NEWS BREAK

Article: Sweden, open while others locked down, experienced soaring mortality last month

Section: MAIN, A14

Sunday’s News Break selects an article from Sunday, May 17, 2020 of The Seattle Times print replica for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions.

You are encouraged to modify this lesson to fit the needs of your students. For example, some teachers might use this as a take-home assignment and others might read and answer the questions in a small group or larger, class discussion.

*Please be sure to preview all NIE content before using it in your classroom to ensure it is appropriate for all of your students.

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1

• Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2

• Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

Objectives:

Students will talk about how they’re feeling under the shelter-in-place orders. Are they taking this seriously or are they still hanging out with friends? Are they wearing masks when out in public? They will debate the current situation in Washington State and whether they think staying at home has saved lives. Students will talk about Sweden’s COVID plan and whether their 30% higher mortality rate surprised them. They will discuss both government plans and which one seems like the better plan overall. They will also discuss reopening strategies and whether phasing in openings slowly is a good one.
Pre-Reading Discussion:

What do you think the article will be about? Are there clues in the picture?
What can you infer?

Vocabulary Building:

Read this sentence, what do you think the highlighted words mean using context clues? A context clue is a word or words that are hints and refers to the sources of information outside of words that readers may use to predict the identities and meanings of unknown words.

“While Sweden is the largest country in Scandinavia, all have strong public health care systems and low health inequality across the population.”

Inequality Guess:

Inequality Definition:

Comprehension Questions:

1. By late March, nearly every country in Europe had closed schools and businesses, restricted travel and ordered citizens to stay home. But one country stood out for its decision to stay open, _________________.
2. The country’s response to the coronavirus outbreak has drawn praise from some U.S. politicians, who see Sweden as a possible model for the United States as it begins to _____________.
3. Across Sweden, almost _____% more people died during the outbreak than is normal during this time of year, an increase similar to that of the United States and far higher than the small increases seen in its neighboring countries.
4. What country is the largest country in Scandinavia?
5. No two countries are exactly alike, making comparisons inexact. What are three factors, outside of government policy that play a role?

6. Swedish officials chose not to implement a nationwide lockdown, trusting that people would do their part to stay ________.

7. Schools, restaurants, gyms and bars remained open, with social distancing rules enforced, while gatherings were restricted to ____ people.

8. Two months later, it has not been the worst-case scenario that many envisioned. COVID-19 deaths have disproportionately hit what populations of people?

9. The New York Times measured the impact of the pandemic in Sweden by comparing what two measures? What did the totals include?

10. While no measure is perfect, the increase in _________ offers the most complete picture of the pandemic’s toll, demographers say.

11. Swedish public health officials have defended their strategy, while acknowledging that the country has failed to protect the _________. The goal is to limit the spread of the infection without having to lock everything down, they said.

12. What sets Sweden apart from other Western European countries?

Discussion Questions (small/large groups), Journal Prompts or Essay Questions:

• How are you handling shelter-in-place orders? Are you staying home with your families and not coming into close contact with friends? How often are you running errands, going on a drive or getting outside air and exercise?

• Are you wearing masks when out in public? Why or why not?

• What is your opinion of the current situation in Washington State? Are you glad that stay-at-home orders were given? Do you think they have saved lives? Why or why not?

• Have you heard about Sweden’s COVID plan prior to reading this article? Did it surprise you that they are having a 30% higher death rate at this time? Do you think those deaths could be COVID-linked, but not tracked?

Although Sweden has not imposed stay-home rules during the coronavirus pandemic, its residents have voluntarily reduced visits to public places, say public health officials.

• Do you think Americans, as a whole, would’ve done the same thing? Why or why not?
“Once you get into a lockdown, it’s difficult to get out of it,” said Sweden’s state epidemiologist, Anders Tegnell. “How do you reopen? When?”

- **Do you think Governor Inslee’s plan to phase in the opening of businesses a good plan or not? Give details to support your answer.**

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