

A LEARNING RESOURCE

For Key Stage 2  
Ages 7-11

- What is news?
- How to write a news broadcast
- Writing for an audience and purpose
- Presenting the news on camera

# Writing the news

Inspired by  
Children's Newsreel



MINISTRY  
OF STORIES



# Writing the news

## INTRODUCTION

What should children's news look like today?

In 1950, the BBC launched *Children's Newsreel*, a version of the news for children. To mark its 70th anniversary, and look at how children's news has changed over time, writers aged 7-10 at Hanover Primary School in Islington wrote and presented their own news stories.

This pack is for teachers and youth workers, to help you use our young writers' news videos to inspire your students to create their own. It's about having fun with the news and giving children a chance to tell the stories they want to share. We've kept things simple and low tech.

## GETTING STARTED

These activities work well as a mini project over three lessons, with a separate, longer session for video recording, where each group of children is filmed individually. Timings for activities are approximate and can be adapted.

We recommend that children make their news broadcasts in groups of 2-3.

You will need:

- General writing materials
- Flip chart paper x 3
- Post-it notes
- Clipboards
- Audio-visual equipment
- An iPad (or similar) for filming
- A quiet place for filming

## WARM UP & INTRO

(10-15 mins)

Ask children to work in pairs and spend one minute telling each other something that happened this week (it could be to them, or to someone they know).

Now discuss the questions:

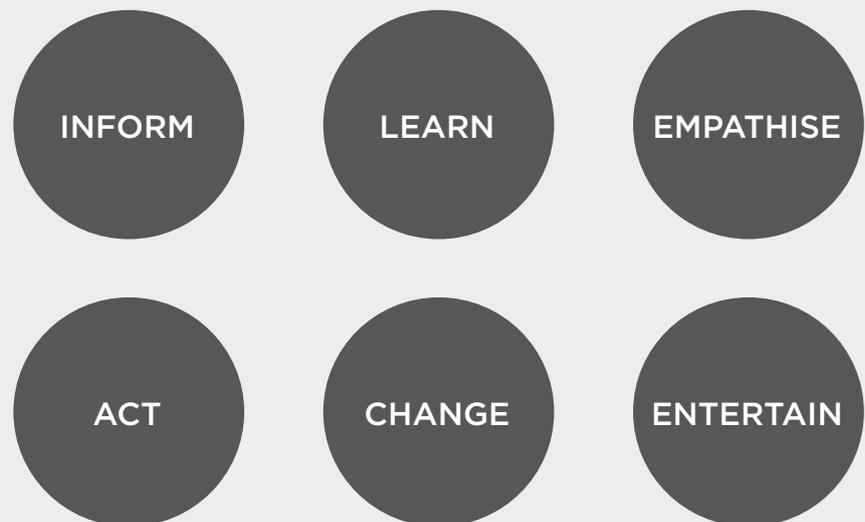
### What is news?

Huw Edwards, news presenter at the BBC, says:

1. It's new - about things happening now.
2. It means something to people. Maybe they want to know about it, or need to know about it.

### What is news for?

Think about all kinds of news: school, local, national, international, entertainment, sports.



You may want to show the BBC Young Reporter video by Huw Edwards, [What is News?](#)

## ACTIVITY 1

20-30 minutes

### CHILDREN'S NEWS: WHAT'S CHANGED?

#### Children's Newsreel (1950s)

[Children's Newsreel](#) was the first news programme the BBC made for children. They used clips from the regular news that were suitable for children. The first ever story was about Brumas the Bear, the first polar bear cub to be born and raised at London Zoo.

[Watch these clips of Children's Newsreel](#)

#### Newsround (1972 - Now)

[Newsround](#) is the BBC's current news programme for 6-10 year olds.

[Watch a clip from Newsround](#) on children cleaning their own classrooms (up to 2:04 on the video). Newsround does lots of stories about children.

#### What are the differences?

Think about colours, sounds, pace, voices, what the story is about, who is telling it, do we see them?

Our writers pointed out that Children's Newsreel only has a narrator, while Newsround has a presenter and sometimes a narrator too.

#### News by Children

Now watch some news *by* children *for* children from our writers at Hanover Primary School, aged 7-10, [News at Hanover](#).

You'll see they wrote different kinds of news stories, from an interview with a child who went on their local School Climate Strike, to an entertainment piece about whether children at Hanover believe in aliens.

## ACTIVITY 2

15-20 minutes

### NEWS TO YOU

What would you like people to know about in your school, neighbourhood and the world?

Mark three pieces of flipchart paper:

**SCHOOL | NEIGHBOURHOOD | WORLD**

Give everyone a handful of post-it notes and ask them to write 1-3 items for each category. Here are some by our writers:



Stick everyone's post-it notes on the sheets and get them to look at each other's and share them out loud.

Now it's time to choose your writing teams. We recommend teams of 2-3 children. Each team should choose a post-it note idea for their news story. They are encouraged to pick other people's ideas.

For an extended activity, you could get each team to pick a few ideas and pitch them to an 'editor' or another team using the 5 Ws activity below.

## ACTIVITY 3

20-30 minutes

### THE 5 Ws

Journalists often use the 5 Ws when planning news stories:

1. Who?
2. What?
3. When?
4. Where?
5. Why?

Choose your students' favourite video from the news items above, and re-watch it, asking them to note down as many Ws as possible for that item.

