

It's News To Me: Teaching Students To Create A School Newspaper

By

***Michelle Sumlin- Long
Columbus Middle School***

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Overview

Welcome to the world of newspaper writing! This Curriculum Unit on Developing a School Newspaper is designed for middle school students, but could be adapted and used for other grades as well. This unit has eleven lessons that will allow teachers to walk students through the process of planning, writing and publishing a school newspaper of their very own! This unit provides four to five weeks of newspaper experience for middle school students at any skill level. The unit begins with an introductory lesson that focuses on why news is important. It goes on to inform the teachers and the students on the benefits of reading the newspaper. This unit will allow students to explore the various parts of a newspaper and learn how to gather the facts. The unit will also help the students use the newspaper as a source of developing their reading, writing, thinking and communicating skills. Furthermore, this unit will also broaden the students' vocabulary and at the same time keep them abreast of the current events. Moreover, the students will also have the opportunity to use the latest technology to publish their schools newspaper. Last but not least, this curriculum unit on developing a school newspaper will enable students to work towards the necessary requirements for their Standard –Based Portfolio in communications.

Rationale

Why develop a unit on creating a school newspaper? I am developing this unit for several reasons. One, Columbus Middle School does not currently have a school newspaper. I believe a school should always have a place where the school community - students, teachers and parents can meet to exchange information, ideas and opinions. In this curriculum unit I plan to have my students plan, write and publish the "Columbus Middle School Bulldog School

Newspaper”. This newspaper will be published once a month. This paper will inform the school community on the school news, sports, and upcoming events. It will also include editorials, advertisements and feature stories that the students will create for the newspaper as well as to fulfill their Communications Standards. Secondly, teaching students to create their very own school newspaper will definitely encourage them to read the newspaper that they had a part in publishing. Students who read the newspaper in school may also develop a habit of reading and listening to news outside of school. Getting in the habit of reading and listening to the news can help develop and improve student vocabulary, word recognition skills and comprehension. Reading the newspaper can also help students build critical thinking, problem solving, oral expression and listening skills. Writing for the newspaper will give the students plenty of opportunities to express themselves. The newspaper provides a writing model for students where they can learn by imitating the clear, concise style of news writing. Furthermore, developing this unit on creating a school newspaper can open up communications between the students and their parents. The newspaper has been a great tool for teaching youngsters about current events and hopefully this unit will encourage them to become informed citizens and lifelong newsreaders!

Objectives:

- * The students will discuss the importance of news and having a school newspaper.
- * The students will become aware of the advantages of reading and listening to the news.
- * The students will identify and define the various categories of a newspaper.
- * The students will write headlines for the newspaper.
- * The students will research and gather facts from a news article.
- * The students will report on facts and information in a news article.
- * The students will use the writing process when writing articles for the newspaper.
- * The students will keep a Newspaper Journal with all newspaper vocabulary, notes and reflections.

- * The students will identify the people, equipment and the functions of putting together a newspaper.
- * The students will be able to work in cooperative groups.
- * The students will enhance their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills.
- * The students will also improve their thinking skills.
- * The students will learn to operate a digital camera with the teacher's assistance.
- * The students will be able to use Microsoft Publisher, clip art and the internet.
- * The students will attend a field trip to the local newspaper facility.
- * The students will be able to publish and distribute the school newspaper.

Strategies:

Timeline: This unit is designed to be taught at the Middle School level but can be adapted to teach at any grade level. It was written to be taught over a course of four to five weeks. It can be lengthened depending on the grade level and timeframe.

Materials: In order to create a school newspaper, you will need to have a collection on various newspapers and high interest news articles. You will also need writing materials such as paper, pencils pens, markers, chart paper and construction paper. You will need to have access to computers, the internet, printers, a digital camera and a copy machine.

Modeling: Students will gain insight to the expected objectives through observing the teacher.

