



Unit Cover Page

Unit Title: News Matters

Subject/Topic Areas: News literacy

Key Words: News literacy, journalism, media

Grade Levels: 3-6

Time Frame: ~3 weeks

Designed by: News Literacy Project and TIME for Kids

Brief summary of unit:

In this unit, students will learn about major standards of quality journalism and why news matters. Through a series of five main lessons, they will distinguish fact from fiction, zone different types of information into their primary purposes, recognize elements of quality journalism, gauge the newsworthiness of topics and stories and identify key journalism terminology. It's meant to be a starting point for conversations about and interest in journalism.

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Stage 1— Identify Desired Results

Established Goals	Transfer	
<p>Standard 1: Students distinguish news from other types of information and can recognize both traditional and nontraditional advertisements.</p> <p>Standard 3: Students understand why professional and ethical standards are necessary to produce quality journalism, and they can apply understanding of those standards to discern credible information and sources for themselves.</p>	<p><i>Students will be able to independently use their learning to...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguish news from other types of information. • Discern evidence of standards to identify quality journalism and credible information. • Evaluate what drives the newsworthiness of a topic. 	
	Meaning	
	<p>UNDERSTANDINGS <i>Students will understand that...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different types of information exist for different purposes. • Quality journalism has rigorous standards designed to produce fair, accurate and timely information about newsworthy issues and events for the public. 	<p>ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS <i>Students will keep considering...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is it important to understand the types of information we encounter? • What rules and guidelines should journalists aspire to when reporting a news story, and why? • What makes an issue or event “news”? Who decides? • How can understanding journalists’ vocabulary help us better understand journalism?
	Acquisition	
<p><i>Students will know...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions of and the difference between facts and opinions. • Different reasons people create media. • Seven standards of quality journalism. • How journalists determine which events and issues to cover in a given news cycle. • Vocabulary terms used in newsrooms. 	<p><i>Students will be skilled at...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying facts and opinions. • Analyzing how facts and opinions are used in journalism. • Using facts to support their opinions. • Differentiating information based on its primary purpose among six main “zones.” • Identifying credible sources of information and those that lack credibility about a given subject. • Developing an individual sense of “news judgment” when evaluating the newsworthiness of various examples. • Identifying examples of journalism terms in various news sources. 	

Stage 2 – Evidence

What evidence will show that students understand?

PERFORMANCE TASK – What student product and performance will provide evidence of desired understandings?

[Media Literacy Scavenger Hunt](#) – In this activity, students evaluate an opinion article, zone information, analyze the credibility of a news article, argue the newsworthiness of an article and find examples to demonstrate understanding of journalism terms.

Fact and Opinion

Read [this](#) opinion article.

How can you tell this is an opinion article?

What is the author's opinion?

What are two facts the author uses to support her opinion?

•

InfoZones

Find the following examples of information. Type the title and hyperlink the article in the appropriate box. Or add a screenshot of the piece of information and hyperlink where it was found.

News	Opinion	Entertainment	Advertisement

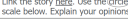
Credibility

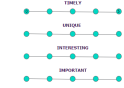
Find a credible news story. Link it [here](#). Use the space below to analyze two sources used in the story.

Name of source	Who they are	What perspective they provide

Are the sources balanced? Explain.

Newsworthiness

Find a story you would make a front-page story of a newspaper. Link the story [here](#). Use the  shape to indicate your rating on the scale below. Explain your opinions.



Explain.

Understanding the Lingo

Find a "soft news" or feature story. Link it [here](#). What is its lead?

Find an article about outer space. What is its byline?

Find an article with a kicker quote. Copy and paste the quote in this box.

Evaluative Criteria: Each task is worth 1-4 points. Students rate themselves on each item and tally up their points on the final slide. The teacher then evaluates the student's work and offers feedback.

How did you do?

How many points would you assign yourself? /25

Which assignment did you find easiest? Which was most challenging?

Total points scored:

Feedback for student:

OTHER EVIDENCE – What other evidence needs to be collected in light of Stage 1 Desired Results?