Now ask each group to answer the questions for their idea(s). For example:

#### **School Climate Strike**

1. Who: Children from different schools in the area
2. What: Going on climate strike
3. When: The last Friday of the month
4. Where: Islington Town Hall
5. Why: To make the government act to stop climate change

#### **The Editor**

Some groups will have a very general idea, like 'Aliens' or 'Protecting the Environment'. An adult in the role of 'Editor' can ask them questions to help narrow the story down. It can also work to train some children in the role of 'Editor', working with an adult. They should think about:

- Who the story is for
- What kind of story is it? (Informative news, entertainment, sports, local, national)
- What is its purpose? (to inform, to make people act, to entertain)
- Who do we need to tell the story? Should it be an interview with one person, or a number of people? Who can they interview?

The 5Ws can also help with narrowing down the story:

- Where should we be protecting the environment?
- Where have you seen litter in your area?
- Who at your school believes in aliens and who doesn't? Could we ask them?

We recommend that the editor gives each group some written feedback between sessions to help them find the focus of their story. Some groups might need help to do some research too.

Some children find it easier and more fun to role play before writing. Using their ideas so far as a guide (the 5Ws, feedback from the editor), children can play the roles of presenter/interviewer or interviewee and have a go at improvising their news piece.

Have another child or adult watch them and write down what they say. This can form the basis of their script. Others may prefer to go straight into writing.

We recommend using a simple structure:

### **Intro**

Make it engaging by asking a question, or including some vivid descriptions.

### **Interview questions**

Use the 5Ws to write interesting questions. No need to write the answers, although the interviewee should have time to practice what they want to say.

### **Outro**

What should people remember or think about from this piece of news?

You can use the scripts on the next page as a guide.

## **ACTIVITY 4**

20-30 minutes

### **ROLE PLAY TO WRITE**

## ARSENAL SUPER FAN By Reggie & Ronnie

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### Intro

Hello I'm Ronnie, your interviewer. Have you ever been to a football match? Well, how about a hundred matches? I've been talking to Reggie, from Islington, who is a bit of an Arsenal super-fan.

### Interview questions

- Can you tell us how many Arsenal games you have been to?
- How old were you when you went to your first match?
- How does it feel walking into a match with thousands of other fans?
- How do you feel about Arsenal's current form?
- Do you love your team to the max?
- Do you think the amount of money that footballers get paid is fair?

### Outro

And that is all from me, hope you guys enjoyed it today, bye!

## CLIMATE STRIKE By Oliver, Ashley and Ismail

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### Intro

Hello everyone, my name is Oliver. Do you need help to stop bullying the environment? Well these kids from different schools have been going on climate strike. Today I am joined by Ismail. He went on the Islington Climate Strike and we are going to ask him some questions.

### Interview Questions

- Who did you see there?
- Where did you go, exactly?
- Why did you go?
- How did you feel?

### Outro

If you want to save the environment, maybe you should start to use less plastic, less cars, and listen to the children. Goodbye!

## NOTES ON RECORDING

We set up our 'studio' in the library – a quiet space, and recorded each group individually on an ipad. We allowed time for several takes per group.

## TIPS FOR RECORDING

- Make it feel as professional as possible by being in role – you are the camera person, they are the presenters and guests
- Do a short vocal warm up. Tongue twisters are good
- Give children a choice of positions to adopt to help them stay as still as they can
- Use clipboards for scripts – it stops paper rustling
- Encourage children to look at the camera at the end of each line or section
- Encourage interviewees to speak freely and have a few goes
- The scripts should be used as a guide. Some children will prefer to improvise on what they have prepared – encourage this
- If you have a news piece that asks for a number of audience responses (for example, to the question, 'Do you believe in aliens?'), ask several children an agreed question throughout the filming process
- Share your news stories with us on Twitter: [@mini\\_stories](https://twitter.com/mini_stories)

## IDEAS FROM OUR WRITERS

- Make an advert to go with your news story
- Make a jingle (a little song) to sing at the start of your news story

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

[BBC Young Reporter](#)

[BBC Newsround](#)

[Get Writing with Ministry of Stories](#)

[Teacher Resources from Ministry of Stories](#)

[826 Digital](#)

## ABOUT US

**Ministry of Stories** champions the writer in every child. We were founded by Lucy Macnab, Ben Payne and best-selling author Nick Hornby, who wanted to create a space for young people in East London to become authors. Through innovative writing clubs, small-group mentoring and fun writing resources, we help young people discover and realise their own creative potential. Ministry of Stories centre was inspired by San Francisco's 826 Valencia and resides behind its own fantastical shop, Hoxton Street Monster Supplies, which has been selling goods such as Cubed Earwax and Thickest Human Snot to London monsters since 1818. All proceeds from the shop go back into the Ministry.

**BBC History** is the part of the BBC responsible for telling the Corporation's story: past, present and future. "What most motivates us," says Robert Seatter, Head of BBC History, "is to show why the BBC matters, and how it has touched people's lives and made a difference." Key activities include orchestration of major anniversary seasons; cultural partnerships with museums and other agencies; commissioning of in-depth written and oral histories; and wider interpretation of BBC History in our BBC buildings. Projects such as Children's Newsreel take great past programming moments and reinvent them for current and future generations.

## SPECIAL THANKS

- Polly Shields and all at Hanover Primary School.
- Mara Alperin and John Escolme for video editing.
- Our wonderful volunteer writing mentors: Saskia Bennett, Hazel Ellis, Adrianna Jones, Andy Long, Caterina Soffici, Edin Suljic and Matthew Yorke.
- We Made This



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



Department for  
Digital, Culture  
Media & Sport



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