1.4 Media Coverage of Kings, Queens, and Royal Families

Monarchy (mono means one) is a system of government where a single leader -- a king or queen -- inherits political control by birth and family membership and rules for life. A **royal family** refers to the immediate family members surrounding a ruling monarch.

Importantly, England whose ideas about and practices of democratic government influenced the American colonists and the political institutions that developed in colonial America has had kings and queens for more than 1,200 years. The current royal family traces its lineage back to William the Conqueror. Not surprisingly, whatever the British royal family does generates an enormous response in print and online media.

Buckingham Palace by dimitrisvetsikas1969 is under Pixabay License

Elizabeth II, who passed in September 2022 at 96 years-old, was the longest reigning British monarch, serving as Queen of the 16 countries of the Commonwealth realm with a population of 150 million people. She was also head of the 54 states in the Commonwealth of Nations that comprise 20% of the world's land and almost one-third of the world's population.

At her passing, her oldest son Charles became King Charles III. Throughout his adult life, Charles has been widely covered in tabloid media (notably his marriage to Princess Diana and his affair and subsequent marriage to Camilla Parker Bowles who is now the Queen Consort of the United Kingdom).

But behind the scenes, Charles has been a hugely successful businessman, using tax breaks, offshore accounts, and real estate deals to acquire huge multi-million dollar assets. The royal family's wealth is estimated at more than $29 billion, an issue in a country where poverty levels have grown significantly and the use of food banks has doubled in recent years ([King Charles Inherits Untold Riches and Passes Off His Own Empire](), New York Times, September 13, 2022).

Watch on YouTube https://edtechbooks.org/-gssk

In the following activities, you will explore how the media covers and portrays influential individuals in the British and U.S. government, specifically the British royal family and United States Presidents.

Activity 1: Analyze Media Coverage of the Death of Queen Elizabeth II and the Business of the Monarchy

The death of Queen Elizabeth II on September 8, 2022 immediately became a huge media event. There was coverage of the Queen's passing, the public mourning, the ascension of Charles to the throne, and the multiple funeral events.

At the same time, the Queen's passing also called attention to the wealth and business of the royal family, the "[Crown Estate](#)" - consisting of palaces, jewels, artwork, land holdings and investment portfolios - that have been estimated at some $15.6 billion. The Queen herself had her own personal wealth, including the Royal Philatelic Collection - stamps valued at $100 million.

Enormous wealth is a political issue in England where some 14.5 million people (22% of the population, including one in three children) are in poverty ([Overall UK Poverty Rates](#), 2020).

- Investigate how the media presented the death of the Queen and the wealth of the royal family from a U.S. and U.K. perspective.
    - **Curate a [Wakelet](#), [Padlet](#), or [Google Slides](#) collection** of news articles from the U.S. (e.g., NPR, CNN, Oprah Magazine, People Magazine, Rolling Stone Magazine; major television networks) and the U.K. (e.g., BBC, The Guardian, The Times, The Daily Telegraph).
        - Explore the AllSides coverage of "[The Queen](#)."
    - What differences or similarities do you see in the coverage?
        - Use the [Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing News & Newspapers](#) to critically analyze how the Queen and the wealth of the royal family were presented in the news.
    - Design a news report that informs others about your findings.

Activity 2: Analyze Media Coverage of Harry and Meghan's Interview with Oprah

In early 2021, Oprah Winfrey's much-anticipated interview with (Prince) Harry and Meghan Markle aired on television in Great Britain

and the United States, creating a huge media event. Online and print media devoted extensive coverage to stories of palace intrigue and family conflict, including revelations about racism within the royal family. The interview followed Harry's and Meghan's break with the royal family in which they voluntarily gave up their royal duties and their His/Her Highness titles.

- Examine the Oprah interview footage as well as the coverage of the interview in online and print news sources.
    - **Curate a [Wakelet](), [Padlet](), or [Google Slides]() collection** of news articles and videos from the U.S. (e.g., NPR, CNN, Oprah Magazine, People Magazine, Rolling Stone Magazine) and the U.K. (e.g., BBC, The Guardian, The Times, The Daily Telegraph).
    - What differences do you see in the coverage of the Harry and Meghan interview?
        - Which images and/or interview clips did each news source use? Why do you think these visuals were selected? How do visuals differ between U.S. and U.K. media outlets?
        - Who is the author of the news article or video? What bias might they have in presenting information about U.K. royalty?
        - What type of language is used in the news article or video? How is language used to influence readers/viewers?
    - How did the participants involved respond to the event?
        - Compare and contrast the [Queen and Buckingham Palace Statements in Full]() and the [Official Website of the Duke & Duchess of Sussex]() (website for Harry and Meghan).
    - Design a video, [podcast](), or website to showcase your findings.
- Consider: How might have British ideas about and practices of government influenced Harry and Meghan's decision to give up

their royal duties?

