

Determining Newsworthiness

News is...

- **Relevant** - Interesting and impactful to a lot of people
- **Current** - Happening right now / related to things happening now
- **Informative** - Contains accurate info that people need to know

Directions:

Determine which of the following news examples are **relevant, current, and informative**

Which story is relevant?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Major road construction starting in three days will make driving challenging for several months. OR ● My cat is really cute!
Which story is current?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In February 2025, the American Journal of Public Health estimated less than 72 percent of American children were vaccinated against measles, when a 90% rate is necessary for herd immunity. OR ● In March of 2020, 73 percent of schools closed to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus.
Which story is informative?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Breezy southeast winds and low humidities will result in a High to Very High fire danger the rest of the afternoon. Use caution when using tools that can create sparks or a lot of heat, when discarding used cigarettes, or burning debris. OR ● The president vetoed the bill.

Newspaper Scavenger Hunt

Look through your copy of the local newspaper to learn about its composition. Work with a partner to answer the following questions.

1. List the different sections of the newspaper:

2. Find an example of a politics story.

Write the headline here: _____

3. Find an example of a science story.

Write the headline here: _____

4. Pick one article to read all the way through.

Write the headline here: _____

5. What is the main idea of the article you read?

6. List at least three sources (people quoted, facts cited) referenced in the article you read:

7. Which section of the newspaper did you find most interesting? Why?

Picking Your Topic

Directions: Answer the following questions to help choose your preferred writing topic:

1. What are some things you are interested in/care about?

2. What are some things you want to learn more about?

3. Why are these things important to you?

Example:

Topic Idea	Subtopic Idea
Basketball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should WNBA players be paid the same as NBA players? • How does the league decide when or how to add new teams?
Animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pros and Cons of Zoos • What kinds of jobs can animals have?

Now you try! Once you have brainstormed a few, circle the one you want to focus on.

Topic Idea	Subtopic Idea
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • •
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • •
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • •

Knowledge Inventory

Share your topic idea with a small group. Explain why you picked it and what you want to focus on writing about. Your small group should pose three questions about your topic. Do you know how to address those questions about the topic? Maybe the questions can help you with research! List their questions here:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

In the left column, write down all the facts you know about your topic. In the right column, write what you want to know about the topic.

What I Know	What I Want to Know
1.	•
2.	•
3.	•
4.	• •
5.	• •
6.	• •

Research Tips

Reference the research tips below if you have a question while conducting research for your project.

- 1. Search specific terms. Using specific terms gets you to the correct answer faster.**
 - Use open-ended question words: Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How
 - Example: When was the first spaceship invented?
 - Non-example: spaceship inventions (gives you a list of technologies invented for spaceships)
 - Distinguish between your specific topics and topics you don't want to learn about
 - Example: Why is the state bird of Louisiana the pelican?
 - Non-example: louisiana pelicans (gives you statistics about the NBA Team, the New Orleans Pelicans)
- 2. Determining Credible Sources. Credible sources are reliable, fact-checked, and unbiased.**
 - Don't just use the top search!
 - Companies pay for the top spot
 - AI summaries can be wrong or reductive/lacking in full context
 - Find websites with .gov, .org or .edu addresses
 - Publicly funded research has lots of scrutiny and review by scientists, researchers, and the public
 - University researchers publish data that is "peer reviewed," or evaluated by other experts before being presented to the public.
 - Major news organizations and encyclopedias
 - Staffed by journalists and researchers who have studied how to research
- 3. Considering Bias. An unbiased source has more credibility because it presents multiple sides of an issue**

How to evaluate a source for credibility and bias:

- Is the source trying to sell you something? Are they putting forward information to influence you to buy a subscription or product?
- What is the political affiliation of the source? Do they highlight or obscure certain people or groups to match a political agenda?
- Does the organization have a vested interest in the topic, or do they have money tied to whether or not you believe them?
- If a source says they are an "expert," what was their field of study or experience? Someone who calls themselves a "health expert," but didn't go to medical school and has no formal training should be scrutinized.

Research Notes

You have your research topic, and you have a list of questions to guide your research. Now it's time to start researching! Take notes on this organizer. In the left column, write the question that you're researching. In the middle column, list the name of the source you found and the title of the article. In the right column, write one direct quote and one fact from the article.

Question #	Source and Article Title	One Quote and One Fact from Source

Research Notes, Continued

You have your research topic, and you have a list of questions to guide your research. Now it's time to start researching! Take notes on this organizer. In the left column, write the question that you're researching. In the middle column, list the name of the source you found and the title of the article. In the right column, write one direct quote and one fact from the article.

