

## Lesson plan 2 - Writing news stories

This lesson plan can be used with students who did not attend the Newsroom workshop but who have already created a website with MyNewsroom.co.uk, or as a refresher for students who came on the trip.

### Teacher preparation

It would be helpful, though not necessary, to have a shortlist of around 10 news stories from that day or the previous day for the students to choose from. It is also advisable for teachers to be familiar with stories in the news in the six categories the students will be working within (UK, world, science, technology, culture, sport).

### Learning outcomes

- Students will:
- Understand typographical terms including: standfirst, headline, byline
  - Be familiar with the structure of a news report
  - Be familiar with typical categories of news stories (eg UK, world etc)
  - Understand the importance of using more than one source of information
  - Have experience of writing a news report
  - Have a general understanding of how to publish on the internet responsibly

### Curriculum relevance

ICT, Media Studies, English, Citizenship.

### Duration

1 hour

### Resources

A selection of that day's newspapers.  
Access to computers with an internet connection. Please see system requirements on MyNewsroom.co.uk.

### Steps

#### 1. Introduction

- Remind students of the work they have done previously with MyNewsroom.co.uk.
- Explain that today they will be taking on the roles of news editors, researchers, reporters and sub-editors and will create stories for their websites.

#### 2. Selecting stories


**EITHER** give the students a list of 10 or so stories, a few in each category, and ask them to choose one **OR** give students a selection of that day's newspapers and access to news websites and give them 15 minutes to find a story they want to follow up and report themselves.  
Useful news websites: guardian.co.uk, bbc.co.uk/news, bbc.co.uk/newsround, reuters.co.uk, channel4.com/news, google.co.uk/news

#### 3. Researching stories

- When students have chosen a story, give them 20 minutes to read as many reports on it as they can, using newspapers and the internet.
- Ask them to find out the 5 Ws (What? Who? Where? When? Why?) and to gather quotations, facts, statistics and background information.
- It is important that they cross-check facts on as many websites as possible. Explain that they can't just rely on one source, as if it contains errors they will repeat them in their own report.
- Discuss how to judge the reliability of a source (eg is it a familiar website? Is it well written? Does it contain any spelling or grammatical errors? Does it differ from other sources?).

#### 4. Writing stories

*(Students may have practised stories in Lesson 1. These can now be replaced on their sites - see step 6)*

- Ask the students to log in to MyNewsroom.co.uk by going to newsroom.kitsite.com, selecting your school, entering their username and password.
- Ask students to click on the middle tab on the top right of their screen that says **Stories**, and then click on  **Write a new story**.
- A page with a number of fields will appear:

Headline	A title for their story.
Byline	The name of the reporter. Many teachers prefer their students to enter just their first initial and surname, rather than full name here.
Standfirst	Text that explains the headline and gives more detail about a story, like a sub-heading.
Category	A story can fall into one of six categories - UK, world, science, technology, culture or sport.
Body text	This is the space where the story text should be written.

- Each field needs to be completed and then the story should be saved either clicking on **Save as draft** or **Done**. It is advisable to save every few minutes as the story is being written. **If the student clicks on another part of the site without first saving their work, any changes will be lost.**

### 5. Story structure

- Explain that in a news report, the opening paragraph is the most important. It should present a summary of the whole story, encouraging the reader to find out more. In this way they differ from narrative stories. The opening paragraph of a news report usually answers the following questions, which are termed the Five Ws of journalism:

- What** happened?
- When** did the story take place?
- Who** is the story about?
- Why** did it happen?
- Where** did the story happen?

- After the opening paragraph, the story is explained in more detail and background information, quotations and possibly information on what will happen next are included.  
 - Explain that it is very important that news reports are balanced. This means they must give space to both, or all, sides of the story and try to include quotations from a range of sources.

### 6. Replacing stories

Note: **It is good practice to ensure that story pages are not deleted or changed substantially.** This is out of consideration for other sites that have created links to these pages.

- Story pages that are out of date should be left on the site but just not featured as one of the top three stories on the home page.
- Some students may have made practice story pages in Lesson 1. To replace these they should:
  - Click on the **Web Pages** tab in the top right of the screen
  - Open the story page they want to update, by clicking on its name
  - Delete the text in all the fields and replace it with their new story text and save.

### 7. Creating story pages

See lesson plan 1 step 4

### 8. Linking story pages to front page

See lesson plan 1 step 5

### 9. Internet responsibility

- Remind students that their sites may be seen by the family and friends of everyone in their school, and many other people across the UK and in other countries. This may include people of different ages, religions and cultures. It may also include the people involved in the stories they are writing about. To avoid trouble, students should ensure that their stories avoid:

- false or inaccurate information
- libel
- plagiarism
- offensive or malicious content\*

*\*This list is not exhaustive and does not constitute legal advice*

- Give students some time to go back and check their stories and amend them if necessary.

### 8. Conclusion

- Have a look together at some of the students' home pages and discuss their reasons for choosing stories, which ones they found most interesting, any difficulties encountered.  
 - Discuss the nature of news websites compared to newspapers, and the pros and cons of being able to publish news stories immediately on the web.

### Teacher follow up

Student websites are not published on the internet until they have been approved by a teacher. This gives you the chance to monitor the content of your students' sites and also give feedback to the students on their work, in effect 'marking' it. See the teacher's handbook for instructions on how to do this.