

Design Document for Blended Learning Course: How to Write a Straight News Article

Introduction:

This course for a blended learning 8th-grade classroom outlines the second in a larger three-bend series that introduces students to investigative journalism as a narrative genre. Bend 1 develops students' news literacy, including familiarity with the anatomy of print and online journalism, straight news versus editorial writing, and common journalistic craft moves. The focus is on noticing these details through reading, not writing. In Bend 2, students are asked to emulate the writers they've been studying by writing a straight news piece of their own. Like a real journalist, they will be asked to cover a story, record facts, conduct interviews, draft, revise, and publish a final piece on a deadline. The information below provides a rough overview of Bend 2 course content.

Performance/Needs Analysis:

Purpose: Develop an e-learning module for the 8th-grade English department's "Investigative Journalism" unit at Stanley Middle School.

Category	Questions to Ask of ELA Teachers
Topic Familiarity and Preparation	Have any teachers taught this unit before? If so, how many times? Judging from past years, what would you consider the strengths and weaknesses of the unit? What elements are you enthusiastic about keeping and/or throwing out? Do any teachers have a background in journalism/media studies? Is there a district-adopted curriculum that you are required to use that we must adapt to fit this module? What elements (if any) do administrators require you to include? What resources are ESSENTIAL to implementing this unit? What resources are not essential, but IDEAL for this unit? How important is it that the entire department implements the curriculum in the same way (i.e. pacing, content, assessment)? For a blended learning environment, what kind of F2F to virtual ratio is ideal? Are you hoping to create a flipped classroom? How much time do you want to allot for this unit? Do you have hard start and end dates? If relevant, what LMSs do you currently utilize?

<p>Standards and Objectives</p>	<p>What key learning objectives do you hope to achieve by the end of the unit? If applicable, how successful have you been in achieving those objectives in past years?</p> <p>What reading skills are you hoping that students will master?</p> <p>What critical thinking skills are you hoping that students will master?</p> <p>What writing skills are you hoping that students will master?</p> <p>What speaking and listening skills are you hoping students will master?</p> <p>With what specific CCSS does the course content align?</p> <p>Are there any other district-adopted standards (i.e Character Counts), goals, or targets that you need to address in this module?</p>
<p>Pedagogy/Teaching Methods</p>	<p>How is your class structured on a typical day? What routines can students expect?</p> <p>What kind of pre-assessments will you be using to measure students' incoming skill level?</p> <p>How will those pre-assessments inform your instruction?</p> <p>How and to what extent do you plan to tap into students' prior knowledge?</p> <p>What teaching methods/activities do you use to engage students?</p> <p>Are you looking to incorporate new teaching methods/activities/strategies into your unit?</p> <p>To what extent do you currently utilize digital platforms during instruction?</p> <p>What apps, add-ons, extensions, or other web tools have you used in your teaching?</p> <p>How do you differentiate instruction for diverse learning styles?</p> <p>How do you accommodate students with IEPs and 504s?</p> <p>How do you coach or redirect students when necessary?</p> <p>How will you provide meaningful and timely feedback to all students throughout the unit?</p> <p>What mentor texts will you use?</p> <p>Do you have text sets prepared for your students?</p> <p>If not, do you plan to have students find their own articles?</p> <p>Will students be expected to complete homework? Daily? Weekly?</p>
<p>Assessment</p>	<p>What grade scale will you be using (i.e. weighted/non-weighted, pluses/minuses)?</p> <p>How will students be informed of their progress?</p> <p>How many graded assignments do you plan to administer?</p> <p>How will you measure growth?</p> <p>How will students demonstrate their mastery?</p> <p>How will teachers determine whether a particular skill has been mastered? (That is, what do you mean by "mastery"?)</p> <p>What kind of rubrics will you use to assess proficiency?</p> <p>Do all teachers plan to use the same rubrics?</p> <p>Are those rubrics aligned to CCSS?</p> <p>What kind of formative assessments will you use to assess student progress?</p>

	<p>Is there a culminating summative assessment? What kind of modifications will you offer to students with IEPs?</p>
--	---

Target Population Analysis:

Target Population: 12- to 14-year old students enrolled in 8th-grade English at Stanley Middle School in Lafayette, Calif.

