The Economist EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

WHAT'S THE NEWS?

Child-led learning resource

ABOUT

This activity helps you to think about where you get your news from and what it is. You will be able to explore really interesting questions like:

- What makes something hit the headlines?
- Is all news equally important?
- Is it true that “no news is good news”?

You can give this a go on your own, but if there’s someone at home who can join you, why not work together? You could also connect with someone by telephone or video.

We’ll practise some critical-thinking skills which are important for understanding and discussing the news.

Ready? Let’s go!

NEWS SOURCES

Draw a spider diagram or make a list of all of the different places where you find the news.

For example: television, radio, Twitter

See if you can come up with at least six different ideas.

Then, for each idea, see how specific you can be. For example: rather than saying “the internet” see whether you can list the particular websites.

NEWS SOURCES

Look at your spider diagram or list and circle the BEST and WORST places to find the news.

How did you decide what “best” and “worst” mean? Is “best” something that is fast? Maybe “best” means it’s cheap, or maybe it means it’s trustworthy?

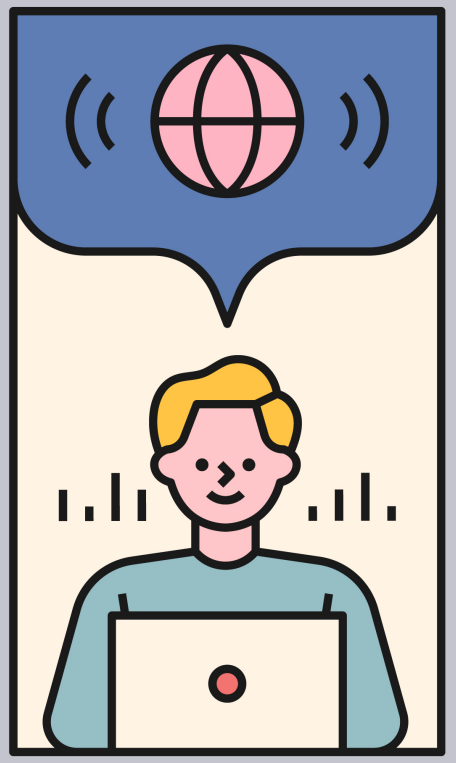
If you are working with a partner, swap ideas.

GOOD NEWS

Think about the news you read, watch or hear. How important are the following things?

Rank them from 1 (most important) to 10 (least important)

	Fast
	Free
	Trustworthy
	First-hand
	Available to everyone
	Easy to understand
	Written down
	Produced by professional journalists
	Interesting
	Easy to understand



GOOD NEWS

1. **Can you give reasons for how you ranked your choices?**
2. **Is there anything else you would add to the list?**
3. **Would everyone have the same opinion as you?**
4. **What would be most important to:**
   - An elderly person
   - A person living in a conflict zone
   - Someone unable to read
5. **What makes us trust what we hear?**
   For example: does it make a difference if we know who produced it? (If you want more tips on how to identify trustworthy news you can find a helpful document at economistfoundation.org/news-literacy)
6. **Are there any dangers if you always trust, or never trust, a particular source of news?**

WHAT'S THE NEWS?

What is "the news"?
Try to write your own definition, then watch this video.

bit.ly/WhatsTheNews

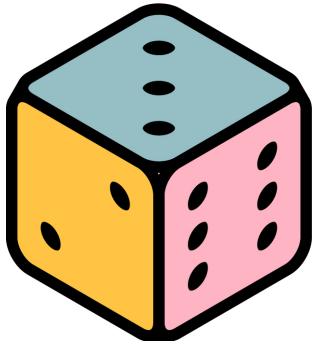
How accurate was your definition?

QUESTION TIME!

Find a die and a partner to play this game with.

Follow the instructions on this page and use the cards on the following three pages.

If you don't have a die you can use random.org/dice



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Stand up opposite your partner - they should look at the instructions but you shouldn't
2. Roll the die
3. Find the question with that number
4. Your partner should ask the questions on the card
5. You should answer!

ROLLED A 6?
Bingo! Try to sum up your last answer in six words or less

TOO EASY?
Your partner should read the *challenge* to get you thinking!

STUCK?
Your partner can read you the *stuck statement* to help

FINISHED?
See if your partner is willing to swap roles and share their opinions

QUESTION TIME!

QUESTION 1

Is all news equally important?

- Why do you think this?
- Can you tell me more?
- Can you give an example?
- Is all news equally important?

QUESTION 2

What makes something hit the headlines?

- Why do you think this?
- Can you tell me more?
- Can you give an example?
- What makes something hit the headlines?

STUCK STATEMENT

Stories that happen closer to home are more important than stories on the other side of the world. Do you agree?

CHALLENGE

Anything can make the news because everything is important to someone. Discuss.

STUCK STATEMENT

Some news only matters to some people. Do you agree?

CHALLENGE

Our opinion on what's important is created by those who write the newspapers. Discuss.

