check your reading skills

- 1) When were the first documentaries made?
Documentaries date back to the beginnings of the cinematograph.
- 2) What is the major difference between documentary and fiction?
Documentaries show real events, unlike fiction, which is based on an imagined story.
- 3) What does documentary reconstruction consist of?
It involves reconstructing certain facts or missing elements rather than filming them as they happen.
- 4) When were the first propaganda documentaries made?
Propaganda documentaries date back to World War I.
- 5) Where can a line be drawn between documentary and propaganda?
A documentary becomes propaganda when it is partisan and lacks objectivity.
- 6) Which German documentaries are considered to be propaganda?
German documentaries made during the Nazi regime.

Check your understanding

- 1) How is Leni Riefenstahl's film a documentary?
The film shows real events and relies on reconstructing certain facts or missing elements. For example, the director asks her lover to re-enact his gold medal after the event. She reconstructed the 1,500 meters event for the camera.
- 2) How is it propaganda?
It is not true to reality and dismisses the actual athletic challenges (like in the diving events where Riefenstahl included unrealistic imagery such as jumps filmed in reverse or divers leaping up into the sky). The film seeks to show the superiority of the Aryan race by manipulating the reality of the outcome at the Games. The failures of German athletes are therefore never shown.

► ACTIVITY 4: READ A FILM REVIEW

Check your understanding

- 1) What is the film's genre?
It is a biopic, i.e. a film that dramatizes the life of an historical figure.
- 2) Describe the film's hero, based on the trailer:
The film is about Jesse Owens, an African-American athlete who was scouted by Ohio State University in track and field, and who later had the opportunity to represent the United States at the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin.



- 3) For what reasons could he have refused to compete in the Berlin Games?
 He could have refused to participate to show solidarity with the “oppressed people” of Nazi Germany, and also in protest of segregation in the United States at the time.
- 4) Cite one reason why he ultimately decided to compete in the Games:
 He decided to go to Berlin to “beat those Nazis”.

Check your reading skills

- 1) What is the document’s source?
 The article was published on the website of France Info radio station.
- 2) What details does the review provide after watching the trailer? Use examples from the text to justify your answer.
 The review gives the journalist’s opinion on why the film is worth seeing—to realize that Jesse Owens agreed to compete at the Olympic Games in solidarity with the oppressed people of Germany when he himself was part of a group that was oppressed in the United States, as illustrated in the subtitle “A hero in 1930s racist America”.

TO HELP YOU:

- It was not until 1964 that African Americans were granted the same rights as white Americans in public places (with access to employment, businesses, higher education, etc.).
- In 1975, when President Gerald Ford presented Owens with the Medal of Freedom, he said the following: “[Jesse Owens] personally achieved what no statesman, journalist, or general achieved at that time—he forced Adolf Hitler to leave the stadium.”
- A street and a school in Berlin have been named after him, as have many public places around the world, and two U.S. postage stamps have been issued in his honor.
- At one point, First Lady of the United States Michelle Obama asked her husband, President Barack Obama, who his all-time favorite athlete was. The President chose Jesse Owens, explaining, “*When you think about not only being the fastest man in the world, but you’re doing it in front of the Nazis, sending a clear signal about what America stands for, the equality of all human beings. Pretty powerful stuff.*”



FIND OUT MORE

CNOSF EDUCATIONAL FILES

- English: A passion for sports
- English: The art of being a (s)wordsmith
- Math: Dimensions and statistics in basketball
- Math: Performance in swimming
- Geography: Tokyo: A global metropolis and host city of the 1964 and 2020 Olympic Games
- French: Competing in the Olympics despite all opposition: ski jumping
- Moral and civic education: The Olympic flame, torchbearers, and values
- Interdisciplinary practical education: Sports and the fight against doping
- Interdisciplinary practical education: Developing a symbolic view of the Olympic Games