Cooperative Groups: Students should be able to work individually as well as with a partner and in cooperative groups in order to carry out the functions and responsibilities of developing a school newspaper.

Newspaper Journals: The teacher and the students should keep a Newspaper Journal in order to record related vocabulary, notes and reflections.

Field Trip: The students will attend a field trip to a local newspaper facility in order to get a firsthand experience of the daily operations of at a newspaper facility.

Evaluation: The evaluation for this unit will be the published news articles, essays that will be featured in the newspaper, assessments on the various newspaper vocabulary and elements and the final product which is the school newspaper.

Contents of Curriculum Unit

Lesson 1- Why is the News Important?

Lesson 2- Exploring The Newspaper!

Lesson 3- Heads Up For Headlines

Lesson 4- Obtaining The Facts

Lesson 5- Tabloid Tales

Lesson 6- Field Trip

Lesson 7- The School Newspaper

Lesson 8- Reports From The Reporters- Writing for the School Newspaper

Lesson 9- Proofreading

Lesson10- Revising

Lesson11- Publishing The School Newspaper

Lesson 1: Introduction – Why is News Important?

In this lesson the students will be introduced to the curriculum unit on creating a school newspaper. The students will determine why news is important and discuss the advantages of reading and watching the news. The students will also participate in a scavenger hunt to identify what students in the classroom watch the news. To start this lesson, conduct a survey to see how many of your students actually watch the news or read any type of news magazine or newspaper.

Once you get a count you can tell the students that **NEWS** stands for News – Economics – Weather- and Sports. These items along with others are usually the highlights of a news program.

Begin to discuss with the students the importance of watching the news. You can share that by watching the news one can be informed of current events that are taking place in their neighborhood, in their city, state and country and the world

around them. Reading and watching the news helps students understand the importance of people, events, and issues in the news. You can also inform the students that the news comes to us in various forms such as the T.V., newspaper, news magazines, radio and the internet. You can also discuss the benefits that youngsters have that watch the news. According to Edward F. DeRoche, students who watch the news or read the newspaper tend to score higher on standardized achievement tests particularly in reading, math and social studies. Reading the newspaper helps students become effective readers. Newspapers can help develop and improve students' vocabulary, word recognition skills and comprehension. Newspapers increase the awareness of and interest in current events. Furthermore, students who read newspapers in school tend to continue reading them when they become adults. You can also share some facts about newspapers that students are probably not aware of. You can say did you know that a roll of newsprint is 10 miles long and weighs 2,650 pounds? Did you know that the base ingredient in newspaper ink is soybeans?

Did you know the white space between columns of print is called the alley or gutter? Did you know that if you draw an inverted triangle over the first paragraph of a news story, you should be able to find the answers to the questions who? what? when? and where? Within the sentence or sentences indicated in the triangle? You can have these facts about newspapers written on chart paper and have the students copy these facts in their Newspaper Journal that they will keep throughout this unit.

You can then start activity one for the first lesson.

Activity 1:

In this activity, the students will go around the classroom and find out what their classmates know and have experienced about the news. They can use the same individual for no more than three items but must collect the initials of someone for every question.

On a worksheet, type in the items below and print a copy for every student. Give each student a copy and let them hunt around to see what their classmates know. You can give them a time limit and when they are done you can tally up the results and have a class discussion on the various items. The student with the most initials can win a reward.

What Do You Know About The News?

1. Can name two TV news reporters
2. Watched the news on TV last night.
3. Watched part of the "Today Show" this morning.
4. Can name three countries that were in the news last week.

5. Knows something about a natural disaster that was in the news in the last two years.
6. Can name at least three different sections in the newspaper.
7. Can name the governor and the mayor.
8. Can name at least two different jobs on a newspaper.
9. Can name two national news magazines.
10. Listened to the news on the radio in the last day or so.
11. Can name three American cities that were in the national news last week.
12. Can name the leaders of three countries other than the United States.
13. Know what the five Ws of news reporting are.