Category	Questions to Ask of ELA Students
Demographics	<p>Who is your English teacher this year? What period do you have English? How would you rate your skill-level of the following: Reading fiction Reading nonfiction Writing fiction Writing nonfiction Forget about skills: how would you rate your ENJOYMENT of the following: Reading fiction Reading nonfiction Writing fiction Writing nonfiction What was your most recent lexile score?</p>
Prior Knowledge	<p>How would you define the word “journalism”? How often do you read or watch the news? Where do you get your news? What is the difference between a straight/hard news article and an editorial?</p>
Technology Skills	<p>How would you rate your comfort level with the following tech and tools? Chromebooks School Loop Google Classroom Youtube Ed1Stop</p>

Example of TPA Interface

Target Population Analysis

*** Required**

First Name *
Your answer: _____

Last Name *
Your answer: _____

Period *

1
 3
 4
 5
 6
 7

English Teacher *

Pledger
 Huckins
 McCalmont

NEXT

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

Target Population Analysis

*** Required**

Demographics

How would you rate your skill-level on the following? *
Keep in mind I am not asking whether or not you can do these things.

	I can do it usually (or I have a lot of help)	I need to struggle with it a lot (or I need some help)	I'm pretty good at it	I'm not one of the best at this
Reading and understanding fiction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reading and understanding non-fiction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing short fiction (like poems or short stories)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing short non-fiction (like essays or reports)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Forget about skills: how would you rate your ENJOYMENT of the following:
Think of all asking if you like (or hate) these things, so be honest as best you can.

	I like this a lot (or I love it)	I like this a little (or I like it)	I don't like this (or I hate it)	I don't know
Reading and understanding fiction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reading and understanding non-fiction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing short fiction (like poems or short stories)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing short non-fiction (like essays or reports)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What was your most recent lexie score? *
If you don't remember just put N/A.

Your answer: _____

Target Population Analysis

*** Required**

Prior Knowledge

How would you define the word "journalism"? *
If you aren't sure, there's okay. Just write "I'm not sure."

Your answer: _____

How often do you read, watch, or listen to the news? *

Not at all
 Less than 30 minutes a day
 30 minutes to 1 hour per day
 1+ hours a day- I'm a news junkie!
 Only when my parents have it on TV