Question #	Source and Article Title	One Quote and One Fact from Source

What's the Angle?

Read through the example editorial provided by your teacher and answer the questions about the editorial's angle.

Title of Editorial: _____

Writer's Name: _____

Publication: _____

1. What is the main topic of the editorial?
2. What is the angle, or major claim, of the editorial? What is the writer trying to persuade you to do?
3. Do you agree with the writer? Why or why not?
4. What is one piece of supporting evidence that the writer uses to boost their claim? Write the quote from the article and name the source that the writer references.
5. How many other sources does the writer reference? Count them up and write them here.
6. Does the writer have a call to action in their editorial? If so, what steps are they calling on the reader to take after learning their position?

Finding Your Angle

Remember to make sure your angle is...

- **Relevant** - Interesting and impactful to a lot of people
- **Current** - Happening right now / related to things happening now
- **Informative** - Contains accurate info that people need to know

Directions: Go over your research from previous sessions and decide what is the angle that you're going to write about for your editorial using these questions to home in on your main idea.

1. What excites you most about your topic?

2. How do you want your readers to feel after reading your editorial? (circle one)
Curious Motivated Surprised Inspired Ready to Act Informed

3. What's the main thing you want readers to understand when they finish your editorial?

4. Review your research and check that you have all of the following:
 - At least three different, trustworthy sources
 - At least three quotes or facts to use in your article
 - No repeating information (all sources should tell you something different!)

5. Based on your research and what you have written above, write a complete sentence that states the angle of your editorial.
Examples:
 - School lunches should be healthier.
 - We must to increase voter turnout in our state.
 - Pollinators are important to our ecosystem and they need our help.

The angle of my editorial is:

Major and Supporting Claims

Major Claim: The main idea of your article. This should appear in the first paragraph and every detail you add should support your main claim. This is also known as a *thesis statement*.

Supporting Claim: Supports your major claim and acts as evidence as to why you are right. Each minor claim will have its own paragraph.

Directions: Choose the major claim of your article. Then brainstorm three supporting claims to support the central idea of your article. Think about: what are you trying to argue, prove, or advocate for in your article? What is the main thing you want your readers to take away?

Major Claim (What is the main idea or angle of your editorial?)



Supporting Claim #1	Supporting Claim #2	Supporting Claim #3
Evidence:	Evidence:	Evidence:

Outlining: Editorial Structure

Introduction

- Hook: An exciting opening that pulls your reader in. A good hook can:
 - Ask a question
 - Use repetition
 - Personal Experience
 - Dialogue
- Introduce topic and what readers can expect from this article

Body Paragraph(s)

- Introduce supporting claims.
- Introduce fact(s) in your own words
- Properly cite your source with a quote
- Explain what this fact/opinion means and add your own ideas to it

*Repeat for every body paragraph. Each body paragraph will explore a different supporting idea.

Each body paragraph should have...

- Topic Sentence (minor claim): What is this paragraph about?
- Quote/evidence: What does your research say?
- Paraphrase: What does your evidence mean in your own words?
- Elaboration: Why does it matter? Why should people care? Who should care?
- Concluding Sentence: How does this paragraph connect to your major claim? How does this connect to your next minor claim?

Conclusion

- Sum up the main idea in different words
- Pick one of these three formats to shape your conclusion.
 - Call to action. Ask the audience to do something specific.
 - Question. Ask a question to get readers thinking more deeply about the topic.
 - Look ahead. How might your topic change 1-5 years from now?

Outlining: The Introduction

Give your readers an idea of what your article will be about. Pull them in with an interesting title and exciting opening sentence. 3-7 sentences.

Hook (an exciting way to start your article):

Major Claim (what is your article about?):

Why should the reader care? Why does this matter?

Outlining: Body Paragraph 1

Body Paragraphs: These paragraphs should be about your supporting claims (evidence!). Include a quote for each supporting claim. Aim for 5-10 sentences for EACH paragraph.

BONUS: Add in your own thoughts/opinions too!

Supporting Claim #1 (from your worksheet):

Quote (from your research):

Analysis (What do you think/What does this quote mean?):

Outlining: Body Paragraph 2

Body Paragraphs: These paragraphs should be about your supporting claims (evidence!). Include a quote for each supporting claim. Aim for 5-10 sentences for EACH paragraph.

