

The
Economist

EDUCATIONAL
FOUNDATION

WHAT'S THE NEWS?

30 MINUTE ACTIVITY

Introduction

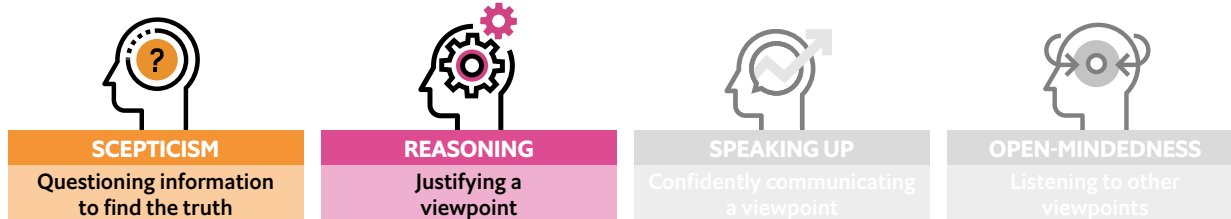
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These resources were produced by The Economist Educational Foundation, an independent charity that was set up by *The Economist* magazine. Combining *The Economist's* journalistic know-how with teaching expertise, we specialise in supporting teachers to facilitate high-quality classroom discussions about the news.

About this resource

This resource introduces students to the news and gets them answering key questions about where the news can be found and how the importance of a news story will differ from person to person. It could be used as part of PSHE, before looking at a particular story, to give students a better understanding of a news-report task.

This resource helps to develop the following skills:



Let us know about any interesting discussions you have!



@Econ_Foundation

#newsthinking #econfoundation #newsliteracy

BEFORE THE SESSION YOU NEED TO HAVE:

- The *What's the news* video ready to play (bit.ly/WhatsTheNews)
- The *Question cards*, printed and cut up, enough for one between two

10-MINUTE ACTIVITY

Where do you find the news?

Resources

No resources needed

Activity instructions

In pairs, ask students to list all of the different places where they find the news. For example: television, Twitter, news apps.

Ask for feedback and compile answers on the board. Encourage more specific ideas such as particular news channels or websites.

Still in pairs, ask students to study the list and discuss which are the best and worst places to find the news. They can choose how to interpret 'best' and 'worst' - and do encourage them to go with their own interpretations.

Once they have decided, ask students to share their thoughts and how they interpreted the task. You might suggest judging news sources by how trustworthy their reporting is, how accessible they are, how timely their coverage is, etc.



CHALLENGE TASK

Ask your students:

- Would different groups of people agree with you? What about people who are a different age or from a different country?
- What makes us trust what we hear? For example: whether we know who the author is. The 'How to identify trustworthy news' resource will help with this. Find it at economistfoundation.org/news-literacy.
- Are there any dangers if you always trust, or don't trust, a particular source of news?

20-MINUTE ACTIVITY

What's the news?

Resources

The *What's the news* video ready to play (bit.ly/WhatsTheNews)

The *Question cards*, printed and cut up, enough for one between two

Activity instructions

Ask your students: what is 'the news'? Hear their initial responses but without approving or rejecting any answers.

Play the *What's the News* video then ask students: which of our first round of answers turned out to be accurate. Were any inaccurate?

Ask students to stand up in a space large enough to move around in.

Give out the *Question cards* to half of the class and ask these students to find someone without one - preferably the person furthest away from them!

The student with the *Question card* should ask the main question to their partner, and use the prompting questions below to push for deeper thinking, before repeating the main question again. If they are stuck, they can use the 'stuck statement' to help make the question easier to tackle, then return to the main question. Equally, encourage high ability students to discuss the challenge.

When they have finished, they should swap roles and repeat with the same partner.

Afterwards, shout "SEARCH, SWAP, SEARCH". The student with the *Question card* should search for someone else with a question card, swap with them, and then search for a new person to interview.

Afterwards, discuss the questions together as a group. Try to limit your input to asking only the following three questions:

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

End by discussing the news stories that they are interested in and the reasons for this.



QUESTION CARD

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?*



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.

QUESTION CARD

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

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 CARD

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?*



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 agree?



CHALLENGE

No news story can ever be fully reliable. Discuss.

QUESTION CARD

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

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 CARD

What news stories interest you?

- *Why do you think this?*
- *Can you tell me more?*
- *Can you give an example?*
- *What news stories interest you?*



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.

Want more news literacy resources?

The Economist Educational Foundation offers a range of programmes to help teachers and students have inspiring, in-depth discussions about current affairs whilst developing their critical thinking skills.

Find out more at
economistfoundation.org

Burnet News Club

Everything you need to run a weekly current affairs club in your primary or secondary school

Inquiry

A six-session scheme of resources each half term, perfect for PSHE

INSET

Develop critical thinking, oracy and independence through heaps of practical activities to embed the news within your curriculum

Workshops

Students dive into an issue over the course of a day, exploring a range of perspectives and having their say

Agora 2020

An immersive, one-day event that puts students at the heart of a breaking news story

"I feel more confident now with having challenging discussions with children and allowing them to form their own opinions on matters"

BURNET NEWS CLUB TEACHER

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