

1C —

NEWSPAPER ORGANIZATION/GENRES OF NEWS

Introduction

Once students know how to find information in a story, they need to learn how newspapers are organized and what types of stories appear in them. In this lesson, students will learn how a newspaper is organized, and practice finding information based on the organization.

Rationale

A newspaper is organized in a logical format. The **front page** has the most exciting news of the day. (The editors determine what is most newsworthy for their readership.) The *A*-section contains **world** and **national** news; the *B*-section contains **local** news; etc. In this lesson, students will learn that the answer to the question “What is news?” varies with the geographical location, ages, and interests of particular newspaper readers.

EALR Benchmarks

Reading: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3

Communication: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4

Objectives ^{A+}

- Describe the sections of a newspaper
- Explain what makes news “important” enough to appear on the front page
- Identify newspaper articles by type (e.g., “world”) and section (e.g., A)
- Look up information in a newspaper

Teaching Materials

- √ Transparency 1C.1 “Organizing the Newspaper”
- √ 1 local newspaper for use in the lecture, preferably that day’s newspaper
- √ For younger students: 5-10 local newspapers, section headings removed with scissors
- √ For older students: 5-10 local newspapers

Background

Newspapers are organized in the following manner:

- **Front page** – the day’s most important local, international, world, business and sports news (in the first or A-section, page 1)
- **World** – world news (usually in the A-section, after the front page)
- **National** – national news (usually in the A-section)
- **Local** – local news; the front page of the section highlights the most important local news (usually the second, or B-section)
- **Business** – local, national and international business news; the front page of the section highlights the most important business news (usually the third, or C-section)

EALR Communication 4.3 states:

The student analyzes and evaluates the effectiveness of formal and informal communication, analyzing mass communication.



- **Sports** – local, national and international sports news; the front page of the section highlights the most important sports news (usually the fourth, or D-section).
- **Features/Entertainment** – Features are not necessarily linked to a current event but explore trends and highlight information that readers will find entertaining and/or relevant to their lives. (Hence the term, “Lifestyle section” that many papers employ.) The features/entertainment section might include stories about cooking, travel, parenting, and celebrities — as well as comics, movie reviews, television listings, and advice columns (usually the fifth, or E-section).
- **Classified Ads** – paid advertisements for “everything” — from houses to jobs to free pets to motor vehicles to concert tickets (usually the last, or F-section).

In the Classroom:



Warm Up

Ask: What can you find in a newspaper? Why do you read the paper?

Listen: Elicit a range of responses — from general (comic strips, national news, sports, ads) to specific (“Peanuts,” President Bush’s speech, the Super Bowl).

Write students’ responses on the board.

Explain: That’s a lot of information for newspaper editors to organize! Today we are going to discuss where to find different information in the newspaper.

Teach

- √ Get out Transparency 1C.1, “Organizing the Newspaper” and one issue of your local newspaper. (*Teachers note:* Younger students may each need a copy of this transparency.)
- √ Display only the top item, **front page**, on the transparency.
- √ Simultaneously display the front page of your local newspaper — or have a volunteer hold up the front page — so all students can see it.

Ask: What stories appear on the first page of a newspaper? Remember, the front page is the first thing people see when they are deciding whether to buy a newspaper.

Listen: “The most important, interesting news of the day goes on the front page.”

Read aloud — or have the volunteer read aloud — the headlines on the front page that you have displayed. Guide students to classify each story as local, national, or international news.

Explain: The front page presents what editors think is the most interesting news of the day for their newspaper’s readers. The front page is the first page in the A-section, the first section in a newspaper.

Write: Have students copy in their journalism notebooks the description of **front page**.

Note: It’s most likely you will find an important *local* news story on the front page of your local newspaper (for example, a story covering a win by a local baseball team or a three-alarm fire that destroyed an apartment building). Such a story would not appear on the front page in another city’s paper.



If that happens,

Ask: **Would this story appear on the front page of a newspaper in Wichita, Kansas, or Toronto, Ontario? Why not?**

Listen: *“The story is of major interest only to readers in the area where the event occurred.”*

Ask: **Does anyone know what goes in the rest of the A-section, after the front page?**

Listen: If students have difficulty, read aloud a few story headlines and datelines from your sample newspaper.

Explain: National and world news goes inside the A-section.

Display the **world** and **national** descriptions on Transparency 1C.1.

Write: Have students copy these descriptions in their notebooks.

Introduce the second, or B-section. Read aloud the headlines and datelines of several stories on the front page of this section. Remind students that the absence of a dateline denotes a local story.

Ask: **What do all the stories in the B-section have in common?** (Unless your local section isn't B, go in order that is laid out in the lesson.)

Listen: *“They are all local stories.”*

Ask: **Where in the section do you find the most important local news stories?**

Listen: *“On the front page of the local section.”*

Display the **local** description on Transparency 1C.1. Have students write the description for **local** in their notebooks.

Using the same teaching strategy as above, present the four remaining newspaper sections described in the Background and on the transparency.

Practice



Younger students: Divide the class into groups of three. Give each group one newspaper section — with the headings cut off. In 5-10 minutes, have students determine what section they are holding, based on the kinds of stories that they find in the section.

Older students: Divide the class into groups of three “editors.” Give each group an entire newspaper. After 5-10 minutes, have groups explain why certain stories were placed on the front page, on the front page of section B, etc. Have them assess whether the stories were placed appropriately.

Note: Students may disagree on whether stories belong where they were placed. Disagreement can lead to a good discussion on what constitutes “news” in your local community. Require students to give reasons for their judgment that a story is or is not appropriately positioned. Above all, remind them to refer to Lesson 1A for the news criteria, to help back up any claims they might make.



Follow-up Activities

- √ *Younger students:* Hold a weekly news scavenger hunt. Make up questions whose answers appear in different sections of the newspaper. For example: “How many cups of sugar go into three-berry pie?” (*Lifestyle*) or “What city just passed a new downtown parking law?” (*Local*)

At first, students may find this activity challenging, but they will attain proficiency after two or three tries. Students must understand how newspapers are organized before they can begin producing their own class paper.

Note to Seattle-area teachers: The *Seattle Times* Newspapers in Education (NIE) program provides **free** daily copies of the *Seattle Times* and *Post-Intelligencer* to schools — along with numerous suggestions for using them in the classroom. The NIE program includes a weekly scavenger hunt and activities designed to glean information from a single news article. Both these lesson types are available by e-mail and are recommended — the former for older elementary students, the latter for middle school and high school students.

Contact Information:

The Seattle Times Newspapers in Education (NIE) program

E-mail: nie@seattletimes.com

Telephone: 206/652-6347

Web page: <http://gateway2.seattletimes.nwsourc.com/nie/>



TRANSPARENCY 1C.1 — ORGANIZING THE NEWSPAPER

Front page — the day’s most important local, international, world, business and sports news (in the first or A-section, page 1)

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National — national news (usually in the A-section)

Local — local area news; the front page of the section highlights the most important local news (usually the second, or B-section)

Business — local, national and international business news; the front page of the section highlights the most important business news (usually the third, or C-section)

Sports — local, national and international sports news; the front page of the section highlights the most important sports news (usually the fourth, or D-section)

Features/Entertainment — Features are not necessarily linked to a current event but explore trends and highlight information that readers will find entertaining and/or relevant to their lives. (Hence the term, “Lifestyle section”) The features/entertainment section might include stories about cooking, travel, parenting, and celebrities — as well as comics, movie reviews, television listings, and advice columns (usually the fifth, or E-section)

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