

# MODERN NEWS



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# Introduction

What do you think of modern news?

Does modern news tell us the truth?

Is modern news today useful for us to know?

# Reading

Years ago, before the internet, people bought newspapers or watched the TV for the daily news.

There was also the radio — considered the best source for up-to-date news as they could interrupt any show with breaking news as all radio shows were live. But now people rely mainly on the internet for all their news.

Every newspaper from the old days had to adapt and go digital — or die.

And because of the internet we also had blogs, personal websites and a plethora of other news websites joining the ranks of the old-school, pre-internet newspapers too. Many of these sites have gained in popularity with millions of followers checking in every day.

While websites such as Huff Post has around fifty million visitors a month, many of the older traditional newspapers have nowhere near as many followers.

Along with all these new newsgroups, the internet also allowed for something else — comments.

Years ago, if you wanted to add your views to the newspaper you would have to write a letter to the editor and wait to see if it had been published. If you were lucky enough to have your letter published, the tone would be civil and polite, even if you might be angry at an issue raised in the newspaper. Plus the letter would be composed of three or four paragraphs.

But nowadays people can add comments directly underneath the news article the day it is published. There is no longer the same etiquette that was used before. People are often rude and make personal remarks to the writer of the news article or other comment makers.

Also, the way in which the news is written is very different. Everyone has an opinion, and this seems to be more important than the actual news itself. Like everyone's own personal views take precedence over and above the facts of the news story.

This has led to the phrase 'Fake News' being thrown around.

From presidents to news editors to the man on the street — everyone uses this phrase as a declaration against some news item they don't like or disagree with.

All the news today has taken on a sensationalist, tabloid feel. Even the broadsheets which always had a sombre and serious tone. Now they all use click-bait titles that try to entice the reader to click and follow the story.

Why has this shift taken place?

Many believe that it is because of the big bucks offered by the large advertising companies. Every time we click on a news story we are immediately subjected to a barrage of advertising.

The news websites claim that this advertising revenue is necessary to keep the news website afloat. Others argue that it is just sheer greed and has nothing to do with anything newsworthy.

It seems that serious journalists of today are more like bloggers — spouting their personal beliefs and writing opinion pieces instead of reporting on the real news of the day.

# Reading Comprehension Questions

How did people consume their news before the internet?

What was considered the most immediate medium for news years ago?

How was this medium so rapid in telling important news?

After the internet what were the most noticeable changes in news media?

How much traffic does Huff Post get every month?

How did people make comments to the newspaper years ago?

How are comments different today from news letters years ago?

According to the article, what is a difference in the way the journalists write the news today?

What is Fake News?

What is click-bait?

What role does advertising play in modern news media?

According to the article, how does the writer regard modern journalists?

What writing style is the article itself?

# Essential Vocabulary

the best source  
interrupt  
rely  
go digital  
join the ranks  
editor  
tone  
issue  
etiquette  
thrown around  
declaration  
tabloid  
sombre  
entice  
big bucks  
subjected  
revenue  
sheer greed  
bloggers

up to date  
breaking news  
adapt  
plethora  
old-school  
published  
civil and polite  
composed  
take precedence  
the man on the street  
sensationalist  
broadsheets  
click-bait titles  
shift  
advertising  
barrage  
afloat  
newsworthy  
spouting

## Exercise

Write down all the words and phrases in your vocabulary notebook. Look in your dictionary and find the meaning of each word. Write the definition next to each word.

Then make up your own sentences using each word or phrase.

For example:

**Notebook**—*a small book with pages of blank paper that students use to make notes when studying.*

***“I left my notebook at home so I was unable to make any notes in my English class.”***

# News of The World

Divide into groups and write a modern-style news article on the following news items. Try to include a picture if you can — you can draw one if you need to.

1. Man steals car. Turns out to be the mayor's car.
2. Three young women go to another country for cosmetic surgery. On the way back they are not allowed through customs as they are all wearing bandages on their faces.
3. Man embezzles one million dollars from company and tries to flee the country.
4. A girl finds a bag with \$10,000 inside. Hands it into the police.
5. Internet bug that can delete all files on any computer spreading like a virus.
6. Strain of pig flu epidemic coming to your country. Warn the public.
7. Couple win ten million dollars on the lottery. Husband disappears with young lover.



# Discussion Questions

What is the role and purpose of the news media in society today? Does it live up to these expectations?

Is the news telling us the truth? Or is it censored?

How do you read the news every day? What news do you read every day?

How will the news media change in the future? How will we read or view it?

Do you like to participate in the comments section of the news? Why/why not?

How do your parents read the news? What about your grandparents?

Is the news too depressing? Should they balance bad and good news? Why/why not?

Does the news media try to spread fear? If so, why do they do it?

Has technology made it so that anyone can be a news journalist? Is this a good or bad thing?

Would you like to be a journalist? Why/why not?

Does your town have a local newspaper? Who reads it? Is it of any value?

Is reading the news a waste of time? Why/why not?

# Writing

Take a popular news story that is current right now and write your own news story about it.

# Teacher's Notes

## Introduction

Get students to read out all the questions, one-by-one, then discuss in the class together.

## Reading

This could be done as a reading assignment before class or in the class with several students taking it in turns to read.

Check for pronunciation.

## Reading Comprehension

This could be done as homework or in class.

Go through all the questions, getting a different student to read out a question each time. Then elicit answers from the class.

## Vocabulary

This could be done as homework or in class.

If you do this in class, it is a good opportunity to help the students learn how to use a dictionary effectively.

It would be better if the students each had their own vocabulary notebook to write down new words learned from the reading exercise.

Get the students to write down the word and the meaning in English. Try to make them avoid using a translation app as this will just slow them down.

For making their own sentences, you could give them some time and go around the class assisting where necessary.

Once all the students are ready, you can get them to read out their sentences in class.

Check for the correct use of the vocabulary and sentence structure.

## News of The World

In a large class, you can divide the students into small groups and let them choose one of the news stories to write together.

In a small class, the students will have to work alone or they could do two or three of the stories as one group.

For one student, let them choose one story and you can work with the student to make the story together. Make sure the student does most of the work though.

## Discussion

Get students to read out each question in class. Then discuss with all the class.

Encourage and push for responses where necessary.

## **Writing**

Do this as a homework assignment.

You could mark all the writing assignments privately or ask the students to read out loud in class, depending on the students' levels of confidence and their culture.

# Credits

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