QUESTION TIME!

QUESTION 3

What are some of the challenges with the news today?

- Why do you think this?
- Can you tell me more?
- Can you give an example?
- What are some of the challenges with the news today?

QUESTION 4

Do you agree that 'no news is good news'?

- Why do you think this?
- Can you tell me more?
- Can you give an example?
- Do you agree that 'no news is good news'?

STUCK STATEMENT

There's a lot of fake news and this has stopped people trusting what they read in the newspapers or see on the news. Do you agree?

CHALLENGE

No news story can ever be fully reliable. Discuss.

STUCK STATEMENT

News stories are only about bad things like war or disasters. Do you agree?

CHALLENGE

People enjoy watching television programmes about war and crime. Do you think they read about bad news for the same reason?

QUESTION TIME!

QUESTION 5

What news stories interest you?

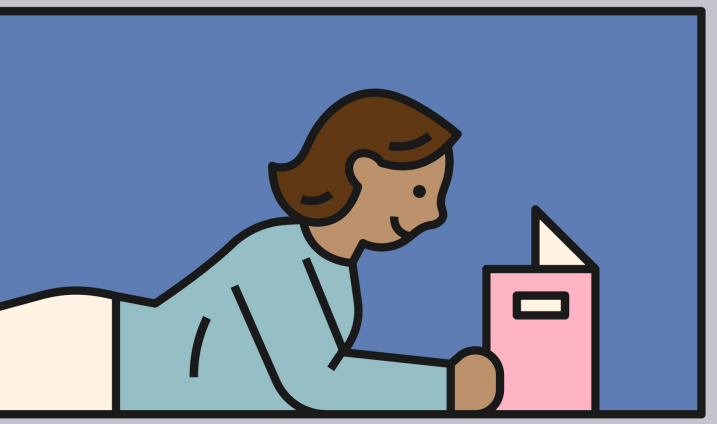
- Why do you think this?
- Can you tell me more?
- Can you give an example?

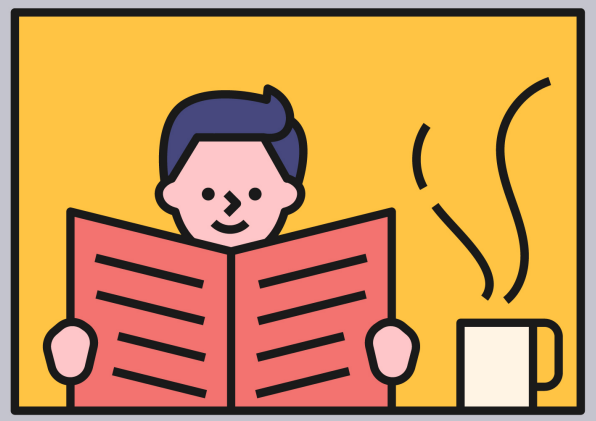
STUCK STATEMENT

Nothing in the news is important to my life.
Do you agree?

CHALLENGE

The stories which affect children are the most important stories in the news. Discuss.

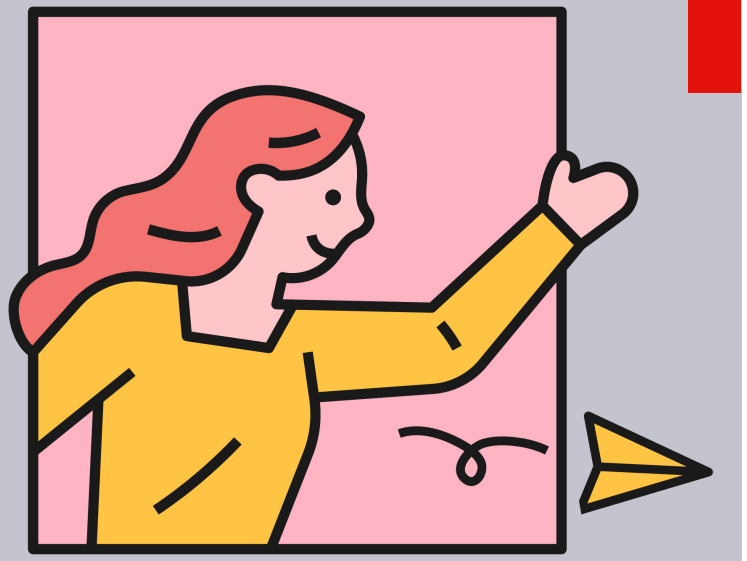




INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVES

Reflection

- When have you given good reasons in these activities?
- Were there any questions that you couldn’t answer?
- Have you been open-minded about anything? How?



SUPER-REFLECTION

- What do you think counts as news?
- Has learning from home made you more or less interested in the news? Why do you think this is?
- Would a world without news be happier?

NOW...

Do some research
Find out how a newspaper or television news programme is produced

Have a discussion
Talk to someone else about the issues covered in these activities

Become the teacher!
See if you can go through these activities again, as the teacher, with somebody else in your household