- ○ **Record a mock interview** between two individuals of your choosing (e.g., Oprah and the Queen) to discuss this issue.

Designing for Learning: Student-Created Activity Example

[Analyze media coverage of Harry and Meghan's interview with Oprah](#) by Isabella Arbelaez and Taylor Callahan

Activity 3: Analyze Movie Trailers About British Kings and Queens and American Presidents

- Analyze movie trailers to compare and contrast how British Kings and Queens and American Presidents are portrayed in movies.
  - ○ Potential films:
    - British Kings and Queens: [13 of the best movies about British royalty](#)
    - American Presidents: [The 20 Best Movies About American Presidents](#)
  - ○ Consider:
    - What differences and similarities do you see in how the British royalty and U.S. leaders are portrayed in movies?
    - What perspectives do films take toward these different forms of government leadership?
    - Is it evident that British ideas and practices of government influenced U.S. government? Why or why not?

- **Design a [Hollywood-style movie trailer](#)** that showcases how British ideas about and practices of government influenced the American colonists and the political institutions that developed in colonial America.

Designing for Learning: Student-Created Activity Example

[Analyze movie trailers about British Kings and Queens and American Presidents](#) by Talia Panacy

Activity 4: Investigate Media Coverage of the Independence of Barbados

The Queen of England's role in the country of Barbados changed dramatically on November 29, 2021 when she was removed as head of state and replaced by Sandra Mason, the nation's first democratically elected woman president -- 400 hundred years after English ships first arrived there and established [one of the most oppressive and brutal](#) of England's Caribbean slave colonies.

As Barbados shifted from a constitutional monarchy to a democratic republic, how did the media cover this historic event?

- Conduct Internet research to find at least 7 sources of news coverage about Barbados' independence, including news articles and videos.
- Then, use the [Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing News & Newspapers](#) to critically examine how different news outlets and mediums portrayed Barbados' shifted from a constitutional monarchy to a democratic republic.
    - Consider: Did the media focus on the role of the Queen and the monarchy, the change in the nation's

government, or the hard history of slavery in that country, or something else?

- Present your findings in a news report video or TikTok.

Designing for Learning: Student-Created Activity Example

[Investigate Media Coverage of the Independence of Barbados](#) by Eliza Kuppens, Ava Mullin, Abigail Ariagno

Additional Resources

- [Prince Harry and Meghan Allege Royal Mistreatment in Oprah Interview](#) - AllSides
- [Balanced News Covering Prince Harry on AllSides](#)
- [Balanced News Covering Meghan Markle on AllSides](#)
- [Balanced News Covering Royal Family on AllSides](#)
- [Movies about British monarchy](#) - IMDB

Connecting to the Building Democracy for All eBook

[Building Democracy for All: The Mayflower Compact, Colonial Governments, Who Voted in Early America, and a Rebellion Against a King](#)

Connecting to the Standards

- [Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards](#)
    - *Explain how British ideas and practices about government influenced American colonists and the political institutions that developed in colonial America* (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and

Social Studies) [8.T1.4]
- [ISTE Standards](#)
    - Knowledge Constructor
        - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data, or other resources.
        - 3c: Students curate information from digital resources using a variety of tools and methods to create collections of artifacts that demonstrate meaningful connections or conclusions.
    - Creative Communicator
        - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
        - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.
- [DLCS Standards](#)
    - Ethics and Laws (CAS.b)
    - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
    - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
    - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
    - Research (DTC.c)
- [English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards](#)
    - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1
    - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2
    - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
    - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
    - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
    - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1
    - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2
    - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
    - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8
    - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9
- [English/Language Arts Common Core Standards](#)
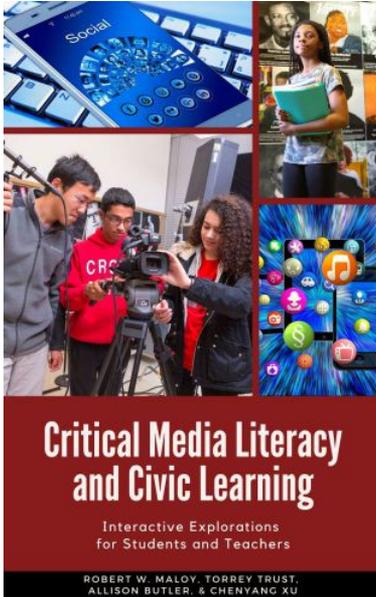
Maloy, R. W., Trust, T., Butler, A. , & Xu, C. (2021). *Critical Media Literacy and Civic Learning.* EdTech Books. https://edtechbooks.org/mediaandciviclearning