





# Making News:

## A Primer on the News Media

### Objectives

#### Students will:

- Define news.
- Discuss the basic elements of news.
- Write a newspaper article highlighting positive actions of students.

### Time Needed

50 minutes

### Getting Ready

#### Read:

- Teacher Background Information

#### Duplicate:

- *The 5 Ws and an H*

#### Make:

- *What Is News?* transparency
- *What's the Big Deal About the News Media?* transparency
- *Media Includes...* transparency
- *The 5 Ws and an H* transparency

### Curriculum Links

- Journalism
- Language Arts
- Consumer Education
- Health

**OVERVIEW OF LESSON**—The news media is a powerful force that shapes society. Teens may think of themselves on the receiving end of news, but they can also be the initiators of positive or negative news. This lesson encourages students to consider the media as a resource they can use to highlight positive contributions such as their community service work, creative accomplishments, sportsmanship, and perspectives.

### Activity Steps

**1.** Ask students to define “news”—the type of news they see on television or reported in a newspaper. Ask students to raise their hand if they have ever been on the television news or know of someone who has. Have them raise both hands if they have ever been mentioned in the newspaper or know of someone who has. Have them stand if they have ever been on the radio or know of someone who has. Note that besides “hard news” like a major earthquake or the death of a president, about 80 percent of what they see on television news or read in the newspaper has been supplied by people like them.

**2.** Cover up the words on the bottom of the *What Is News?* transparency. Project *What Is News?* and ask students to give their definition of “news.” Write their answers on the blank portion of the transparency. Uncover the answer when students offer no more ideas. Project and discuss the remaining transparencies: *What's the Big Deal About the News Media?*; *Media Includes*; and *The 5 Ws and an H*.

**3.** Homework assignment: Have students write a brief newspaper article about a positive activity teens are involved in at their school. Some examples may include a school play, community service work, or sports. Distribute *The 5 Ws and an H* to students for reference. Coordinate with the school newspaper editor and/or journalism instructor to publish some of the student articles, and/or contact a community newspaper to see if they will publish student articles. Some community newspapers have sections dedicated to teens.



### Extensions

- **Optional Homework:** Ask students to monitor and clip newspaper stories about teens for a week. Have them report on what they found and write a letter to the editor expressing their opinions (e.g., thanking the newspaper for its well-balanced coverage of teens, or requesting that the newspaper work harder at highlighting teens' positive actions).

### Teacher Background Information

News highlighted in the media typically has elements of controversy and criticism. It also has to have importance or relevance. But the media also strives to feature human interest stories that are more positive in nature. These positive stories often involve youths. This lesson promotes a proactive approach that places teens in the driver's seat by allowing them to designate how they would like teens to be presented in the media. It also allows them to identify the elements of a news story and incorporate them into the news stories they write.

# What Is News?

## Controversy and Criticism

This about sums it up.

True to its name, news is also about the latest happening.

It's similar to gossip.

News must also be important.

# What's the Big Deal about the News Media?



The media can expose injustice, such as discriminatory hiring practices, which can result in multimillion dollar lawsuits.

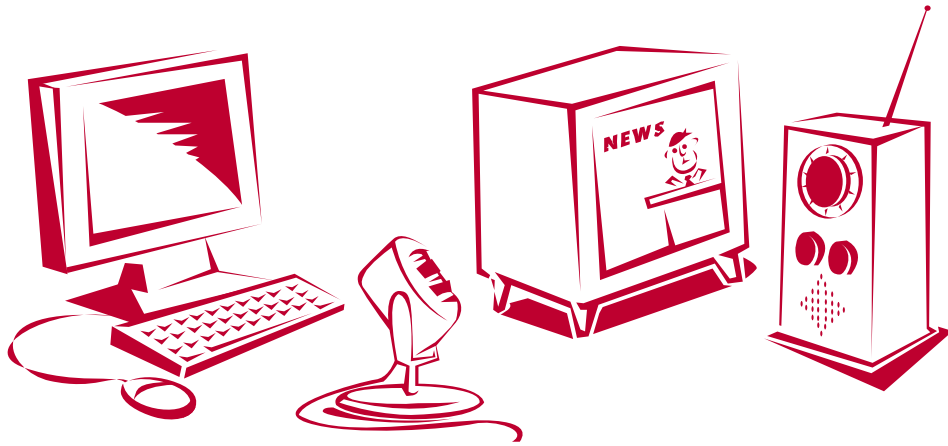


The media can detail human tragedy through stories on earthquakes, floods, riots, etc.