Lesson 2: – Exploring The Newspaper

In this lesson the students will be introduced to the many facets of the newspaper. They will also use a K-W-L Chart to determine and record what they know about newspapers. To begin this lesson you will need chart paper for the K-W-L chart. You will need chart paper for each cooperative group. Be sure to label the parts of the newspaper on the chart paper for each group. You will also need a newspaper for each cooperative group.

Introduce the topic of the newspaper by formulating a K-W-L chart on the board. Ask students to brainstorm what they already know about the “newspaper” and the “news.”

Ask the students prompting questions such as what is news? What is the newspaper used for? Where can you get a newspaper from? Who reads the newspaper at your house? What are the names of the newspapers that are sold in your area? Who is able to write in a newspaper and how are they able to do this? What are the advantages and disadvantages of a newspaper? Why would you want to purchase a newspaper? If you were to read a newspaper, what section of the newspaper would you be interested in reading? Record their responses under the **K** of the K-W-L chart.

Next, ask the students to brainstorm questions that they want to learn about the “Newspaper.”

Record the student’s questions on the chart paper under the **W** of the K-W-L chart for what they want to know.

Activity 1:

Display the front page of the local newspaper to the students, and focus their attention on it, Identify, define and discuss the following terms that are associated with the front page. Explain why each part is significant. Explain that the reader would not know where a paper is from without a banner. Explain how the index makes locating the weather section or the comic section easier than looking at every page. Discuss that the other parts such as the headline, byline, dateline and caption are designed to give the reader pertinent information before they begin to read a news story, this information will help the reader determine if they want to continue to read that particular article. Have the students record these terms in their Newspaper Journal.

Banner- gives the name of the newspaper and tells where the paper is printed and how much it cost.

Headline-It is the title of the story which is written in large bold letters above the story

Byline – located below the headline/title and tells who wrote the story.

Dateline- tells the city, state and/or country where the story was written, all letters are capitalized.

Caption- located below the photos and tells what is in the picture

Index- gives the page number of the different sections of the newspaper

News story- an article that reports a news event.

After you have discussed these term with the students, have students create their own front pages by cutting out these particular sections of the newspaper and pasting them on construction paper. Tell students that they will need to include all parts of the newspaper listed on the chart paper to have a completed front page. The students will need to have a newspaper, construction paper, scissors, paste and colored markers to complete this activity. Inform students that they should place their names and the date on the banner section of the front page. The students can use the colored markers to decorate their banner at the top of the page. Once students have completed the activity check their work by checking to see if students have included all parts of the front page listed on the chart paper. Display the students' work on a bulletin board entitled Extra, Extra read all about it!

Activity 2:

Have students participate in a “**Newspaper Scavenger Hunt**”. This particular activity will also get the students familiar with what is in the various parts of the newspaper. In their cooperative groups have the student’s research specific information such as: What was the score in the Pittsburgh Steelers versus the Baltimore Ravens game? What is the top news story of the day? What sitcom is coming on tonight on channel 11 at 9:00 p.m.? What does a new Trailblazer cost at the Cochran Dealership? What is the weather forecast for the day? Give them about 10- 15 items to research. The first group to find all the correct items can win gold slips which can be redeemable for prizes.

Activity 3:

Using the newspapers that you have provided for each cooperative group, give them a few minutes to browse through the paper again. Have the students list from their discovery the various sections of the newspaper (examples: sports, comics, weather, business articles, news stories, advertisements, T.V. guide, real estate ads, classified ads, etc.)

Next, have students in cooperative groups cut out examples of the different parts of the newspaper and label them on an individual groups’ chart paper. Once the students are done, discuss the various sections and have them record the terms in their Newspaper journal. Check each groups chart to verify the correct labeling of the newspaper parts.

Furthermore, have students respond to the following statement: **I only know about Television, so explain a newspaper to me.** Their responses can be placed in the students’ Newspaper Journals that they will keep throughout the unit.

