

# ***1B — HOW TO READ A NEWS STORY***

## ***A.K.A. NEWS DETECTIVES***

### ***Introduction***

Now that students can identify news criteria — what makes a story interesting, engaging and entertaining — they need to focus on how to read news stories. In this lesson, students will learn to be “news detectives” — understanding how a news story is organized and what information they can get from different parts of a news story.

### ***Rationale***

News is organized in an extremely accessible way: in a few key words, the **headline** summarizes the story; the **dateline** tells where the story was written; and the **news lead** (first sentence, sometimes first two sentences) indicates the story’s focus.

As students identify these standard elements in specific articles, they will begin thinking about how they can best present information in their own news stories and other forms of writing. With practice, students can quickly identify and absorb key information in news stories, rather than feeling overwhelmed by the material.

This lesson is an excellent introduction and model for presenting current events in class. Please read advice at the end of this lesson to see how to make these discussions more effective.

### ***EALR Benchmarks***

Reading: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1,3.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3

Communication: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3

### ***Objectives*** <sup>A+</sup>

- Identify standard elements in a news story
- Review news criteria (Lesson 1A)

### ***Teaching Materials***

- √ Transparency 1B.1 “Yellow Clues”
- √ Transparency 1B.2 “WASD Test”

### ***Background***

A news story has several elements that give important information:

- **Headline** and **sub-headline** – key words at the top of a story that describe its content
- **Byline** – names of the writer and news organization that the writer works for
- **Dateline** – where the story was written
- **News lead** – gives the essence of the story by answering the “5 *Ws* and 1 *H*” (**Who?** **What?** **Where?** **When?** **Why?** and **How?**)
- **Direct quote** – a person’s exact words to a reporter

*Note:* Teachers’ copies of the two transparencies are included in this lesson.

*EALR Reading 1.1 states:*

The student understands and uses different skills and strategies to read, using word recognition and word meaning skills to read and comprehend text.



**In the Classroom:**



**Teach**

**Display** Transparency 1B.1. Tell students to look at the news story that it shows.

**Explain:** We are going to play a game called “news detective.” Tell me quickly where I can find key words that say what the story is about *without* reading the actual story.

**Listen:** *In the headline.*

Have a student come up and circle the headline and sub-head.

**Ask:** What is the story about?

**Listen:** Guide students to see that it’s about a show, “Yellow Clues,” getting a new host.

**Ask:** Are these complete sentences?

**Listen:** *No.*

**Ask:** Why not?

**Listen:** *A headline is a very brief statement of events.*

**Explain** that a sub-headline is used if more detail is needed, or to vary the layout. Point out that the sub-headline is printed in smaller letters than the headline.

**Write** on the transparency: Draw an arrow to the headline. Label it: **HEADLINE**. Draw an arrow to the sub-headline. Label it: **SUB-HEADLINE**.



**Ask:** Who wrote this story?

**Listen:** *John Rodriguez.*

**Ask:** Where does he work?

**Listen:** *Daily News Wire.*

**Ask:** Where did you find this information?

**Listen:** *Where it says “By John Rodriguez.”*

**Explain** that this is called, aptly, the byline. A newspaper contains stories from several different sources. Reporters hired by the newspaper write some stories; additional stories are purchased from news agencies, such as the Daily News Wire, and other publications.

**Write** on the transparency: Circle and label the byline: **BYLINE**.



**Ask:** Where was this story written?

**Listen:** *Los Angeles.*

**Explain:** Students will find this information in the dateline, which appears in capital letters at the beginning of the story. Sometimes a story does not have a dateline. (For example, most *Seattle Times* stories about Seattle have no dateline.) The absence of a dateline indicates that the story was produced wherever the newspaper is located.

**Write** on the transparency: Circle and label the dateline: **DATELINE**.

**Ask:** Have you heard the term, “5 Ws and 1 H?”

**Explain:** The “5 Ws and 1 H” stand for **Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How?**

**Write** the 5 Ws and 1 H on the board. Have students copy them in their journalism notebooks.

**Ask:** Can anyone tell me where to find the 5 Ws and 1 H in this story?

**Listen:** *In the first two sentences.*

**Explain:** If students falter, point out that the story tells about more than the show “Yellow Clues.” (The *What?* of the story is more specific: *What* is the *news* about Yellow Clues?) This appears in the first sentence.

**Write** on the transparency: Draw an arrow to the first sentence. Label it: **NEWS LEAD SENTENCE**.

Let students guide you to underline and identify the 5 Ws and 1 H. Have them underline and label each section, like on the Teacher’s Copy, or use different colors for each of the 5 Ws and 1 H:

1. *Who?* (actor Mustafa Habib and Jim Crawford)
2. *What?* (taking over as host of one of television’s most popular children’s shows, “Yellow Clues”)
3. *When?* (Starting Monday)
4. *Where?* (Los Angeles) Note that this *W* appears in the dateline.
5. *Why?* (replacing actor Jim Crawford, who wants a different acting job)
  1. *How?* (was selected from hundreds of actors).



**Listen:** Elicit from students that *Who? What? When?* and *Where?* are answered in the news lead.

**Explain:** The *Why?* and *How?* are almost always answered farther along in a story. Generally, reporters explain *what* happened, *who* was involved and/or affected, and *when* it happened before writing *why* and *how* it happened.

**Ask:** As a lead-in to direction quotations, **Does anyone know the difference between third-person and first-person?**

**Listen:** *Third person* is he, she, it or they; *first person* is I.



**Ask:** What sentences in this story are written in first person?

**Listen:** “I hope kids know I won’t be replacing Jim,” says Habib. “Mustafa is a whole new character for them to get to know and love.”

