

Level: Intermediate – Upper intermediate (B1–B2)

Age: Teenagers

Time: This lesson can be divided up in various ways to suit the time you have with your students. Below are two time options that you can choose from depending on the length of your class. However, these are just suggestions and there are many other ways you could divide the lesson up.

90 minutes – Complete all activities in The front page and Write a news story.

60 minutes – Complete all activities in Write a news story.

Summary: This lesson is divided into two sections: The front page and Write a news story. In the lesson, students will:

- 1 talk about newspapers;
- 2 learn newspaper vocabulary;
- 3 learn how to write a news story;
- 4 write a news story.

Key skills: Reading, writing, speaking

Subskills: Newspaper vocabulary, writing headlines, writing a news story

Materials: One copy of The front page and Write a news story per student; access to an online newspaper or physical newspaper per student

THE FRONT PAGE

1 Bring up the websites of a few newspapers for students to see. Ask students to tell you about the papers. Which ones do they read and why? Which is the best and why?

2 Give out copies of The front page worksheet and point students toward the activity Talking news. Ask them to match the words in bold to the definitions. Go over the answers together.

Key: 1 c; 2 e; 3 d; 4 a; 5 b; 6 f

3 Have students discuss their answers to the questions in pairs. When most pairs have finished, go through each question, asking for some feedback on their responses.

4 Ask students which different sections they expect to find in a newspaper. Write a list on the board of as many sections as they can think of (e.g., *national news, international news, sport, business, arts, weather*). When students read a newspaper, which section do they look at first? What's the most popular section in the class?

5 Students work in groups and complete the Look at a newspaper activity. They will need access to an online paper, unless they have a copy of a newspaper with them. They look through the newspaper and write down a few examples of stories the paper is running in each section. For example, in *Money and business*, they might write down the following: —*rising house prices, childcare costs, female entrepreneurs*.

6 Explain that, in the next activity, they are going to create the front page of a newspaper and include part of the main story from the different sections of the paper.

Write the following terms on the board:

front page, headline, lead, exclusive, scoop, caption, advertisement

How many of the terms do the students know? Do not confirm the meanings at this stage. Tell them to read the text in Make your own front page to check their answers. You could then ask them to turn over their worksheets before you test their memory of the terms.

7 Tell students to find examples of a headline, a lead, an exclusive, a scoop, a caption, and an advertisement in the newspapers they looked at in the previous activity.

WRITE A NEWS STORY

1 Explain that, as preparation for making the newspaper front page, the students need to look at how a newspaper story is put together. Hand out Write a news story. Divide the class into pairs or small groups. Tell them to complete the activity Write an attention-grabbing headline.

2 When most groups have finished, ask each group to read one of their headlines out loud. Write it up on the board and ask the other students to check that they have followed the tips in the box. Which headline is the most attention-grabbing?



3 In Maintain the reader's interest, students should write three questions, then trade worksheets with another group. The other group must then read the text in the Run a grammar check activity and see if they can answer the questions. They write the answers on the worksheet under each question and return the worksheet to the other group. The group can then check the answers provided.

4 Students should attempt Run a grammar check activity alone before comparing answers in their groups. Then go over the answers with the class.

Key: 1 saved; 2 was sailing; 3 felt; 4 didn't know; 5 was happening / had happened; 6 grabbed; 7 has been; 8 has been given / was given

5 In their groups, students should write a caption for each of the photos in the Caption competition activity. When they have finished, ask each group to read a caption out loud and see who can be the first to identify the photo the caption relates to.

6 Explain that, for homework, students will be writing a news story with their group. Ask them to choose a story, either real or imaginary, and brainstorm vocabulary for it. Go around and monitor their efforts, suggesting useful vocabulary or correcting their vocabulary, as appropriate. They can start work on a first draft of the story, if time allows.

HOMework TASK

The groups should meet up, outside of class, and complete their news story. Remind them to follow all the advice in Write a news story. They may want to find a photo and include it in their story.



TALKING NEWS

Match the definitions with the words. Then discuss the questions in pairs.