Discuss the various sections and have the student’s record the terms in their Newspaper Journal.

Sports section – highlights all sports events and gives team scores

T.V Guide - a colorful section outline of television viewing for that day with program listing, times and stations

Weather section – provides a complete weather forecast for that particular day

News stories- an article that reports news

Lesson 3: Heads Up For Headlines

In this lesson the students will be introduced once again to the word **Headline**. The students will also define the words **topic and main idea** and determine the main idea of a news story. Furthermore, the students will write headlines for news articles.

Start the lesson by asking students how do you think writers get you interested in reading their stories? Proceed by telling them that the writers try to make their headlines as interesting as possible. Ask students if they remember the definition of the word headline that should be in their newspaper journal. Discuss the definition with the class once again. Explain that a headline is the title of the story that is written in large bold letters to attract the reader. Stress to the students the importance of writing a good headline. The headline should grab the reader's attention and tell the reader the article's topic, all in a few words. Show them several examples of headlines that may catch their attention. Tell them that today they will have the opportunity to create their own headlines for news articles after they have determined the main idea of a news story. Also introduce the word topic and main idea. Have them write these words in their journal as well. A topic is the general subject that all the sentences in the story talk about. The main idea is the most important idea expressed in a piece of writing.

Choose three short news stories that would be interesting to your students. Cut off the headline and then photo copy each one so that you have a copy for each student. As you read these stories out loud to the students, have them follow along with you. After reading the first article, discuss the topic of the article and the main idea. Have a space where they can record the topic and main idea of the article. Then have students try to come up with headlines for the articles. Have them write their headline at the top of the article with a marker. Write their responses on the board then as a group choose the best headline for the story. Ask students which headlines do they think would attract the attention of the readers. Do this with the other two articles to make sure the students understand how to determine the topic, main idea and headline. Once they show that they understand, you are now ready for activity one.

Activity 1:

This activity can be done within their cooperative groups. Distribute a wide variety of news articles that would be of interest to your students. Be sure to de-head the articles by removing the headlines. As a group, have the students read

the article, determine the topic and main idea and then come up with an attention grabber headline that reflects the main idea of the article. Students can paste their article on chart paper and record the topic and main idea. Above the article the student can create the headline using a colored marker. Provide time for the students to share their news stories and their attention – grabber headlines with their classmates.

Post all the original headlines in an accessible place; then have the students select the headline that goes with the article that they read. Explore the following questions with the students: Do the headlines match the actual headline? Do they express the same idea as the newspaper headlines? Are the students' headlines an improvement on the actual headlines? Remind students that a good headline tells the main idea of a story, it should have a subject and a verb, and it should entice the reader to read the article.

Newspapers are the best resource for this particular activity; however, teachers can use some of the following online news sites as sources:

- Time for Kids
- StudentNewsNet
- Scholastic News Zone
- New York Times Learning Network

For an assessment you can provide five news stories without headlines and challenge each student to create headlines for all five stories. At least four of the five headlines should correctly identify the main idea of the news story.

Lesson 4: Obtaining the Facts

In this lesson the students will learn to identify the components of a news story by obtaining the facts. Students will also interview classmates to practice interviewing skills and to gather facts.

Explain to the students that news reporters often write stories about events that they have seen. Before writing, the reporter must obtain the facts, and observe what is happening. Reporters always record these important questions before writing an article.

Who is the story about?

What happened?

Where did the event take place?

When did the event happen?

Why did the event happen?

How did the event happen?

Read a short article to the students and have them gather the facts by listening and recording the **5W** questions and how on an index card. Discuss the facts as a class and check to see if the students were able to obtain the correct responses to the **5W** questions.

Next read another short article to the students and have them determine what **W** fact

is missing. First have them list all the facts that are in the story by answering the who, what, where, why and how. Write their responses on the chalkboard. Then have them focus on what fact is missing. Have students retell the story including all of the facts.

