

Worksheet 1.1

A rumour is going around school that a Year 7 student's parents are now rich thanks to a win on the National Lottery. How long do you think it would take that rumour to spread around the entire school?

The first question to ask is why such a story is interesting? List your reasons for listening to the rumour.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Compare notes with your classmates and write down any other good reasons why this is an interesting tale. In doing this you are starting to consider what makes a story newsworthy.

Consider the following 'sources' of information that you could turn to in order to verify the story about this suddenly super-rich pupil. Use the table below to consider the trustworthiness or otherwise of each piece of evidence. Provide a reason to believe and a reason not to believe each of them.

Evidence	Trust?	Distrust?
The news is repeated to you by several members of your year group from different classes.		
The younger sibling of a person in your class tells you that the story is true and involves someone in their tutor group.		
At break you see a big crowd around a young child in the playground – people are making fun of him/her; asking for things, claiming to be their best friend, etc. The teachers have to break it up.		
There is an announcement in assembly about the child's good fortune and the need to give them space and treat them with kindness.		
A photographer from your local newspaper is standing at the school gate and, with the parent's permission, takes some shots of the child being picked up from school.		

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If you were writing up this story for your school magazine or planning to feature it in a filmed news report, what questions would you want to ask and whom?

Consider:

1. The child and his/her family
2. The school
3. People outside school from the community

Again, compare your responses.

Imagine that you were under pressure to write or film the story. What questions from your list might have to be sacrificed to meet your deadline? What difference would these 'subtractions' make?

Finally, you may have managed to 'verify' the tale (proving it to be true) but is it actually news? After all, at the moment it only affects one person and their family, and there might be more important stories to tell – news of a new sports hall; the fact the school cannot find a maths teacher to fill a staff vacancy; the discovery of a rare butterfly in the lower school wilderness area. Why does this story deserve to get more coverage than these other tales?