DIGITAL RESOURCES

- Learn more about the Olympic Games:
<https://cnosf.franceolympique.com/cnosf/actus/7234-expositions-cnosf-sur-lolympisme-avec-livrets-danalyse.html>
- Learn more about the Olympic Games in Berlin (various archival footage):
<http://education.francetv.fr/matiere/epoque-contemporaine/premiere/video/l-attribution-des-jeux-olympiques-pour-sortir-du-marasme-de-la-crise>
<http://education.francetv.fr/matiere/epoque-contemporaine/premiere/video/outils-de-propagande-et-jeux-olympiques-1>
<http://education.francetv.fr/matiere/epoque-contemporaine/premiere/video/la-reappropriation-des-jeux-antiques-par-l-allemande-nazie>



Learn more about Nazi Germany:

<http://education.francetv.fr/matiere/epoque-contemporaine/premiere/video/l-allemande-nazie-se-prepare-pour-les-jeux-olympiques>

<http://education.francetv.fr/matiere/epoque-contemporaine/premiere/video/la-nazification-de-la-jeunesse-par-le-sport>

FILMS FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Race, directed by Stephen Hopkins
(France, Germany, Canada; 2016)

Unbroken, directed by Angelina Jolie
(United States, 2014)

The first part of the film focuses on athletics. The story of a young boy who chooses running to avoid delinquency. He is trained by his brother and manages to qualify for the U.S. national team in the 5,000 meters at the Berlin Olympic Games.

Chariots of Fire, directed by Hugh Hudson
(United Kingdom, 1981)

The Ace of Aces, directed by Gérard Oury
(France, 1982)

BOOKS FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Friedrich, by Hans Peter Richter, Penguin

Bel-Ami, by Guy de Maupassant, Penguin Classics

Lost Illusions, by Honoré de Balzac, Dodo Press

ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS

End of unit: "It's your turn!"

The 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin: propaganda and journalism" (and answer key).



CYCLE PROGRESS WORKSHEET

CYCLE 4 • INFORMATION AND MEDIA LITERACY

THE 1936 OLYMPIC GAMES IN BERLIN: PROPAGANDA AND JOURNALISM

Throughout Cycle 4, information and media literacy, which is covered in all subjects, should be included in all fields of knowledge transmitted to students (source: Cycle 4 programs).

Connections with certain fields of education can be suggested throughout Cycle 4, however.

For students 12–13 years old, the worksheet could establish a connection with the moral and civic education program by emphasizing the following points:

- Sensitivity (self and others): expressing moral feelings through questioning.
- Discernment (thinking for oneself and with others): developing critical thinking skills, being aware of different forms of discrimination (racial, anti-Semitic, religious, xenophobic, sexist, homophobic, etc.).

For students 13–14 years old, the worksheet could establish a connection with the literature and arts program, and more specifically the topic “Taking action in the world / Inform, be informed, deform?” The focus should be on the importance of context in creation, and the author’s intention, in various documents used for propaganda or showing how information can be manipulated.

There are two possible ways to connect texts:

- The link between the press and the novel in the 19th century: *Bel-Ami* by Guy de Maupassant; *Lost Illusions* by Honoré de Balzac.
- Journalism as a profession: “*J’Accuse...!*” by Émile Zola; the censored article by Albert Camus that should have been published in *Le Soir Républicain* on November 25, 1939; etc.

For students 14–15 years old, the worksheet could be directly connected to the history program, through topic 1: “Weakened democracies and totalitarian experiences in interwar Europe.” Another connection could also be made with the literature and arts program, and more specifically the topic “Taking action at the city level: power and the individual”.



STUDENT WORKSHEET

CYCLE 4 • INFORMATION AND MEDIA LITERACY



THE 1936 OLYMPIC GAMES IN BERLIN: PROPAGANDA AND JOURNALISM

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VOCABULARY

ARGUMENT: A piece of evidence or reason given to justify an opinion.

CRITIQUE: A detailed analysis of something, especially a work of art.

