



## TIPS FOR TEACHERS

When working with images from the Case Histories PDF, you should also have a range of recent newspapers to hand (for example, *The Financial Times*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Independent*, *The Guardian*, *The Daily Mail*, *The Daily Mirror*, *The Sun*, and a number of local newspapers). It is important that students can experience the physical nature of the newspaper, as well as familiarising themselves with the different formats and up-to-date news stories.

Students may choose to extend some activities by creating convincing mock-ups of their ideas on the computer. They can distribute these to other classes, include their articles in a school newspaper or leave them in reception for visitors to read.

# BIAS AND CENSORSHIP

These activities look at how the same story will often be presented in completely different ways by different newspapers. Careful investigations throw up important questions, such as:

- Is the newspaper presenting the whole story?
- Whose 'voice' are we hearing?
- How is the news presented to its readers?
- Is there any justification for bias or censorship?

Some of the activities focus on bias in relation to images. It is said that the camera never lies, but any analysis of newspapers will show this statement to be a simplification. Students should ask how editors and photographers influence the way we view an image.

## Group activity

Find between 3 and 5 examples of the same story from a range of different newspapers (you might do this by buying a range of newspapers on the same day). Read each of the articles and discuss whether the meaning of the story differs from paper to paper. Discuss the ways in which meaning is altered in each paper. Think about why the journalists and editors might be telling the story in a particular way.

## Class discussion

In a brief class discussion establish the difference between the terms 'bias' and 'censorship'. If an article is censored, is it necessarily also biased, and vice versa? Extend the discussion by asking, "who do you think writes the news?" (Write bullet points on the board)

## Group work: discussion

Hand out a photocopy of a current news story. Ask a student to read the article out to the whole class. Divide the class into small groups, asking each group to re-read the article. Using the criteria established in the previous discussion, ask each group to talk about how the article might be biased or censored. These ideas can be fed back to the whole class or remain within the group.

## Writing and analysis

Give each member of the group one of the following identities:

- Financial investor
- Leading politician
- Spin-doctor
- Newspaper baron
- Scientist
- Ecologist
- Religious leader

Ask each student to re-write part of the article with a bias towards their given identity, i.e.: the article must reflect their interests and concerns. They may also choose to censor aspects of the text, but must have valid reasons for doing so. Read out some diverse examples to the class

Ask the class to think of how they have defined censorship and bias. Discuss whether these definitions be applied to the use of images.

# TYPOGRAPHY AND DESIGN

These activities look at the power of design and how it is used to shape a newspaper's identity. Typeface, scale and colour are all used to create an impact, whether the effect is vibrant or subtle. Questions to explore:

- In our highly visual culture, how do newspapers vie for our attention?
- Do newspapers work on the same principles as other visual media?

## **Class discussion**

As a class look at some current front pages from the following newspapers: The Financial Times, The Daily Telegraph, The Independent, The Guardian, The Daily Mail, The Daily Mirror, The Sun, a local paper. Ask students to comment on the meanings or ideas they associate with a particular style. For example, does one paper appear to be more 'truthful' or serious than another because of its design?

Choose 3 or 4 examples representing a range of periods of history from the Front Page CD. Divide into small groups to briefly compare the use of typography, scale and colour, and the balance between image and text on each front page. Look at the inclusion of advertising in the overall layout. Ask students to feedback their ideas and impressions to the whole class.

## **Group work: design**

Give each group the same text content from an existing news story, an example of a range of fonts, a newspaper title (e.g.: The Telegraph), and the name of a product or competition to be advertised. Ask each group to think of an appropriate headline for their story and select a font. Ask the group to imagine an appropriate image for the article.

Using simple collage and/or diagrammatic drawing, ask each group to make a mock-up of the front page by applying the design criteria discovered in the previous exercises.

## **Group or individual work: discussion, drawing or writing activity**

Using the mock-ups and working in small groups or individually, ask students how their story could be presented in a newspaper of the future. What format will the newspaper exist in? How will readers access it? How will it remain fundamentally different from other forms of news transmission (TV, Radio and Internet)?

