

Session 5: Producing News Stories

Outcomes

- understood the roles and skills of the personnel involved in news production
- understood the stages in production through which a story travels

11. ACTIVITY: Planning for news production

12. ACTIVITY: Story production

13. MASTERCLASS 4: Producing TV news – Newsbelt Producer Bridgid Nzekwu

11. ACTIVITY: PLANNING FOR NEWS PRODUCTION

Personnel



Focus on the roles and key skills of the personnel involved in producing a news story. Ask students to watch the video interviews with TV news staff hosted on the website.

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

Students should take notes during these interviews under the following headings:

- job title
- key responsibility
- skills necessary for the job
- who they work closely with
- who is this person answerable to (e.g. line manager)?

Use **Worksheet 5** to build up profiles of the members of the news team. Discuss the typical make up of a news team, paying particular attention to determining which members of the team work together. Plot the relationships between these individuals on a whiteboard or similar.

Worksheet 6 asks students to identify the key skills necessary for roles involved in news production should you choose to simulate a news day in the classroom. Students are asked to identify the roles that would suit their qualities and skills.

Stages in production

Help students to understand the different stages involved in the production of TV news. Refer to the interactive timeline.

<http://www.channel4.com/learning/breakingthenews/schools/channel4newsroom/aday.html> and ask students to identify and comment on each of the stages.



Does the timeline conform to their expectations of a day in the newsroom? Are there any surprises? What happens if there is a delay in completing one of the stages?



In a news simulation, students could work to similar deadlines to the Channel 4 News team. Help students to plan for a news simulation by asking pairs or groups to fill in **Worksheet 7**. Take stock of the technology and space needed to complete each stage of the process.

Getting to grips with the technology



Promoting the safe and effective use of relevant hardware and software is an essential part of the preparatory process. Because different groups of students will be working with different systems and technologies, it might be useful to allocate activities to small groups of students rather than involving the whole class. Allow the students the freedom to experiment with the technologies at their disposal and to find out more about best operating practice for themselves.



Ask students working with cameras to make an inventory of the equipment available to them.

Ensure that students are briefed on how to use the recording equipment (involve the school technician, if operating instructions are required). Ask students to record some shots of a typical school day, demonstrating the range of camera positions and types of shots available to them. Ask these students to discuss the relative pros and cons of the shots and techniques they have learned, paying particular attention to:

- close up
- panning shot
- establishing shot
- the effect of zooming in or out
- the 'eye line' of the camera.

Finally, ask the camera operators to draw up a one-page dossier entitled 'An Introduction to Cameras' which should feature their findings, any settings which need to be recorded, tips and general guidance.

VT editors



Ask the students who will be editing footage for stories to make an inventory of the equipment available to them.

Ask the VT editors to draw up a one-page dossier entitled 'An Introduction to Editing' which should feature their findings, any settings which need to be recorded, tips and general guidance.

Sound technicians



Ask students working with sound to make an inventory of the equipment available to them.

Ensure that students are briefed on how to use the sound recording equipment (involve the school technician if operating instructions are required).

Finally, ask the sound technicians to draw up a one-page dossier entitled 'An Introduction to Sound' which should feature their findings, any settings which need to be recorded, tips and general guidance.

Graphics



Ask the students who will be creating graphics to make an inventory of the equipment available to them.

Encourage students to explore the technologies available for the production of graphics by asking the group to provide graphics for a sample news story (or a short film representing a day in the life of the school). Students should watch some of the news stories featured online, taking notes on when and where graphics are used.

Finally, ask the students working with graphics to draw up a one-page dossier entitled 'An Introduction to Graphics' which should feature their findings, tips and general guidance.

Using e-SEQ

<http://www.channel4.com/learning/breakingthenews/schools/toolsandresources/treseqeditingtool.html>



The e-SEQ tool contains video footage from ITN that can be used to make a news story. Ensure that students understand how to use e-SEQ. Note that the e-SEQ server will be updated with new footage on a regular basis so that different stories can be created.

12. ACTIVITY: STORY PRODUCTION

As with the schools involved in Breaking the News, students could prepare stories such as:



- a local news feature completely shot, scripted and edited in the school
- a news feature or topical story created from ITN assets in e-SEQ or self-generated footage

Allocate roles and ensure team members are clear of their roles and responsibilities towards the team. Students may fulfil more than one role in the team. Activities might include:

Local news feature

- brainstorm a list of local stories which might be of interest to a national audience
- think of an 'angle' which might appeal to a 'youth' audience
- identify research required
- brainstorm local contacts who could be contacted to comment
- identify required visuals and audio
- draw up a timeline with deadlines.