OPINION: A judgment or way of thinking about a subject.

DISCRIMINATION: The act of treating individuals or groups within the same population differently.

CRITICAL THINKING: The act of objectively analyzing a fact or opinion in order to form a judgment.

PARTIAL/IMPARTIAL: The act of favoring one person or opinion over another or judging without concern for objectivity; biased. / Not favoring one side over the other but treating all sides equally; unbiased.

PROPAGANDA: Information, especially biased or misleading, used to influence public opinion and promote certain ideas or doctrines.

SEGREGATION: In some countries, the act of separating groups from different backgrounds and not granting them the same rights as others.



ACTIVITIES

FUN FACT!

When the International Olympic Committee (IOC) designated Berlin as the host city for the 1936 Olympic Games, Adolf Hitler was not yet Chancellor of Germany. The aim was to help the country emerge from the economic crisis that had affected it at the end of World War I. The government at the time pledged to uphold the Olympic Charter, which prohibited discrimination among athletes.

Starting in 1933, Hitler gradually installed a totalitarian and racist regime that promoted the superiority of the "German race" and an obsession with sports and physical exercise. Sports clubs that failed to obey the Nazi Party would no longer be allowed in Germany. As a result, many Jewish athletes were excluded from German sports federations, and their performances were no longer recorded.

German teams no longer included any Jewish athletes, and Hitler saw the Berlin Games as an opportunity to promote the image of a new Germany as pacifist and the legitimate heir to ancient Greece. Despite attempts to boycott the event, the vast majority of nations ultimately took part in the Games, including France and the United States.

Jesse Owens, an African-American sprinter who had already broken records at the university championships, was a member of the U.S. track and field team. He won four gold medals (for the 100 meters, 200 meters, 4 × 100-meter relay, and the long jump), beat or tied nine Olympic records, and set three new world records.

At one event, he befriended the German athlete Carl Ludwig Long, who came in second in the long jump.



TIPS & TRICKS



As with writing a newspaper article, there are certain rules for writing an assignment. For example, never copy a page from a book or a website without explaining or quoting your sources. And there's no point in citing a bunch of numbers and dates without an explanation.



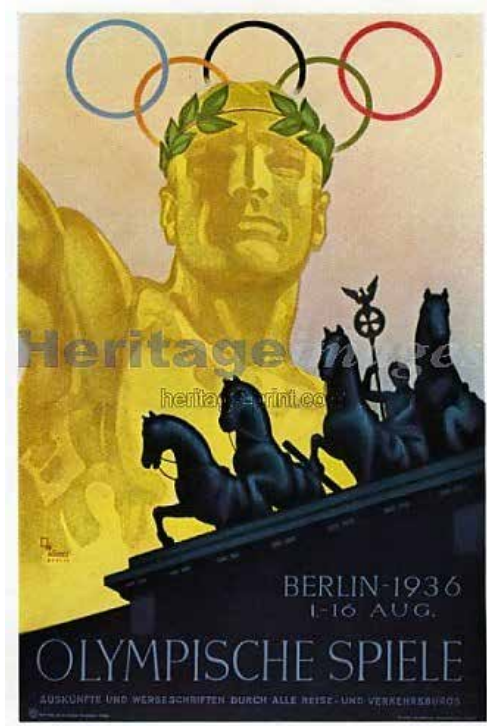
► **ACTIVITY 1: EXAMINE A POSTER**

The first Olympic Games poster was designed for the 1912 Games in Stockholm.

The Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (OCOG) chooses the official poster from various proposals. An Olympic poster must communicate information directly related to the Olympic Games, and in this way becomes a kind of ambassador for the event.

Here's a reproduction of the official poster for the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, Germany.

Designed by German artist Werner Würbel, it meets the three publicity guidelines given by the OCOG: to indicate the importance of the Games, to draw attention to the city of Berlin, and to promote the Olympic Games in an effective and comprehensible manner abroad.