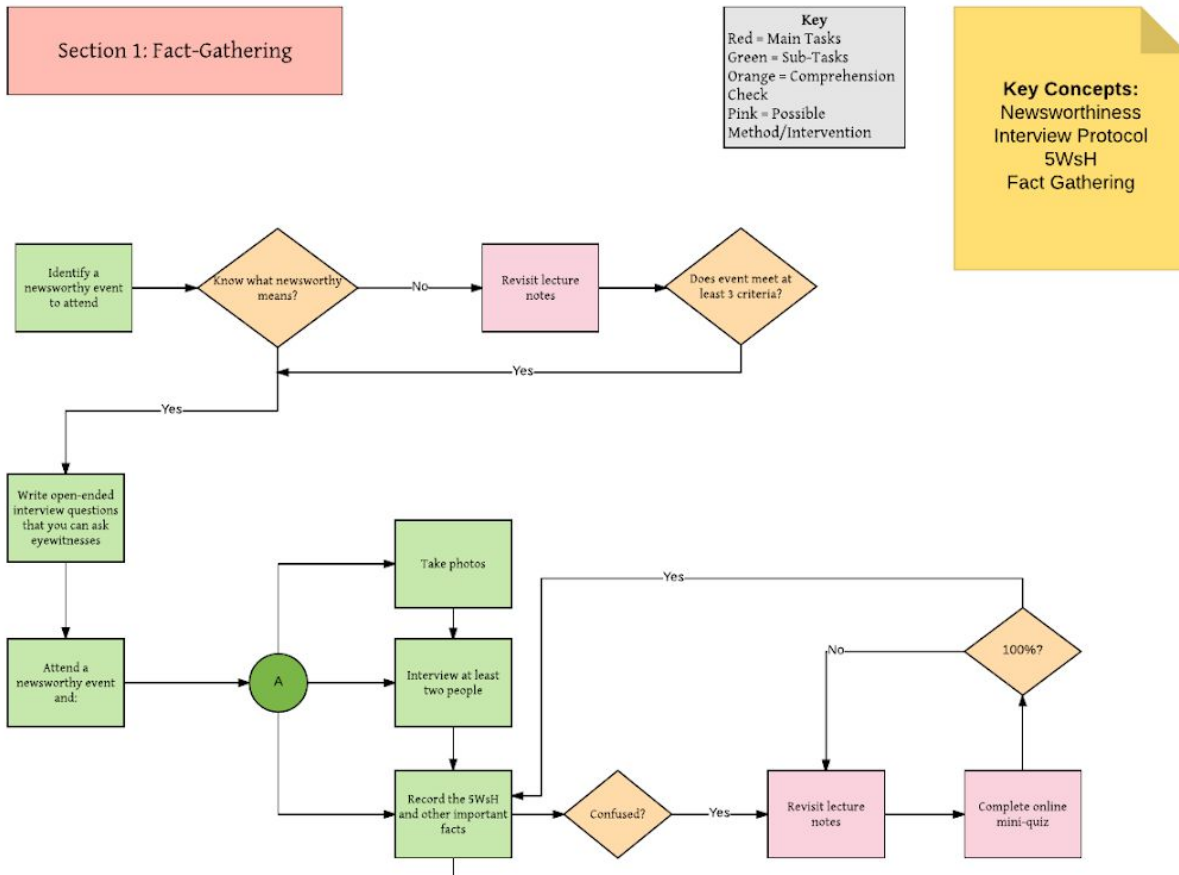
Where do you get your news? *
Check all that apply.

Nowhere-I don't watch/listen to the news
 Facebook/Instagram/Twitter or other social media outlets
 Online news sources like NYTimes.com or TheHill.com
 Broadcast Television
