

T3 ~ Number 25  
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**Strategy:**  
**ARTICLE OF THE WEEK**



**Adapted from:**

"Article of the Week" for Prior Knowledge Deficiency." *Education Quick Takes*. Web. 03 May 2011. <<http://educationquicktakes.blogspot.com/2011/02/article-of-week-for-prior-knowledge.html>>.

## BACKGROUND INFO

### "ARTICLE OF THE WEEK" FOR PRIOR KNOWLEDGE DEFICIENCY

When a high school senior asked his teacher, "Who is this guy, Al Qaeda?", it quickly became apparent that a lack of background knowledge was a serious hindrance to learning for his students. In response, Kelly Gallagher created his **Article of the Week** strategy, which appears to synchronize nicely with Daniel Willingham's message that skills like "analysis" and "critical thinking" are tied to content. In other words, when it comes to reading and writing skills, content matters.

*When Kelly Gallagher learned that his ninth grade students could not name the vice president of the United States, and when two seniors asked him in all seriousness, "Who is this guy, Al Qaeda?", Kelly was shocked into realizing he needed to do something outside the standard curriculum to build his students' background knowledge. In response, he developed the **Article of the Week** activity to address the serious gaps in his students' education.*

### *How to implement*

- Each week, students read a short article that informs them about the world
- Students highlight passages and words they don't understand, consider the author's purpose and intended audience, and work through any confusion.
- Students may answer follow-up questions or craft a written response to the article
- The class then discusses how the structure and craft of the article informs reader comprehension and how they can implement these elements into their own writing.
- Articles provide the background knowledge that is the foundation for critical reading.

## Website resources

- HERE'S KELLY GALLAGHER'S WEBSITE WITH AN ARCHIVE OF ARTICLES HE HAS USED WITH HIS CLASSES.  
[HTTP://WWW.KELLYGALLAGHER.ORG/RESOURCES/ARTICLES.HTML](http://www.kellygallagher.org/resources/articles.html)
- OTHER WEBSITES THAT HAVE CURRENT EVENT ARTICLES FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS:
  - [HTTP://TWEENTRIBUNE.COM/TEEN](http://tweentribune.com/teen)
  - [HTTP://TEACHER.SCHOLASTIC.COM/SCHOLASTICNEWS/INDEPTH/UPFRONT/](http://teacher.scholastic.com/scholasticnews/indepth/upfront/) (UPFRONT MAGAZINE)
  - [HTTP://WWW2.SCHOLASTIC.COM/BROWSE/CLASSMAGS.JSP?SRCID=2](http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/classmags.jsp?srcid=2) (JUNIOR SCHOLASTIC)
  - [HTTP://WWW.CNN.COM/STUDENTNEWS/](http://www.cnn.com/studentnews/) (CNN STUDENT NEWS)