

Dear Families,

This week New Media 11: Journalism, Podcasting, & Audio-Storytelling will begin studying the podcast Serial (<https://serialpodcast.org/season-one>):

Serial is an investigative journalism podcast hosted by Sarah Koenig, narrating a nonfiction story over multiple episodes. [...] Season 1 investigated the 1999 murder of Hae Min Lee, an 18-year-old student at Woodlawn High School in Baltimore County. [...] Serial ranked number one on iTunes even before its debut and remained there for several weeks. Serial won a Peabody Award in April 2015 for its innovative telling of a long-form nonfiction story. As of September 2018, episodes of seasons 1 and 2 have been downloaded over 340 million times, establishing an ongoing podcast world record. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serial\\_\(podcast\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serial_(podcast)) )

As an outstanding example of investigative journalism, Serial provides a vehicle for demonstrating core competencies - for example: *The exploration of text and story deepens our understanding of diverse, complex ideas about identity, others, and the world.*

“The show has seized the popular imagination and developed an unusually intense following. High-school English teachers have abandoned their normal lesson plans and are having their classes follow along. Visitors to the social-media and entertainment website Reddit are attempting to investigate the crime on their own, sorting through court documents, retracing the footsteps of the suspects, sometimes even trying to track down key players who testified in court. People are listening to a podcast about the podcast [...] while switching allegiances over the true identity of the killer.” (<https://www.wsj.com/articles/serial-podcast-catches-fire-1415921853>)

“You could do a whole lot worse than listening to the 12 episodes of Serial. It’s free, it’s entertaining, and it’s the best tutorial you’ll find on what it takes to be a reporter.” (<https://slate.com/culture/2014/12/serial-as-investigative-journalism-the-hit-podcast-was-a-master-class-in-reporting.html>)

While explicit depictions of intimate partner violence do not appear in Serial, the accusations in these stories may simultaneously be difficult to understand for some students and all too real for others. It is possible that some students will have additional questions or comments on these topics. Should additional questions arise, in addition to the student’s parent/guardian, the following individuals may be contacted:

Mike Lattimer, Grade 11 Counsellor  
([mlattimer@vsb.bc.ca](mailto:mlattimer@vsb.bc.ca))

Ciara Cawley, Safe and Caring Schools Liaison  
([ccawley@vsb.bc.ca](mailto:ccawley@vsb.bc.ca))

Women Against Violence Against Women  
(<https://www.wavaw.ca/>)



If you would like alternative curricular options for your child please do not hesitate to contact me ([tsteeves@vsb.bc.ca](mailto:tsteeves@vsb.bc.ca)).

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I have read and understand the above information regarding Serial and would prefer if alternative curricular options were made available for: \_\_\_\_\_

Student’s Name (Please Print)

Parent/Guardian’s Signature