 Radio
 Good, old-fashioned newspapers
 Magazines like Time or The Atlantic
 Other: _____

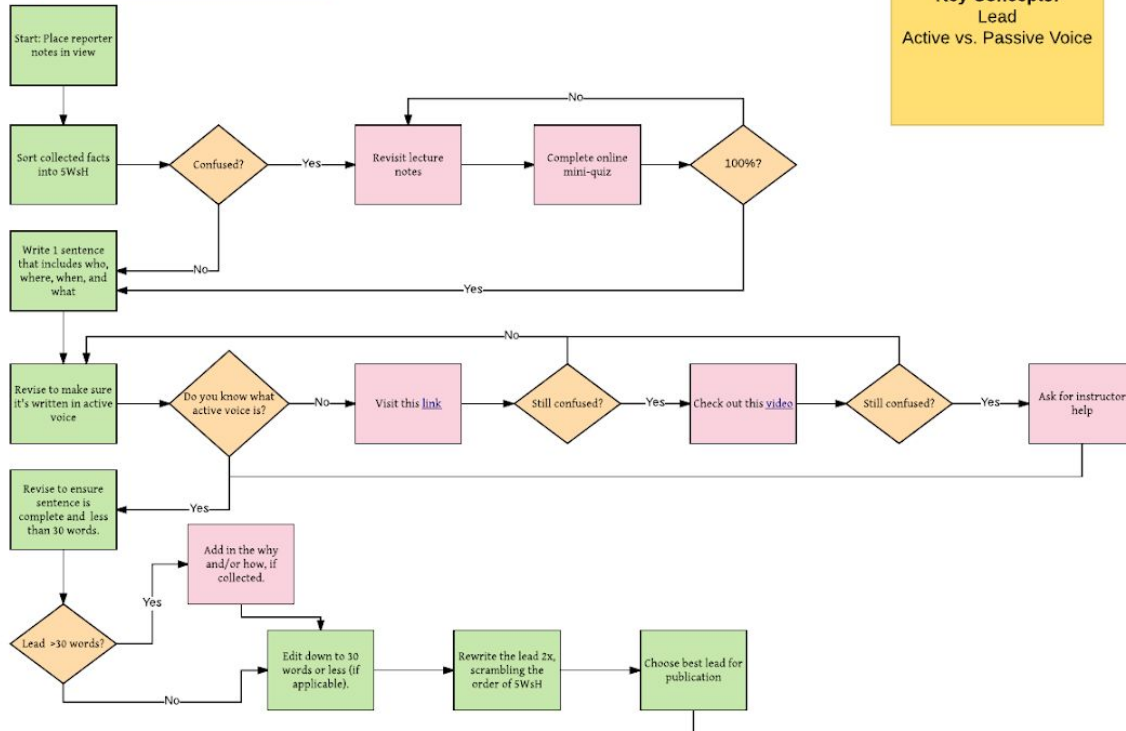
What is the difference between a straight news article and an editorial? *
If you aren't sure, there's okay. Just write "I'm not sure."

