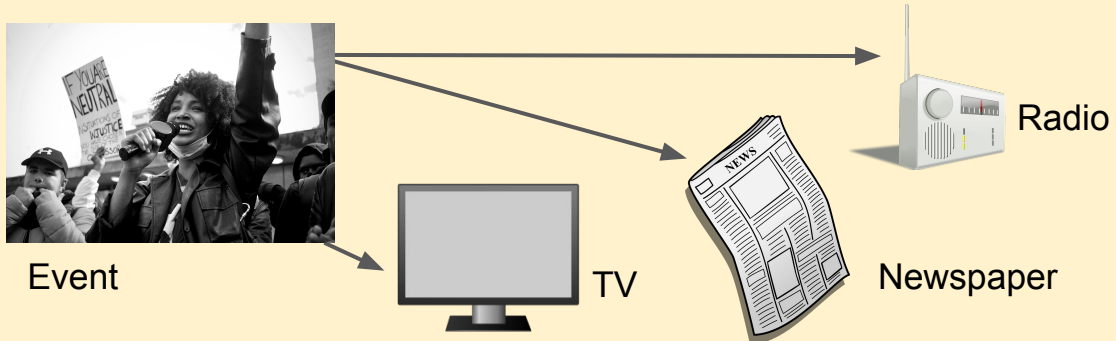


Newsworthy stories

What do we mean by news?

News is information that is published in newspapers and broadcast on radio and television about recent events in the country, world or in a particular area.



Ask students how they would define news. Have students either discuss or write their ideas individually or as a class.

Look at this dictionary definition from Collins and see if it sums up their feelings or there is anything they'd like to add or change. It might be quite hard to come up with a definition, which speaks to the fact that news encompasses many things.

Photo: Sushil Nash via Unsplash
Clip art via Clip Safari

What do we mean by newsworthy?

- Worthy = having value or merit



What do you think
makes a news story
worth watching,
reading or listening to?



The word 'worthy' means having value or merit. So when we ask if something is newsworthy we ask whether it is a story that will be valuable enough to people that it is worth being shared.

The next two slides will cover specific criteria for something being newsworthy, but this is a chance for students to discuss their ideas. If students are struggling, these may be useful prompt questions:

- *Who are the people (or types of people) normally featured in news stories?*
- *What do you personally like to find out the latest news about (eg. gaming, music, fashion)? What about adults in your life?*
- *What sort of things do people need to hear about to make decisions in their daily life?*
- *Can you think of a news story that impacted your life or the life of someone you know? Are there other stories on a similar topic?*

*Photos (clockwise from top left):
Sushil Nash via Unsplash
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What makes a story newsworthy?



Subject - who is the story about?

A story is more newsworthy if it is about lots of people, an important/famous person, or a surprising person.



Surprising - will the story surprise people?

A story is more newsworthy if it is unexpected or if it informs people about something they didn't already know.

For something to be considered news it has to meet certain criteria.

Subject – the person or people the story is about – some examples:

- a woman going to eat in a local cafe is not newsworthy, but if that woman is the Queen (or maybe a famous actor or singer), that might be newsworthy for people in that town
- one person's house flooding because of a broken water pipe is not newsworthy, but a major flood impacting hundreds of homes is
- a person running a marathon is not newsworthy, but if it's the youngest ever person to complete that marathon, it might be

Surprising – the story needs to be something unusual or new – some examples

- A sheep in a field is not unusual, however a town being overrun by sheep is
- People know that vegetables are healthy, but scientists discovering a certain vegetable helps to fight cancer would be new and newsworthy

Photo: Mark de Jong via Unsplash

What makes a story newsworthy?



Place - where did the story happen?

A story is most newsworthy to the people closest to it.



Time - when did the story happen?

A story is more newsworthy if it has only just happened or if it is the first time it has happened.

For something to be considered news it has to meet certain criteria.

Place – the location of the story can depend on whether or not it is news. This can also be particular to the type of news (local, national, international) – examples:

- A cinema being closed in your local area is probably important news to your area, but not other towns or regions
- changes to GCSE exams in England would be important news in England, but not Scotland or anywhere else in the world
- A plan to send people to Mars is something unusual that would probably be interesting to people all over the world

Time – news stories, in most cases, are about recent events – examples:

- The events of World War II are not news, but finding a secret diary from an important general that has never been seen before would be
- Information about a tornado or hurricane would only be news if it was happening currently or within the last few days

Photos left to right:

Brett Zeck via Unsplash

Jaelynn Castillo via Unsplash

Learning check

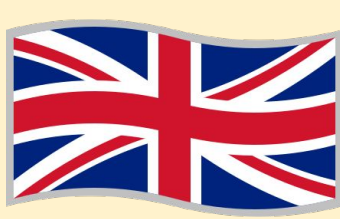
1. What is meant by news?
2. What is meant by newsworthy?
3. What are the four factors that make a story newsworthy?

This can be done orally or written down.

Answers:

1. New information about events that is shared with people - this could be in newspapers, TV, radio or online (this will vary depending on your discussion).
2. Valuable information about recent events that the public would like or need to know about.
3. When deciding if a story is newsworthy, we look at subject, place, time and if it is surprising.

