



Module 2: 1977

Activity 1: Free Expression

Compelling question: How do the arts play an important role in social change?

Overview: Teachers might use and adapt this activity as a stand alone exercise or in conjunction with other Module 2 activities. Also, we encourage you to explore Modules 1, 3, and 4 to design a comprehensive exploration of the 68, 77, 89 project.

As you design your students' learning experiences we suggest:

- Utilize the background resources for Module 2
- Previewing the selected primary and secondary resources
- Explore the instructional supports and selected vocabulary
- Adapt the lesson plans and performance assessments we provided for this activity

Focus: In this activity, students will explore the struggles faced by artists in communist Czechoslovakia.

Primary and Secondary Resources for this Activity

Oral History:

1. [Vladimir Maule](#) - This 2.5 minute clip titled “The Explosive Group” explores how music and radio impacted Vladimir’s life under Soviet communism.
2. [Vit Horejs](#) - This 1 minute clip titled “Acting” explains how theater was influenced and controlled by Communist authoritarianism.

Articles from the Summer 2003 Issue of *Slovo*.

3. “[Memories of Growing Up as an Artist in Communist Czechoslovakia](#)” - Award-winning filmmaker and illustrator Peter Sis paints a portrait of a world that was crumbling as he began to discover his artistic identity. **(The article is on pages 20-22 in the magazine and includes primary source photos).**

Support Resources

[Graphic Organizers](#): Create free, custom made graphic organizers including T-Charts, Venn Diagrams, Frayer Models and much more.

[Historical Thinking Prompts](#): The chart helps demonstrate historical thinking and has sentence frames to support the development of these skills.

[Document Analysis Organizers](#): Use these worksheets — for photos, written documents, artifacts, posters, maps, cartoons, videos, and sound recordings — to teach your students the process of document analysis.

[Harvard’s Project Zero Thinking Routines](#): A routine can be thought of as any procedure, process, or pattern of action that is used facilitate the accomplishment of specific goals or tasks. Explore this collection and use them with the activities.

[Socratic Seminar/Discussion Stems](#): A handout of prompts and scaffolds for students.

[Rubric Maker](#): Easy to use, quick and free rubric tool maker.

Key Vocabulary for this activity:

1. **Radio Free Europe**: Established in 1949, it was one of the most successful propaganda vehicles during the Cold War. The radio stations, run by the United States government, contributed to a great extent to the survival of democratic

values and desire for freedom among the people of the Soviet bloc countries.

2. **Propaganda:** Information, ideas, or rumors deliberately spread widely to help or harm a person, group, movement, institution, nation, etc.
3. **Commemorate:** To honor or celebrate with an action the memory of an event, person, or idea.
4. **Indoctrination:** The process of teaching a person or group to accept a set of beliefs uncritically.
5. **Enigma:** A person, event, or thing that is mysterious, puzzling, or difficult to understand.

Suggested strategies and assessments for this activity.

Compelling question: How do the arts play an important role in social change?

Instructional Strategy A: [Connect - Extend - Challenge](#)

This strategy works best after students have already been introduced to an idea or topic and are receiving new information or perspectives that might challenge their initial understanding. The protocol described here engages students in metacognitive reflection by asking them to identify ideas and pieces of information that are consistent with their prior understanding of a topic, those that cause them to revise their thinking, and those that are confusing. This process helps students both deepen their understanding of a topic and become more thoughtful and independent learners. [\(Full details can be found here\).](#)

Class 1: Preparation - Students read/watch the 3 resources provided in this activity. Utilize the questions and commentary provided with the resources as well as the support items provided. You might have students engage with the source multiple times, once together as a class and again independently. As students engage with the resources, remind them that they should be looking for evidence to answer the compelling question.

Instructional Strategy B: Alphabet Brainstorm

The Alphabet Brainstorm strategy helps to structure students' brainstorming by asking them to generate ideas that begin with each letter of the alphabet. This can be done individually, in small groups, or as a whole-class activity. It is a quick way to generate thoughts, measure prior knowledge, and evaluate learning. ([Full details can be found here](#)).

Class 1: Alphabet Brainstorm- Ask students to write the alphabet down the left-hand side of a piece of paper. Alternatively, you can put 26 posters around the room, each with a letter on it. Or you can provide a graphic organizer with the alphabet printed on it. You could give students only a portion of the alphabet to work with. Or you could divide the alphabet into quarters or thirds and have groups work on only one section.

Students use the letters to connect with the resources and themes to demonstrate their understanding or access prior knowledge.

Class 2: Performance Assessment - This class invites students to organize their information from the alphabet brainstorm and present it in the assessment format you use (suggestions below). By giving them class time to work on the assessment, you can troubleshoot, check in with students, and they can collaborate.

Suggested Performance Assessments: Now that students have engaged with the documents and have shared their insights with their classmates, it is time for them to collect their thoughts and answer the compelling question. It is important to connect the historical content to the present. In this sense, the historical content informs students about the past and apply that knowledge to the present.

Your decision on what students should produce will relate to the skills you think they should develop to succeed in the future.

- 1) Students create an interactive or hyperlinked image that they create or find to inform other students about what they learned. [Thinglink](#) or [Google Drawings](#) are both platforms for creating these resources.
- 2) Write an essay that answers the compelling question.

Communicate your reflection on the compelling question in a written, audio, or video journal.