



## LESSON PLAN

**Level:** Grades 7 to 10

**About the Author:** Adapted from lessons created by Rosalind Ross, David Halliday and John Crocker of the Durham Board of Education in *The AML Anthology* (1990), produced by the Association for Media Literacy

# Television News

## Overview

---

This lesson is part of a unit that explores news journalism across the media. In this lesson, students explore the impact of news reporting on a visual medium such as television. Students begin with an analysis of their television viewing habits and an introduction to the terms and vocabulary associated with television and radio. In small groups, they will analyze, contrast and compare news broadcasts from different types of televised news sources. Optional activities include deconstructing a news broadcast in class, comparing the strengths and weaknesses of both television and radio as sources of news, and completing a short essay about television news reporting and youth.

## Learning Outcomes

---

Students will demonstrate:

- an understanding of the terminology associated with radio and television
- an appreciation of the strengths and the weaknesses of a variety of mediums as sources of information
- an appreciation of the role that target audience plays in the creation and content of a news broadcast on television
- an awareness of the way in which news is "packaged" for a particular target audience
- an awareness of their television viewing habits and attitudes
- an understanding of how different mediums approach news reporting

## Preparation and Materials

---

- *Television News Questionnaire*
- *Radio and Television Vocabulary*
- *Television News Information Chart*



## Procedure

---

If you have not already done so, review the *Radio and Television Vocabulary* terms with students.

Distribute the *Television News Questionnaire* to students and give them time to answer the questions.

As a class, discuss students' answers to the questionnaire. Select note takers to record on the blackboard the percentage of students who watch televised news on a regular basis, compared to those who don't. Ask students to explain why they do, or don't, watch television news.

Still using note takers, ask students which news source they are most likely to use: television, radio, newspapers, newsmagazines or the Internet. Discuss the merits and limitations of each medium for news reporting.

Ask students, "what makes television such a compelling news medium?"

## Activity

### Activity One: Radio News Comparison

- Divide the class into groups of three students.
- Within each group, each student will listen to a different television news broadcast and, using a column from the *Television News Information Chart*, make notes about content, style, length of program, advertisers, etc. (In order to ensure a wide cross-section, students should be encouraged to choose from a variety of stations: i.e. a news broadcast from a 24 hour cable news channel; a national news broadcast; a local news broadcast etc.)
- When students return to their groups the next day, have them share, compare and contrast their findings with group members.
- Have each group summarize their findings and present them to class.

### Optional Activities:

- If students have not yet done the "Comparing Radio News and Television News" activity from Lesson Three of this unit, this would be an appropriate opportunity to do so.
- There is a common belief that youth are insufficiently represented in mainstream news and that mainstream news does not reflect the concerns of young people. Ask students to respond to this statement in a brief essay.

## Evaluation

- Completed *Television News Information Charts*

Optional activities: Comparing Radio News and Television News and/or Youth Representation in the News essays.



## Television News Questionnaire

---

### How much do you know about television news?

1. What channels do you watch?
2. Why do you watch television?
3. What channels do other members of your family watch?
4. How many hours per day do you watch television?
5. How often do you watch the news on television?
6. Generally, do you watch the whole news broadcast, or specific segments? (If so, which ones?)
7. What is the target audience of your favourite television station?
8. Would there be a difference in approach to the news between your favourite channel and that of your parents?
9. Are you more likely to watch the news on the same television station as your parents, or do you watch the news on a different channel?
10. In what order is the following information presented:
  - local news
  - national news
  - international news
  - weather
  - sports
  - Where would you expect to get the most detailed analysis of the news:
    - radio
    - television
    - newspaper
    - newsmagazine
11. When would the majority of people listen to television news: morning, afternoon, night? Why?
12. As a teenager, do you feel it makes a difference whether you watch news on a television channel that's geared to teens (i.e. Much Music or YTV) or from a television channel such as CBC?



## Radio and Television Vocabulary

---

**Call sign:** the letters assigned to identify the radio or television station (CHUM, CFTR, CBLT)

**Frequency:** the numbers on the dial identify the length of energy wave transmitting the program signal

**Network:** a chain of many stations owned and operated by a parent company (CTV) or government agency (CBC)

**Affiliate:** a local station owned by the parent company, or an independent station, both subscribing to some network programming and producing their own local content

**Cable:** much like a telephone company, cables link customers to programming rather than using the airwaves

**Anchor:** the person who provides the studio focus for the news but calls upon others for weather, sports, local and on-the-scene reports

**Correspondent:** a news writer/reporter, based in another area or country, who gives regular reports on a developing story

**Clip/footage:** a segment produced outside the studio or a satellite

**Insert:** transmission tape inserted into the studio broadcast to add immediacy and scope to the news presentation

**Ratings:** information solicited by survey companies indicating to the advertisers the size of the audience for a particular program, including news broadcasts



## Television News Information Chart

	Station #1	Station #2	Station #3
Call letters, VHF/UHF			
Age and occupation of target audience			
What is the lead story? Details?			
Other stories			
On-the-scene (live) reports? Why were they used?			
How long was spent on: (in minutes) 1. international 2. national 3. local 4. sports 5. weather 6. commercials	1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.
Products advertised			
Total length of news broadcast, including commercials			
What visuals were used? Set? Graphics? Tone of newscast?			