# WORD AND IMAGE

These activities explore the ways that headlines influence the reading of an image and vice versa. Students will be introduced to the idea that an image can add another interpretive dimension to a story, rather than simply illustrating it.

Questions to explore:

- Is the image as powerful as the word?
- How do words and images influence each other?

## **Group work: discussion and analysis**

Select 6 striking newspaper images and around 20 headlines from a range of newspapers. The images and headlines should all be fairly ambiguous in their content, and should not be easily associated with particular stories. Don't include headlines that relate to your chosen images. Photocopy the headlines, putting several on one sheet, so that you have 6 identical sets.

Divide the class into 6 groups, giving each one an image. Ask the groups to spend a few minutes discussing what they think the image might portray. Now hand out the headlines and ask students to match the most appropriate headline to their image, they must be able to agree as a group and justify their choice.

Ask the groups to swap around so that they are now working with another group's image and headline. Ask each group to decide whether the image and headline work together. Can they work out what the story is? Ask each group to select another headline for the image in order to completely change its meaning.

## **Individual work: writing and drawing**

Ask students to write a short article for a school newspaper on a given subject. They need to think about the facts of the story, the tone of the article, who readership is, and how they can make it an interesting read.

Ask students to pass their article to a neighbour, read the article they have been given, and generate a headline of between 1 and 6 words. Ask them to consider the purpose of a headline. You could use the Front Page CD to look at striking or successful headlines.

Now ask students to pass the article and headline on to another neighbour who will sketch an image for it. Ask them to consider how the three components work together. Would the story still work if one component were removed?

# TABLOID VERSUS BROADSHEET

These activities explore the differences between the tabloid and broadsheet formats. Questions to explore:

- Are newspapers all about news, or do they also provide their readers with entertainment and 'infotainment'?
- Do tabloids and broadsheets approach the same story differently?
- Do differences in the world of newspapers reflect broader social and cultural issues?

## **Class discussion and group work: analysis**

Use examples from the Front Page CD to introduce the question: What makes a 'good' newspaper story? Extend the discussion: is a good story in the news the same as a good story in film, TV or literature? List as many criteria as possible on the board. Ask students to be critical and to edit their list so that they have a clear set of guidelines to work with.

Using a range of current newspapers (tabloid, broadsheet, local) divide the class into small groups or pairs and ask them to select one story they feel fits their criteria. Ask students to feed their findings back to the class. Hold a class vote to ascertain which story really fits the criteria. Ask the group to consider whether we analyse stories in this way when we read them?

## **Individual work: writing and presentation**

Have a brief discussion with the whole class about stories they have come across in films and books. Ask how these differ from stories in the news (length, complexity, content etc.). You could focus on a book that the whole class is studying.

Show examples of stories from the Front Page CD that tell a 'human interest' story.

Ask students to think about a chosen story in film or literature (or use the one you have discussed). Using no more than 5 bullet points write down the essence of the plot. Now focus on a key scene, perhaps one that is dramatic or pivotal. List all the characters involved, where it happened and any other facts that influence the scene (weather, time of day etc.).

Selecting a newspaper title they are familiar with ask students to re-write the scene as though it were a news story appearing on tomorrow's front page. They will need to think about the impact of the story, the essential facts and human interest. How can the story retain its integrity whilst capturing the public imagination?

# NEWSPAPERS IN SOCIETY

These activities are designed around fundamental questions relating to the purpose of newspapers. Questions to explore:

- Is the role of newspapers to uncover the truth or reflect collective values and ideals?
- Do newspapers set the tone for our political and cultural thinking?
- How are minority interests represented in print?
- Do newspapers talk to YOU?
- Do newspapers provide a distinct alternative to the TV news?

## Class discussion

Read out a story from a recent paper. Ask your students what the journalist considered important when he or she wrote the story (interest, accuracy, clarity etc.).

