



SEARCHLIGHTS AND SUNGLASSES

LEARNING LAYER

In a world of problems, solutions are news

Mainstream journalism reports on problems but usually omits the responses, says the [Solutions Journalism Network](#). That means “Newsworthy solutions exist everywhere, but they are hidden. It’s time, the group says, for journalism to broaden its lens and tell the whole story. If journalists fail to report on solutions, are they sensationalizing the news by telling it out of context?”

Activities for students at three levels:

Flashlight: Break students into groups. Give each a different newspaper, The New York Times, Wall Street Journal, USA TODAY, a local paper, a free metro paper, a magazine, etc. Give the groups 10-12 minutes to skim the papers and mark any solutions-oriented headlines or content they see. Class discussion: How many did you find? Were you surprised? Were their solutions angles to other articles that might have been used? Is a solution as newsworthy as a problem?

Spotlight: Have students read [Peg Tyre’s award-winning article](#), *The Writing Revolution*. Identify ways in which the story meets (or doesn’t meet) the different elements on [the solutions journalism checklist](#). (This activity works best when students have a chance to read the article in advance and mark it up independently.)

Searchlight: Play around with the [Global Burden of Disease Report Arrow Diagram](#) until you figure out how it works. Are there any causes of death that are lessening? Hint: Look for something where the median percentage change in the last column drops significantly between 1990 and 2010. This is called a positive deviant. With the class, brainstorm ways to report this story. How would they find out why the improvement happened? How might they frame or pitch this story?