

Lesson Plan: News Navigator - Decoding Journalistic Texts

Materials Needed

- A selection of printed or digital journalistic texts (at least two examples each of opinion editorials, sports articles, and science/tech articles covering news, features, and editorials). Good sources include news websites for teens (e.g., Newsela, TIME for Kids), sports sections of newspapers, and science magazines.
- Highlighters in at least three different colors (e.g., yellow, pink, blue)
- Notebook, journal, or blank paper
- Pens or pencils
- Computer or tablet with internet access and a word processing program (like Google Docs or Microsoft Word)
- Graphic Organizer templates (examples provided within the lesson)
- Optional for Transfer activity: Poster board, markers, scissors, glue

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, Aira Marie will be able to:

1. **(Cognitive)** Identify and differentiate the purpose, language, and structure of news reports, feature articles, and opinion editorials in journalistic texts.
2. **(Psychomotor)** Create a portfolio containing three original short articles (a science news report, a sports feature, and an opinion editorial) that correctly apply the appropriate text structures.
3. **(Affective)** Articulate an appreciation for how different journalistic forms shape a reader's understanding of and feelings about a topic.

Lesson Proper (EFDT Model)

Introduction: Setting the Stage

Hook (5 minutes): What's the Story?

Present Aira Marie with three distinct headlines on a single topic, for example, a new video game release:

- **Headline A:** "Epic Games Releases 'Galaxy Quest 5' Today for PC and Consoles"
- **Headline B:** "The 10-Year Journey to Create 'Galaxy Quest 5': An Interview with the Lead Designer"
- **Headline C:** "Why 'Galaxy Quest 5' is a Disappointment We Should Have Seen Coming"

Ask: "Without reading the articles, what do you think the purpose of each one is? Which one just gives you facts? Which one tells a deeper story? Which one is trying to convince you of something? How can you tell?" This initial discussion sparks curiosity about author's purpose and text type.

Stating the Objectives (2 minutes):

"That's a great start! You're already acting like a news detective. Today, our mission is to become experts at navigating the news. By the end of our lesson, you'll be able to tell the difference between any news report, feature story, or opinion piece you find. You'll even create your own mini-newspaper to show off your skills, and you'll understand why knowing this difference makes you a smarter reader."

Body of the Lesson

Phase 1: EXPLORE (15 minutes)

Activity: Article Scavenger Hunt

I do: "I have a collection of different articles here about sports, science, and other topics. They all look different and are written for different reasons."

You do: "Your first mission is to be a sorter. Read through at least six of these articles. Based on your gut feeling, sort them into three piles:

- **Pile 1: Just the Facts** (Articles that seem to just report what happened)
- **Pile 2: The Full Story** (Articles that feel more descriptive and story-like)
- **Pile 3: What They Think** (Articles where the author is clearly sharing a strong opinion)

Don't worry about being perfect; we're just exploring. When you're done, be ready to tell me why you put each article in its pile. What clues did you use?"

This constructivist activity allows Aira Marie to build her own understanding before formal terms are introduced.

Phase 2: FIRM-UP (20 minutes)

Activity: Giving it a Name & Color-Coding Clues

I do (Direct Instruction): "You did an amazing job sorting those! Your categories are exactly what journalists use. Let's give them their official names." Introduce the concepts using a simple chart:

Text Type	Purpose (Why?)	Structure (How?)	Language (What?)
News Report (Your 'Just the Facts' pile)	To INFORM quickly	Inverted Pyramid (Most important info first)	Objective, Factual, 5Ws & H (Who, What, When, Where, Why & How)
Feature Article (Your 'The Full Story' pile)	To ENTERTAIN & EXPLORE	Narrative-style, creative hook, descriptive	Creative, sensory details, anecdotes, quotes
Opinion Editorial (Your 'What They Think' pile)	To PERSUADE	Claim -> Reasons/Evidence -> Conclusion/Call to Action	Subjective, persuasive words, uses "I" or "we", emotional appeal

We do (Guided Practice): "Let's test this out. Let's pick one article from each of your piles. Together, we're going to use highlighters to find the evidence."

- In the **News Report**, use a **YELLOW** highlighter to mark the 5Ws & H.
- In the **Feature Article**, use a **BLUE** highlighter to mark descriptive language or a personal story (anecdote).
- In the **Opinion Editorial**, use a **PINK** highlighter to mark the author's main claim and any

persuasive words.