Types of news



What categories?



If you watch a news broadcast or read a newspaper, you'll notice the news doesn't just come in a random list. It's split into categories.

Think of these categories like subjects at school. You don't have a class for learning poetry, a class for learning plays, a class for learning novels - these all fit within English.

Some of the images on the screen might help you to guess some categories, although more categories exist and can vary according to publication (for example, the categories in a business-focused newspaper would be different than a general newspaper).

*Photos (clockwise from top right):
Alex Kondratiev via Unsplash
Jonathan Chng via Unsplash
Nicolas J Leclercq via Unsplash
Clipart via Clip Safari*

Sections of news

Which Section would you place the following stories you will see on the next slides?

1. UK Stories
2. International Stories (stories about other countries)
3. Science and environment
4. Sport
5. Entertainment and Culture

The sections we're going to focus on today are the following: UK, International, Science and Environment, Sport, and Entertainment and Culture.

On the following slides, students are presented with news stories and asked to discuss which section they'd fall under.

New cancer drug shows good results in early tests



UK



International



Science and
Environment

Which section?



Entertainment
and Culture

Sport



This one is Science and Environment

Prime Minister to announce new plan to create jobs



UK



International



Science and
Environment

Which section?



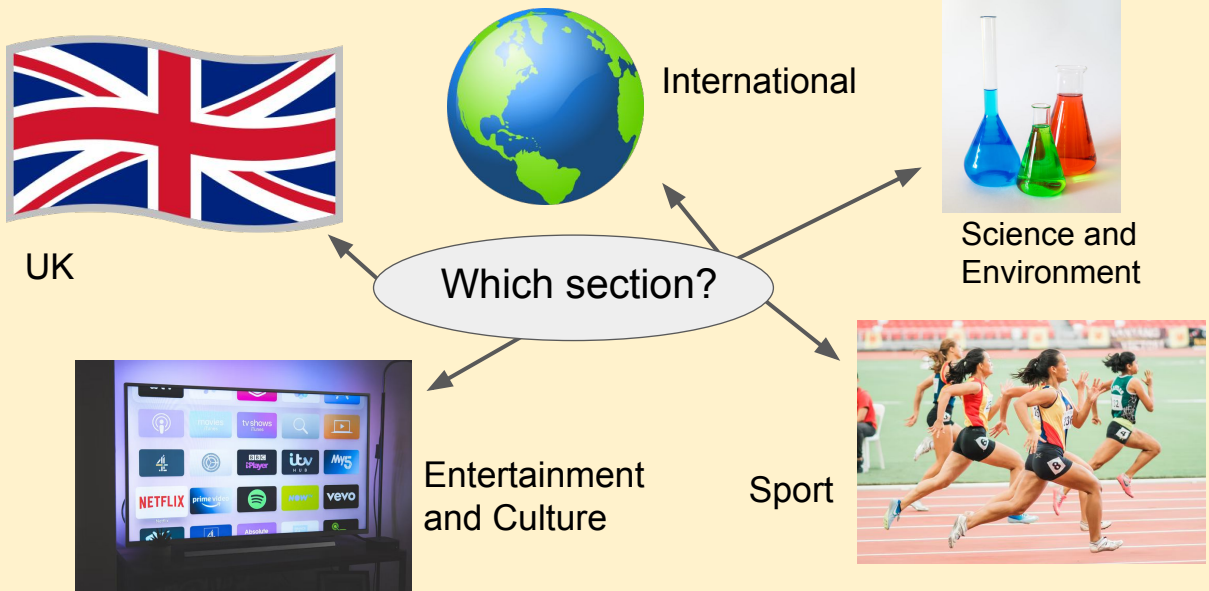
Entertainment
and Culture



Sport

This one is UK

Billie Eilish announces new world tour



This one is a bit trickier.

Even though the story is about an international tour, it's really about Billie Eilish. As she's a singer, this would fall under Entertainment and Culture.

Climate change film reaches record number of views

News.wise Behind the Headlines



UK



International



Science and Environment



Entertainment and Culture



Sport

Which section?