News feature or breaking story

- draw up a list of criteria against which to judge assets
- brainstorm additional resources that the group is able to bring to the story
- read a newspaper or look at a news website and write a list of the current top stories in order to keep abreast of topical issues (or fill in a daily news log on a rotational basis so that students take responsibility for informing others about news events)
- take a news story and devise ways of approaching it from a 'youth' angle
- brainstorm local contacts who could be contacted to comment
- draw up a timeline with deadlines
- draw up a strategy for acquiring research resources.

Selecting language, images and sound



Having discussed the importance of selecting effective language, images and sound in order to create a meaningful and exciting story, ask groups of students to decide on the information that they would need to capture for a range of hypothetical news stories, detailed in **Worksheet 8**. The table is designed to help students (particularly the news producers, camera operators and sound operators) decide on the most appropriate images and sounds to capture for stories. Students who will be taking on the responsibilities of the news journalist should be encouraged to focus on the language used in each of the stories.

Discuss the contents of each group's table with the class, paying particular attention to the identification of key images, sounds and language.

Deadlines and targets

Discuss the nature and importance of TV news production deadlines.

- what happens when something goes wrong?
- what happens if a story breaks late or whilst the bulletin is on air?
- who takes responsibility for ensuring that deadlines are met?
- what are the consequences of an individual or group missing a deadline?

Refer back to the interactive timeline if necessary to clarify any planning issues which may arise from this conversation.

13. MASTERCLASS 4: PRODUCING TV NEWS - NEWSBELT PRODUCER BRIGID NZEKWU

Find out more about producing TV news with newsbelt producer, Brigid Nzekwu.

<http://www.channel4.com/learning/breakingthenews/schools/channel4newsroom/masterclass4.html>

Worksheet 5

Identify the key personnel involved in TV news production. Outline their key responsibilities, skills, co-workers and line manager. An example of what your profiles will look like:

Job title	Programme editor
Key responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Team leader, responsible for running two main meetings of the day - Makes final decision about what will be in a programme and how it will be presented - Decides how to allocate resources and where to send cameras
Skills necessary for the job	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good knowledge of news and politics - Analytical mind - Leadership skills
Works closely with/reports to	Reporters, producers, presenters

Job title	
Key responsibilities	
Skills necessary for the job	
Works closely with/reports to	

Job title	
Key responsibilities	
Skills necessary for the job	
Works closely with/reports to	

Job title	
Key responsibilities	
Skills necessary for the job	
Works closely with/reports to	

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Job title	
Key responsibilities	
Skills necessary for the job	
Works closely with/reports to	

Worksheet 6

Fill in the table below in order to analyse the key skills necessary for each of the roles in a news simulation. In each case, assign the numbers 1, 2 and 3 to the most important qualities each person would need.

Role	Good presentation	Leadership	Technical skill	Flair for design	Legal knowledge	Thrives under pressure	Understands audience	Ability to budget	Initiative	Good with people	Problem-solving skills
Programme editor											
Newsbelt producer											
Producer											
Journalist / reporter											
Camera											
Sound											
VT editor											
Graphics											
Presenter											

Write down *two* roles you feel best match your qualities and skills.

Worksheet 7

Complete the following table to plan for a news simulation day.

Stage	Time	Location	Personnel required	Technology required	Led by

Worksheet 8

Consider each of the stories in the left-hand column. Identify the key images, sound and words that you might record for inclusion in the story. The first row has already been completed as an example.

Story	Key images	Key sounds	Key language
Due to budget cuts, the local council is making several lollipop men and women (crossing patrols) serving primary schools in the area redundant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • busy road (shoot from low level / eye level of small child?) • children crossing road with help of lollipop lady 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • traffic (the noisier the better?) • playground sounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • top of the pops • will soon be hanging up his lollipop for good...
Local builders, working on the foundations of a house, have unearthed a body thought to be over 2000 years old			
A local man is being threatened with arrest by the police after chaining himself to the forecourt of a petrol station as a protest at the increase in fuel prices			
A local woman is awaiting compensation from a large soft drinks manufacturer after finding a piece of factory machinery in a can of lemonade			