

Resource: Using newspaper articles and photographs to explore class & language

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Description:

Considering that one of the ways social class operates is through media representations, it is useful for the students to see various portrayals in newspaper articles and photographs of working class and middle class people, celebrities, and the royal family. It also allows an analysis of how gender, ethnicity and religion intersect with class within representations.

How I've used it:

After a few introductory classes to sociology, gender and class theories, I will get the students to bring a selection of newspapers to class (in the UK, there are many different types of newspapers – tabloids, broadsheets, regional newspapers – from both left and right positions). Working in pairs or groups, they can analyse the newspapers and cut out a few articles and photos in each newspaper. They can compare how different classed people are represented in varying ways – looking at celebrities and the royal family in particular will be useful. At the next class they can present what they found and show some examples. This opens up conversations about UK class categories, connotations of words and slang, and possible effects of representations on the lives of working class people.