

Newspaper style (a worksheet)

Activity 1

Look at the pictures and discuss the questions:

1. What do you see in these pictures? What are people doing?
2. Do you belong to people who like or dislike reading newspapers? Why?
3. Why do people like and dislike reading newspapers?
4. Do you agree or disagree with Sir Stanley Unwin's quote?

"Power of the Press, a power which may last, but a day; by comparison little is heard of the power of books, which may endure for generations".



Activity 2

Read the article. What are the peculiarities of the newspaper style?



Newspaper style was the last of all the styles of written literary English to be recognized as a specific form of writing standing apart from other forms. Information in the English newspaper is conveyed, in the first place, through the medium of brief news items and long analytical articles.

The principal function of a brief news is to inform the reader. It states facts without giving explicit comments, and whatever evaluation there is in news paragraphs is for the most part implicit and as a rule unemotional.

It goes without saying that the bulk of the vocabulary used in newspaper writing is neutral and common literary. But apart from this, newspaper style has its specific vocabulary features and is characterized by an extensive use of:

- a) **Special political and economic terms**, e. g. socialism, constitution, president, apartheid, by-election, General Assembly, gross output, per capita production;
- b) **Non-term political vocabulary**, e.g. public, people, progressive, nation-wide, unity, peace;
- c) **Newspaper clichés**, e.g. stereotyped expressions, commonplace phrases familiar to the reader like vital issue, pressing problem, informed sources, danger of war, to escalate a war, war hysteria, overwhelming majority;
- d) **Abbreviations**. News items, press reports and headlines abound in abbreviations of various kinds. e.g. UN (United Nations), FO (Foreign Office), PIB (Prices and Incomes Board);
- e) **Neologisms**. These are very common in newspaper vocabulary. The newspaper is very quick to react to any new development in the life of society, in science and technology. e.g. hacktivist (a person who gets access to computer systems to promote political views), glass ceiling (barriers that prevent representatives of ethnic minorities from making a career), Generation D (generation that is aware of computer systems), garriage (marriage between representatives of the same sex).

Answer the questions:

1. What difficulties do you face with while reading a newspaper article?
2. Which aspect is more complicated for you, grammar or vocabulary?

Activity 3

Look through information about headlines and do the exercises.



The main function of a headline is to catch the readers' attention and to inform them briefly what the text is about. Headlines could be declarative (*"They threw bombs on gypsy sides"*) or interrogative (*"Would it be found?"*). Link-verbs are often omitted: *"7 arrested in sit down protest"*. A simple form of the verb is used: *"Queen opens hospital today"*. The infinitive is used to show that something is going to happen in the nearest future: *"President to visit mine"*. Newspaper headlines use a lot of distinctive vocabulary. They prefer words that are usually shorter and generally sound more dramatic than ordinary English words. Here is the chart with commonly used words in headlines. Learn them in order to be able to explain the meaning of the headlines.

Newspaper word	Meaning	Newspaper word	Meaning
Aid	help	Key	essential
Axe	cut	Link	connection
Back	support	Ordeal	painful experience
Bar	forbid	Oust	push out
Bid	attempt	Plea	request
Blast	explosion	Pledge	promise
Boost	encourage	Poll	election, public opinion survey
Clash	dispute	Probe	investigation
Curb	restraint, limit	Riddle	mystery
Cut	reduction	Vow	promise
Gems	jewels	Wed	marry
Go-ahead	approval		

3.1. Match the headlines with the appropriate topic.

Headlines		News topics
A. PM BACKS PEACE PLAN		1. marriage of a famous actress
B. MP SPY DRAMA		2. royal jewels are stolen
C. SPACE PROBE FAILS		3. person who saw the crime is in danger
D. QUEEN'S GEMS RIDDLE		4. proposal to end the war
E. STAR WEDS		5. satellite is not launched
F. KEY WITNESS DEATH THREAT		6. politician sells secrets to the enemy