Activity 1:

Ask students to think of their favorite stories that they have read so far in Communications class and list some of these stories on the chalkboard. Under each story list the who, what, where, when and why questions. Give students more index cards so that they can do the same. Ask the students to give you the facts by giving you the five **W**'s to the stories. Have students write the facts on the index cards while you write them on the board.

Activity 2:

Explain to the class that another way that you can find the facts in an article is to draw an **inverted triangle** over the first paragraph of the article. Give each cooperative group an article to read. Have them research the facts by drawing an inverted triangle over the first paragraph in order to locate the facts. Have the groups paste their article on construction paper and record their responses to the 5 **W** questions on the bottom of the construction paper. Have students give a brief summary of their article and have them present the facts. You could also hang these on a bulletin board and call it "**Just The Facts**"

Activity 3:

This activity will give the students an opportunity to organize their facts while interviewing a classmate. Provide the students with a worksheet that has the 5 **W** questions on it. Pair the students with a partner. Have each student think of an unusual experience that they had either in school or out of school. Have their partner interview them to get the facts about this event. The partners can take turns interviewing each other. As they interview each other have them record their

partner's responses on the Fact sheet. Give students an opportunity to share some of their facts.

Lesson 5: Tabloid Tales

In this lesson students will have the opportunity to learn about the power of exaggeration by writing news stories that accompany actual tabloid headlines. The students will also have the chance to explore current tabloid stories and research the five W questions in that story. The materials that you would need for this activity are a collection of tabloid newspapers and writing materials. Begin this lesson by defining and discussing the term ***Tabloid***. Have the students record this term in their Newspaper Journal. Provide the latest issues of some tabloid newspapers. Share a sampling of headlines and stories that have been published recently. Be careful to choose articles that are appropriate for your grade level. Inform students of the kinds of stories that are found in the tabloids.

Discuss how unbelievable many of the story headlines are and how writers exaggerate. After you have shared several tabloid headlines with the students, select one of the headlines and write a short story with the students. Be sure to write the story that they imagine might have appeared with that headline. The teacher can write the story on chart paper as the students give the teacher the details and facts of the story. Encourage the students to be creative! After you have written the story share the real story with the students to see how the class story uses the power of exaggeration to mimic a tabloid news story. You can also read the actual published story and compare it to the class story.

Activity 1:

In this activity have the students demonstrate their own creative thinking and writing skills by writing their own stories using tabloid headlines. Provide the students with a list of Tabloid headlines. Have students choose the headline of their choose and write a creative story which includes the facts and supporting details and examples of exaggerations. Once students are done have them revise and proofread their stories and type the final draft. You can also have the students proofread each other's papers. Check stories to see if students included the facts and examples of exaggerations. Once stories are complete you can compile the stories and create a class newspaper entitled "**Tabloid Tales.**" This should be a fun activity so encourage the students to have great fun and be creative!

The following are some tabloid headlines that you can use with this activity:

- “Ravioli Worker Rolls In Dough”**
- “Dog Eats Eight Wristwatches”**
- “Roaches Take Over Pittsburgh Pat Bus”**
- “Burglar - Alarm Factory Robbed”**
- “Veggie Eating Mother Has Green Baby”**
- “Her Son Is A Werewolf”**
- “Bodybuilder Explodes”**
- “Plumber Goes Down The Toilet”**
- “Missing Baby Found In Watermelon”**
- “Dog Lands Plane After Pilot Has Heart Attack”**
- “Bigfoot Stole My Gal”**

***Students can choose one of these tabloid headlines or create their own.**

Lesson 6: Field Trip to your Local Newspaper Facility

In this lesson you can plan a **field trip** to your local newspaper facility or invite a reporter to come and speak with your students about the daily operations at a newspaper facility. Have the students learn as much as they can from this experience. The students will need to take their Newspaper Journals to take notes on this event. The students should brainstorm and prepare questions to ask the reporter about their occupation as well as the facility. The students should also answer the 5W questions that relate to the event. When the students return, have each cooperative group write an article about the fieldtrip. In their article they should have a headline, the lead and a byline. The article should discuss the events that occurred on the fieldtrip and what they learned and enjoyed from the trip. You could also take the digital camera along to take pictures that can be displayed in the school newspaper. Have each group share its article about the trip then decide (with the students) which article should be featured in the school newspaper. Do not forget to include the photo from the digital camera! It would also be nice for the students to send a copy of their article to the newspaper facility along with a thank you letter.

