

NEWSPAPER ACTIVITIES

For Grades 3-6

Overview

This lesson provides students with the opportunity to write authentic newspaper stories. Students will enjoy this creative, exciting, and stimulating lesson in writing. Various aspects of newspapers are covered, including parts of a newspaper, writing an article, online newspapers, newspaper reading habits, and layout and design techniques.

From Theory to Practice

Encouraging children to read and write in ways that allow them to make sense of real language in real contexts is more likely to help them develop the skills necessary to become fluent readers and writers. Creation of a class newspaper provides such a real context, and thus makes an excellent choice as the basis for a project designed with this goal in mind.

Abilities in formal writing are best developed with a "process approach" that goes through five distinct phases: prewriting, composing or drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Using this approach helps students more fully understand the process of producing formal written documents, such as magazines and newspapers.

Lund, D.M., & Sanderson, D.A. (1999). From printed page to multimedia: Evolution of a second-grade class newspaper.

Reading Online Available: http://www.readingonline.org/articles/art_index.asp?HREF=lund/index.html.

Student Objectives

Students will:

- Identify the parts of a newspaper
- Identify the format of a news article
- Write a newspaper story
- Edit newspaper articles
- Layout and publish a classroom newspaper

Getting to Know the Newspaper

Hold up a sample front page from a selected newspaper. Ask students what they notice about the format that is different from other texts they read (e.g., black and white ink, graphics, headline, column format).

Divide the students into groups of three to four members. Explain to the students that they will explore a newspaper, paying attention to the layout and format. Instruct students to study the front page first and discuss what different parts they notice.

Ask each group to report back to everyone what members noticed was contained on the front page. Make a list of parts on the board. (e.g., title, headlines, pictures or graphics, captions, date, subtitles, table of contents/index, etc.). Students should notice similarities between different newspapers.

Discuss with the class how newspapers use a standard format.

In their groups, have students continue to explore copies of newspapers. What kinds of things do they notice? Students should begin to identify sections and features that are specific to newspapers. Have the groups again report to everyone what types of items they noticed in their paper. Continue keeping the list of items on the board. (Additional items may include: editorials, cartoons, horoscope, local news, weddings, classifieds, advertising, etc.)

Explain to the class that people read newspapers differently than other types of texts. Discuss how people read newspapers. Reading a newspaper matches people's interests in certain things. They scan headlines, subtitles, and images to see if the story interests them or not.

Read some sample headlines from newspapers. Ask, "How many of you would be interested in reading this story?"

The Five W's

List the words who, what, where, when, and why on the board, overhead, or chart paper. Answer each of the five W questions using the popular rhyme "Jack & Jill."

Example:

Who? Jack and Jill

What? Fell down and broke crown

Where? On the hill

When? Sometime in the past

Why? Trying to fetch water

Put students in groups of three to four members. Ask the students to choose another famous rhyme or fairy tale and answer the five W questions. Have each group read just the answers to their questions, and then have the class try to guess what fairy tale or rhyme it is. Explain that these five Ws help with the organization of a news story and that they make up the most important details of the story.

Demonstrate to the class the organization of a good news story using the *Inverted Pyramid Format* handout. Use a sample newspaper story to illustrate an example of this format

The Sections & Articles

Have students brainstorm the types of articles they would like to write and list them on the board. Look at the list and ask students if the articles could be grouped into categories or "newspaper sections."

Use the *Reporting Tips* handout to present how to make newspaper articles more interesting. Go over each point and clarify any questions that students may raise.

The Layout

As a group, discuss newspaper layout, addressing the following points:

Headline News—Top priority articles are near the front (1-2 pages). These are typically of high interest to your entire audience of readers (e.g., town news such as a new park or community center). Long front-page articles can be continued on an inside page to provide room for other headline news.

Feature Articles—Stories about topics or events that are of interest to a certain group of readers (e.g., sports, animal stories, academic topics, interviews with school staff, book reviews). These are typically grouped into sections.

Pictures or graphics—The image should always appear with the story. A caption can be included. The size usually depends on how much space is available in the layout.

The Finished Product

They may then begin the newspaper layout using appropriate software. *The ReadWriteThink Printing Press* includes an option for creating a newspaper.

Note: 8 ½ X 11 size pages are optimal. They can be printed and copied back to back on 11 X 17 size paper that can be folded like a real newspaper. The completed paper must have an even number of pages for this format.

Pictures can be drawn or pasted into the layout. Depending on the available resources, pictures can also be scanned or downloaded from a digital camera. Tell students to play around with fonts and columns. They should experiment and be creative!

ONLINE PRINTING PRESS PROGRAM:

http://interactives.mped.org/view_interactive.aspx?id=110&title=

Content taken from ReadWriteThink.org

http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=249