**Explain:** This is called a direct quote. It gives the exact words that a person, actor Mustafa Habib, said to a reporter, John Rodriguez.

Explain that, with the exception of direct quotes, news stories are *always* written in the third person. Point out that writing “our school” or “my class” is not an acceptable style in a school newspaper story — unless the phrase is part of a direct quotation.

Tell students that every news story they write **MUST** contain at least one direct quote.

**Write** on the transparency: Circle and label the direct quote: ***DIRECT QUOTE***.

### ***Practice***

- Review the five news criteria. Ask which criteria are met by “Yellow Clues.” (Current, important, identification.)
- Introduce Transparency 1B.2 (“WASD Test”). Have students identify the standard news terms in the article.

*Note:* You may wish to direct this activity, calling on students one-by-one to identify each news element. Or you could assign it as an individual or group activity, in which students write the answers independently.



### ***Follow-up Activities***

- √ Select stories from the daily newspaper, copy the stories onto transparencies, and have the class spend a few minutes each day (or several days each week) identifying all the elements of news: the five news criteria (from Lesson 1A) and the standard news elements presented in this lesson. For younger students particularly, the teacher may need to walk students through the process many times before they are ready to try it on their own.

This activity can serve as an alternative or adjunct to a standard current events presentation. With practice, students will be able to find and analyze news stories on their own, and lead the class in a discussion of the news.

### ***Important Advice***

Use this lesson to avoid the common mistakes of a standard current events presentation. **DON'T** give students a sheet of paper with the 5 Ws and 1 H listed, and require them to transpose the information from a news story. They often miss key elements in the attempt to resummarize! **DO** have them identify the 5 Ws and 1 H in the news story itself, using five different colored markers on a transparency. This can start with the teacher, and move to students doing the work on the transparency in front of the class.



## **TRANSPARENCY 1B.1 — NEWS DETECTIVES**

### **‘YELLOW CLUES’ GETS NEW HOST**

#### **Youngsters Mourn Jim’s Departure**

**By JOHN RODRIGUEZ**

Daily News Wire

LOS ANGELES — Starting Monday, Mustafa Habib will take over as host of one of television’s most popular children’s shows, “Yellow Clues,” replacing Jim Crawford, the show’s host since it started eight years ago.

Habib was selected from among hundreds of young actors who auditioned all over the country.

Crawford said he was leaving the show to move onto other acting jobs. He has become a beloved television celebrity to preschoolers, some of whom have been known to cry at the news that he is leaving.

“I hope kids know I won’t be replacing Jim,” said Habib. “Mustafa is a whole new person for them to get to know and love.”



TEACHER'S COPY

TRANSPARENCY 1B.1 — NEWS DETECTIVES

'YELLOW CLUES' GETS NEW HOST → headline  
Youngsters Mourn Jim's Departure → sub-headline  
By JOHN RODRIGUEZ → byline  
Daily News Wire → dateline & where

LOS ANGELES — Starting Monday, Mustafa Habib will take over as host of one of television's most popular children's shows, "Yellow Clues," replacing Jim Crawford, the show's host since it started eight years ago.

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Crawford said he was leaving the show to move onto other acting jobs. He has become a beloved television celebrity to preschoolers, some of whom have been known to cry at the news that he is leaving.

"I hope kids know I won't be replacing Jim," said Habib. "Mustafa is a whole new person for them to get to know and love."

news lead ←  
how ←  
when  
who  
what  
what  
who  
why  
direct quote



## TRANSPARENCY 1B.2 — NEWS DETECTIVES

### WASD TEST RESISTED BY SOME PARENTS

Some find the exercises pointless and offensive

By Joan Davis, Staff reporter

SEATTLE DAILY NEWS

For the last two years, Amy Mannaheim has kept her kids under house arrest the week that the Washington Assumption of Student Development (WASD) is offered in their school.

The test, known as the “WASD,” uses several different formats to assess reading, writing, math, listening and cooking skills. Soon all students will be required to pass the tests each year if they want to graduate.

But some parents like Mannaheim refuse to participate, arguing that the increasing use of such tests to rank and rate students and schools is destroying real learning in the classroom.

“I’d rather lock my kids in a closet than put them through the WASD,” said Mannaheim. “Tell me how some ordinary test is going to rank what my child knows.”



TEACHER'S COPY

TRANSPARENCY 1B.2 — NEWS DETECTIVES

No dateline?  
"Where" is Seattle

**WASD TEST RESISTED BY SOME PARENTS** → headline

Some find the exercises pointless and offensive → sub-headline

By Joan Davis, Staff reporter → byline

SEATTLE DAILY NEWS

For the last two years, Amy Mannaheim <sup>when</sup> has kept her kids <sup>who</sup> under house arrest <sup>what</sup> the week <sup>when</sup> that the Washington Assumption of Student Development (WASD) is offered in their <sup>where</sup> school. <sup>what</sup>

how  
and  
what

The test, known as the "WASD," uses several different formats to assess reading, writing, math, listening and cooking skills. Soon all students will be required to pass the tests each year if they want to graduate. <sup>what</sup>

why

But some parents like Mannaheim refuse to participate, arguing that the increasing use of such tests to rank and rate students and schools is destroying real learning in the classroom.

"I'd rather lock my kids in a closet than put them through the WASD," said Mannaheim. "Tell me how some ordinary test is going to rank what my child knows."

direct  
quote