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# Junior Journalists

## LEARNING FOR LIFE

- ☉ Newspapers can be in print or digital formats.
- ☉ Newspapers are the most up-to-date resources for current events.
- ☉ News can be a combination of fact and opinion.
- ☉ Newspapers contain news, interviews, reviews, opinions, sports reports, photographs and advertisements.

## FOCUS QUESTIONS

*What else is there in a newspaper besides news?  
How can I be a junior journalist?*

## RESOURCES

- ☉ local and national newspapers in a variety of formats including print, digital and television news broadcasts
- ☉ digital cameras
- ☉ clips or transcripts of television interviews
- ☉ BLM 19

## OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES

- ☉ websites, such as:
  - Guidelines for Better Photographic Composition [www.photoinf.com](http://www.photoinf.com)
  - Teaching Digital Photography [www.youthlearn.org/learning/activities/multimedia/photo1.asp](http://www.youthlearn.org/learning/activities/multimedia/photo1.asp)

## LEARNING ACTIVITIES

### GETTING STARTED

Begin this unit in the first term so students have the skills to be the official reporters and photographers for events throughout the year. If there is no school newsletter, consider publishing a newspaper twice a term or starting a blog. File their work so they can compile 'The Year in Review' for the school's end-of-year celebrations.

### IN THE NEWS

Examine a number of different newspapers to determine their common elements, such as news, interviews, reviews, opinions, sports reports, photographs and advertisements.

Collect samples of each section from each newspaper to compare. Construct a chart with a column for each section or type of article found in the newspaper. As students learn more about the language and features of each, add this information to the chart.

### MAKING NEWS

- What is news?*
- Who is in the national news this week?*
- What is making news in our school community this week?*
- What sort of writing is used to present the news?*

Examine the samples of news reports to determine their common features. Explain that a news report is a reconstruction of events and is called a recount. Describe the features of a recount and compare the samples to see if they have them (opening statement, description of events in order, conclusion).

### IN THE NEWS

Have partners report on events in the school for publication in the school newsletter, on the school website or a school blog.



- Who is our audience?*
- What will they want to know?*
- What are the essential features of a newspaper report?*
- How can we be sure that the report is accurate?*
- What questions should we ask the participants?*
- What will be the best way to take notes?*
- Who will make sure that what we write is ready for publication?*
- What is the deadline for having the report finished and submitted?*

### Hint

If you are not familiar with basic photography techniques, follow the suggestions from online websites, such as Teaching Digital Photography and Guidelines for Better Photographic Composition.

**I WAS THERE**

Explain to students that reports are more interesting if they include eyewitness accounts. Before a planned school event, have students decide who would be most likely to add insight to the information. After the event, they can approach that person for a comment. Tell students to make sure a range of perspectives is represented.

**IN THE PICTURE**

Examine newspaper photographs and discuss how they enrich or enhance the text. Train students to use a digital camera so they can photograph people and events to accompany news reports. As well as the basics of using the camera itself and the software needed to manipulate the images, teach them how to take photos that are interesting and eye-catching. Ensure that you have signed parent/guardian permission for any photos to be published.

**IN THE SPOTLIGHT**

Teach students how to conduct an interview so they are ready whenever someone of interest visits the school. Examine footage of television interviews and have students identify the sorts of questions asked.

*What did the journalist want to find out?*

*What research would the journalist have done to prepare for the interview?*

*Were all of the questions prepared?*

*How were the questions phrased so that the answers were interesting?*

*How did the journalist respond to the answers?*

Have each student prepare five questions they would use to interview their favourite book character. Have them identify what it is about the character that is important to them and base their questions on this. Encourage them to seek insight not just information. To test the quality of their questions, have them become the book character and answer them. Conduct a series of interviews to clarify the roles of particular staff and students for publication in the newsletter, on the website or the blog.

**IN FOCUS**

Have partners write reports which describe the purpose and function of school bodies, such as the student representative council, peer mediators, school board and so on.

**IN QUESTION**

Choose an issue in the school or the community that is causing concern. Have students create a report which explains the problem, who it is affecting and why. Publish this and invite readers to comment and offer solutions. Collect these comments and analyse them with students. Distribute **BLM 19** and have students use it to clarify the issue, compare the perspectives, consider the options and reach a conclusion. Have each student write their own report, summarising the perspectives.

*If this issue is to be resolved, who needs to know about it?*

*How can we inform them?*

*How will we know if we are successful?*

**IN MY OPINION**

Examine and discuss an editorial and other opinion pieces in a newspaper.

*How do these articles differ from the reported news?*

Identify an issue that is causing concern in your school or community. Have students find out more about it, then write a piece which summarises what they have discovered. Make sure they include and justify their own opinion of it.

**MORE THOUGHTS**

Examine the reviews section of a newspaper to identify the essential elements of a review. Have students write reviews of books, movies, television shows and restaurants.

*Are the reviews only about books?*

*What other things are reviewed?*

*Are reviews fact, opinion, or a mixture of both?*

*Which parts are fact?*

*Which parts are opinion?*

*What sorts of things would students in our school be interested in having reviewed?*

**THE BACK PAGES**

Have teams compile sports reports focusing on:

- school sports results
- local results
- local sports opportunities
- player profiles
- introductions to unusual or uncommon sports.

**THE YEAR IN REVIEW**

At the end of the year compile a CD of 'The Year in Review' for the school archives and graduating students.