

Creating a Newspaper - Lesson Plan **Amy Chambers – Hanceville High School**

Standard: Reading, Writing, Language and Organization Skills

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

- 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

Session 1

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 the whole class 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 the whole class 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?"

Session 2

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* overhead. Use a sample newspaper story to illustrate an example of this format

Session 3

Give students time to read the newspaper article they brought from home. Hand out the Newspaper Story Format sheet. Students should then complete the sheet using details from their particular article and share the summary of their newspaper article.

Ask the students to rewrite the newspaper article in their own words as if they were a reporter for their local newspaper. What changes would they make and why?

Have the students share their stories with a classmate using the following questions to guide their discussion:

Were changes made to the lead? Why?
Were changes made to the five Ws? Why?
Were changes made to the details? Why?

As a class, discuss fact versus opinion. Explain that news articles do not include the reporter's opinion. Have students go back and see if the changes that were made to their articles were strictly factual. Refer to original articles as needed for examples of fact-based stories

Session 4

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 overhead to present how to make newspaper articles more interesting. Go over each point and clarify any questions that students may raise.

Group students based on interests to form an "editorial staff" for each newspaper section. Have the groups meet to decide who will write which stories. Students can use the Reporter's Guide* handout as a guideline. When they have finished, students can begin collecting facts for their stories.

Session 5

Take students to the computer lab and have them write their first draft. They should not worry about font, size, or columns at this point. Be sure that they save their work and print a hard copy of their article for editing.

Students' stories should then be self-edited and edited by two other members of their editorial staff (using the Story Feedback Form*). Students should make necessary revisions to their stories based on the comments from the Story Feedback Form.

Session 6

In the computer lab, students should complete final story revisions. They may then begin the newspaper layout using appropriate software. The [ReadWriteThink Printing Press](#) includes an option for creating a newspaper. Each editorial staff works together to complete their newspaper section.

Note: 8 ½ X 11 size pages are optimal. They can be printed and copied back to back on 11 X 17 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!

Once pages are completed, they should be printed. The editorial staff should do a final reading for errors. Pages are then submitted to the teacher for publishing.

Session 7

Distribute the class newspaper to the students and allow them time to read it. When they have finished, hand out the Newspaper Writing Assessment* sheet and ask them to fill it out.

ASSESSMENT

Assess students' comments from the Newspaper Writing Assessment sheet.
Completion of all worksheets and articles.

Newspaper Story Format

Name _____

Enter Lead/Headline

Enter the Five *W*'s in these boxes

--	--	--	--	--

Enter three less important details in these boxes

--	--	--

Enter the least important detail in the final box

Newspaper Writing Assessment

Name: _____

1. What did you learn about writing a newspaper story?
2. What did you like about writing as a newspaper reporter?
3. What surprised you the most about creating a classroom newspaper?
4. What was your editorial staff's biggest challenge?
5. What was your favorite story and why?

Story Feedback Form

Reporter's Name: _____

Place a check mark in the box to show that the newspaper story has been edited for each of the following items.

Story Includes:	Self	1	2
Who?			
What?			
When?			
Where?			
Why?			
Lead: Does it "grab"?			
Opinion is left out			
Clearly written			
Spelling is OK			

Comments: (Editor 1)

Comments: (Editor 2)

Reporting Tips

1. Accuracy

Make sure you have the facts right (including how to spell names).

2. Audience

Keep in mind the audience who will read the paper. Is your story of interest to them?

3. Interviews

It may be necessary to schedule an interview. Prepare your questions ahead of time. Take notes during the interview and ask for clarification when needed. If possible, use a quote to make your story more interesting.

4. Research

Use reference materials to get the facts you need, or check facts that you have collected.

5. Writing

Start with a good lead. You want to grab the reader's attention and make him or her want to read more. Don't forget to answer the five *W*'s and leave out your opinion!

6. Images

It's never too soon to start thinking about what images you want to go along with your story. Do you need a digital photo or clipart? Make sure you don't wait until the last minute.

Reporter's Guide

_____ Reporting
(Student's Name)

Who?

What?

Where?

When?

Why?