The media can even highlight the positive actions of students.

# Media Includes...



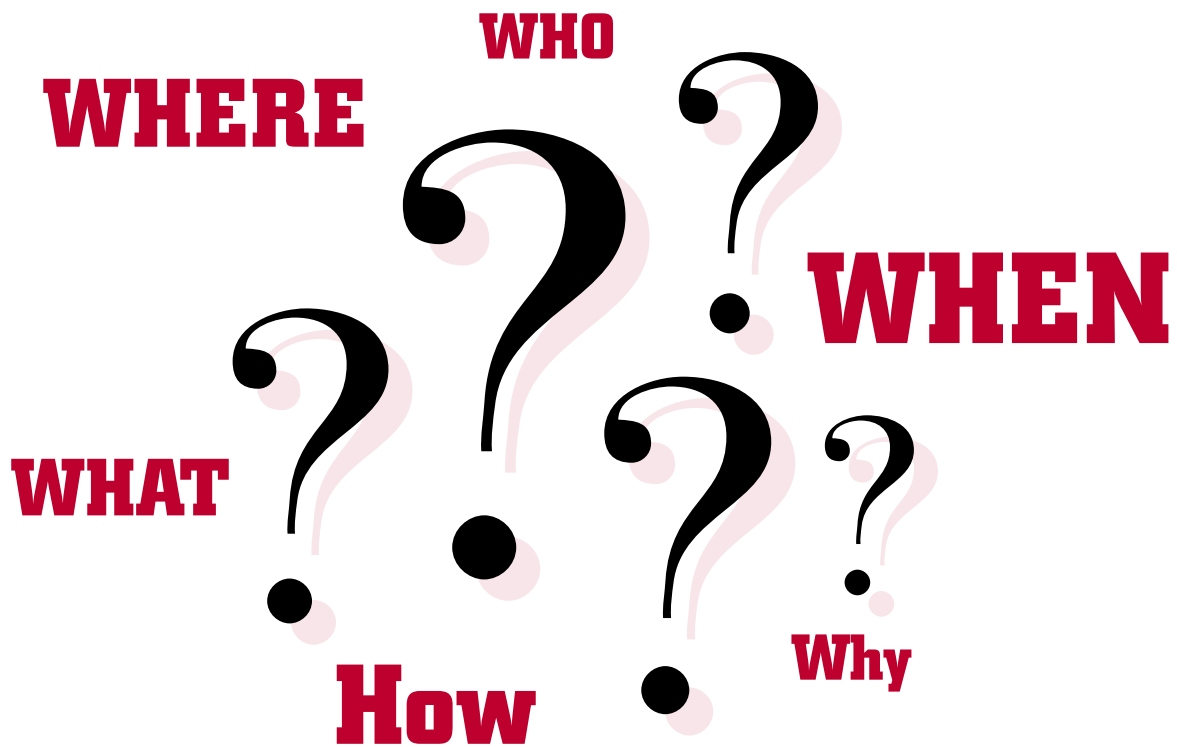
Electronic (Radio, TV, Internet)



Print (Newspapers, Magazines, Newsletters)

# The 5 Ws and an H

Reporters must answer these critical questions  
before they can develop a story:



If you're talking to an editor or reporter about a story idea that you have,  
you need to be able to answer the above questions.

Reporters usually answer the five Ws at the beginning of a story.

Other details, such as the H for "How," follow later.

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