

# 2022 TEACHER TRAINING COURSE USING THE NEWS IN THE CLASSROOM

## INTRODUCTION

The news is inescapable. It surrounds us on our TVs, car radio, phones, computers, newspapers and magazines. Interacting with news sources has never been easier – or more important.

It is obvious that most of the international news media is in English, and exposing students to news sources in English will allow them to widen their knowledge and expand their English.

## Making a TV News Report

One great idea is to make a news bulletin that students can plan, script and act (maybe even film and post to social media).

This could be about a current news story (the war in Ukraine, Italian news or even sport), an invented story (aliens land in Rome) or even a story about the school (a new project or a report on an excursion).

What news stories could you give your students to research? Tell us in the chat.

Students can divide it into parts

1. The news anchor presents the story with the important facts
2. The news anchor chats to a reporter on location
3. The reporter on location interviews a person on the scene or news personality (e.g., President Biden)

How do you write a news script? - BBC Young Reporter: <https://youtu.be/ypZG5NrhArQ>

The 5 Ws of Journalism: “Who,” “What,” “When,” “Where,” and “Why.”

The 3 Cs of News Writing: “Clear”, “Concise” and “Correct”

## Fake News

Fake news is false or misleading information presented as news. Fake news often has the aim of damaging the reputation of a person or entity, or making money through advertising revenue. The term was first used in the 1890s when sensational reports in newspapers were common.

However, the term does not have a fixed definition, and has been applied more broadly to include any type of false information, including unintentional and unconscious mechanisms, and also by high-profile individuals to apply to any news unfavourable to their personal perspectives. Furthermore, disinformation is an insidious type that involves spreading false information with harmful intent, and is sometimes generated and propagated by hostile foreign actors, particularly during elections.

In some definitions, fake news includes satirical articles misinterpreted as genuine, and articles that employ sensationalist or clickbait headlines that are not supported in the text. Because of this diversity of types of false news, recent researchers are beginning to favour information disorder as a more neutral and informative term.

## Fake News Listening Comprehension

What is ‘fake news’, and what isn’t - BBC Young Reporter: <https://youtu.be/1JMyxROfkLM>

Not only will this video inform and educate your students, it also features a range of different accents to help them practise their listening skills.

Can you work out which of the following headlines are genuine? (Answers for worksheet)

1. “Woman murders roommate for sending too many Candy Crush requests” FAKE
2. “Minnesota Deputies Reel In Women Stranded On Waterborne Unicorn” GENUINE
3. “France bans work emails after 6pm” FAKE

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4. "Two Elderly Men Sneak Out Of Nursing Home To Attend Heavy Metal Festival" GENUINE
5. "Planet Nibiru is headed straight for Earth" FAKE
6. "A Train Left 25 Seconds Early In Japan And The Company Wants Everyone To Know It's Really, Really Sorry"  
**GENUINE**

While Fake News isn't a positive in today's society, as teachers, it can be used to our advantage:

- A Fake News article can be used for discussion among your students
- A headline can be used to practise speculating: a key skill for speaking exams B1-C2.
- The language used may be more colloquial, helping to build your students' vocabulary.
- You can get your students to practise persuasive writing and have them write a Fake News article.

## **A Fun Activity: "The GOOD news is ..." "The BAD news is ..."**

- Two students stand in front of the class.
- One starts with some good news:
  - "The good news is that this morning I found 20 euros"
- The other counters with the bad news:
  - "The bad news is that it was fake!"
- The first student continues with more good news following on from the bad news:
  - "The good news is that it was a fake made by Banksy, so someone offered me 10,000 euros for it"
- The dialogue continues, perhaps with inspiration from the teacher is it ends too soon.
- A great exercise for encouraging fluency and Cambridge Speaking exam skills (turn-taking, listening, and responding).

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## Conclusion

Encouraging students to interact with news sources in English can really help improve their level of English. Are they interested in Premier League Football? The latest Batman movie? What's going on in Ukraine? How Italian politics is seen from abroad? Ask them to research it!

There are lots of great exercises in textbooks about news vocabulary (headline vocabulary, reported speech, narrative tenses). Why not supplement them with some real news stories from today's news sites?

