

# Classroom Newsletter

*An Educator's Reference Desk Lesson Plan*

This is a two week lesson plan in which students create a newsletter for their classroom and/or school. Students visit a local newspaper and learn about the various jobs at a newspaper.

## Materials

- [Newspaper Reporters - An Introduction to Newspaper Writing](#) by Marzella Brown (ISBN 1-55734-137-0), Teacher Created Materials, Inc.
- computers with Internet access
- camera
- lay-out software (i.e. [Quark](#) or [Pagemaker](#) )
- photography software (i.e. [PhotoShop](#) or similar)
- copy machine
- photo scanner
- [Hazelwood vs. Kuhlmeier Case](#) (available online)
- [Field Trip Handouts](#)
  
- [Newsletter Handouts](#)  
*Handouts in .pdf format; requires free Adobe Acrobat Reader.*

## Vocabulary:

1. *Headline* - Head of a newspaper story or article usually printed in large type, giving the gist of the story or article that follows.
2. *Publisher* - Head of the paper; decides who will do what work.
3. *Mechanical Department* - Decides where the articles, pictures, and ads will go and then prints the paper.
4. *Caption* - The words under a picture that describe the picture.
5. *Logo* - A slogan, design, or artwork that is the paper's trademark.
6. *Freedom of Speech* - The right to speak freely.
7. *Typesetter* - The person who types all of the articles.
8. *Editorial* - An article where the writer shares opinions about the news instead of just facts.
9. *Feature* - Feature writers choose subjects for stories that will interest the newspaper's readers.
10. *Advertising* - Something that calls public attention to, especially by emphasizing desirable qualities so as to arouse a desire to buy or patronize.

# Activity Time

Two weeks

## Concepts Taught

## How To Play

[Prior to this unit, set up a field trip to a local newspaper -- to occur on Day 2 of the unit.]

### *Day 1:*

Discuss what the term *freedom of speech* means. "Have you heard of that phrase before? Do you think we have freedom of speech in America? Why or why not? Should we have complete freedom of speech? Should racist remarks be allowed in the classroom? Should a teacher be allowed to swear in a first grade classroom? Is it okay to tell lies and spread bad rumors about classmates?"

Have students access the [Hazelwood vs. Kuhlmeier](#) case. (The decision decided that a principal could censor a school newspaper.) Discuss the issues involved in the case and ask students to share their comments and questions. (Older students could be asked to write a short essay describing the case and their viewpoints on the outcome.)

At the end of class, give each student a copy of the field trip rules. Review the rules and respond to any questions that students may have. Ask students to bring in examples of newspapers, magazines, and newsletters for an activity later in the week (for Day 4).

### *Day 2:*

Before leaving for the field trip, discuss what the students will see at the newspaper. Have them look for one thing that they did not know about the newspaper business before. Do they think they will see many people performing different jobs? Will the paper be divided up into separate departments? Encourage students to look for different types of jobs at the newspaper. Remind students to bring in examples of newspapers, magazines, and newsletters to look at in class on Day 4.

### *Day 3:*

Discuss what the students saw at the newspaper. Have students fill out the "Field Trip Activity" hand-out, which lists questions about what students saw at the newspaper. Next, students will complete an Internet activity in which they research newspaper occupations (accompanying hand-out in **Materials** ). For each occupation, students will research salary, skills needed, duties, etc. Remind students to bring in examples of newspapers, magazines, and newsletters for the next day's class.

### *Day 4:*

Have students look at the newspapers, magazines, and newsletters that they brought in. "What interests you in the paper you are looking at? Does every article grab your

attention? What makes a good newspaper? How does an article grab your attention? Do different font sizes affect what you read first? Does everyone know what a font is? What are the different parts of the paper called?" (headline, articles, photos, captions, logos, etc.)

"As a class, you will create your own newsletter. What sections do you think would interest your viewers the most?" Go over the brainstorming techniques that students have used in the past. Remind them that "listing" is where you write down the first word that pops into your head; there are no wrong or right answers. With what they have learned about the types of jobs in the field of journalism and what they saw at the newspaper, have students fill out the "Creating a Newsletter" hand-out (see **Materials** ). Then discuss their answers and list possible themes for the newsletter, names, and sections. Write their answers on the board, and have students vote on the best choice.

On the "Creating a Newsletter" hand-out, students also select the department they would be interested in (news department, mechanical department, business department, and publisher). Review students' selections and make a list of the students interested in each department for the next day's class.

*Day 5:*

Have students get into their assigned groups (departments), and give each group a selection of newspapers. Using the newspapers and hand-outs from the Newspaper Reporters book, students find examples of items related to their "jobs." For instance, an example for the job of illustrator could be the comics section of the newspaper.

*Day 6:*

Prepare a list of assigned duties for each group (see "Posting of Jobs" hand-out in **Materials** ). Each group will have one publisher who is in charge of keeping everyone organized and making sure that everything is getting done on time. Other hand-outs can be created by the teacher, based on what the teacher assigns the students to do in their department. The hand-outs should contain a list of specific duties that each student needs to complete for the week. [For example, if the newsletter's theme is about the whole school, one of the duties could be to write an article about a sports activity. If the newsletter's theme is about fashion, one of the duties could be to have a student photograph the students of the school and what they are wearing.] On Day 6, everyone needs to have an idea of what they need to get done in the upcoming week.

*Days 7-8:*

Each group will work on their section of the newsletter. Each student will have a list of the projects that they need to complete by Day 9.

*Day 9:*

This is the last day for students to submit work for the newsletter and finalize everything.

*Day 10:*

Everyone will read a copy of the completed newsletter and reflect on what they like and

what they could have done better. Students will write a critique listing the pros and cons of the final product. Students may distribute copies of the newsletter to the rest of the school.

## **Assessments**

Students will write a short essay explaining what they have learned about newspapers and the newspaper business.

## **Useful Internet Resources:**

\* [Hazelwood vs. Kuhlmeier Case](#)

<http://www.splc.org/legalresearch.asp?id=4>

\* [Online Idea: Newspaper in the Classroom](#)

<http://www.startribune.com/education/classroo.shtml>

\* [Teacher Created Materials](#)

<http://www.teachercreated.com>

[http://www.eduref.org/Virtual/Lessons/Language\\_Arts/Journalism/JNL0200.html](http://www.eduref.org/Virtual/Lessons/Language_Arts/Journalism/JNL0200.html)

[http://www.eduref.org/Virtual/Lessons/Language\\_Arts/Journalism/JNL0200a.pdf](http://www.eduref.org/Virtual/Lessons/Language_Arts/Journalism/JNL0200a.pdf)

This site contains newsletter handouts

[http://www.eduref.org/Virtual/Lessons/Language\\_Arts/Journalism/JNL0200b.pdf](http://www.eduref.org/Virtual/Lessons/Language_Arts/Journalism/JNL0200b.pdf)