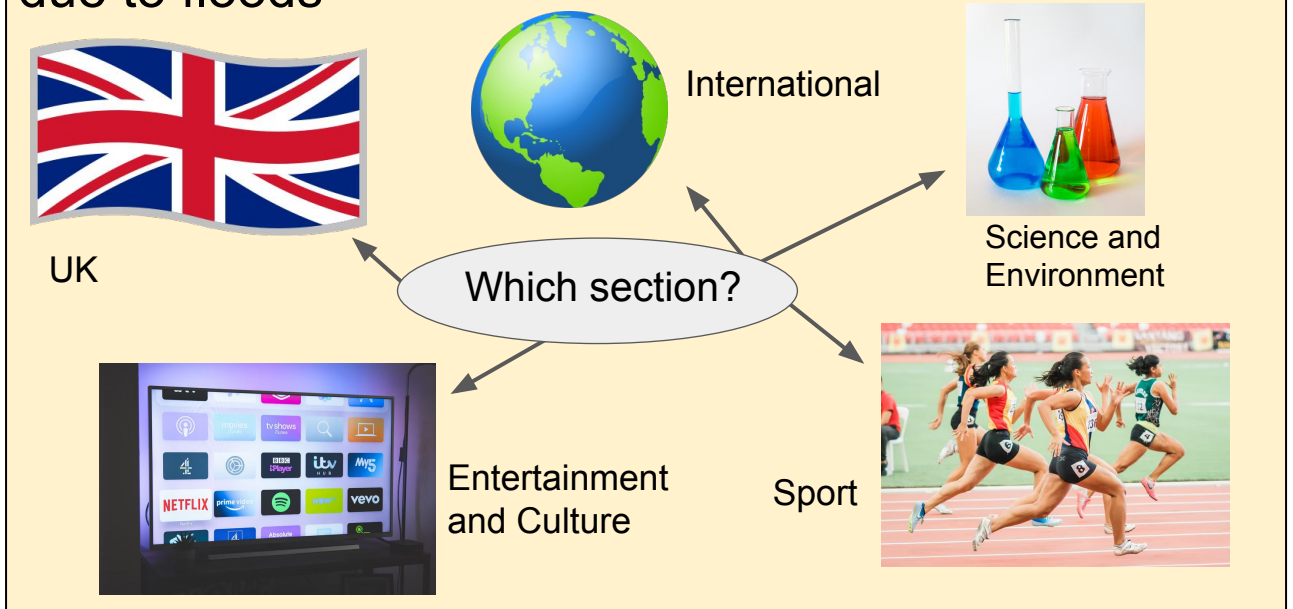
This one is tricky as well.

Because the film is about climate change, it might fit in Science and Environment. But because it's a film, it might fit under Entertainment and Culture. It would probably depend on whether the article is about the film, or about the impacts of climate change that the film highlights.

There's no right or wrong answer, but these are the kind of decisions editors need to make.

Football matches in Germany cancelled due to floods

News.WISE Behind the Headlines



This one is the most difficult.

It could be sport (as it's about football), international (as it's about Germany), or Science and Environment (as it's about flooding).

Again, there is no right or wrong answer but students can discuss what they would choose. Sometimes, news outlets will look at the same story from different angles. For example:

- Sports: German football clubs feel the effect of cancelled matches
- International: Flooding devastates Germany impacting sport, transport, and farming
- Science and Environment: Are devastating German floods here to stay?

Who makes the decisions?

An important role in a news organisation is an editor. They make decisions about what news stories reporters should research and write about.



In all forms of formal news production (newspapers, television, radio, online news outlets), editors are in charge of making decisions about what news stories are told. They will look at ideas for news stories coming in from around the country and world, and decide which ones they want their reporters to look into in more detail. Some editors focus on particular sections, while other editors look at the news overall.

Photo: David Levene for The Guardian

Learning check

1. What are the four factors that make a story newsworthy?
2. Who decides which stories get reported?
3. What type of stories go in the International section?

Answers:

1. When deciding if a story is newsworthy, we look at subject, place, time and if it is surprising.
2. An editor.
3. Stories about other countries

Prioritising news

Editors also need to make choices about what stories are the most important or newsworthy.

You will now take on the role of an editor. You need to make the decisions about what news people should find out about.



Individual/group task begins here

For this task, students can work independently or in pairs/groups.

Each student/group will be given a list of stories from one particular section of news. You can decide (or the class can decide together) who you want the audience of their news to be – whether it's a local radio broadcast, UK newspaper, or international news website (or any other news source).

Each student/group is given a list of possible stories for their section. They need to identify their lead news story (the most important one), and two other stories they think should go in their section.

The next slide reminds them of the newsworthy criteria.

Photo: Jason Goodman via Unsplash

What makes a story newsworthy?

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Headlines

Subject - who is the story about?

A story is more newsworthy if it is about lots of people, an important/famous person, or a surprising person.

Surprising - will the story surprise people?

A story is more newsworthy if it is unexpected or if it informs people about something they didn't already know.

Place - where did the story happen?

A story is most newsworthy to the people closest to it.

Time - when did the story happen?

A story is more newsworthy if it has only just happened or if it is the first time it has happened.

This slide is to be left up while students are making their editorial decisions.

When students have finished, have them feed back their choices and discuss why they felt they were newsworthy.

What have you learnt?



Final question

Now that everyone has chosen your stories, what would you choose as the top story of the day?



Plenary/Assessment for learning

This is the final editorial choice. What is the top story going to be? This is the story that would be on the front page of the newspaper, or come first on a news broadcast. It would also be the first and biggest story on a news website.

Look at the stories everyone in the class has selected. What would you choose as the top one?

Normally, top stories come from the UK or international section, but this isn't always the case. There might be a big sports story (like England advancing in the World Cup) or an entertainment story (sometimes the death of a very famous actor or singer) that takes priority.

There's no right or wrong answer for this, it's up to the editors to decide.

Photo: Jason Goodman via Unsplash

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theguardianfoundation.org

For more media literacy resources from Behind the Headlines and Newswise, visit
<https://theguardianfoundation.org/>.