Lesson 7: The School Newspaper

In this lesson read the story **“The School Newspaper”** by Rod Quantock. This book discusses the people who are involved in developing a school newspaper, people such as the Organizers, Contributors, Editors and the Designers. It also discusses the type of equipment and materials needed to publish

the newspaper such as computers, cameras and printers. Furthermore, it informs the readers of the various categories that a newspaper can be divided in, such as the news, editorials, features, sports, pictorials and school events just to name a few. Last but not least, the book includes a section where the students can look back and reflect on the published piece. It tells students to decide on what they like and dislike about the school newspaper. Moreover, it tells them to think about how and where they can make changes to improve the content and design of the paper. While reading the book, stop at certain points in the story to check for understanding. Leave the book out on the table so that the students can refer back to it at any time during the unit.

After you have read the School Newspaper story, discuss its contents with the students. From this point you can begin developing plans for your school newspaper. The first thing you can discuss is the name of the school newspaper. You can have students brainstorm various names and have the students vote on what to name the newspaper. You can also take it a step further and have the school vote on a name. You can make an announcement and tell the student that your class has come up with several names for the school newspaper and they would like the student body to participate in the voting process. Place a ballot box in your room or the central office for students to place their vote.

Next, you want to discuss the content of the newspaper. What sections do you and the students want to include in the newspaper? You can include such sections such as up coming school events, past school events, news features, sports events, comics, and book reviews. You may also want to include a section that lists the students who are on their way to achieving their 25 book goal. You can also include students who have received honor roll or high honor roll. You can also feature students and teachers of the month and write a short bio on those particular candidates. You can also include a comic section and a word search section or some type of puzzle.

Furthermore, you need to discuss what cooperative groups will be in charge of the organization process. You also want to discuss who will contribute articles to the newspaper, who the editors will be, who the designers will be and who will be in charge of using the equipment. Last but not least, you want to decide who will be in charge of the equipment and publishing the school newspaper. As you are discussing these ideas, get a feel of what group would be interested in performing each job. You can decide what job each cooperative group will have or you can have the students decide along with you. You also want to decide how often you will publish the school newspaper, whether it be monthly or quarterly. Moreover, your class needs to decide on a publication date for the first issue of the school newspaper. You can also decide how you plan to distribute the paper to students, staff and parents. You may also decide if you are

going to charge the school community for the newspaper or if it is going to be free. Once you have decided on all of these factors you can record this information on chart paper and hang it up in the classroom so students are aware of their responsibilities.

The School Newspaper

The People

***Organizers** – Organizers find the tools and the people to use them. They look after timetables, find work spaces and arrange staff.

***Contributors** – Contributors write the words, draw the pictures, and take photographs that fill the pages. Anyone can be a contributor, and anything can be contributed.

***Editors** – Editors decide what should go into the paper and on what page it should go. They also proofread for spelling and grammatical errors and factual mistakes. Writing interesting headlines is another job for an editor.

***Designers** – Designers arrange each page so that it is interesting to look at and easy to read.

The Equipment

* **Computers** - You can design your newspaper right on the computer screen using Micro-Soft Publisher.

* **Printer** – Using a copier is the easiest way to make as many copies as you want.

* **Digital Camera** – Digital cameras allow you to save pictures and print them right off the computer.

You can cut and paste pictures right onto your school newspaper.