Your answer: _____

Task Analysis:

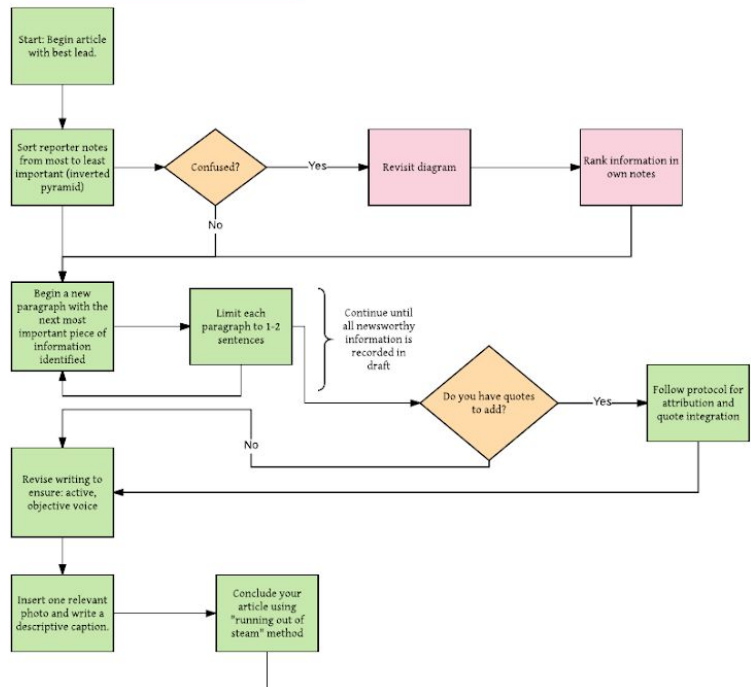


Section 2: Writing the Lead

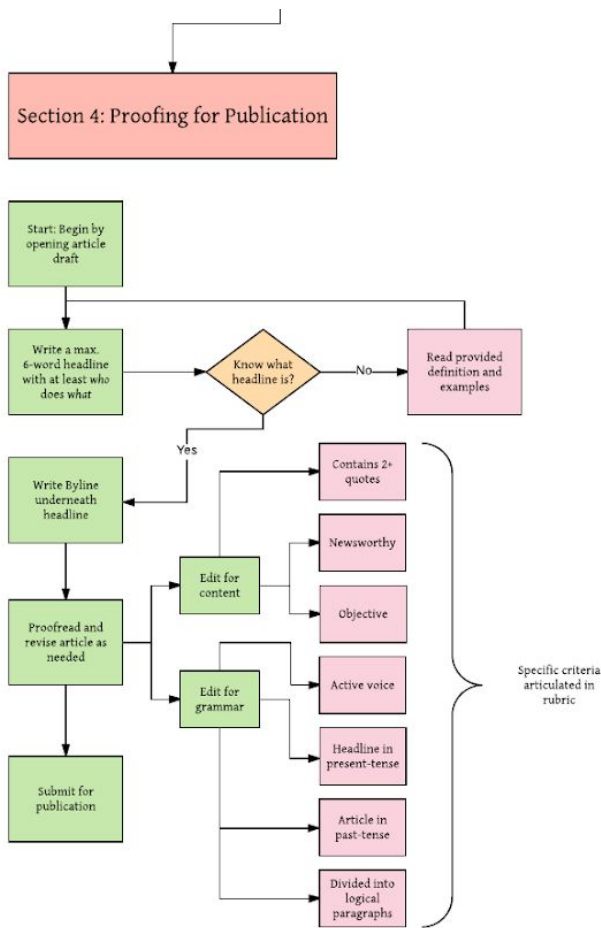


Key Concepts:
Lead
Active vs. Passive Voice

Section 3: Drafting the Body



Key Concepts:
Inverted Pyramid
Integrating Quotes
Objective/Unbiased
"Running out of Steam"



Key Concepts:
 Proofreading
 Headlines
 Bylines

Learning Objectives and Aligned Assessments:

Section 1: Fact-Gathering	
Learning Objectives	Assessments
Given the definitions of the five factors of newsworthiness, students will be able to name a newsworthy event to attend and report upon which contains at least 3 factors of newsworthiness.	Name the factors of newsworthiness in three news articles pulled from various familiar news sources (i.e. <i>SF Chronicle</i> , <i>NY Times</i> , <i>Sacramento Bee</i>).
Given a menu of note-taking strategies, students will be able to record the facts of that event in an accurate format that they can revisit (i.e. handwritten notes, audio recording, typewritten notes), including <i>who</i> , <i>what</i> , <i>when</i> , and <i>where</i> ,	While attending a newsworthy event, record the facts of that event within its start and end times in an accurate format that can be revisited (i.e. handwritten notes, audio recording, typewritten notes), including <i>who</i> , <i>what</i> , <i>when</i> , and <i>where</i> .

within the start and end times of the event.	
Given the criteria for a great interview question, students will be able to write at least ten open-ended, relevant, and interesting interview questions for a person attending this event.	Write at least ten open-ended, relevant, and interesting interview questions for a person attending this event.
Indirect Assessment	During F2F instruction times, drop by table groups and ask students to report out on the event about which they are preparing to attend. Follow up with probing questions. (i.e. <i>What makes this story newsworthy? Who would be the best people to interview at this event? Why? What kind of questions will you ask? What might your readership be most interested in knowing?</i>)

Section 2: Writing the Lead	
Learning Objectives	Assessments
Given the definition of 5Wsh, students will be able to sort the 5Wsh of journalism using examples from news articles and in their own fact-gathering for news reports with 90% accuracy.	Sort the 5Wsh of journalism in three news articles pulled from various familiar news sources (i.e. <i>SF Chronicle, NY Times, Sacramento Bee</i>) with 90% accuracy. Sort the 5Wsh of journalism from own fact-gathering reporter's notes using a graphic organizer.
Given a definition, examples, and teacher feedback, students will be able to write (or revise) their writing to reflect the use of active voice throughout their news piece.	Write (or revise) the lead to reflect the use of active voice throughout their news piece.
Given mentor texts and criteria for success, students will be able to write a concise straight news lead that, at minimum, includes <i>who, what, when, and where</i> the news event occurred.	Write a concise straight news lead that, at minimum, includes <i>who, what, when, and where</i> the news event occurred.
Indirect Assessment	During F2F instruction times, drop by table groups and ask students to report out on the event about which they are writing straight news leads. Follow up with probing questions. (i.e. <i>Who do you think this story is about? What are the most newsworthy moments? What information do you think you should tell the reader first? Are</i>

