**Lesson Title:** Can you become a watchdog?

**Description of the lesson**: The role of a watchdog is built largely on investigative reporting that can help to uncover issues in the community that may otherwise remain silent and holds individuals, including public officials, accountable for their actions within society.

Can it be applied to scholastic media? Of course. It can be applied to nearly every aspect of society with the proper dedication to research, collection of data and consistent pressure to uncover mistakes, silenced material or errors that could impact a community.

**Objectives*by the end of this lessons, students will be able to ..***

* Identify the importance of the “watchdog” function
* Identify its role in scholastic media
* Identify how it can be applied

**Before moving forward, read about how journalists should use anonymous sources in their publications.**

* Elements of Journalism (Chapter 6)
* [Watchdog Culture: Why You Need it, How You Can Build it](https://www.poynter.org/news/watchdog-culture-why-you-need-it-how-you-can-build-it)
* [The Watergate Scandal](https://www.history.com/topics/watergate)
* [These high school journalists investigated a new principal’s credentials. Days later, she resigned.](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2017/04/05/these-high-school-journalists-investigated-a-new-principals-credentials-days-later-she-resigned/?utm_term=.b4c50fb2021b)



**Procedures:**

* Take a look the reading “[Watchdog Culture: Why You Need it, How You Can Build it](https://www.poynter.org/news/watchdog-culture-why-you-need-it-how-you-can-build-it) and the “Watergate Scandal.
  + After reviewing the material, identify why or how this is used in today’s world.
    - Have you read, watched or listened to investigative journalism?
    - What stories do you remember or have stood out to you?
    - What steps should you take in order to begin an investigation? How long should it take? Or is there a time limit? Why or why not?
  + Review the reading on the young journalists who exposed their new principal’s credentials.
    - Working in groups of three, answer the following questions:
      * Do you think the student’s work was important or of value? Why or why not?
      * How and why did they launch their investigation?
        + What did they do when faced with adversity?
      * What did the investigation uncover?
      * What was the result?
* ACTIVITY:
  + Working individually, write a position paper on the role watchdog journalism plays in scholastic media. What pieces of investigative journalism can students get involved in? Below are questions to help guide you to a response:
    - How can students be investigative journalists? Is it possible?
      * What are the challenges you may face?
    - What pieces of investigative journalism can students work on? Is there a limit?