3.2. Explain what the following headlines mean:

Example: SHOP BLAZE 5 DEAD – 5 people died in fire in the shop

1. MOVE TO CREATE MORE JOBS
2. GO-AHEAD FOR WATER CURBS
3. WOMAN QUILTS AFTER JOB ORDEAL
4. POLL PROBES SPENDING HABITS
5. PRINCE VOWS TO BACK FAMILY

3.3. Look at the underlined words and explain what they mean:

Example: PM TO CURB SPENDING - to limit

1. CHANCELLOR CUTS INTEREST RATES
2. BOMB BLASTS CENTRAL LONDON
3. PM PLEDGES BACKING FOR EUROPE
4. PRESIDENT HEADS PEACE MOVES

3.4. Explain the meaning of the headlines suggested:

GEM SMUGGLERS CAUGHT IN PORT SWOOP
BANK RAID CASH HAUL FOUND: 3 CHARGED
DICTATOR OUSTED: PLEA FOR CALM
NEW MOVES TO HALT BORDER CLASHES
GOVT BACKS ARMS BAN TO WOO LEFT
KIDNAP BID FOILED: 3 QUIZZED, 2 FLEE

3.5. Make brief headlines from the following news stories:

- A. Eighteen people were killed when the army tried to overthrow the government
- B. A leading diplomat has been mysteriously murdered
- C. The Prime Minister is trying to win the support of the coal miners' trade union
- D. The director of British Petroleum has been forced to resign
- E. A member of Parliament was questioned by the police in an investigation into the use of illegal drugs

Activity 4

Read the article. What are the grammar peculiarities of the newspaper style?



THE TIMES
TUESDAY APRIL 23 2002

A literary favour to world culture

BOOKS
Even the Pope keeps a Moleiro manuscript next to his bed, says Allegra Stratton

Language and love are intertwined. Scientists argue that the brain's erotic and linguistic centres are the same. Experience dictates that affairs of the heart lead to letters, books and poetry. On April 23, St George's Day, Catalonia's reader's version of Valentine's Day, lovers will not be swapping chocolate but books. Champions Casanovas should give a Moleiro manuscript.

Moleiro publishers, set up in 1992 by Manuel Moleiro, provide an invaluable service to the academic world from Barcelona, the publishing capital of the Spanish speaking world. While most publishers offer a simple material support on which detailed photographs of pages are reproduced as faithfully as possible, beginning with handmade parchment or paper. Each of the pages is trimmed to the size and shape of its prototype. The image is then scanned on with special printing techniques that utilize inks chosen by experts to

Only 987 are made of earth and all are signed by notarial deed, making them attractive to investors. Moleiro manuscripts are so highly regarded that when President George W. Bush visited Madrid last year, the Spanish Government presented the American First Lady, Laura Bush, with a Book of Hours. The Pope, another loyal fan, keeps his copy of Moleiro's *Martirología* by his bed.

The real benefits, however, are felt in academia. While some may regard anything so expensive (prices range from £300 to £8,000) as the antithesis of the academic process and yet others may believe that rarity and expense is the correct context in which to study a

The art of illustrators cannot be appreciated while shut in museums. Now there are nearly 1,000 copies of manuscripts such as *The Bible of St Louis*, and maps such as the *Portolan Chart of Christopher Columbus*, which previously existed in sep-

Oxford's Bodleian has just bought the £9,000 *St Louis Bible*, of which Moleiro has already sold 500.

Another reproduction revealed a Byzantine manuscript, a luxury item from the capital's best crypticists, to be of poor

All manuscripts are accompanied by such academic analysis. The feel and texture of the paper and burnished gold between the fingers is convincing. On the anniversary of the birth of Miguel de Cervantes and the death of William Shake-

The following grammatical peculiarities of newspaper English may be regarded as grammatical parameters of newspaper style:

a) **Occasional disregard for the sequence of tenses rule and rules for reporting speech:** "It was announced in Cairo yesterday that elections *will be held*..."

b) **Verbal (infinitive, participial, gerundial) constructions and verbal noun constructions, e.g.:** "Mr. Nobusuke Kishi, the former Prime Minister of Japan, has sought to set an example to the faction ridden Governing Liberal Democratic Party *by announcing the disbanding of his own faction numbering 11* of the total of 295 conservative members of the Lower house of the Diet."

c) **Syntactical (predicative) complexes**, especially the nominative with the infinitive (complex subject). These constructions are largely used to avoid mentioning the source of information: "The condition of Lord Samuel, aged 92, *was said last night to be* a little better."

