

# Middle/Upper Primary

# *Writing*

# *the News*

**Practical newspaper-based writing  
activities, expanding on reporting and  
creative writing skills.**

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# ***Introduction***

*Writing the News* is a media and writing programme aimed at 10 to 12 year old students.

The book's aims are twofold:

- **For Teachers:** To provide a range of newspaper-based writing activities which can be used in literacy and media lessons.
- **For Students:** To build greater awareness of the techniques used in constructing the various parts of a newspaper; and to develop writing skills.

## ***Rationale***

The media plays a big role in not only keeping the public informed of what is going on in their own town, across the country and around the world, but in also shaping their opinions on these events. One of the most studied forms of media is the newspaper, partly because of its ease of use in the classroom setting.

Each unit of work in *Writing the News* examines how a different feature of the newspaper is written. Beginning with news articles, and moving on to editorial, sporting articles, advertisements, letters, entertainment and more, activities include studying examples of each, as well as hands-on writing exercises.

*Writing the News* focuses on meeting the needs of the Written and Visual Language strands of the English Curriculum Achievement Objectives, namely:

- Students read a wide range of texts with purpose, understanding and critical awareness.
- Students write for a range of purposes and in a range of forms, using conventions appropriate to purpose, audience and context.

## ***Using the Activities***

*Writing the News* is all about reading newspapers and writing for newspapers. What better way to understand how a newspaper is written than to actually have fun writing part or all of it in class?

The pages which follow include a variety of activities. Some involve comprehension, others involve writing, whilst others ask students to consider their own attitudes.

This book can be used sequentially, working through the different parts of the newspaper, from news articles to competitions, and finishing with a whole class newspaper project. Alternatively, each activity stands alone – allowing you to focus on the specific parts of the newspaper appropriate for your teaching programme.

Many activities refer to 'your daily newspaper'. In some areas there is only one daily, in others you may choose to focus on one, or may use this as an opportunity to compare and discuss the differences between various daily papers. Local weekly papers and weekend papers are also appropriate for most activities. In addition, most newspapers have websites which may be of use in lesson planning.

As well as being ideal for media studies, the class newspaper task could be used to focus on a specific theme studied in other subject areas, with all sections of the class paper focusing on this theme in some way. A whole-class newspaper could also be the local paper for the town in a class novel, with all news reports and other content relating to the events of the novel in some way.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Newspaper

- Take some time to familiarise yourself with a daily newspaper. Look at how it is laid out and what it contains. The following questions will help.

1. What is on the front page? \_\_\_\_\_

2. How many pages are devoted to each of the following?

International News \_\_\_\_\_

National News \_\_\_\_\_

Local News \_\_\_\_\_

Sport \_\_\_\_\_

Whole Page Advertisements \_\_\_\_\_

Classified Advertisements \_\_\_\_\_

Comics and Puzzles \_\_\_\_\_

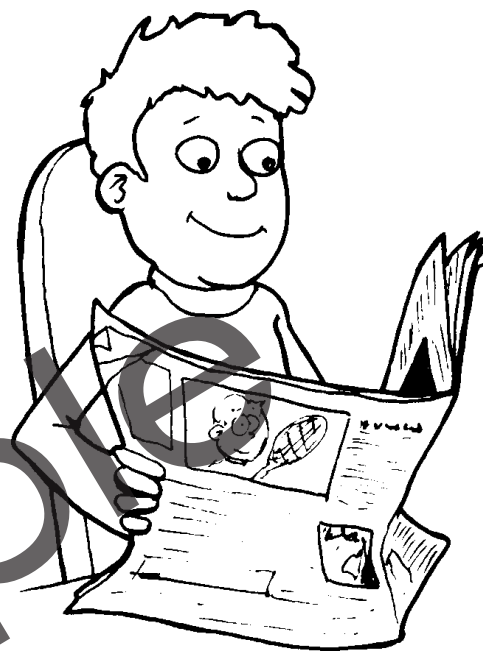
Letters to the Editor \_\_\_\_\_

3. What other things are included in your newspaper?  
How many pages do they take up?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



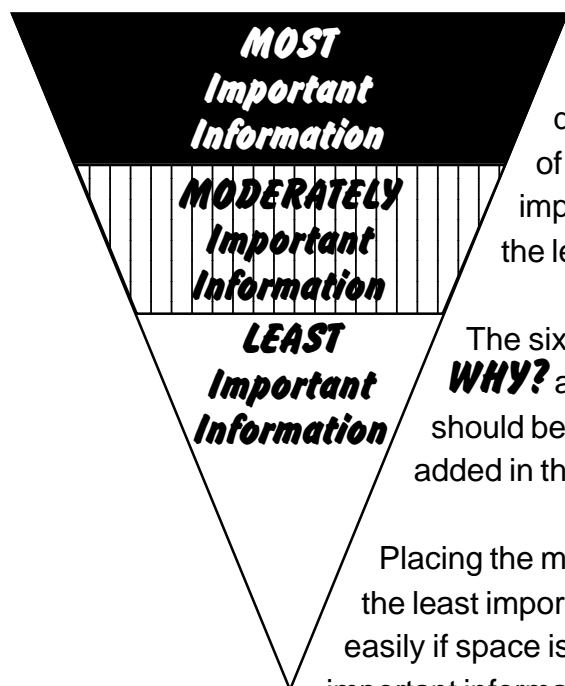
4. Choose an article from the front page, and another news article from several pages into the paper. Compare them using the following table.

