

15 Ways to Use The Learning Network This School Year

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CreditPiotr Redlinski for The New York Times

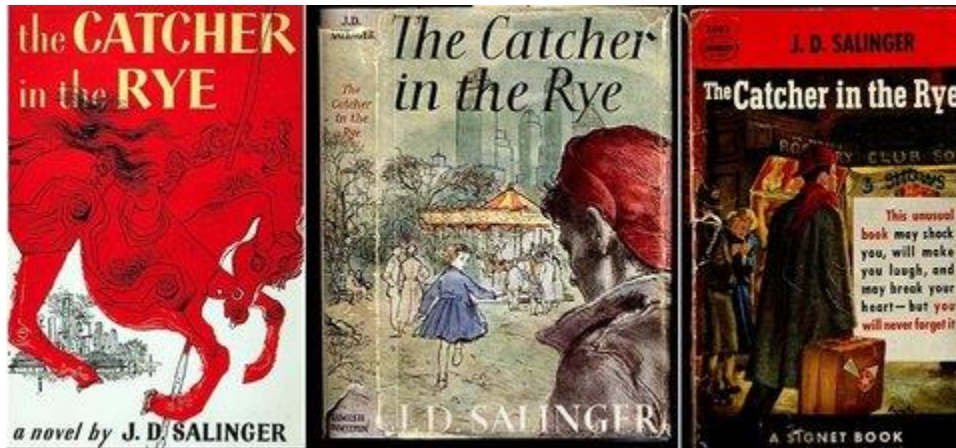
Happy academic year 2015-16! Here's what we've got on our blog and how you can use it, whether you're a teacher, a student (of any age) or a parent.

Over the summer we added some new things and tweaked some old. Below you'll find details about our brand-new [Film Club](#), our revamped [News Q's](#) and [Word of the Day](#) features, and the [new student contests](#) we'll be offering this year.

[Get our weekly email](#) to keep up with what's new, or follow us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

And remember: The Learning Network and everything we publish, as well as all the content from The Times that we link to, is free and [accessible without a digital subscription](#).

1. Find new, Common Core-aligned [lesson plans](#) every week.



From left, editions by Bantam Books, Hamish Hamilton, and Little, Brown & Company.

Image from our [Text to Text lesson](#) that pairs “*The Catcher in the Rye*” with a *Sunday Review* article, “*The Case for Delayed Adulthood.*”

We publish at least one new lesson plan each week of the school year, on topics drawn from front-page news as well as from other sections of The New York Times.

Use them to make connections to current events in your [social studies](#) or [E.L.A.](#) classroom; incorporate [recent research](#) or [new Times features](#) into STEM lessons; draw on both Times archival articles and current popular culture to teach [literature](#) or [history](#); or teach a [cross-curricular skill or strategy](#) via a Times article or feature.

We also post at least one monthly “[Text to Text](#)” lesson, in which we pair an often-taught work in history, literature, science or math with a piece from The Times that illuminates it in some way.

To quickly scan all the lessons we published in 2014-15, visit these links:

- [Year-End Roundup | Language Arts, Journalism, the Arts and Academic Skills](#)
 - [Year-End Roundup | Science, Health, Technology and Math](#)
 - [Year-End Roundup | Social Studies, History, Geography and Civics](#)
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3. Participate in a live visual-literacy discussion each week via [“What’s Going On in This Picture?”](#)



What's going on in this picture? Look closely at the image above, or [view it in a larger size](#), then tell us what you see by posting a comment [here](#). Credit Andrew Biraj/Reuters

We run [this popular feature](#), which demands critical thinking and evidence-gathering about Times photojournalism, with our partners [Visual Thinking Strategies](#).

Every Monday morning we post a photograph without its caption or other identifying information and ask students to think deeply about “What’s Going On in This Picture?”

From 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Eastern time, your students are invited to join young people from around the world to post in our comments section about what they see and why, while a moderator from V.T.S. acts as a facilitator to further the conversation. On Friday mornings each week this year, we will reveal information about the origins of the photo and what it depicts.

[Here is a post featuring 10 of the most intriguing images we’ve used](#), along with teaching tips for using this feature to strengthen visual thinking and close reading skills.

4. Keep up with the news of the day through our [interactive news quizzes](#).



An image from an [early August news quiz](#). Do you know what it shows? Credit Doug Mills/The New York Times

Want a quick, fun way to make sure you always know something about the most important news of the week?

Take our 10-question [interactive Weekly News Quiz](#) to look back at the news of the previous week and forward to the week ahead, to learn additional context about each question — and to see how you stack up against other participants.

5. Find a daily mini-lesson on an important or compelling news story with our revamped [News Q's](#) feature.

For years we chose a Times story daily and posed the basic “6 Q’s About the News” — Who, What, Where, When, Why and How — about it.

This year, thanks to feedback from teachers, we’re going a step further.

Now each News Q’s edition includes a short “before reading” question or activity to help students warm up; five or so “after reading” comprehension questions that ask for both “right there” answers and higher-level thinking via evidence from the text; a “going further” activity for teachers who would like to make the topic a full lesson plan; and a series of related links to find what else we and The Times have published on the topic.

Teachers tell us they use the feature both as a structure for lesson plans as well as for as homework and extra-credit assignments students can complete on their own.

6. Learn what happened [On This Day in History](#).



[Read in Times Machine](#) | [Buy the front page](#)

Visit [On This Day](#) every day to read an original Times article about an important event that took place on that day in history, or scroll through the archive to look up your birthday or another special day.

