



LESSON PLAN

Title: How about News? Critical thinking...

Authors:	Mihaela CONDRAT, Colegiul Dobrogean "Spiru Haret" Tulcea, Romania
Grades (age of students)	9th-12th grades
Materials:	Computer/ WIFI
Duration:	40 minutes
Skills:	Critical thinking

Objectives:

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Identify the elements of a news story
- Understand the notion of editorial decision and "angle of approach"
- to de(construct) the elements of media message/ news

LESSON MOMENTS	INFO POINTS
1. Introduction Teacher is announcing the title of the lesson and its objectives.	



2. Introducing the topic

News structure

Activity

Teacher introduces news as a basic element in journalism along with editorial, interview, investigation, blog, vlog and emphasizes how the new platforms have streamlined journalistic types.

Set of questions for teachers: What do you think when you hear the word news? Which are the elements by which you can describe what the news means?

Teacher introduces the inverted pyramid in order to make students aware of the main components (lead, content, background)

News- definition

An information about an event, person, situation that took place and that is of interest to the public.

Structure of news

5 questions: who, what, when, where, how, why. The most important question is "what", then it is followed by "who", continuing with "where", "when", "how", "why" and sometimes "how".

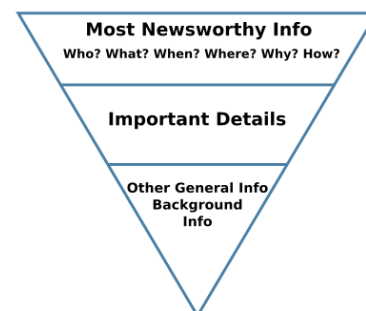
Inverted pyramid

The pyramid is reversed because the most important, newest, most striking part of a news story is concentrated at the beginning of the text. All other information, which adds additional details, can be found in the following paragraphs.

The first, and most important paragraph of a news story, is called a lead. It concentrates the essential information of the news. Writing the news in the form of an inverted pyramid can provide the reader with access to relevant information, even if it interrupts reading immediately after the lead.

The development paragraphs provide additional information about the facts or data presented in the first paragraph.

Some of the development paragraphs may also include contextual elements: previous events, possible consequences, information about the participants, the date to highlight the magnitude of the events.





3. Learning by doing, experiential working

Activity

Students will be challenged to act as journalists and write news; choose a title. They will be divided into groups (max. 5 students), they will all have the same task: to compose news from a given set of information and to choose the channel (written press, online press, TV, radio). Teacher gives instructions for working in groups: time limit, specifies that they have to start from reporters' notes in order to write news and that they can select information but not add anything new. At the end of the time, each group presents its news.

Reporter's notes :

Set of information will consist of

- an event - a car accident
- place- in a very crowded crossroad of your city
- moment- middle of the day
- persons involved in the accident - a driver with a truck/ other big car and a driver with a skirt driving a sport red car.
- witnesses- witness 1, 45 years man. "trucks should not be allowed in city centers; they always provoke accidents"
- witness 2, 25 boy years "the sport car was driving too fast, such drivers never respect other drivers. They think they own the world"
- witness 3, 55 years woman living in the neighborhood" in this crossroad there are always many accidents"
- a police officer "there are no victims, we suspended driving license for one driver"

Note for the teacher- details regarding to persons are chosen in a way which will lead to different stories. They will give teacher the chance to make students understand later, when they will present their news, that they created totally different stories according to their beliefs, stereotypes, biases (e.g., the driver with the skirt will be probably blamed for the accident because she is a woman).



4. Presenting the results

Activity

Each team will read its result. Teacher is conducting conversation so that he can underline what an editorial decision is (how students selected info, what chose to keep, what they removed from the reporter's notebook), how different content creators have different perspectives/ angles of approach even if they are presenting news about the same event; that the author of article/news can introduce opinions instead of being impartial and giving only facts.

Teacher will use students' answers in order to prove subjective character of the selecting information process:

- The news was different because the authors were different;
- each author has his own vision that is reflected in the press material;
- the editorial process, selection and processing of information is a subjective process; since students probably had to argue till they got to a consensus, it will be clear for them that
- the journalistic product is a subjective construct; media messages have individuals behind; if they are created by professional journalists, they have more chances to be objective;
- readers' reaction to news are influenced by their biases, sometimes gender stereotypes (women are worse drivers than men); in order to reinforce how biases and gender stereotypes work, teacher will introduce 1 statistic and an article which prove that statistically men cause more car accidents than women);
- titles have the tendency to introduce sensational elements (title is always important as it has to draw readers' attention and persuade him to read news/watch news, but impactful doesn't involve necessarily sensational element)

Questions that can be used

- How was for you as a team the process of selecting information? Did you have to argue with your group members about which info to keep or to remove? Are you aware that if during selection process you had chosen elements in a different way, your news would have been now totally or partially different?
- what criteria did you take into account when you chose the title?
- How was the "skirt" element used? Was here a gender bias / gender stereotype working?

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/27/well/live/car-accidents-deaths-men-women.html>

[https://www.trafficsafetystore.com/blog/who-causes-](https://www.trafficsafetystore.com/blog/who-causes-accidents/#:~:text=But%20let's%20look%20at%20the,year%20(National%20Highway%20Safety%20Administration)&text=On%20average%2C%20men%20drive%2016%2C550,per%20year%20(%20Federal%20Highway%20Administration))

[accidents/#:~:text=But%20let's%20look%20at%20the,year%20\(National%20Highway%20Safety%20Administration\)&text=On%20average%2C%20men%20drive%2016%2C550,per%20year%20\(%20Federal%20Highway%20Administration\)](https://www.trafficsafetystore.com/blog/who-causes-accidents/#:~:text=But%20let's%20look%20at%20the,year%20(National%20Highway%20Safety%20Administration)&text=On%20average%2C%20men%20drive%2016%2C550,per%20year%20(%20Federal%20Highway%20Administration))

- How were witness statements used? Did you give the same space in your article to all "voices?" (both drivers, police officer as an official source)
- Was there a tendency towards sensationalism?
- For which channel did you choose to write? how did this choice influence the content?
- Did we recognize in our behavior as "reporters" elements (even from those we criticize) from the press?

5. Feedback and evaluation

Set of questions for fixing:

From what I worked on in this session / From what you remember from this session, what are the elements that characterize a news story?

Extend/assignment

Students are assigned to choose one news and to analyze if it respects a "good news" criteria



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