Show examples from the Front Page CD about an issue of national concern e.g.: The War in Iraq  
Ask students:

Does everybody feel the same about this issue?  
Where do newspapers get their information?  
Where can we get other information about this subject? (internet, campaign groups, books, history, TV, radio, government)

Ask the class to help you draw a diagram or time-line that shows where news comes from and the route it takes before ending up on the front page.

## Individual work

Give the class a set of hard facts about global warming (wildlife behaviour, seasonal change, 'natural events', statistics, projections etc.). Discuss how these facts could be used to write an article that informs the public about global warming. Ask students:

- What should the public know?
- What are they concerned about?
- What are they least interested in?

Divide the class in two. Using this information, ask students in one half of the class to write an informative list or article about the issues involved. Ask the other half to write a list or article that creates concern and fear. Ask the class whether readers are interested in hard facts (statistics, scientific research etc.) or the story? How do these different modes of presentation impact on the reader in different ways?

## Class discussion and pair work

Using the hard facts and the individual writing already generated, ask students to think about how this story could be presented on TV. What might be added or taken away? What kind of impact does TV have compared to newspapers? Introduce the idea of sound, movement and time as crucial factors.

### **Class discussion and analysis**

Use the Front Page CD to look at the way the press has covered 3 key stories about US presidents (Nixon, Clinton, Bush). Ask the group to consider whether the press plays a judicial role in society.

Ask students to give each article marks out of 10 for each of the following categories:

- Investigation
- Information
- Balance

Now mark the same articles for the following qualities:

- Sensationalism
- Evasion
- Hysteria

Compare results. Ask students if they feel differently about these articles now they have graded them.

### **Class discussion and writing**

In a class discussion ask for individual opinions about the War in Iraq. Write down responses on the board.

Give students a piece of paper, ask them to fold it in four and open it out. On the top half of the page ask students to write down where they get their information and opinions about the war.

Ask them to turn the paper over and write in the left vertical column people that might agree with their opinions, and in the right column people that might disagree with them.

Ask them to turn the paper over again and in the bottom horizontal section write down any group or individual they feel is not represented fairly in the reporting of the War.

Look at articles covering the build up to War in Iraq, events throughout the War, and the situation in Iraq as it now stands. Ask students to consider the following questions:

- How has the proportion of 'News from Iraq' changed over 3 years?
- Has popular opinion shifted during this time?
- What is the 'popular mood' now?
- How is it possible to form your own opinion?

### **Pair work: writing**

Ask students to work with a partner to write down on a new piece of paper what the Iraqi press might be reporting.

# CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Who and what might change the newspaper establishment of the future? These activities aim to look at the history and possible future of newspapers. Questions to explore:

- As new technologies develop will newspapers survive in their current form?
- How might we receive the news in the future?
- Does technology dictate the nature of news reportage as well as the way it is delivered to us?
- Will newspapers retain their status in the delivery of news?

## Class discussion

Discuss the following with your students:

- Who owns the newspapers?
- Who are they accountable to?

Take each point in turn and ask your students how they think this will change in the future and why?

## Group work: analysis

How will newspapers change in the future? Which elements will remain constant?

Ask each group to read an article from this week's news, and to come up with a list of all the different people who might have contributed to it (reporters, eyewitnesses, experts etc.). Ask them to explain the different contributions each of these people makes.

Ask the class whether they think the sources are correct. How would they feel if they knew that some of them were incorrect?

Ask each group to list all the sources that might be used in a newspaper in 50 years time, will there be different sources to those used now? How might the news change as a result? How might 'accountability' change?

## Individual work

Ask your students to do the following:

Fold a piece of A4 paper in half 3 times so that when you unfold it you have eight rectangles. In each rectangle write one heading such as 'News', 'Sport', 'Arts', 'Finance' etc. Add any other headings you would like to find in a newspaper. Number them from 1-8 in order of reading preference.

Imagine that each of these rectangles represents a screen. In each screen write or draw how you would like to receive your news (text updates, layers of in-depth reports, images, sound etc.).

You can extend this project by making a layered / collaged image to show the different ways in which you can receive news, how you would make links between formats, and any interactive options.