Definitions

- 1 the people who read a newspaper
- 2 not objective or neutral; with political preferences
- 3 the section in a paper where the editor gives his/her opinion about a story
- 4 a newspaper that has a sensationalist style
- 5 the number of copies of a newspaper that are sold
- 6 designed to have a strong emotional impact on the reader

Words

- a tabloid
- b circulation
- c readership
- d editorial
- e biased
- f sensationalist

Questions

- 1 How many newspapers are there in your country?
- 2 What are the names of the **tabloid** newspapers?
- 3 Which newspaper has the highest **circulation**?
- 4 Does it also have the highest **readership**?
- 5 Which newspaper is the most **sensationalist**?
- 6 Are any of the newspapers **biased**?
- 7 Which newspaper provides the most objective news?
- 8 Do you ever read the **editorial** of a daily paper?

LOOK AT A NEWSPAPER

Look at a newspaper and write down a few examples of stories from each section.

National news _____

International news _____

Sports _____

Arts and entertainment _____

Money and business _____

Comment / editorial _____



MAKE YOUR OWN FRONT PAGE



 The front page
 

MAKE YOUR OWN FRONT PAGE

What news stories have dominated the front pages of newspapers where you live over the past few weeks?

Here's your chance to produce the front page of your own newspaper. You can fill the page with stories about world events, rich and famous people, or exclusive stories about yourself and your friends. But first, here are some things you should consider.

The front page of a newspaper needs good *headlines* to get the readers' attention and make them want to read the news stories. A good headline should include as much information in as few words as possible.

The *lead* is the most important news story on the front page. A *scoop* or an *exclusive* is the best possible lead story. An exclusive is a news story that one newspaper has and the others don't. A scoop is a sensational news story that is an exclusive and guaranteed to sell more newspapers.



Hot off the press!

A good front page also needs a dynamic visual element to illustrate a news story and attract the reader's attention. You need to write clear picture *captions* for your illustrations.

To make your front page, you need to decide what news stories you would like to include. There are also spaces for headlines, an *advertisement*, and an image. Measure the size of each of the spaces and then

prepare your news stories so that they fit in the corresponding spaces. You can use the advertising space to promote an event or product of your choice. When you are ready, write the news stories and create your newspaper front page.



WRITE AN ATTENTION-GRABBING HEADLINE

Headlines should grab the reader's attention. They should be short and are not usually complete sentences. Here are some tips for making a complete sentence into a headline.

- 1 Delete *a, the,* and all possessive adjectives.
- 2 Delete all forms of the auxiliary verb *be* (e.g., *is, are, was, were*).
- 3 Use the infinitive to talk about future events.
- 4 Use the simple present to talk about current or recent events.
- 5 Group nouns together wherever you can (for example, *house prices, New York hotel*).

Look at these examples.

Sentence: Jennifer Lawrence's new movie has broken box office records in its opening week.

Headline:



Sentence: The president is going to open an art gallery in Boston.

Headline:



Now write headlines for these sentences.

A friendly dolphin has saved a teenage boy from drowning.

Headline:



The Memphis Grizzlies suffered their third defeat at home last night.

Headline:



A pair of sunglasses worn by Elvis Presley were sold to a businessman from Texas for \$1 million.

Headline:



Frontman Dusty Biebs is going to marry his make-up artist on Christmas Day.

Headline:



MAINTAIN THE READER'S INTEREST

The start of a news story should expand on the headline and give the reader some, but not all, of the story's details. It should make the reader want to read the full story.

Look at the headline below. What would you most like to know about the story? Write three questions.



1 _____ ?

Answer: _____

2 _____ ?

Answer: _____

3 _____ ?

Answer: _____

Trade questions with another group. Read the story below in Run a grammar check. Does it answer the group's questions? Write the answers on the group's worksheet and then return it to the group.

RUN A GRAMMAR CHECK

When you have written your story, you will need to check that all verbs are in the correct tense and that you've used the passive where you need to. As practice, write the verbs in the story below in the correct form.

A dolphin (1) _____ (save) a boy from drowning in the Adriatic Sea last weekend.

Davide Ceci (2) _____ (sail) with his father when he slipped and fell into the water. He was calling for help when he (3) _____ (feel) something pushing him out of the sea and toward the boat.

"At first, I (4) _____ (not know) what (5) _____ (happen),"

14-year-old Davide told journalists, "but when I realized it was Filippo the dolphin pushing me, I (6) _____ (grab) on to him."

The 380 kg dolphin (7) _____ (be) a popular tourist attraction in the sea near Manfredonia, in southeast Italy, for two years and (8) _____ (give) the name Filippo by local people.



CAPTION COMPETITION

All your story needs now is a photo and a caption to go under the photo. Look at the photos below. Can you think of a caption for each photo?

Write a news story worksheet 4