In addition to informal observations, each lesson has work samples that can be assessed for student understanding.

Lesson 1: Exit ticket: “Should plastic straws be banned?”

Evaluative Criteria: Do students provide their opinion and use two reasons, based on what they read in the “[Straw Ban](#)” [Checkology](#) challenge? (Must be logged into Checkology to access.)

Lesson 2: Exit ticket: Students choose an article, analyze which InfoZone the article falls into and explain their thinking.

Evaluative Criteria: Do students accurately zone the article? Do they explain why it fits into the respective zone and why it is *not* a different type of information?

Lesson 3: “[Get Inside the Story](#)” assessment.

Evaluative Criteria: Do students explain nine accurate examples of standards of quality journalism found in the TIME for Kids article?

Lesson 4: Exit ticket: Students rate the newsworthiness of The Washington Post article “[You Met Him as ‘Corn Kid.’ Now, he’s South Dakota’s ‘Corn-bassador.’](#)”

Evaluative Criteria: In their paragraph on the newsworthiness of the article, do students use the Big Four factors plus the element they decided on in the closure of the lesson?

Lesson 5: “[Lingo Bingo](#)” responses.

Evaluative Criteria: Are students’ examples accurate?

Student Self-Assessment and Reflection

1. “[Vocabulary Self-Assessment](#).”

Evaluative Criteria: Look for additional definitions and examples and fill in the self-assessment as the lesson progresses. Ensure the definitions and examples are correct.

2. Self-assess the [Media Literacy Scavenger Hunt](#) (see text above for performance task)

Evaluative Criteria: Each task is worth 1-4 points. Students rate themselves on each item and tally up their points on the final slide. (The teacher then evaluates the student’s work and offers feedback.)

3. Students complete “[Stoplight Exit Ticket](#),” identifying one thing they will stop doing, one thing they will slow down and take a closer look at, and one thing they will start doing.

Evaluative Criteria: Look for evidence reflecting knowledge of fact versus opinion, different zones of information, standards of journalism, newsworthiness and journalism terms.



Stage 3 – Plan Learning Experiences

What sequence of teaching and learning experiences will equip students to engage with, develop and demonstrate the desired understandings?

Coding	Learning Events
	<p>Coding WHERE TO... How will the design: W= Help the students know Where the unit is going and What is expected? Help the teacher know Where the students are coming from (prior knowledge, interests)? H= Hook all students and Hold their interest? E= Equip students, help them Experience the key ideas and Explore the issues? R= Provide opportunities to Rethink and Revise their understandings and work? E-2= Allow students to Evaluate their work and its implications? T= Be Tailored (personalized) to the different needs, interests and abilities of learners? O= Be Organized to maximize initial and sustained engagement as well as effective learning?</p>
H	<p>1. News Literacy Hook</p> <p>Provide students with the TikTok Viewing Guide from TIME for Kids, then show them the quick TikTok video from the News Literacy Project, which you may need to play a few times depending on the needs of your class. Explain to students that some of the concepts and vocabulary in this video may not be familiar to them yet, but will include the kinds of knowledge and skills they will explore throughout this unit. After viewing the video and completing the viewing guide, facilitate a discussion as a whole class or in groups using the discussion questions at the end of the guide.</p>
W	<p>2. Media Literacy Scavenger Hunt Pre-Assessment</p> <p>Show students the Media Literacy Scavenger Hunt. Explain that by the end of the unit, everyone will be able to complete this. Provide students with the adapted version as a pre-assessment to see what they already know. Give everyone 20 minutes to complete the adapted version and see how far they get. Have students turn in their pre-assessments and review them to determine what students already know and what topics need more attention during the lessons. You'll return them at the end of the unit.</p>
W, E	<p>3. Getting started with the News Literacy Project and news literacy essential questions</p> <p>Students register for a free Checkology account. Tell students they'll need to use Checkology for various lessons throughout this unit. Allow students time to acquaint themselves with Checkology and the News Literacy Project. Then, hold a class discussion on the unit's essential questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Why is it important to understand the types of information we encounter? ● What rules and guidelines should journalists aspire to when reporting a news story, and why? ● What makes an issue or event "news"? Who decides? ● How can understanding journalists' vocabulary help us better understand journalism? <p>Write down student responses on a piece of chart paper and display it throughout the unit. Let students know they will revisit these questions periodically.</p>