	you using active voice?)
--	--------------------------

Section 3: Drafting the Body	
-------------------------------------	--

Learning Objectives	Assessments
Given the principles of the inverted pyramid, students will be able to rank the information collected in reporter's notes from most important to least important.	Rank and label the information collected in reporter's notes from most to least important.
Given a definition, examples, and teacher feedback, students will be able to write (or revise) their writing to reflect the use of active voice throughout the news piece.	Write (or revise) the body to reflect the use of active voice throughout their news piece.
Given mentor texts and criteria for success, students will be able to write a concise straight news body that is broken into 1-2 sentence paragraphs and ordered according to the principles of the inverted pyramid.	Write a straight news body in several 1-2 sentence paragraphs adhering to the principles of the inverted pyramid.
Given proper formatting technique, students will be able to integrate direct quotes into the news story using correct attribution and formatting styles.	Integrate direct quotes into the news story body using correct attribution and formatting styles.
Indirect Assessments	<p>During F2F instruction times, drop by table groups and ask students to report out on the event about which they are writing straight news bodies. Follow up with probing questions. (i.e. <i>After your lead, how did you decide what was the next most important piece of information? What quotes do you think work best with this story? Who exactly is speaking here? Last name? Age?</i>)</p> <p>Ask student to identify an area of need or concern (or, supply one after a quick read-through if student believes their writing is flawless). Coach or advise appropriate next steps as required.</p>

Section 4: Proofing for Publication	
--	--

Learning Objectives	Assessments
---------------------	-------------

<p>Students will be able to revise their draft given the supplied rubric to guide editing decisions and ensure adherence to English language conventions.</p>	<p>Using a rubric-aligned self-edit checklist, revise news story draft as needed to ensure adherence to English language conventions.</p>
<p>Given a definition, examples, and teacher feedback, students will be able to write (or revise) their writing to reflect the use of active voice throughout the news piece.</p>	<p>Write (or revise) the body to reflect the use of active voice throughout their news piece.</p>
<p>Provided students have done the work to this point, they will be able to combine and revise their writing to produce a concise, polished straight news article that contains a lead, headline, byline, photos, direct quotes, and information compiled in 300-500 words.</p>	<p>Produce a concise, polished straight news article that contains a lead, headline, byline, photos, direct quotes, and information compiled in 300-500 words.</p>
<p>Indirect Assessment</p>	<p>During F2F instruction times, drop by table groups and ask students to report out on the event about which they are writing straight news leads. Follow up with probing questions. (i.e. <i>Did you cross-reference your work with the rubric? How do you think your writing achieves [x] criteria? What could you do better? Did you read your story out loud?</i>)</p> <p>Ask student to identify an area of need or concern (or, supply one after a quick read-through if student believes their writing is flawless). Coach or advise appropriate next steps as required.</p> <p>After submitting final draft, ask students to reflect on their learning in a brief multiple-choice and short-answer survey.</p>

Content Examples—General Information:

Clicking each slide below opens a link to a more detailed display of procedures, supporting concepts, supporting facts, principles, and guidelines.

Procedure Example

Bend 2: Writing a Straight News Article
Lesson 1: Fact-Gathering

1. Identify a newsworthy event to attend.
 - a. Review the factors of newsworthiness
 - b. Practice applying the factors of newsworthiness
 - c. Observe the school calendar, personal schedule, and/or friends' schedules to note potential event opportunities
2. Write open-ended interview questions to pose to interviewee(s)
 - a. Learn who would make a good interview subject
 - b. Research the interviewee and event
 - c. Review the definition of an open-ended question and practice distinguishing them from other question types
3. Attend the event
 - a. Take pictures
 - b. Interview two subjects
 - c. Record facts/quotes/important details in an efficient note-taking format

Principle

In order to write an informative, robust straight news article, you need to know how to cover an event in the field.

Therefore, by the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Prepare to attend a newsworthy event as a field reporter by ensuring you've chosen an efficient note-taking strategy and packing your prepared interview questions along with a reliable camera.
- Collect detailed facts/stats, record relevant quotes from interviewees, and shoot edifying and well-crafted photos within a newsworthy event's start and end times.
- Organize, clarify, and assess the completeness of field notes, photos, and interviews.
- Track down any outstanding Need-to-Knows before beginning the drafting phase.

