

Name:

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Unit 1 – History: Conspiracy Theories

Directions:

Work through this workbook in order, completing the four assignments when you are directed to. They are found in the Unit 1 Assignments document. When you are finished, review your learning, and hand the workbook in to your teacher for marking. Your work will be marked holistically using the rubric on the last page, then scaled up out of ten marks.

Assessing Prior Knowledge:

1. In one sentence, explain what you think a *conspiracy* is.

2. What does the dictionary say a conspiracy is?

Does this match up with your thinking? Often, people confuse the term *conspiracy* for the term *conspiracy theory*. Conspiracies can, and do, exist! Where we run into trouble is accepting theories (unproven explanations) for fact, without doing the work to examine available evidence.

In this unit, we are going to look at a selection of conspiracies from the 20th century. Some are theories that have conclusively been disproven, some are theories we can only use our best judgement and critical thinking skills with, and some have been officially revealed to be true.

3. Brainstorm all the conspiracy theories you have heard of below.

4. Look back at your brainstorm above. Highlight any conspiracies that you think are real, and not just theory. Choose one and write a paragraph explaining what you think about it and why. At the end of this unit, you will return to this paragraph and examine your thinking using the skills you will have developed.

Skills: Examining Evidence and Logic

BC Curricular Competencies:

- Use inquiry processes and skills to ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas; and communicate findings and decisions
- Assess the justification for competing accounts after investigating points of contention, reliability of sources, and adequacy of evidence

5. Using the **EVIDENCE** competency in Social Studies, how can you tell if a source is reliable? View this video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bZ122WakNDY> (*How to Evaluate Sources* by Stanford University Libraries).

Record what you learn below.

6. What makes statements or arguments persuasive? View this video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YG1FfC8vpeY> (Recognizing Persuasive Language by GCFLearnFree).

Record what you learn below.

Logical fallacy

7. Something else to be on the lookout for, especially when evidence is inconclusive, is faulty logic. A **logical fallacy** is an argument that uses faulty (or bad) logic to persuade someone that it is correct. When the argument is properly examined, one can see that it does not make sense.

View this video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n_P5GMbj2j4.

Identify and define the 6 common Logical Fallacies described.

Complete Assignment #1 from the Unit 1 Assignments document.

OUR FIRST CONSPIRACY THEORY - "The 1969 Moon Landing Was Faked"

This is a pretty well-known one. Conspiracy Theorists (people who promote conspiracy theories) have been arguing that NASA never landed human beings on the moon since footage was first presented live.

8. Visit the NASA website and read about the Apollo 11 mission.

https://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/apollo/apollo11.html

Answer the reading questions below.

9. When did the Apollo 11 mission take place?
10. Who are the astronauts who participate in the mission?
11. How long did it take the rocket to reach Earth orbit?
12. How long after that until it reaches Moon orbit?
13. What was the name of the lunar module?
14. What was Armstrong's biggest concern about the mission?
15. What did Armstrong say when he set foot on the moon?
16. What does Armstrong's famous statement mean? Do you agree with it?
17. What did the Apollo 11 mission leave behind on the moon?
18. How many people have been on the moon's surface since?

19. The following documentary does a good job of summing up the arguments made by Moon Landing Conspiracy Theorists, and uses persuasive tactics to convince viewers of the truth. Watch the video and use the graphic organizer to take notes. Record as much information as possible and make sure to include the names and roles of people interviewed.

Conspiracy Theory: Did We Land on the Moon (2001, Fox)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mly8ZggK5G8>

"Evidence" Presented	Who shared the evidence

20. Do you find the video convincing? What is your perspective on the moon landing, following viewing?

21. Record two examples of logical fallacies you note in the film.

22. Apart from the evidence presented, what strategies does the video use to attempt to be convincing?

23. Using the table below, Identify the 5 most compelling arguments from your notes, in support of the conspiracy theory, and use the internet to conduct your own research. Can you support or refute any of them, using reliable sources?

Video Evidence	Your research	Source

31. And finally, the video came out in 2001. Use the internet a final time to uncover whether any new evidence exists about humans landing on the moon (ie: have there been any additional visits, or new technologies, that contradict the claims in the video or prove that humans are able to, and have, landed on the moon?)

Information	Source

Complete Assignment #2 from the Unit 1 Assignments document.

OUR SECOND CONSPIRACY THEORY – CHOICE, INQUIRY_– Suspicious Deaths

We will continue to use our EVIDENCE competency, for this section, but also be working on PERSPECTIVE

Skills: Comparing Perspectives

*BC Curricular Competency

- Explain different perspectives on past or present people, places, issues, and events by considering prevailing norms, values, worldviews, and beliefs

32. What is Perspective and why is it important?

With the evolution of mass media, the entertainment industry, and access to information over the 20th Century, one type of conspiracy theory has grown in popularity: celebrity death conspiracy theories. Whether we think dead celebrities are still alive or that the official story is a lie, humans believe in all sorts of conspiracies about public figures who have unexpectedly lost their lives.