7. Compete in our [student contests](#).

A [winning entry](#) in our 2013 15-Second Vocabulary Video Contest.

We love [contests](#), and we're always inventing new ones. Whether writing reviews or raps, creating vocabulary videos or found poems, crafting written editorials or editorial cartoons, we hope there's something on the list for everyone.

[Here's a calendar of what we'll offer this year](#) so you can plan ahead.

8. Enrich your [vocabulary](#) with our new Word of the Day + Quiz.



Our [Word of the Day](#) now includes not just a definition and an example in the context of a recent Times article, but also a related quiz that tests whether or not you really understand each word.

Other Learning Network vocabulary builders? Try the quizzes in the [archive of our long-running Test Yourself series](#), which we're suspending this year now that we have the Word of the Day quiz, but which test vocabulary in the context of high-interest Times articles, on topics from [silent discos](#) to [Minecraft](#).

And, of course, for more fun with vocabulary, we have an archive of over 100 [Student Crosswords](#) as well as these [12 Ways to Learn Vocabulary With The New York Times](#).

9. Participate in our new, twice-monthly [Film Club](#).

Via award-winning series like [Op-Docs](#), The Times offers short documentaries (most under 15 minutes) that touch on issues like race and gender identity; technology and society; civil rights; criminal justice; ethics; and artistic and scientific exploration — issues that both matter to teenagers and complement classroom content.

At least two Fridays a month this school year, we'll be posting films we think will inspire powerful conversations — and then inviting teenagers and teachers from around the world to have those conversations here, on the blog. For each, we'll also provide optional discussion questions and short activities to take the discussions further.

10. Use our [new series](#) of weekly quizzes + writing prompts with your E.L.L. students.

Every Monday this school year beginning Sept. 14, we'll be providing a post for E.L.L. students that will invite them to learn from a Times article, video or photo via a short

quiz and a related writing prompt. We hope E.L.L. students from around the world will come to the blog and post their thoughts.

11. Teach any day's Times with our [activity sheets](#).

NAME _____		DATE _____	
PAGE 1 BINGO			
Directions: Play this Bingo game to see how you can scan the front page of The New York Times for interesting or useful information. Try to find something from Page 1 of today's Times that fits the criteria given in the boxes below. When completing each box, make a short note that describes the item. When you have completed a row vertically, horizontally or diagonally, call out "BINGO!"			
How should you dress tomorrow based on the weather?	A sports, arts or style article	An article that might not have been published if we did not have freedom of the press	A word you don't know and a guess about its meaning
The story considered most important by Times editors today	A story that would be considered hard news	The article on Page 1 you'd be most interested in reading	A metro or business article

[Related PDF](#) | [More Activity Sheets](#)[Credit](#)

Graphic organizers, games, discussion starters, maps and more: [Great Ways to Teach Any Day's Times](#) is one-stop shopping for reusable activity sheets like [Times Bingo](#), a [Connecting The Times to Your World](#) reading log, a [Cause and Effect](#) organizer and a [fun photo activity](#).

We've also added a few new selections specifically to help students with Common Core skills like [close reading](#), [primary-source analysis](#), and [comparing texts](#).

Here, meanwhile are [Three Teacher-Tested Ways to Encourage Your Students to Follow Current Events This School Year](#) and [50 Ways to Teach With Current Events](#) in general.

12. Find [collections of high-interest articles about young people](#).

["Teenagers in The Times"](#) is our monthly post that recognizes newsworthy young people by regularly collecting all the Times articles about them in one place.

Use the feature's articles to inspire student projects and goals, as models for journalistic writing, as nonfiction companion pieces to literature, or simply as a way to hook young people on reading the newspaper. [Here are more teaching ideas](#), as well as an [activity sheet](#) (PDF) you can use with any month's collection.

13. Quickly locate Times resources for [frequently taught subjects](#).



Greenland's immense ice sheet is melting as a result of climate change. [Related Teaching Resource](#) Credit Kadir van Lohuizen for The New York Times

Our [Teaching Topics](#) page is a living index to collections we've made on topics we know teachers teach often — from [climate change](#) to [immigration](#), and [bullying](#) or [learning with infographics](#). Check back frequently: we keep adding.

We also have a [growing list of pages devoted to teaching literary classics alongside Times nonfiction](#). Each page links to Times articles past and present that fit with the themes, characters, settings and ideas of works by authors from Shakespeare to Salinger.

14. [Get your ideas published.](#)



Who made that Super Soaker? [Related Article](#) Credit Jens Mortensen for The New York Times

If you would like to see your idea for teaching with The Times on our blog, send it in to us through our [Great Ideas From Our Readers series](#).

Your idea can be [elaborate](#) or [simple](#), might involve a whole school or just one child, and could employ multiple sections of the daily paper or one dog-eared article you clipped in 1973.

We're just interested in hearing about how people are using The Times in as wide a variety of educational settings as possible.

15. Read and comment on a [poem paired with a related Times article.](#)

For years now we have been pairing accessible poems chosen by the Poetry Foundation with Times content that somehow echoes, extends or challenges the poem's themes. [Here is an index of the full collection.](#)

We generally alternate a classic poem, like [Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken,"](#) with a contemporary poem, like [David Wagoner's "For a Student Sleeping in a Poetry Workshop."](#)

How can you use it in the classroom? [Here are some ideas.](#)