What To Include

***News** – some ideas for new stories are school excursions, fairs, school dances, plays or concerts, sports events and news about new students or teachers.

* **Editorials**- The editorial section can include a message from the editor, known as the “editorial,” as well as letters to the editor from readers. In a school newspaper, it is a good place to put a report from the principal.

* **Features** – feature stories give more detail and background that news reports do, some examples would include science or art projects, stories about people in and around school and stories that center around holiday and travel.

* **Sports** – These articles can include reports on recent competitions and their results as well as interviews with star players or coaches.

* **Entertainment** – The entertainment section of the newspaper can offer fun things for readers to do in their spare time. These can include fictional stories, puzzles, poems, jokes cartoons, and even recipes. There may also be reviews of music, T.V. programs, plays and books.

* **Advertising** – This section may include things for sale, job notices and even lost and found.

* **Pictorial** – This section includes drawings and photos which can add visual interest to the pages.

Lesson 8: Writing For the School Newspaper

In this lesson, the students will compare and contrast school newspapers from various middle schools. You can get a collection of school newspapers off the internet or you may have to make a trip to the various middle schools in your area to collect different school newspapers. The students will listen to a number of lead paragraphs to determine the elements that make them interesting and worth reading. The students will review what needs to be included in a newspaper article. You can provide a review sheet so the students will have a resource or checklist to refer to when writing. Finally, the students will also begin using their creative thinking and writing skills to produce a piece of work for the school newspaper. You will need a collection of different school newspapers and writing materials. You can also purchase the book entitled “**Create Your Own Class Newspaper**” by Diane Crosby. This book walks students through the process of planning, writing and publishing a school newspaper. It includes sections on writing news features, conducting personal interviews, drafting sports features. It also includes instructions on writing headlines and editing for the newspaper. Each section includes a teacher page with information on how to introduce the topic and accompanying student pages. The student **pages** include reproducible forms and worksheets for writing notes and final drafts. It also includes ideas on

integrating the curriculum with various subjects like social studies, math and science. You can use this book as a resource when you are assigning writing assignments for the newspaper.

You can begin the lesson by showing students a collection of school newspapers from different schools. Skim through some of the school newspapers as a class so the students can see examples of the various sections that the school included in their newspaper. Read through and discuss some of the sections and articles so the students can get a feel for the types of articles. Stress to the students that the lead paragraph of an article is very important and should be an attention grabber. The lead paragraph should make the reader want to read the whole article. Talk about the elements that make the reader want to continue to read. You may ask what **action words** or **descriptive words** did the writer use to make the lead paragraph interesting and exciting? What are the most important facts? What could have been done to make the lead more interesting? These are just a few examples of some question that you could ask the students to encourage them to be more descriptive when writing. Provide the students with a list of action words and descriptive words to use while writing.

This will improve their writing skills as well as their vocabulary. Now you can begin assigning creative writing assignments to the cooperative groups or to the individual students.

Activity 1:

In this activity you need to review with the students the information and sections that you want in the school newspaper. Review the chart that has the list of sections that you decided on in lesson 6. You can use the book “Create Your Own Newspaper” to assign students new stories to write.

Assign **The Contributors** (the students) a topic for their portion of the newspaper: (i.e. news article, editorials, special features, sports, entertainment, advertising or pictorial etc.) Be sure to provide students with graphic organizers to research and organize their information. Students should begin working on their assignment for the newspaper. Give the students ample time to begin their project but you also want to give them a deadline because you want to be sure you are on schedule for the publication date.

Lesson 9: Proofreading

In this lesson the students will learn the basic proofreading marks to indicate spelling, punctuations and grammatical errors in an article. They will use editing techniques to proofread articles checking for errors in spelling,

punctuations and grammar. Students will also proofread and revise their article for the newspaper. Provide a list of the basic proofreading marks so that the students can place this in their Newspaper Journal. Demonstrate for the students the proofreading marks on chart paper so you can hang it up in the classroom when you are done. Give students several sentences to practice proofreading.

