



Lesson 3: Writing News

This lesson plan is the third of a series of six that explain the news-making process followed by professional journalists.

OBJECTIVES

To understand:

- The structure and writing style of a news report
- Why there are School Report rules about child protection

LESSON 3: ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

Activity	Resources	Low tech alternative
1 Video: Huw Edwards' tips	Internet access or DVD	Worksheet 3.1
2 Beginning, middle, end	Printout from the BBC website cut into strips	Printout from the BBC website cut into strips
3 Telling a story	Same printout as activity 2 or different printouts from BBC website	None
4 Writing a script	Worksheet 3.2	Worksheet 3.2
5 Checking a script	Worksheet 3.2	Worksheet 3.2
6 Getting the point across	None	None

STARTER ACTIVITY

1. Video: Huw Edwards' tips

[Video with subtitles](#)

Students watch this Huw Edwards video, then recollect his top tips using this worksheet.

Low tech alternative to video

Using the above worksheet students match each top tip with Huw's advice.

Teachers tip: This worksheet could also be used as a plenary activity.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

2. Beginning, middle, end

Print a news story from the

or

websites using the Printable version function at the top of the page.

Cut up the story into sections, two or three paragraphs in each section, or individual sentences if you wish to make the task more difficult.



NEWS IS WRITTEN IN

- Third person
- Past tense Example: Scientists have successfully produced...

In small groups, students place the sections in order before comparing their sequence with the original story.

Ask students:

- What did you notice about the beginning, middle and end of the reports?
- Where are most of the W facts?
- Where are most of the opinions?

Explain: In many genres of writing, the main event occurs in the middle, or at the end, such as a murder-mystery novel. In news, the first sentence should reveal the key occurrence and often includes the key W facts.

3. Telling a story

In pairs, students tell their partner about the last thing that interested them so much, they couldn't wait to tell someone else. That's what news is about - communicating something of interest.

Alternatively, students can use the BBC News story they re-ordered at the beginning of the lesson, or a different story from the

or

websites, or a newspaper, and tell it to their partner in their own words.

4. Writing a script

Individually, students turn their spoken story into a script using this worksheet.

Writing one word per cell will enable students to calculate how long it will take them to read aloud, based on the average speed of a professional journalist - three words a second.

Before beginning writing, remind students of Huw's advice, to be:

- Clear - write how you would say it and get straight to the point at the beginning
- Concise - keep your sentences short
- Correct - get your facts right

Students practice reading their scripts out loud, at three words a second. They will have another chance to do this in Lesson 6: Broadcasting news.

Teachers tips:

- Limit students to a script of 30-seconds or less as it will help students remain concise.
- Students will probably need a few copies of the worksheet as one of Huw's tips is to write, re-write and re-write again.
- The worksheet is designed for scripting video or audio news, but can also be used for text-based news - and helps avoid the temptation to copy and paste.

5. Checking a script

Ask students: Why do you think there is a School Report rule that if you are taking part in the project, you must only use the first names of anyone under 18?

Explain: The rule is to protect the identity of young people, as their work is broadcast on the internet, which can be accessed world-wide.

In pairs, students check each other's work to make sure it contains only the first names of anyone under 18, and amend where necessary.



ENARY

. Getting the point across

A handful of students read their scripts to the rest of the group. After each reading, ask the group: What was the main point of the story? If the majority can answer, the script is a success - it has communicated news to the audience.

For reference, teachers may like to look at previous years' resources including

This lesson has been approved by the BBC College of Journalism.

Story from BBC NEWS:
http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/school_report/7497775.stm

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