

Session 2: What is news?

Outcomes:

- deconstructed a news story in detail
3. ACTIVITY: What is a story? continued
 4. ACTIVITY: What makes a story newsworthy?
 5. MASTERCLASS 1: Analysing TV news – Reporter Lucy Manning

3. ACTIVITY: WHAT IS A STORY?

Complete any work from session 1 on this topic.

4. ACTIVITY: WHAT MAKES A STORY NEWSWORTHY?

“Sex, sensation, pets, heroism.”

Donald Zec – author and Daily Mirror journalist for 40 years

“Hard news really is hard. It sticks not in the craw, but in the mind. It has an almost physical effect, causing fear, interest, laughter or shock.”

Andrew Marr – *My Trade – A Short History of British Journalism* (Macmillan 2004)

“Bad news sells best. Good news is no news.”

Charles Tatum (Kirk Douglas) in *Ace In the Hole* (director: Billy Wilder – 1951)



To what extent do students agree or disagree with the quotations above? Invite them to rank them in the order they feel reflects their value, as a critique of news on TV and in newspapers. Do they feel the Zec quotation is helpful as a way of understanding the Waveland news report? Is it unfair to say that it was only broadcast because it contained some of these core elements?

Discussion: What is news?



It is the obvious question to ask any journalist and it's the one to use when evaluating the content of a news TV broadcast or newspaper's contents. And yet on most days, reporters are not dealing with attacks on the Twin Towers, or Hurricane Katrina (obvious hard news stories), but having to weigh a whole host of stories from political press conferences to sightings of white sharks off the Dorset coast, trying to decide which to include and in what order.



Invite students to write down a list of news stories they have heard in recent days. These can be general areas of the world that are currently in the news rather than specific stories. Compare notes. Include a list compiled by the teacher.

What makes these stories newsworthy? Why did they appear on national TV news broadcasts and in national newspapers? If there is a significant gap between the stories suggested ask why this difference exists.

5. MASTERCLASS 1: ANALYSING TV NEWS – REPORTER LUCY MANNING



Find out more about how a reporter decides what stories to follow and how he/she makes decisions throughout the day about what to include.

<http://www.channel4.com/learning/breakingthenews/schools/channel4newsroom/masterclass1.html>