In this Inquiry Project, you will use all of the skills you built during our first conspiracy examination to attempt to uncover the truth about what happened to a notable figure of your choosing. It is important to note that these are conspiracy theories for which it may be impossible to definitively prove truth or falsehood. You have to play the investigator and use the best evidence available to come to the most reasonable conclusion. This is often where conspiracy theories fill in gaps, but remember: **absence of evidence in one direction is not automatically evidence in the other direction**. It is better to sit in a place of curiosity and questioning than to adopt a perspective you have not personally validated. Your job for this assignment is to compare and contrast the merits of, and reasons behind, different perspectives. You do not necessarily have to claim to know the "right" answer.

Complete Assignment #3 from the Unit 1 Assignments document.

OUR THIRD CONSPIRACY THEORY – MK ULTRA

Comparing different perspectives is only one piece of the PERSPECTIVE skill when it comes to Social Studies. The second part is being able to put oneself into the shoes of someone who lived in the past, or lives in a different culture today. While learning about this real-life conspiracy, you should be trying to imagine what it would be like to be either participating in, or victimized by, the conspiracy.

Conspiracies (evil, unlawful, treacherous, surreptitious plans, formulated in secret, by groups) do, without question, happen for real. Usually, they are not exposed by suspicious civilians on the internet, though. They are most often brought to light by whistle-blowers from within an organization, poor cover-up, or professional investigation. This was the case with the true 20th Century conspiracy we are going to look at: The CIA's operation MK Ultra.

A note of caution: even within this confirmed conspiracy there are many unsubstantiated theories floating around. For example, a recent docuseries about Ted Kaczynski indicated that he was unknowingly involved in MK Ultra experiments at Harvard, and that this played a role in his development into a terrorist. Kaczynski himself denied this. As it stands, either could be true; however, there is not any reliable evidence available to prove truth (as of the time of writing this). We may be able to suppose, or make connections or interpretations, to form opinions...but that is not the same thing as discovering proof of reliable fact.

Read the History.com article and answer the questions below.

MK-Ultra - <https://www.history.com/topics/us-government/history-of-mk-ultra>

33. What was MK – Ultra?

34. When did it take place?

35. How was MK-Ultra exposed to the public?

36. What was a U.S government fear during the Cold War?

37. Where did many of the experiments take place?

38. Why did the CIA allegedly decide not to use LSD

39. What was "Operation Midnight Climax" under the MK-Ultra program?

40. What is the conspiracy theory about Frank Olson?

41. How did MK-Ultra influence the hippie psychedelic drug scene?

42. What Executive Order did MK-Ultra lead to?

Canadian Involvement?

Watch *The Fifth Estate's* coverage of MK Ultra experiments in Canada from 1980

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=990k-5Jm5aA>

then answer these questions.

43. What are your personal impressions of the people providing evidence?

44. What do you think the scientists at McGill University were trying to achieve?

45. How do you think the scientists would have felt if they had known where their funding came from?

46. What was the CIA trying to achieve?
47. How/why did a Canadian university get involved?
48. Do the professors/doctors seem to be 100% altruistic (well-meaning, selfless)?
49. The man in the video states, "An intelligent, ethical, scientist today would not do an awful lot of the things an ethical scientist would do in those days." Do you agree? Explain your answer.
50. Do you think the threat of attack, and use of mind-control, by Cold War enemies justified these experiments?
Explain
51. How would you feel if you were one of the professors, when you found out how your experiments had been funded?
52. How would you feel if you were a patient who found out, twenty years later, that you had been experimented on?

Complete Assignment #4 from the Unit 1 Assignments document.

Unit Reflection

1. Look back at your paragraph at the top of page 2. Has your opinion changed, stayed the same, or been reinforced in some way? Explain.

Holistic Marking Rubric				
Insufficient Evidence of Learning (0-2 marks)	Accessing (2.5-3 marks)	Developing (3.5 marks)	Mastering (4 marks)	Excelling (5 marks)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not demonstrate sufficient understanding of content, or awareness of competencies. • Presentation is difficult to make meaning out of. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates some understanding of some of the required content. • References competencies accurately or uses competencies partially, perhaps without acknowledging the skill itself. • Attempts to communicate some new learning, relevant to the topic or skill being worked on. Presentation may be somewhat confusing or disorganized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates good understanding of most required content. • Demonstrates clear understanding of relevant competency or competencies, and an ability to accurately, perhaps partially, use it/them. • Communicates learning in a way that makes sense to the reader/viewer/listener and demonstrates an effort at improving mechanics of grammar, presentation, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates excellent, complete, understanding of required content. • Uses relevant questions. • Demonstrates strong, complete, use of the relevant competency or competencies. • Communicates learning clearly and creatively. Grammatical or presentational flaws do not detract from impact or meaning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates exceptional understanding of required content. Possibly extends beyond requirements. • Uses insightful questions. • Demonstrates confident, extensive, and self-reflective use of the relevant competency or competencies. • Communicates learning clearly, articulately, effectively and with intended impact, without grammatical or presentational flaws.