	Article 1	Article 2
Title		
Size of Headline		
Number of Paragraphs		
Photo Size		

### **DISCUSS**

Why are the articles different in some or all of these areas? How do you think the editor would choose which article to put on the front page? Why?

## The Inverted Triangle



When a reporter writes a newspaper article, s/he uses what is called the inverted triangle. The most important details are included in the opening paragraph. The rest of the article should give further details of decreasing importance, so that the final paragraph (the tail) provides the least important details.

The six questions – **WHO? WHAT? WHERE? WHEN? WHY? and HOW?** – provide the main information and so should be answered in the opening paragraph, with further details added in the rest of the article.

Placing the most important details at the beginning of the article and the least important at the end allows the editor to shorten the article easily if space is tight, and also allows readers to access the most important information quickly and easily.

- The paragraphs in the following article have been jumbled. Number them in their correct order?

A. After asking the partying animals to turn down the music, officers left the farm. Captain Humpty, of Gooseville police said: "Really, if a cow wants to jump the moon, there is little we can do. There is no law against him doing it, even if common sense says it's a little unwise."

D. Mother Hubbard, the owner of the farm, declined to comment on the incident. It is believed she was away from the farm at the time of the alleged jump, arriving home after the police visit.

B. The fiddle playing cat, however, was quoted as saying that the moon jump was a spectacular sight. "Although," he said, "the dish and the spoon weren't too happy. They haven't been seen since."

E. The cow is believed to be a spotted fresian. It is not known whether she plans another jump.

C. Reports of a frenzied cow jumping over the moon amazed residents of downtown Gooseville on Tuesday night. Witnesses have reported seeing the cow jump from a springboard, after taking too many vitamin tablets.

F. Police were called to the vicinity of the Diddle Diddle Farm after neighbours complained of loud mooing and fiddle playing. Officers say they were unable to find any trace of the cow, although there were a cat and several other animals dancing and singing loudly.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Write a News Report

- ☐ Now that you have explored how a news report is structured, it is time to plan and write your own. Choose one of the following events, and plan your article in the space below.

1. Humpty Dumpty falling off the wall.
2. Little Bo Peep losing her sheep.
3. Jack and Jill falling down the hill.
4. Three blind mice having their tails chopped off.

### Opening Paragraph

**Who:** \_\_\_\_\_

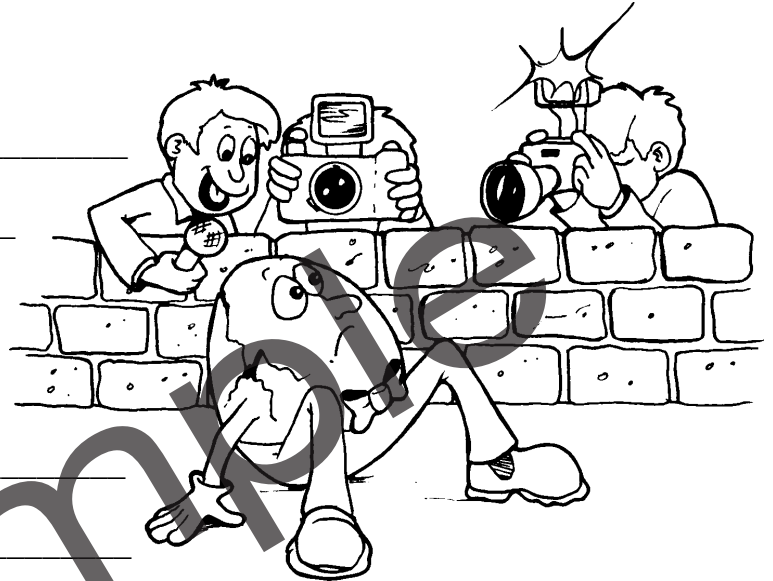
**What:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Where:** \_\_\_\_\_

**When:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Why:** \_\_\_\_\_

**How:** \_\_\_\_\_



### Middle Paragraphs

Were there any witnesses? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the effect of the event? \_\_\_\_\_

Quote a witness or one of the characters involved. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Final Paragraph

Any other small details \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Now, use your plan to write your article. Share it with the class.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Looking at Headlines

Look at the following headlines:



Wolf Wins War  
Mother Goose to Sue Chickens  
**Lamb Nuisance: Mayor to Act  
Protests Over Pig Power**



You will notice that:

1. Headlines do not use full sentences or correct grammar.
2. Headlines can be different lengths and print sizes.
3. Headlines aim to get readers' interest, so that they will read the article.

○ Think about these three points by answering these questions.

1. a) What techniques can headlines use to get people interested? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b) Why aren't headlines all the same size? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Why don't headlines use correct sentence structure? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Discuss your answers with the rest of the class.

Challenge: Write an article to go with one of the headlines above. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_