

Stop press! Newspaper headlines

Primary Lesson Plan



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Source

[Teaching Viewing and Visual Texts: Primary](#) (page 131)

Learning area

English

Level

Upper primary (Years 4–7)

Unit description

A unit of work in this area helps students to understand that news and documentaries are never completely objective because, like all other visual messages, they are the result of a process of selection and organisation.

Lesson overview

To demonstrate the influence that newspaper headlines can have, noting in particular the use of size, style and choice of words.

Lesson duration

40 minutes

Possible outcomes

In relation to *English — a curriculum profile for Australian schools*, work in this area could lead to the achievement of outcomes in the following strands:

- **Reading and viewing**
Contextual understanding
Linguistic structures and features

There will also be links with other learning areas such as Studies of society and environment and Technology.

Materials required

- the front pages of at least 2 different daily newspapers from the same day
- 6 different newspaper articles with headlines. Remove and save the headlines. Make about 5 copies of each article.
- paper, pens and textas

Procedure

1 Class discussion

Discuss the importance of headlines in newspapers. Why are they used? They communicate through print and visual language. The size and style of a headline have symbolic meaning, and play an important role in the communication. The choice of words can have a powerful effect, and they also influence the choice of words used in the article itself, as they have to fit into the available space.

Look at different front pages of newspapers.

Discuss the different ways at least two different daily papers have presented the news from the same day, and the effect on the reader's response and interpretations of the events.

- Is the leading article the same?
- How have the different headlines been presented?
- Which headlines are the most grabbing?
- What variations are there in the way the reader's attention is attracted?
- Which make the story seem more dramatic?
- Are some aspects of the story made to appear more dramatic?
- How much space has been devoted to articles on the same topic?
- Ask students to suggest some different headlines for the leading article.

2 Distribute articles

Ask students to select one of the six different copied articles (with headline removed). Ask them to create a headline for their article.

3 Discuss created headlines

Discuss the headlines the students have created. In particular, note the ways different students have treated the same article.

Provide the original headlines, and allow students to compare them with their own. Discuss some of the factors which might affect the choice of headlines in newspapers.

Extension activity

Ask students how many different headlines they can create for their article, within certain constraints such as:

- a serious headline
- a humorous headline
- a slang headline
- a one-word headline
- a two-word headline
- a three-word headline

Suggested follow-up activities

Ask students to collect headlines that attracted their attention. Create a class display of the headlines, with students' comments on why they chose them.

Ask different students to watch the news on a particular television channel, so that all channels are covered. Note in particular:

- the introductory headlines
- the order of the stories presented
- time given to each story