© DR

1) What features make the poster identifiable as an official Olympic poster?

2) Describe the poster's composition and content:

3) What elements allude to the ancient Games? What do you think they mean?

🔍 **FIND OUT MORE:**

Use the school library's resources to research Hitler's initiatives to prepare and organize the Berlin Games, explicitly referencing ancient Greece and the Games of Olympia.

OPTIONAL FURTHER STUDY WITH YOUR ART TEACHER:

Make a poster to highlight three qualities that are essential to you at school, meeting the following guidelines:

- Indicate the importance of education.
- Draw attention to your school.
- Promote what makes your school great.



► ACTIVITY 2: THE PROFESSIONAL DUTIES OF A JOURNALIST

In 1936, foreign journalists were divided on whether Nazi Germany and the pacifist image it displayed in organizing the Berlin Games was sincere.

There was fierce controversy, as evident in the text below, “The 1936 Olympic Games in the French Press”, which compares the points of view of two newspapers published on July 31 and August 1, 1936.

“Forty-nine nations, including France, are participating in the Berlin Games in the end.

In order to give an image of a prosperous and pacifist Germany abroad, the city has been cleaned up, literally and figuratively; on July 31, *La Croix* explained: ‘Socialist nations seem determined to prolong, as much as possible, the good impression they intend to leave on visitors, who, upon returning home, would all spread the new gospel. [...] All the gypsies in Berlin, and all throughout Germany, have just been taken to a kind of “national park”—without calling it a concentration camp— [...] two hours outside the capital [in order to] spare foreigners the sight.’

L’Excelsior, however, on August 1, commended ‘the Germans’ great effort to promote sports’:

‘This is not about military sports, or about preparing for war. That’s politics, and athletes are not at all interested in it’ [...] ‘These [German] youth are not warlike in the least; they live simply, as it is good to live with the sun in one’s eyes and joy in one’s heart.’”

Source: Isabelle Copin and Laurent Arzel, October 9, 2016 in *Collections*

In 1918, the Charter of the Professional Duties of French Journalists was adopted in France. The text was written by journalists at the time, and explains how journalists should behave to do their job well. The charter is regularly modified and updated.

It states that “journalism is about researching, verifying, contextualizing, prioritizing, editing, commenting, and publishing quality information”.

The Munich Declaration of the Duties and Rights of Journalists, adopted in 1971, complements the French charter by specifying in Article 9: “Never confusing the profession of journalist with that of advertiser or propagandist”.

Check your reading skills

1) Based on that definition, what do you think about the point of view expressed in the newspaper *L’Excelsior*, from July 31, 1936?

.....

2) What essential quality in journalism should have been expected of the author?

.....

🔍 FIND OUT MORE:

Find the full article “The 1936 Olympic Games in the French Press” on the BNF website (in French):

<http://gallica.bnf.fr/blog/09102016/les-jeux-olympiques-de-1936-dans-la-presse-francaise>



► ACTIVITY 3: DOCUMENTARY FILMS: BETWEEN INFORMATION AND PROPAGANDA

Document 1: A brief history of documentary film

“ From the beginnings of the cinematograph, the documentary film emerged (*Workers Leaving The Lumière Factory in Lyon*, 1894).

Expedition and travel films dominated until the 1920s (*Nanook of the North*, R. Flaherty, 1922). However, World War I brought forth new perspectives—information and propaganda. [...]

In Germany, there was also a strong documentary tradition, but the format was soon used solely for the purposes of Nazi propaganda. ”

Source: Larousse Collège 2016

Document 2: When documentary becomes propaganda

“ A film genre in its own right and in contrast with fiction, a documentary is a film [...] that relies on documents to describe a certain reality or to conveniently arrange it.

It differs from fiction in that it generally serves an informative purpose, the subject being reality and not an imaginary or adapted story.

To make a documentary, certain facts or missing elements may be reconstructed, whereas in fiction, action is dramatized.

