



Lesson Plan: Create and Review Biographical Profiles

OVERVIEW:

This lesson plan is designed to be used with the film *49 Up*, the seventh installment of a series of films that profile a group of English children every seven years, beginning in 1964.

This lesson asks students to create two profiles of their own lives, one for age seven and one for age 14. Another student will then review these profiles and identify factors that may have brought about changes during this stage of life.

P.O.V. documentaries can be recorded off-the-air and used for educational purposes for up to one year from the initial broadcast.

OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this lesson, students will:

- Create written and visual profiles of their lives at ages seven and 14.
- Review another student's profiles and identify factors that may have influenced change during this time period.

GRADE LEVELS: 9-12

SUBJECTS: Sociology, Journalism, U.S. History, English, Visual Arts

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Handout: [Me at Ages Seven and 14](#) (PDF file)
- Handout: [Profile Review](#) (PDF file)
- Method (varies by school) of showing the class a video clip and features from the P.O.V. Web site

ESTIMATED TIME OF COMPLETION: One to two 50-minute class periods (assuming that the profiles are mostly completed outside of class)

SUGGESTED CLIPS:

The trailer for *49 Up*

BACKGROUND:

49 Up is the seventh installment of a series of films that profile a group of English children every seven years inspired by the Jesuit maxim, "Give me the child until he is seven and I will give you the man." Filmmaker Michael Apted, a researcher for the original film, has returned to interview the "children" every seven years since, at ages 14, 21, 28, 35, 42 and now again at age 49. This film interweaves clips from earlier films with contemporary footage to address questions of love, personality, marriage, career, class and prejudice. *49 Up* also invites viewers to think about how people change over time.

ACTIVITY:

1. Show students the [trailer](#) (length: 2:09) for the film *49 Up* (<http://www.pbs.org/pov/pov2007/49up/index.html>), as well as the [Growing Up](#)

(http://www.pbs.org/pov/pov2007/49up/special_02.html) photo gallery on the P.O.V. Web site. Explain that *49 Up* is the latest in a series of films that profile a group of English children every seven years. The series allows us to see how and why the attitudes, ideas, and circumstances of those in the film evolve over time and how their lives take shape.

2. Tell students that they will be examining their own lives in a similar way by creating profiles of themselves at ages seven and 14. Distribute the handout, "Me at Ages Seven and 14." Review the steps and assign an appropriate deadline. Consider the types of media that students should use to create their profiles (e.g., paper and posterboard, online blogs and digital collages, etc.) To inspire students for the collage portion of the activity, show students the collages featured on the P.O.V. Web site from artists who have interpreted the years when an *Up* series installment was produced.

3. On the day that the profiles are due, have student pairs review his or her partner's profiles and complete the Profile Review handout.

ASSESSMENT SUGGESTIONS

Students can be assessed on:

- The quality of the written and visual aspects of their profiles.
- Complete responses on the Profile Review handout.

EXTENSIONS & ADAPTATIONS

- Follow one or two of the individuals featured in *49 Up*. Discuss what factors influenced the life choices of each individual and whether or not each person's future could have been predicted based on how he or she was as a child. Then, write an opinion paper agreeing or disagreeing with the Jesuit maxim cited in the film, "Give me a child until he is seven and I will give you the man."
- Ask students to extend their profiles forward to a specified age and predict how their lives will evolve. Have them justify their predictions in writing.
- Learn more about filmmaking by having small groups each watch a segment on the P.O.V. Web site of a conversation (http://www.pbs.org/pov/pov2007/49up/special_01.html) between *49 Up* filmmaker Michael Apted and film critic Roger Ebert. Ask groups to note what production strategies have contributed to the success and appeal of the *Up*-series. Compile these notes into a class list that can be referenced during future video production assignments.
- View both *49 Up* and *Following Sean*, a P.O.V. film that follows the life of a young American boy from the turbulent 1960's to modern times. (Note: *Following Sean* is available from P.O.V.'s free lending library for classrooms. Be sure to request the broadcast version of the film to avoid content in the filmmaker version that would be inappropriate for classroom use.) Create a timeline of major events in Sean's life, and a similar timeline for one of the people featured in *49 Up*. Discuss how each person changed at various ages. Which experiences and values seem to be universal and which spring from cultural background and socioeconomic class? Consider also how historical context might have shaped their life decisions. P.O.V.'s Discussion Guide for *49 Up* (http://www.pbs.org/pov/pov2007/49up/resources_guide.php) lists political,

economic, and social developments in the United States and Great Britain for the years in which the people in *49 Up* were interviewed: 1964, 1971, 1978, 1985, 1992, 1999 and 2006. Compare the student-created timelines with these historical snapshots and analyze in writing to what degree their lives reflected each time period.

- Explore how children are educated around the world with the *Up*-series-inspired documentary project, *Time for School* from Wide Angle (<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/shows/school2/index.html>). This series checks in on the schooling of seven children in seven different countries over a 12-year period. The second episode from the 2007 season is available online and is broken into video chapters. Have students learn about one of the children featured in this series and then write an essay comparing and contrasting that child's educational experiences with their own.

RESOURCES:

How to Make a Collage

<http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Collage>

Find steps and tips for creating a collage on paper or poster board. Related links provide information on creating a digital photo collage.

Time Magazine: "Keeping Up with the 7 Up"

<http://www.time.com/time/arts/article/0,8599,1565038,00.html>

This extensive piece provides background on the *Up* series and serves as an excellent introduction to the entire enterprise.

STANDARDS:

These standards are drawn from "Content Knowledge," a compilation of content standards and benchmarks for K-12 curriculum by McRel (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning) at <http://www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks/>.

Behavioral Studies

Standard 1: Understands that group and cultural influences contribute to human development, identity, and behavior.

Level IV, Benchmark 6: Understands that heredity, culture, and personal experience interact in shaping human behavior, and that the relative importance of these influences is not clear in most circumstances.

Level IV, Benchmark 7: Understands that family, gender, ethnicity, nationality, institutional affiliations, socioeconomic status, and other group and cultural influences contribute to the shaping of a person's identity.

Language Arts

Standard 4: Gathers and uses information for research purposes.

Standard 10: Understands the characteristics and components of the media.

U.S. History

Standard 31: Understands economic, social, and cultural developments in the contemporary United States.

Visual Arts

Standard 1: Understands and applies media, techniques, and processes related to the visual arts.

Standard 4: Understands the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Cari Ladd, M.Ed., is an educational writer with a background in broadcast journalism, secondary education, and media development. Previously, she served as PBS Interactive's Director of Education, overseeing the development of curricular resources tied to PBS programs, the PBS TeacherSource Web site (now PBS Teachers), and online teacher professional development services. She has also taught in Maryland and Northern Virginia.