Read the article and retell it using not newspaper style.

Childcare Costs Stopping Mothers Going to Work, Says Study

The study says the number of women opting to look after their children instead of doing paid employment has risen by 32,000 since last summer, with rising childcare costs being a key factor in their decision. The figures are based on analysis of the latest Labour Force Survey, and the number of women classing themselves as economically inactive because they are looking after their family and home.

According to the insurer Aviva's latest Family Finances Report, the average cost of full-time childcare is £385 a month, but this rises to £729 for children under two. Part-time care comes in at £193 a month, or £364 for the under-twos.

On top of this, the average worker is spending £120 (full-time) and £90 (part-time) on expenses associated with their jobs, such as clothes, travel and food, and £147 on school-related costs. After meeting these costs, Aviva said a woman in a relationship on the average part-time salary of £8,557, after tax and national insurance, with children aged one and seven would be losing £98 a month.

In contrast, a woman in a similar position who does not pay for childcare will take home £402 a month once work costs are taken into account. According to the insurer's research, 54% of families say they are not currently paying for childcare.

Full-time workers are better off, but only just. A woman with a one-year-old and seven-year-old who earns £17,513 after tax will have £120 left if she does pay for childcare, if she does not have to meet childcare costs, she will have £1,118.

Louise Colley, head of protection at Aviva, said: "As care costs rise, it's quite possible we will see more and more couples relying on one salary while the other person looks after the children – simply because they may actually be worse off if both people work. However, while this may make financial sense, it can also leave families vulnerable should anything happen to that income earner."

Emily Devane gave up work as a teacher to look after her children. Devane, who was a history teacher at a school in Hertfordshire, had returned part-time after having her daughter and had planned to do the same after Sam was born.

"I went back three days a week after Kate was born and that worked fine, but the fees at the nursery have gone up," she said. "I did the maths and I worked out I would be earning about £50 a week."

Devane's job meant a long commute and rising petrol costs, plus work after school hours. When Kate was offered three hours a day free of charge at a local pre-school, giving up work made even more sense. "I would have had to find a childminder who would have taken her to nursery and looked after Sam," she said. "It wasn't easy to make the decision – I think for women, particularly educated women, your work defines you. It was really difficult to give up." However, she added: "I could be earning very little money looking after other people's children or be here with my children, which for me seems the wiser decision at the moment."

Homework

Task 1

For each of the following headlines find the sentence below which expresses it as it would appear in an ordinary news article.

'POLLS RIGGED' CHARGES
TWO SOUGHT AFTER BREAK-OUT DRAMA
CABINET RESHUFFLE URGED
SERVICE CHIEFS GAGGED: TWO QUIT
GEMS HAUL SEIZED IN SWOOP

1. allegations have been made that election results were falsified.
2. police raided a house today and took possession of jewellery stolen in a recent robbery.
3. police are hunting two men who made a daring escape from prison by helicopter.
4. senior officers of the armed forces have been instructed not to talk to the media and? As a
5. result two of them have resigned.
6. strong appeals have been made to the PM to make changes in his ministers.

Task 2

Express the meaning of the following headlines

EDITORS URGE END TO PRESS GAG
INDIA SEEKS US AID
HEAD QUILTS OVER 'RIGGED' EXAM RESULTS
RAIL CHIEFS RESHUFFLED AFTER BIG LOSSES
GOVT DEFEATED IN POLL DRAMA
CABINET LEAK: CALL FOR PROBE
EU SPLIT OVER LIFTING OF TRAVEL CURBS
PEER DIES IN FLATS BLAZE DRAMA
BLAST TOLL RISING: WITNESSES SOUGHT
COMMONS STORM OVER DEFENCE CUTS
M - WAY DEATH CRASH: BRITON HELD