Documentaries can therefore—based on shots (and sound) considered as documentary evidence—refer to reality, render it on screen and, potentially, interpret it. [...]

Propaganda documentaries are partisan films which extol the merits, the benefits [...] of an ideology, a person, a nation, a party... which it presents as the only, if not the solution or the best alternative.

It magnifies and arranges reality to make it ideal. It is also an informational film, even if it has the disadvantage of distorting information about the reality depicted, arranging it according to convenience.

The history of Russian and German cinema gives us some examples of that [...] ”

Source: “A Short Note about Documentary Film”
by Albain Michel Ikomb (Le collège au cinéma 2002, CNDP Clermont)

Check your reading skills

1) When were the first documentaries made?

.....

2) What is the major difference between documentary and fiction?

.....

.....

3) What does documentary reconstruction consist of?

.....

4) When were the first propaganda documentaries made?

.....

5) Where can a line be drawn between documentary and propaganda?

.....

6) Which German documentaries are considered to be propaganda?

.....



Document 3: Leni Riefenstahl's films for the Third Reich

“ In 1936, Hitler wanted to use the Berlin Olympic Games to show the superiority of a new Germany. That is why he commissioned the German director Leni Riefenstahl to make a film that would celebrate the athletes of the Reich. The film, released in 1938, was entitled *Olympia*. ”

Watch the video at the following link and answer the questions:

<http://education.francetv.fr/matiere/epoque-contemporaine/premiere/video/le-cinema-de-leni-riefenstahl-au-service-du-iiieme-reich-1>

Check your understanding

1) How is Leni Riefenstahl's film a documentary?

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2) How is it propaganda?

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.....
.....

🔍 FIND OUT MORE:

Research Leni Riefenstahl's life and work.

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

- Although Riefenstahl's film may not be a standard sports documentary, it is nevertheless an artistic masterpiece.
There were more than 300 people on the film crew, including 40 camera operators, who worked for months to develop new techniques (such as low-angle, slow motion, traveling, and underwater shots) leading up to the events.
- When it was released in theaters, a large number of nations boycotted the film *Olympia*, as shown in the video *The Post-Olympic Games: Propaganda's Failure in the Rest of the World*.

<http://education.francetv.fr/matiere/epoque-contemporaine/premiere/video/l-apres-jeux-olympiques-echec-de-la-propagande-dans-le-reste-du-monde>

▶ ACTIVITY 4: READ A FILM REVIEW

Here's the trailer for *Race*, released in 2016. Watch the trailer and answer the following questions:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eZ2eFxVlMXQ&ab_channel=FocusFeatures

Check your understanding

1) What is the film's genre?

2) Describe the film's hero, based on the trailer:

.....
.....



3) For what reasons could he have refused to compete in the Berlin Games?

.....
.....
.....

4) Cite one reason why he ultimately decided to compete in the Games:

.....
.....

2) Here's a review that was published in July 2016, shortly after the film was released. Read the review and then answer the questions below.

Wednesday, July 27, marks the release of an historical film. *Race* is a tribute to Jesse Owens, the black sprinter who won the gold medal in 1936 in Berlin while Hitler was watching.

“ August 1936, the Olympic Games in Berlin were a confirmation for Hitler and the Nazi regime. Thousands of athletes took part, even those from democracies, led by the United States. Among them was Jesse Owens, an exceptional black sprinter who had been scouted at U.S. university championships despite hostility from white spectators. *Race* looks back on the athletic career of Owens, who emerged from the Cleveland ghetto during the terrible years of racial segregation.