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E, T	<p>4. Lesson 1: Distinguishing Fact from Opinion (S1)</p> <p>Students will learn what differentiates a fact from an opinion and will practice identifying the two. Then they'll read a debate published by TIME for Kids to understand how facts can support opinions.</p>
E, T	<p>5. Lesson 2: Zoning Information (S1, S3)</p> <p>Students learn about six different "zones" of information. They will identify the primary purpose of each type of information to help them identify credible news sources.</p>
E	<p>6. Lesson 3: Recognizing Quality Journalism (S3)</p> <p>Students learn about seven standards of quality journalism. They will apply these guidelines to put together a credible news story in the "Practicing Quality Journalism" Checkology lesson, and they will analyze how journalists can apply these standards in their work with a viewing guide for a News Goggles video with journalist Lionel Ramos.</p>
R	<p>7. Revisit the unit's essential questions (S1, S3)</p> <p>Review and discuss the unit's essential questions. Ask students what they understand now that they didn't at the beginning of the unit. What is still unclear? Add their responses to the chart paper started at the beginning of the unit.</p>
E2	<p>8. Optional: Reach out to connect with a journalist through the News Literacy Project's Newsroom to Classroom visits. (S1-S5)</p> <p>If you're planning to invite a journalist to your classroom (the optional activity in lesson 5), decide, as a class, which journalist to invite, create a list of questions and draft an email explaining what the class is learning and still would like to know.</p>

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E	<p>9. Lesson 4: What Makes Something Newsworthy? (S1)</p> <p>Students learn about four factors that can help them determine which information is worthy of becoming news. They'll use these factors to gauge the newsworthiness of a topic, and they will make judgments about which news stories should be covered over others.</p>
E, R	<p>10. Lesson 5: Learning the Lingo (S3)</p> <p>Students self-assess and show evidence of their understanding of core vocabulary used in newsrooms. This is meant to be a catalyst to the next series of journalism lessons.</p>
R, T	<p>11. Allow students a choice in learning experiences to extend their learning (Differentiate by content, process and product according to students' readiness and/or interest). You'll want to use the student assessments from each lesson to determine which offerings best support student needs. Below are a few options. (S1, S3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● View clips of the PBS documentary "Storm Lake" on PBS Learning Media. Learn about the importance of local news and how it is made with these resources from the News Literacy Project and <i>Independent Lens</i>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ After viewing, students can use this news log to follow and analyze news sources. ● Complete additional lessons on Checkology. ● Complete additional News Goggles activities. ● Complete any of the extension options offered in the five lessons, if not already completed.
R, T	<p>12. Media Literacy Scavenger Hunt from TIME for Kids (S1, S3)</p> <p>Students complete this end-of-unit assessment to test their knowledge of the unit's knowledge and skills goals. Once evaluated, return students pre-assessments to allow them to see their growth.</p>

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R	<p>13. Revisit the unit’s essential questions (S1, S3)</p> <p>Review and discuss the unit’s essential questions. Ask students what they better understand now. What additional questions did this unit uncover for students? If you have plans for a journalist to visit your classroom, consider reviewing the essential questions, activities and assessments within each lesson with your students. Create a class list of all the news literacy knowledge and skills students have acquired throughout this unit, then ask students to create additional questions for the visiting journalist based upon what they have learned.</p>
E2	<p>14. Optional: Newsroom to Classroom visit (S1-S5)</p> <p>If the class has decided to host a journalist, meet with them and ask questions! Follow up with a thank-you note.</p>
R	<p>15. “Stoplight Exit Ticket” (S1, S3)</p> <p>Give students 5-10 minutes to brainstorm a list of items they stop doing in regard to news consumption, things they will slow down and take a closer look at, and things they will start doing. Then, have them choose the top items from each and write them on their Stoplight exit ticket.</p>