Why not get students to summarise a contemporary news story into emojis, then other students have to guess what it is? The same could be done with mime.

## Useful Links

### Using the News in Class

<https://breakingnewsenglish.com/>

<https://busyteacher.org/23289-how-to-use-news-in-class-8-fun-ways.html>

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/using-news-articles>

<https://eltexperiences.com/five-ways-to-use-newspapers-in-the-efl-classroom/>

<http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Farmer-News.html>

### Italian News in English

<https://www.ansa.it/english/>

<https://www.euronews.com/tag/italy>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/italy>

<https://www.lastampa.it/esteri/la-stampa-in-english/>

### News for Young People/Learners

<https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/cv1v5k4n4p5t/young-people>

<https://www.newsinlevels.com/>

<https://www.simpleenglishnews.com/>



**Anchor’s introduction**

(Give the main points – who, what, when, where, why)

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**Reporter on Location**

(Some prepared questions with prepared answers – focus on what the reporter has seen or heard)

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**Reporter’s Interview**

(Questions about what the interviewee thinks, wants, has seen or heard)

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## Listening Comprehension

Watch the video carefully and answer the following questions:

- 1) News is a problem because it can ..... people's decisions.
  - a. Alter
  - b. Influx
  - c. Influence
  
- 2) Nowadays, young people feel
  - a. Missinformed
  - b. Misinformed
  - c. Uninformed
  
- 3) How are millions of people influenced very quickly?
  
- 4) What are the two situations mentioned where fake news is often used?
  
- 5) Often, a story isn't fake news but rather it is
  - a. Misleading
  - b. Disleading
  - c. Illeading
  
- 6) Name two things wrongly called 'Fake News':
  
- 7) Who would often use the term 'Fake News' to avoid answering a tricky question?
  
- 8) Before sharing a story on social media, what should you do?



## **Listening Comprehension      KEY**

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- 3) How are millions of people influenced very quickly?

### **Social media**

- 4) What are the two situations mentioned where fake news is often used?

### **Political and commercial advantage**

- 5) Often, a story isn't fake news but rather it is
  - a. Misleading
  - b. Disleading
  - c. Illeading

- 6) Name two things wrongly called 'Fake News':  
**Rumour, Spin, Satire, Mistakes**

- 7) Who would often use the term 'Fake News' to avoid answering a tricky question?

### **Politicians**

- 8) Before sharing a story on social media, what should you do?

**Ask yourself: is this likely to be true, does this feel right?**





### Wikipedia's definition of fake news

- Fake news is false or misleading information presented as news. Fake news often has the aim of damaging the reputation of a person or entity, or making money through advertising revenue. The term was first used in the 1890s when sensational reports in newspapers were common.
  - However, the term does not have a fixed definition, and has been applied more broadly to include any type of false information, including unintentional and unconscious mechanisms, and also by high-profile individuals to apply to any news unfavourable to their personal perspectives. Furthermore, disinformation is an insidious type that involves spreading false information with harmful intent and is sometimes generated and propagated by hostile foreign actors, particularly during elections.
  - In some definitions, fake news includes satirical articles misinterpreted as genuine, and articles that employ sensationalist or clickbait headlines that are not supported in the text. Because of this diversity of types of false news, recent researchers are beginning to favour information disorder as a more neutral and informative term.
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- Using this definition, can you think of anything which you have read recently which could be deemed as fake news?
  
  - Look at the following news headlines, with a partner decide which are genuine and which are fake and give reasons for your choice.
    - "Woman murders roommate for sending too many Candy Crush requests"
    - "Minnesota Deputies Reel In Women Stranded On Waterborne Unicorn"
    - "France bans work emails after 6pm"
    - "Two Elderly Men Sneak Out Of Nursing Home To Attend Heavy Metal Festival"
    - "Planet Nibiru is headed straight for Earth"
    - "A Train Left 25 Seconds Early In Japan And The Company Wants Everyone To Know It's Really, Really Sorry"
  
  - Look up one of the news stories above and find five new words to research.
  - With a partner, adapt a news story creating fake news and see how many people fall for it.