



LESSON PLAN

Level:	Grades 2 to 4
Author:	This lesson was created by elementary educator Ginie Waller. Parts of this lesson have been adapted from <i>News and Stuff</i> , by Don Hale (1996), produced by the Ontario Newspaper in Education Association.

Looking at Newspapers: Introduction

Overview

The newspaper offers a fun and useful tool to learn about the workings of print media. In this lesson, students learn basic information about newspaper journalism through guided class discussion and group and individual activities. Topics include the front page, what's inside the paper, how to find information, and what elements make up a newspaper story.

Learning Outcomes

Students will demonstrate:

- an awareness of the different sections of a newspaper
- an ability to dissect and understand the "news" story in newspapers
- an awareness of the different types of newspaper stories
- an awareness of how journalists and editors can "slant" a story
- a developing ability to compose short newspaper stories

Preparation and Materials

For this lesson, you will need newspapers (international, national and local). Many newspapers have a program for selling multiple copies for school use and discounts are frequently available. Ask students to bring in current local newspapers. Often, editors are happy to send sample copies of their newspapers if they receive requests from teachers or students.

Procedure

Part One: Reading the Newspaper

Divide the class into small groups and distribute newspapers to each. Give them 10 minutes or so to browse through the newspapers, then do a scavenger hunt.



Activity

Give your students a list of items in the newspaper that you would like them to find. Here are some examples:

- A headline (the big letters above a story that look like a title) for a story from another country
- An advertisement for a car you would like your parents to buy
- A photograph of a local event
- The start time for a movie you would like to see
- A word on the front page you don't know the meaning of
- Your favourite cartoon
- A sports score
- The coldest place in Canada
- A letter to the editor

Discussion

Many different things go into a newspaper: a newspaper has lots of stories, lots of pictures, and lots of advertisements.

- What sorts of things do you see when you look at a newspaper? (*Brainstorm with students and write down their answers.*)

Ask students:

- Why do people read newspapers?
- What kind of information are they looking for?
- Are there other reasons?

Part Two: What do you see on the front page?

(*Note: Teachers may want to look at, and compare, the front pages of two or three different newspapers during this exercise.*)

Before beginning, review the following newspaper terms with students:

Banner: A prominent headline on the front page, usually stretching across the full width of the page.

Byline: The printed name of the writer appearing at the head of the news or feature story

Caption or outline: The explanation accompanying a picture.

Credit line: A line giving credit for the source of the story or illustration.

Headline: The title given to a newspaper story.

Lead: The first few sentences or opening paragraph of a news story, usually summarizing the main points.

Wire photo: A photograph transmitted by telephone or telegraph equipment



Discussion

The front page of a newspaper is what attracts casual readers to buy it, and so editors must choose the stories they feel people will want to read. Editors use their judgement to select the most important stories, in terms of what people are affected by the story. Are the people well-known in the community? Is the story interesting or controversial?.

Ask students:

- How many stories do you see?
- How long are the stories?
- Are some bigger than others?
- Which headline is the biggest?
- Why do you think that one is the biggest?
- Are there pictures on the front page?
- What is in the pictures?
- What kinds of people are in them?
- How many pictures are on the front page?
- Are they colour, or black and white?
- What kinds of pictures do you like best? Why?
- Why is the front page of a newspaper so important?

Individual Activity

- Cut out a headline and its story from the newspaper, and separate the two.
- Swap stories with someone else in the class, making sure that person doesn't see the headline to the story you give them.
- Take the story you are given and write a headline for it.
- Then check the original headline for the story.
- In your journal, write down your title, the original title and a brief summary of the story; and answer the following:
 - Which title do think is more effective? Why?
 - Why do you think the editor chose that headline?

Part Three: What's inside the newspaper?

In their small groups, with newspapers in front of them, ask students:

- How do you find out what information is inside the paper?
- Is there a table of contents, as in a book?
- Find the sections or articles listed in the index.
- What are the sections?



- If you have both a local paper and a national paper, compare which sections are in each. If you were the editor, what sections would you include? Did you think of any that are not in these papers? Why aren't they?
- Are the photographs inside the paper different from the ones on the front page? Are there pictures of children? Old people? Are there more pictures of men or of women?
- Choose a short news item on page two or three. After reading it as a class, ask the students: Why do you think it wasn't put on the front page?

Part Four: What is a newspaper story?

A newspaper story answers the five "Ws." So should you.

Let's use the following story as an example:

Yesterday, John took his dog for a walk outside. John wanted to go to the park. He wanted to play with his dog when they got there. They played Frisbee and had a picnic. Then they went home.

(Write the "5 Ws" column on the board, and have students complete the "or?" column.)

The 5 Ws

Who is the story about?

What is the story about?

Where did the story happen?

When did this story happen?

Why did this story happen?

Or?

Who are the characters?

What did John and his dog do?

Where did John and his dog go out?

When did John and his dog go out?

Why did John and his dog go out?

Guided Discussion

What kinds of stories can you find in a newspaper?

There are lots of different stories in a newspaper. Some news is about people in countries. These are called international stories.

Some news is about people in Canada. Canada is the nation you live in. So stories about people in Canada are called national stories.

Some news is about people in your very own city - sometimes you may even know the people in the stories! These people live in the same location as you do. So these stories are called local stories.

Ask students:

What kind of story would it be if John and his dog lived:

- in China?
- in Canada?
- in your town?



Still in small groups, ask students to count the international, national and local stories in their newspaper.

- How many stories are there of each?
- What makes them international, national or local?
- What kinds of countries are the international stories about? Do those stories have pictures? How do pictures help you to understand a place you've never seen?

Guided Discussion:

What are newspaper stories about?

Newspaper stories are usually about people doing things. Sometimes the stories are happy, and sometimes they are sad. But they're always interesting. Newspaper stories help you to learn new things about people you may never meet - people close by, and far away. If it weren't for newspapers, you probably wouldn't know much about anyone!

A newspaper has many different stories. Some are about meetings. Some are about the government. Some are about money and banks. Some are about sports. Some are about parents, grandparents, teachers, doctors, and even kids. Newspapers are about everything and everyone!

- What are people doing (or what have they done) at your school that you could write stories about? (*Ideas might include a bake sale, a sports team, a school concert or play, parent-teacher meetings.*)

Activity

Have students use the five Ws to plan a story about a class trip (or other event). Brainstorm ideas, and permit them to make notes.

- What kind of trip was this? What happened on it?
- Who went on the trip?
- Where did the class go?
- When was the trip made?
- Why did the class go on this trip?

Have students write up their stories.

Evaluation

- Group work and class participation
- Headline analysis
- Story about class trip

