

TBLM OLE.9#1: Suggested Activities to Familiarize Students with Newspapers

1. Compare news headlines on the same day in two local newspapers. Discuss the slant each newspaper has taken, and which one is more effective, more sensational, more respectful of the people involved, and more accurate.
2. Provide students with a newspaper headline and ask them to predict what the article might be about. Then provide them with the article. Was the headline accurate? What would have been a better one?
3. Have students
 - calculate the area covered by advertisements on a page or in a section of a newspaper. What is the equivalent in percentage?
 - calculate the number of pages devoted to chosen sections, such as Sports, World Events, Local Events, and Arts and Entertainment. What percentage of the whole newspaper is devoted to each section? How does this percentage range between local, national, and online newspapers?
4. Give students a newspaper article and ask them to highlight the 5Ws (When? Who? What? Where? Why?). Ask them to list the 5Ws in their favourite children's story, nursery rhyme, or fairy tale, and write a short news event article about it. (See BLM OLE.9#3: 5Ws + H Chart.)
5. Give students a newspaper article and ask them to record the 5Ws on a separate piece of paper. Students exchange the papers and write an article based on the 5Ws. Compare the articles written by the students with the original article. (See BLM OLE.9#3: 5Ws + H Chart.)
6. Have students use the Classified section of a newspaper to find materials or services that would assist them in getting past the following challenges:
 - a barbed wire fence
 - a hungry lion
 - a 6-metre deep moat filled with piranhas
 - a 15-metre vertical cliff
 - a locked steel door
7. Give each group an envelope filled with articles and ask students to categorize them and label each category. Groups report on the categories they identify. Are there common groupings?
8. Give each group an envelope with 10 articles, with the headlines cut off and placed in a separate envelope. Students match the headline with the article it describes. Students reflect on which details helped them to complete the match. Were they correct in their assumptions?
9. Have students examine and use newspaper vocabulary.
 - Students scan a newspaper to find an adjective for each letter of the alphabet. They write the sentence in which the adjective was found, and then write a new sentence with the same adjective.
 - Students find and highlight signal or transition words in a newspaper article.
 - Students find 10 words used in the newspaper with which they are not familiar. They record each word in their Vocabulary Database, along with a definition and an example of the word used in a sentence. (See OLE.2: Daily Edit.)
10. For one week, groups of students search for stories, photographs, display advertisements, and classifieds describing random acts of kindness. Students put them in a group scrapbook and make a presentation about the one that was most meaningful to them. The group can vote for the random act of kindness of the week. If students are writing a class or school newspaper, they report random acts of kindness in the school or local community.

For more ideas, search the Internet using the terms “newspaper in education” and “newspaper teaching units.”