BONUS: Add in your own thoughts/opinions too!

Supporting Claim #2:

Quote (from your research):

Analysis (What do you think/What does this quote mean?):

Outlining: Body Paragraph 3

Body Paragraphs: These paragraphs should be about your supporting claims (evidence!). Include a quote for each supporting claim. Aim for 5-10 sentences for EACH paragraph.

BONUS: Add in your own thoughts/opinions too!

Supporting Claim #3:

Quote (from your research):

Analysis (What do you think/What does this quote mean?):

Outlining: Conclusion

Conclusion This is the last chance to inform/persuade your readers about your topic. End it with power! 3-5 sentences

Restate major claim using different words:

Why Your Topic is Important (Why should your readers care? What do you want them to learn?):

Call to action, look ahead, or leave readers with a question to think about:

Now that you've planned your editorial, what will the title be?

Revision Activity: Part 1

Read the excerpt from “The Burning of the Amazon Rainforest” by Bethany Woo, Age 11, 826 Valencia. What would you suggest to Bethany if you were their peer reviewer?

Excerpt:

There were a lot of fires in the past year. It wood be really bad if the Amazon burned down. Do you know why? Because it has trees and we need oxygen to live And we haven't found another planet to live on.

Suggestions:

Revision Activity: Part 2

Read the revised excerpt from “The Burning of the Amazon Rainforest” by Bethany Woo, Age 11, 826 Valencia. What would you suggest to Bethany if you were their peer reviewer?

Revised excerpt:

The Washington Post says there have been about 100,000 fires in 2019. What do you think would happen if The Amazon actually burned down? Trees turn carbon dioxide into oxygen, and without trees, we would have a lot more carbon dioxide on Earth. Furthermore, besides all that carbon dioxide, we also lose the plants and trees that are able to convert the carbon dioxide into oxygen. The reason why this is important is because we need oxygen to live. And we haven't found another planet to live on. Global warming is caused by carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and the fires release more CO₂, so there will be more carbon dioxide and more global warming.

What revision techniques were used?

Revision Checklist

With a peer or your teacher, compare your editorial draft to the items on this checklist. The guiding questions should help you reflect, while the checkboxes are must-have qualities for a successful editorial.

If something on the checklist is missing in your editorial, now is the time to revise it. If the editorial looks good and you have a reader (not yourself) go through everything with you, they can sign off on the checklist for you. At that point, your editorial draft will be complete!

IDEAS: Your main message

Guiding questions:

What's the main idea or message? How do the details connect to the topic?

Revision checklist:

- My editorial has a clear main idea.
- I have included quotes from my research.
- All of the details in my article connect back to my main idea.
- My editorial has a title that clues the reader in to what it's about

ORGANIZATION: Arrangement of ideas

Guiding questions:

What's the beginning, middle, and end?

How do you want to organize your ideas?

Does the most important information come early in the article?

Revision checklist:

- I have an exciting hook or lead that draws the reader in.
- My writing has a beginning, middle, and end that make sense together.
- My ideas are easy to follow and well-paced.
- I end my article with a call to action.

Voice: Personal flavor

Guiding questions:

How do you feel about the topic? Who will read your writing? How do you want your readers to learn? Did you leave any readers' questions unanswered? Did you pick a picture for your article?

Revision checklist:

My readers are:

I want my readers to learn:

I want my readers to feel:

Revision Checklist, Continued

Word Choice: Exciting language

Guiding questions:

- Does your article include descriptive words?
- How can you show instead of tell?
- How can you paint a picture for your readers?

Revision Checklist:

- I have used transition phrases
- I have substituted five ordinary words with more exciting words (words good and bad are not allowed) from the Word Choice wordbank.

Sentence Fluency: How it sounds

Guiding questions:

- How does the writing sound?
- Do the sentences flow?

Revision checklist:

- I have read my writing aloud to listen for how it flows.
- All my sentences and words are in the right order.
- I have checked for fragments and run-ons.

Conventions: Final touches

Revision checklist:

- All my sentences start with a capital letter. Words aren't capitalized unless needed.
- All my sentences end with a punctuation mark.
- The titles of articles and all quotations are in quotation marks.
- All my sources are cited correctly.
- The names of newspapers, online publications, books, movies, TV shows, and video games are in italics.
- I have worked with another person to correct spelling, paying particular attention to names.

I agree that I've reread my work and have completed all steps required in the packet:

Student Signature: _____

Reviewer/Teacher Signature: _____