This provides a clear, kinesthetic way to solidify the concepts.

Formative Assessment (Quick Check): Hand Aira Marie three new, short paragraphs, one of each type. Ask her to identify the type and explain her choice using the "magic words" from our chart (e.g., "This is a news report because it's objective and gives the 5Ws.>").

Phase 3: DEEPEN (25 minutes)

Activity: The Same-Topic Challenge

You do: "Now for a real detective challenge. Pick one topic you love—it could be your favorite sports team, the latest mission to Mars, or a new technology you're excited about. Your mission is to go online and find three different articles about that **exact same topic**:"

1. A news report
2. A feature article
3. An opinion editorial

"As you find them, fill out this 'Text Detective' graphic organizer. This will help you see how different writers can take the same event and present it in completely different ways."

Text Detective Graphic Organizer:

Analysis Point	Article 1: News Report	Article 2: Feature	Article 3: Editorial
Author's Main Purpose?			
What is the overall feeling or tone?			
Quote one sentence that BEST proves its type.			

This activity deepens understanding by requiring analysis and comparison, hitting the cognitive objective at a higher level.

Phase 4: TRANSFER (45 minutes)

Summative Assessment: Aira Marie's Journal

You do: "You've proven you can spot these articles in the wild. Now it's time to become the journalist! You are going to create the front page of your own publication, 'Aira Marie's Journal.' It must include three short articles that you write yourself."

- **A Science/Tech News Report:** Report the facts about a new gadget, a scientific discovery, or an update on an app you use. (Aim for ~75 words).
- **A Sports Feature:** Tell the story behind your favorite athlete, a great play you saw, or what it feels like to play your favorite sport. Use descriptive language! (Aim for ~100 words).
- **An Opinion Editorial:** Persuade your reader about something you feel strongly about. (e.g., "Why all students should learn to code," "The best book/movie ever is...," "Why we need more time for outdoor play.>"). (Aim for ~100 words).

You can type these up in a document, or get creative and design a real newspaper front page on a poster board! Before you finish, check your work against this Success Checklist."

Success Criteria Checklist:

- [] **News Report:** Is my tone objective? Do I answer the 5Ws (Who, What, Where, When, Why)? Is the most important fact first?
- [] **Feature Article:** Do I have a creative hook? Have I used descriptive words to paint a picture for my reader? Am I telling a story?
- [] **Opinion Editorial:** Do I state my opinion clearly as a claim? Do I give at least two reasons to support my opinion? Do I use persuasive language?

This project assesses both the cognitive and psychomotor objectives by requiring direct application of knowledge in a creative, choice-driven format.

Conclusion (10 minutes)

Showcase and Recap:

Aira Marie shares her "Journal" project. We read the articles together and celebrate the final product.

Reflection Discussion:

Ask reflective questions to assess the affective objective:

- "Which article was the most fun to write? Which was the most challenging? Why?"
- "How did it feel to write an opinion piece versus just reporting the facts?"
- "When you read an article online tomorrow, what new things will you look for?"
- "Why is it important for a news website to have all three types of articles? How do they help us understand the world better?"

Reinforce Takeaways:

"You've done an incredible job today. You are officially a News Navigator! Remember, knowing the difference between a news report (the what), a feature (the story behind it), and an editorial (the why we should care) makes you a powerful and critical reader. You can now understand not just what happened, but how the author wants you to feel about it."

Differentiation and Adaptability

- **Scaffolding Support:** Provide sentence starters or fill-in-the-blank templates for the final writing project (e.g., "In a recent discovery, scientists have ____." for the news report, or "In my opinion, ____ is essential because ____ and ____." for the editorial).
 - **Extension Challenge:** Ask Aira Marie to find a "biased" news article that mixes opinion with facts and use her highlighter method to separate the factual statements from the subjective ones. Alternatively, challenge her to transform one of her written articles into a different format, like a 60-second video news report or a podcast editorial.
 - **Context Adaptability:** In a classroom, the "Explore" and "Deepen" phases can be done in pairs or small groups. The final "Transfer" project can be a collaborative class newspaper. For professional training, the topics can be shifted to industry-specific news, internal communications vs. marketing materials, and thought leadership articles.
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