

News

Topic

News media, news headlines and news stories

Learning outcomes

- Describe the advantages and disadvantages of different news media
- Create a news story from a headline
- Develop note-taking and summarising skills
- Ask and answer questions about a recent event

Age and level

13-17, Adults (B1+)

Time

Varies depending on chosen tasks

Materials

- Presentation or student worksheet
- (Optional) A selection of newspapers (or learners can use mobile devices if you have internet access)

Introduction

This lesson is about news and news media and gives learners opportunities to express their own opinions. Learners start by talking about the news and considering the advantages and disadvantages of the four main media sources – newspapers, radio, TV, social media and websites. Then learners look at some headlines and invent the story behind one. Learners also summarise a news story, discuss

controversial quotes based on the topic of news, and finally they step into the role of a news reporter to carry out an interview with a person from the news.

The tasks can be selected and adapted to suit your learners depending on their level, age group and context. You can use a student worksheet for this lesson, or a presentation for a no-printing option.

Procedure

Before the lesson	There are a number of different activities in this lesson. Choose activities according to the age / level of your learners, the skills / language that you would like to focus on, the time that you have available and your local context.
Lead-in (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show slide 2 of the presentation or refer learners to the Lead-in activity in the student worksheet. • Ask learners to discuss the questions. If you have a large class, you could split the learners up into small groups. In a smaller class you could sit in a circle with the learners and facilitate the discussion. • If learners have discussed the questions in groups, ask some to share their answers with the whole class. • The idea is to get everyone thinking about the importance (or not) of what's happening in the world, and how they get their news (e.g. newspapers, TV / radio, websites, social media, mobile apps, podcasts, from other people etc).
Task 1: Advantages and disadvantages of news media (15 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show slide 3 of the presentation or refer learners to Task 1 in the student worksheet. • Option 1: In pairs or small groups, learners note the advantages / disadvantages of each type of media as a source of information. They could include other sources if they would like to. • Option 2: Put learners into pairs / small groups. Each pair / group notes the advantages / disadvantages of a different type of media (e.g. Group 1 thinks about newspapers; Group 2 thinks about radio etc). Include other sources if you like. When pairs / groups are ready, make new groups which include a learner from Group 1, a learner from Group 2 etc. They share their ideas in the new groups.

- Elicit examples of advantages / disadvantages of each media as a source of information (see suggestions below).
- Pairs / groups then decide which media they think is best. Ask pairs / groups to say why.

Suggested advantages / disadvantages

Newspapers

Advantages: readers don't need technical skills / device / electricity to access; readers can decide what to look at and in which order; can avoid advertising; news remains printed and can't be changed

Disadvantages: no interaction; not immediate; can be expensive

Radio

Advantages: accessible with a simple device; can be immediate; listeners can do other things while listening; listeners can share experience with others; cheap or free

Disadvantages: lack of visuals; may have advertising; less choice in which stories to listen to

TV

Advantages: accessible with a TV; can be immediate; viewers can share experience with others; cheap or free; visuals help viewers to understand

Disadvantages: may have advertising; less choice in which stories to watch; TV personalities may dominate

Social media / websites

Advantages: accessible anytime / anywhere with internet access and device; readers can interact; can be immediate; low cost (if have internet access / device); wide / diverse range of information (potentially)

Disadvantages: need device / internet access; anyone can publish and may not be edited; information may be false / incorrect; quality can vary; readers may only see certain kinds of information

Task 2: Headline stories (15 minutes)

- Show **slide 4** of the presentation or refer learners to **Task 2** in the student worksheet. Explain that these are the headlines of some news stories.
- Ask learners to work in pairs and choose (or assign them) one of the headlines. They should guess or invent the story – encourage them to be creative!

- Tell them to make notes of vocabulary and events of the news story. They should include important information such as: When / where did it take place? Who was involved? What happened? What are the results?
- Walk around the class as pairs work and help if necessary. Give a time limit.
- When pairs are ready, put them together to share their stories. If you have a small group, ask pairs to share their stories with the rest of the class.
- You may like to make notes of good language use / language errors to review at the end of the activity.

Note: The headlines given are real and deliberately avoid politics, showbiz and any stories that will go out of date quickly. If you want to make this activity more topical, you can choose your own headlines.

For higher levels you could choose some headlines from different sources (e.g. different newspaper websites, social media sites) and you could look at the differences in style and content.

For lower levels you could do this activity using photos from newspapers instead of headlines.

Task 3:
Summarising
news stories
(20-25 minutes)

- Do this activity if you have newspapers or if learners have devices and access to the internet. Alternatively, ask learners to bring an interesting news story that they have found to the lesson.
- Allow learners to choose a news story that they find interesting. With younger learners, you may like to provide a selection of suitable news stories. Some may not be appropriate.
- Explain that learners are going to give a summary of the story to the rest of their group or the class, so they need to read it carefully. Once they decide what the important parts of the story are, they should make notes of the points and keywords that will help them give their summary.
- Give a time limit and walk around and help as learners read and make notes for their summary. They could do this individually or in pairs. Encourage them to use dictionaries and not to always rely on you to supply all the vocabulary.
- When learners are ready, put them into groups to share their summaries. As they listen to each other, they should think of one question they'd like to ask

	<p>the learner giving the summary. At the end, select a few learners to ask their question.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You might like to introduce this activity by modelling it first. Tell learners that you read a really sad / funny / odd article in the paper this morning. Give a brief summary of the article and encourage them to ask you about it. Learners could also write up their summary for homework.
Task 4: Discussion (10–15 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show slide 5 of the presentation or refer learners to Task 4 in the student worksheet. Ask them to read and talk about the quotes in small groups. They should choose some quotes, say if they agree or disagree and why, and make sure they find out other people's opinions too. The activity could also be done as a mingle, with each learner taking one quote and going round the room to discuss it with the other learners. They could then report to the class what the overall class opinions were for their quote. If you have more learners than quotes, some learners could do the same quote, then compare what they discussed in pairs before reporting back. Before the activity, you might like to brainstorm functional language for agreeing and disagreeing on the board and encourage learners to use the language in their discussions.
Task 5: Role play (20-30 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show slide 6 of the presentation or refer learners to Task 5 in the student worksheet. Tell learners to imagine that they are a journalist, and that they have been asked to interview someone who has been in the news. Elicit some names. These could be people from a local / national news story, a politician, a sports person, a celebrity etc. The important thing is that they have been in the news. In pairs, learners choose a person to interview, and then write some questions to ask. The questions should be related to the news story involving the person. Then in their pairs learners decide who will role play the journalist and who will role play the interviewee. The interviewee should think about what their

answers might be, and the journalist can either help them with ideas or think of some follow-up questions they could ask to their main questions.

- Depending on your learners, they might like to perform their interview in front of the class, imagining they are on TV or online, or do their interview together before writing it up for a newspaper or news website.

Contributed by

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