

Journalism Workshop: From the Field to the Future

Materials Needed

- Access to news websites or physical newspapers/magazines
- Notebook or digital document
- Timer (phone or kitchen timer)
- Highlighters (three different colors)
- "The Triple Threat" Worksheet (or blank paper divided into three sections)

Learning Objectives

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

- Identify the unique characteristics and "voice" of Op-Eds, Sports articles, and Sci-Tech reports.
- Analyze how journalists use different tones to engage their specific audiences.
- Write three distinct "leads" (opening paragraphs) representing each of these journalistic styles.

1. Introduction (The Hook)

The Scenario: Imagine you are the Editor-in-Chief of *The Global Pulse*, a trendy news outlet. Three major stories just broke: a local team won a championship in a massive upset, a new AI robot was released that can cook five-star meals, and there is a heated debate about whether schools should start at 10:00 AM.

The Challenge: You can't write all three stories the same way. If you write about the robot like a sports game, it'll sound weird. If you write about the 10:00 AM start time like a science report, it might be boring. Today, we are going to learn how to "switch gears" between these three styles.

2. Body: The "I Do" (Expert Analysis)

Let's break down our three categories. Each has a specific "job" to do.

A. The Opinion Editorial (Op-Ed)

- **The Goal:** To persuade the reader to agree with your viewpoint.
- **The Voice:** Strong, passionate, and personal. It often uses "I" or "we."
- **Key Feature:** The "Call to Action"—telling the reader what they should do or think.

B. The Sports Article

- **The Goal:** To capture the excitement, stats, and "drama" of a physical competition.
- **The Voice:** Energetic and descriptive. It uses "action verbs" (e.g., *sprinted, crushed, pivoted*).
- **Key Feature:** The "5 Ws" (Who won? What happened? When? Where? Why did it matter?).

C. Science and Technology (Sci-Tech)

- **The Goal:** To explain complex ideas or new inventions in a way that is easy to understand.
- **The Voice:** Informative, curious, and objective. It avoids taking sides.
- **Key Feature:** The "So What?" factor—explaining how this new tech or discovery changes our daily lives.

3. Body: The "We Do" (Guided Practice)

Let's look at three "headlines" and decide which category they belong to and why. (Educator/Parent should discuss these with the student).

1. **"Why the 15-Year-Old Prodigy Just Changed Basketball Forever"**
 - *Style:* Sports. (Clues: Basketball, prodigy, focus on a player/achievement).
2. **"How Micro-Chips in Our Clothes Could Track Our Health"**
 - *Style:* Sci-Tech. (Clues: Micro-chips, health tracking, future discovery).
3. **"Video Games Are Actually Good For You, And Here is Why"**
 - *Style:* Op-Ed. (Clues: Taking a stance on a debate, trying to change your mind).

Activity: Find one article online or in a paper for each category. Use your highlighters to mark one "Action Verb" in the Sports piece, one "Opinion Statement" in the Op-Ed, and one "Fact/Definition" in the Sci-Tech piece.

4. Body: The "You Do" (Independent Practice)

The Triple Threat Writing Challenge: You are going to write the "Lead" (the first 2-3 sentences) for three different stories. Use the prompts below:

1. **Sports Lead:** Write about a fictional (or real) championship game between two rival schools.
Focus on the energy and the final score.
2. **Sci-Tech Lead:** Write about a new invention: "The Homework-Helper Helmet." *Focus on how the technology works and what it does for the user.*
3. **Op-Ed Lead:** Write about why every 12-year-old should be allowed to vote in local elections.
Focus on why your opinion is right and use persuasive language.

5. Conclusion (Closure & Recap)

Review: Reflect on your writing. Which style was the easiest for you to write? Which was the hardest?

- **Recap:**
 - Op-Eds = *Persuasion*.
 - Sports = *Action*.
 - Sci-Tech = *Explanation*.

Final Takeaway: A great journalist is like a "voice actor"—they change their tone depending on the story they are telling to make sure the reader stays interested.

Assessment

Formative Assessment: During the "We Do" section, can the learner correctly identify the category and explain *why* based on the voice and goal?

Summative Assessment (Success Criteria): Review the "Triple Threat" writing leads. Check for the following:

- Does the Sports lead use at least two strong action verbs?
- Does the Sci-Tech lead explain a "how" or a "why"?
- Does the Op-Ed lead state a clear point of view?

Differentiation & Adaptations

- **For Struggling Writers:** Provide "Sentence Starters" (e.g., "The crowd went wild when..." for Sports, or "In my opinion, the most important thing is..." for Op-Eds).
- **For Advanced Learners:** Ask them to write a "Cross-Over" piece. How would a Science reporter write about the physics of a basketball game? How would an Op-Ed writer argue against a new piece of technology?
- **Multi-Sensory Option:** Record the "leads" as a 30-second podcast clip or news broadcast instead of writing them.