

Guidelines for creating a successful newspaper

The way newspapers are written:

Top heavy – unlike traditional stories.
Who What Where How all come in the first few sentences.
Why comes later as part of the analysis.

Reporting:

Write down as much information as you can before you go, such as location and time and then when you arrive check everything is as billed. Make lots of notes whilst you are there – even basic information. You will be surprised how easily and quickly some things are forgotten.

It's great if you can have a form of shorthand whilst at the event (such as using texting language from your mobile: gr8 etc) but make sure you can remember what it means when you get back to your desk!

Interviewing:

Think of questions before you leave for the interview.
Ask open questions such as, "How did participating in ... make you feel?" This means your interviewee has to do more than say 'yes' or 'no'.
Build on what your interviewee says, for example, "You say this activity helped the environment. Can you list the top three benefits?"

Before you set off anywhere make a PLAN

Divide yourselves up so that you each have a task.
Write down a few ideas of the articles your newspaper will include.
Be prepared for changes and don't be afraid to make decisions.
Don't decide for definite what your front page story will be – news happens all the time and your newspaper needs to be up-to-date and informative.

Arrange a time to meet back up with your group and review your progress.

Work on the newspaper articles all the time: journalists don't start work at 5pm every day – they shape their stories throughout the day and refine and update them as more news comes in.

It is better to have too much information that you can edit than too little that you have to eke out in large font.

Headlines:

Don't worry about these until the end but when you do have fun with them: use alliteration, onomatopoeia, adjectives, hyperbole.

Beyond the front page: Quite often newspapers have features or more in-depth articles which come on page 2 and beyond. Consider doing a quick survey or doing some desk research to enable you to write a more in-depth article on one or more of the news items you report.

A few notes on newspaper language:

Refer to 'yesterday' and 'recently', not 'On the 5th July 200_'. It would be a terrible newspaper that only came out once a year.

Don't assume your reader knows who you are writing about – everyone is labelled in newspapers. For example, "Beckham" might refer to either of the couple but, "Football superstar, David Beckham said ..." or, "One time pop princess, Victoria Beckham said ..." means readers know exactly who they are reading about.

Use superlatives – events are always "the biggest, the best, the most fantastic, the most exciting" in newspaper terms.