Guidelines

- **Learn from the best!** Read pieces of journalism from *NYT*, *Atlantic*, *Washington Post*, etc., paying particular attention to the details they include in their articles. (*Practiced in LL.1*)
- **Get informed!** Learn as much as you can about the event and the people involved by doing some research before attending. (*Practiced in LL.2*)
- **Be prepared!** A good journalist needs to be ready to capture details at a moment's notice. Keep your pencil ready, camera charged, and eyes open for small moments.
- **Be flexible!** Never go to an event with preconceived notions about how it might play out. This might blind you to the unique situation that you are observing. Be willing to adjust as new or unexpected moments occur.
- **Be an active listener!** Listen closely to your interviewees and help them to speak freely by responding with appropriate follow-up and clarifying questions, non-verbal cues/gestures, and comments.
- **Get organized!** It's important to create a note-taking system that works for you so that you are able to record information quickly, accurately, and legibly.

Supporting Concepts and Facts Example

The supporting concepts relative to the fact-gathering procedure are:

1. What makes an event newsworthy? (Step 1)
 - a. Definitions of factors of newsworthiness (From Media College)
 - b. Examples of newsworthy stories (headlines and leads) pulled from print and online news sources
2. What is an open-ended question? (Step 2)
 - a. Definition of open-ended, close-ended, and leading questions
 - b. Examples of open-ended questions
 - c. Non-examples of close-ended and leading questions

3. Who will make a good interview subject? (Step 2)
 - a. What is an eyewitness?
 - b. What is an expert?
 - c. What is a person of interest?
4. Efficient note-taking strategies (Step 3)
 - a. Examples of different ways to annotate in the field

The supporting facts relative to the fact-gathering procedure are:

1. Parts of a newspaper (Step 1)
2. Framing a photograph (Step 3)

Content Examples—Procedure:

Clicking each slide below opens a link to a more detailed display of the procedure storyboards.

Procedure Screen: Basic Idea Lesson 1.1A (All buttons currently not live)

What makes a story newsworthy?

Timing

Significance

Proximity

Prominence

Human Interest

Narrator defines five factors of newsworthiness while video of corresponding terms and graphic appears on screen in sync. Brief pause, then narrator discusses examples in print and online. Corresponding graphics to right enlarge in tandem; highlighting and labels call out newsworthy elements in each story.

Advance to practice screen **Now You Try!**

Procedure Screen: Basic Idea Lesson 1.1B (All buttons currently not live)

Now You Try!

Click on a headline below to get started:

Report: Trump Son Informed Russia Meeting Was Effort To Aid His Father's Campaign

Airbnb's goal: Help 100,000 refugees find temporary housing over next five years

Building Booms in Boston Casts Shadow on History and Public Space

When clicked, opens: expanded story on left; textbox w/ newsworthiness terms on right. (From Media College). Hovering over terms produces pop-out; textbox w/ definition. Students select terms they believe present in example and hit "Submit". Next screen produces score.

(con't) The terms highlighted in green = correct; red = incorrect; yellow = failed to select. Hovering over each response generates a pop-up textbox that explains: a) how the factor is present, or b) how the factor is not present (no voice over)

"Continue" button turns live after earning 80%+ on one practice page **Continue!**

Procedure Screen: Basic Idea Lesson 1.1C (All buttons currently not live)

What newsworthy story will you cover?

Stanley Calendar

Tuesday, August 15
Boys Soccer vs. Benicia --Away

Friday, August 18
Wildcat Day!

Monday, August 21
Girls Volleyball vs. Vallejo--Home

Wednesday, August 23
Girls Maker Club Orientation

Next Week

Link to padlet where students can share ideas

Link to students' school calendar to review personal events + add idea dates

Get down at least 3 story ideas here!

Interactive notepad; button will send answers to teacher when clicked

Submit

"Continue" button turns live after submitting ideas

Continue!