A hero in 1930s racist America

‘Because he was an amazing sportsman, he carried home four gold medals from the Olympics and slapped a flannel off the face of Adolf Hitler,’ explains Jeremy Irons, who acts in the film. At the Berlin Olympic Games, Jesse Owens won four gold medals: the 100 meters, the 200 meters, the 4 × 100-meter relay, and the long jump, against the German athlete Lutz Long, Hitler’s champion. To the very end, the American Olympic Committee fought with Goebbels to avoid the boycott supported in part by U.S. opinion. Today, the Berlin Games are remembered as much for Nazi propaganda as for Jesse Owens’ wins, for he became a hero in 1930s racist America. ”

Source: France Info: “*Race*: A Film in Homage to the Legend Jesse Owens” (07/24/2016)

Check your reading skills

1) What is the document’s source?

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2) What details does the review provide after watching the trailer? Use examples from the text to justify your answer.

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🔍 FIND OUT MORE:

Write a review about the last film you saw.

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

When Jesse Owens returned to the United States, he was not invited to meet with President Roosevelt, as was the tradition, due to racial segregation that was rampant at the time. Jesse Owens died of lung cancer in 1980. Since then, a number of tributes have been paid to him.

Research at the school library:

- When did segregation end in the United States?
- Find some posthumous tributes to Jesse Owens.



REVIEW

- The role of a poster is to inform and promote (i.e. advertise an event).
- A poster is closely related to its time. It is important to understand the social, political, and geopolitical context of when it was designed to read and interpret it.
- At first glance, the official poster for the Berlin Olympic Games is a tribute to the ancient games, but in light of the events, the Nazis clearly used it as a means of propaganda.
- Freedom of the press is the freedom to express one's ideas in newspapers, and on radio, television, or internet. In France, freedom of the press was proclaimed a right in 1789, in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen, which states that "every citizen may therefore speak, write and publish freely".
- French journalists must adhere to a charter of professional duties, drawn up in 1918 by a journalists' union and updated regularly. The charter is a set of specific moral standards that journalists must respect: morality, rigor, loyalty, protection of sources, copyright, the right of reply, and honesty.
- A documentary film can be a cultural or educational film that shows real events, unlike fiction.
- It may feature reconstructed scenes but should remain true to reality.
- A documentary becomes propaganda when it transforms or distorts reality.
- When watching a documentary, one should practice critical thinking and be aware of the circumstances in which it was created, and of the author's intentions.
- Reviews or critiques about a work of art contain its main points as well as the journalist's opinion.
- It is therefore a text that is based on the author's arguments.



NOW, TAKE ACTION!

- **Don't judge a person's abilities based on his or her physical appearance, sex, skin color, religion, or social background.** We are all equal and worthy of respect.
- **Form your own opinion.** If a rule or law seems unfair because it does not respect human rights, ask yourself the question, "Can I disobey it?" Then talk about it and discuss it with friends and adults.



IT'S YOUR TURN!

CYCLE 4 • INFORMATION AND MEDIA LITERACY

THE 1936 OLYMPIC GAMES IN BERLIN: PROPAGANDA AND JOURNALISM

PUT YOUR KNOWLEDGE TO THE TEST

1 WHAT YEAR DID BERLIN HOST THE OLYMPIC GAMES?

- 1936 1939 1945

2 WHAT NATIONALITY WAS JESSE OWENS, THE TRACK AND FIELD ATHLETE WHO WON FOUR GOLD MEDALS AT THE BERLIN OLYMPIC GAMES?

- English
 German
 American

3 WHO SELECTS THE POSTER FOR EACH EDITION OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES?

- The mayor of the host city The International Olympic Committee The athletes

4 WHAT IS IT CALLED WHEN ALL POSSIBLE MEANS ARE USED TO PROMOTE AN IDEA, ESPECIALLY THROUGH THE MEDIA?

- Publicity Propaganda Information

5 WHAT DOES AN OLYMPIC POSTER HAVE TO INCLUDE TO BE AN OFFICIAL POSTER?

- The Olympic rings The Olympic motto The Olympic maxim

6 TRUE OR FALSE? A CRITIQUE OF A WORK (FILM, BOOK, ETC.) ALWAYS REFLECTS REALITY.

- True False

EXPLAIN YOUR ANSWER:

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