Activity 1:

Before the students begin to proofread and revise their articles give them some practice. Have the students demonstrate their understanding of the proofreading marks by having the students proofread 3 lead paragraphs, checking for errors in spelling, punctuations and grammar. You can create this worksheet for them. Tell students there are 5 mistakes in each paragraph. Provide space for the students rewrite the lead paragraphs making the necessary corrections. Review the lead paragraphs with the students to make sure students have found all of the mistakes.

Activity 2:

In this activity have the students become Spelling Detectives as they seek out the spelling errors in current events news stories. This activity can be done individually or in pairs. Copy a short article on to a teacher –made worksheet and edit the text to include 15 spelling errors. These misspelled words should be words that the students should be able to spell. Have the students circle the misspelled word and write the correct spelling of the word above it. You might want to double space the text so the students will have enough room to write the correct spelling above the misspelled word. Review the article with the students to make sure the students have found all 15 spelling errors.

Lesson 10: Revising

In this lesson students will use editing techniques to revise and peer edit for the school newspaper. The students will need their articles and work that they prepared for the first issue of the newspaper. Tell the students that their news stories need to give the correct information. They must check for accuracy and make sure that their facts are correct. Share these editing rules with the students. Once again you can write these rules on a chart and hang them with the proofreading chart. Also provide a revising checklist for students.

Editing Rules:

- * Check the facts – Make sure all your facts are correct
- * Be sure your lead paragraph tells who, what, when and where
- * Check to make sure that the body of your story contains supporting details about your lead.
- * Be sure your headline is an attention grabber and will interest the readers
- * Check for spelling, punctuation and capitalization
- * Make sure each paragraph is indented

Activity 1:

In this activity you can have the students revise and edit their own work before it goes to the Editors. They can also create a headline for their work. Be sure to inform the students to begin the line with a strong verb to catch the readers attention. Remind them to use their list of action words and their descriptive words. Have the students type their final draft of their article or work. Be sure to use the spell checker and save the draft on a 3 1/2 disk or cd. Give a copy of the completed work to the teacher and to **The Editors**.

Lesson 11: Publishing The School Newspaper

In this lesson the students will generate a complete product, which is “**The School Newspaper**” using Microsoft Publisher. They will also comprehend the process of writing a newspaper and the students can complete the L from their K-W-L chart that they started at the beginning of the unit. The students will need a computer with Micro-Soft word and a printer. Students will also need access to a copier machine unless the teacher is going to carry out this duty. Once the students have done the necessary steps in completing their final draft of their work, it is time for publishing.

The Designers along with the teacher will decide the layout of the paper. Once the school newspaper is complete, distribute it to the school community which includes the students, staff and parents. You could also publish the final product on the Internet for all to enjoy! Now get ready for issue # 2.

You may want to start a Newspaper Club to publish the remaining issues of the newspaper.

Annotated Bibliography

Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Elements of Literature, Harcourt Education Co, Austin 2005

A sixth grade literature book, includes various fictional and non-fictional stories and informational text.

Quantock, Rod, The School Newspaper, Wright Group/McGraw Hill, Bothell WA

A book that discusses the various elements of a newspaper. It also discusses the different functions of a newspaper.

Crosby, Diane, Create Your Own Class Newspaper, Incentive Publications Inc, Nashville TN

A complete guide for planning, writing and publishing a newspaper. It includes reproducible worksheets on which students can write notes, rough drafts, and final newspaper stories.

Web Sites

www.kidsnew.com

Various articles on current events for students. Also includes resources for students and teachers.

www.educationworld.com

A collection of professional Development resources and archives.

www.essdack.org/tips/newspaper

Tips on developing and organizing a newspaper.

Student Book List

Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Elements of Literature, Harcourt Education Co, Austin 2005

A sixth grade literature book, includes various fictional and non-fictional stories and informational text.

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