Embedd school calendar agenda--will update automatically as changed by admin

Procedure Screen: Basic Idea Lesson 1.2A (All buttons currently not live)

Preparing for a Great Interview!

Short video previewing all steps of the interview preparation process. Steps appear on right as introduced in video. At conclusion, "Get Started" button appears on bottom right.

1. Identify subjects to interview, including eyewitnesses, people of interest, and experts.
2. Do some research on your subjects and the event you'll be covering.
3. Craft interesting open-ended questions to ask your subject(s) while avoiding leading and close-ended questions.

Get Started!

Content Examples—Supporting Concepts, Supporting Facts, and Instructional Methods:

Clicking each slide below opens a link to a more detailed display of the supporting concepts, supporting facts, and instructional methods storyboards.

Supporting Concepts Lesson 1.1
(Definitions adapted from mediacollege.com)

What makes a story newsworthy?

- Timing** The word news means exactly that - things which are new. Topics which are current are good news. Consumers are used to receiving the latest updates, and there is so much news about that old news is quickly discarded. A story with only average interest needs to be told quickly if it is to be told at all. If it happened today, it's news. If the same thing happened last week, it's no longer interesting.
- Significance** The number of people affected by the story is important. A plane crash in which hundreds of people died is more significant than a crash killing a dozen.
- Proximity** Stories which happen near to us have more significance. The closer the story to home, the more newsworthy it is. For someone living in France, a major plane crash in the USA has a similar news value to a small plane crash near Paris. Note that proximity doesn't have to mean geographical distance. Stories from countries with which we have a particular bond or similarity have the same effect. For example, Australians would be expected to relate more to a story from a distant Western nation than a story from a closer Asian country.
- Prominence** Famous people get more coverage just because they are famous. If you send out a snarky Tweet it won't make the news, but if the President of the United States send out a snarky Tweet it's big news.
- Human Interest** Human interest stories are a bit of a special case. They often disregard the main rules of newsworthiness; for example, they don't date as quickly, they need not affect a large number of people, and it may not matter where in the world the story takes place. Human interest stories appeal to emotion. They aim to evoke responses such as amusement or sadness. Newspapers often have a dedicated area for offbeat or interesting items.

Supporting Facts Lesson 1.1

Parts of a Newspaper

Print

Online

Supporting Concepts Lesson 1.2 *(All buttons currently not live)*

Who Should You Interview?

Eyewitness

Definition: Place definition of an eyewitness here.

Examples: Insert examples of an eyewitness in a given scenario.

Person of Interest

Definition: Place definition of an person of interest here.

Examples: Insert examples of an person of interest in a given scenario.

Expert

Definition: Place definition of an expert here.

Examples: Insert examples of an expert in a given scenario.

Continue! →

Instructional Methods Screen: Introduction Video

How to Cover an Event in the Field

Introduction animated video follows 8th-grade student, Julie. Like the students, she has to complete an assignment wherein she reports on an event in a straight news article. The purpose of video is to provide students with general overview of entire task. (~2 mins)



Interactive Techniques:

Element	Design Description
Video	Animated overview of tasks in a typical case study provided for: covering an event in the field and interviewing a subject.
Animation	Follow 8th-grader "Julie" as she covers an event in the field. Narrator voice over describes best practices.
Virtual Simulations	Help "Julie" complete her tasks by implementing the guidelines.
Clickable Buttons	Students interface with course content at their own pace by clicking buttons to next screen.
Drag-and-Drop	Practice activities include drag-and-drop games to help master new concepts.

Notepads	Students will add to notepads on an ongoing basis; free to refer to notes at any point to aide in applying learned content.
Roll-Over Content	A small pop-up will appear on the screen. when certain terms are rolled over with a mouse to give students access to more detailed definitions on demand.

Web 2.0

Platform	Purpose
Wiki	Students will add to ongoing wikis to share: story/beat ideas, interview tips/techniques, and effective craft moves.
Blog	Students will publish their final piece on a portfolio blog that will be open to comment within the wider Stanley M.S. community.