
MY WORLD LESSON #9

Why Do Some News Stories Evolve?

Overview

Students investigate how and why news stories evolve over time. The BBC *My World* video segment, “Why Does the News Keep Changing?” introduces the concept of *developing news stories*. Students explore what can cause the news to change, including multiple themes, new actions or events, emerging subtleties, widening impacts, and a changing list of affected people. Students distinguish changing information from corrected information and learn that consumers of developing stories—and in fact most news stories—are best served by referring to a variety of dependable news sources.

Target audience: English and Language Arts, Social Studies, Media Studies. Ages 11–14.

Class time: 45-60 minutes

Student handouts: “24-Hour News” Informational article, “Update!” Guided Practice, Share It or NOT? flowchart, Check Your Media Literacy Assessment.

Materials: Computer or tablet with internet connection.

Class structure and pacing

1. 5 minutes Class warm-up discussion
2. 10 minutes *My World* video: “Why Does the News Keep Changing?”
3. 10 minutes Informational article “24-Hour News”
4. 5 minutes Whole-class discussion
5. 10 minutes Guided Practice
6. 10 minutes Media Literacy Assessment

Procedure

1. Begin class with a brief warm-up discussion.

■ **Open by describing initial media treatment of the December 26, 2004, tsunami that hit South and Southeast Asia:**

- 12/26: The BBC reported online that over 10,000 people had died in 7 countries.
- 12/27: The New York Times reported that over 13,000 people had died in 6 countries.
- 12/28: China Daily reported that 24,000 had died, and many Chinese people were missing.
- 12/30: The British newspaper The Guardian reported that the death toll had grown to 123,000, and that survivors were suffering from lack of food and aid.
- Ask: How did this story change over time? Why do you think there were differences in the reports?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Investigate the nature of evolving news stories.

Examine the various causes for changes (including corrections) in developing news stories.

Evaluate the coverage of a developing news story across more than one source.

LESSON VOCABULARY

breaking news *n.* information about an event that just happened

crawl *n.* a bar of scrolling text, usually at the bottom of a television news screen

impact *n.* a powerful effect

incorporate *v.* to include something

running story *n.* a news event that develops over time

update *v.* to add the most recent information

- **Explain that by the end of this lesson, they will be able to:**
 - Recognize why certain news stories change over time.
 - Identify the changes that can happen in stories of wide scope.
 - Determine the causes and effects of changing news stories, including new events and newly revealed information.
 - Distinguish between new and corrected information.

2. Present the *My World* video segment, “Why Does the News Keep Changing?” to introduce students to the ways that news changes over time.

- **Before screening, write the following bullet points on the board. Have students take notes on these points as they watch the video.**
 - Note how the example story is first described.
 - Note how the facts and statistics change as the story develops.
 - Jot down new and corrected information.

■ **Ask students to share their observations about how and why journalists change or add information and why this information is important (timely, up-to-date information, new facts emerge, new sources come forward).**

3. Analyze concept of breaking news by having students read the informational article, “24-Hour News.” Instructional options are:

- **Read each section as a class. Stop after each section to note and compare the concepts students learned about in the video, such as;**
 - Definitions of breaking news and running story
 - Sources for breaking news
 - Causes and effects of changes and corrections in news updates
- **Read the entire article in pairs and discuss the question, “How can news stories change over time?”**

4. Review what students have learned and provide a chance for them to express their views through whole-class or small-group discussion about ways in which news stories change as they develop.

- **Ask students;**
 - What kind of information might be added to a breaking news story as it develops? (Hint: Think about what you have learned about sources.)
 - Why might journalists have to change or correct information about a developing story? (Hint: Think about what you have learned about verification.)
 - How might changing information affect news consumers? (Hint: Think about what you have learned about bias.)
- **Model using critical thinking skills when responding or adding to student answers.**

 **TIPS FROM**

 **Microsoft Education**

Create engaging learning experiences tied to this Lesson with the following free Microsoft Education tools:

Utilize Flipgrid with this Lesson

After reviewing the video and article give students a chance to express their views by sharing ways news stories change as they develop in Flipgrid with question prompts. Continue the conversation on [Flipgrid!](#)

Facilitate collaborative learning

Post the ‘check your media literacy’, student handout into Teams; assign a point value and deadline. Review as handouts are turned in and get real-time understanding of how the lesson concepts have landed with your students and if you need to revisit a particular topic. Free education collaboration tools are at your fingertips with [Office 365](#).

5. Provide an opportunity for students to apply what they have learned through Guided Practice in analyzing a breaking news story.

- **Allow students to work in pairs as they analyze the developing story.**

- **Direct students to complete the Guided Practice handout using what they have learned from the lesson.**

6. Assess what students have learned and provide a chance to express their views about the impact of a developing news story.

- **Direct students to complete the assessment handout.**

- **Allow students to consult their notes if needed for short answers.**

Extend and connect

ELEMENTARY/PRIMARY

(ages 6–10)

Explain that a breaking news story is often missing information about *who, what, when, where, or how* it is first reported. This is because news outlets want their audience to know about the story even if they do not have all the information yet. Write this breaking news on the board. Then ask students to point out what information the story lacks.

A powerful earthquake has rocked the Japanese city of Yokohama this evening. The quake was centered west of the city near the town of Ebina.

HIGH SCHOOL/SECONDARY

(ages 15–18)

Explain that breaking news often contains unverified facts. Key words and phrases are often used to indicate how reliable the information is. Write these phrases and explanations on the board:

- *We are getting reports.* (The information is new and not verified.)
- *We are seeking confirmation.* (The news team is trying to determine if information is true.)
- *We can confirm.* (The news team has been able to verify that their information is true.) Encourage students to find examples of each phrase in news reports online.

EDUCATION STANDARDS

Media Literacy

ISTE 3a Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.

ISTE 3b Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data or other resources.

CCSS English and Language Arts Reading Information

RI.6.7 Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.

RI.7.1 Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RI.8.7 Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.

RI.9.7 Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

Social Studies

RH.6–8.6 Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

RH.9–10.6 Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

24-Hour News

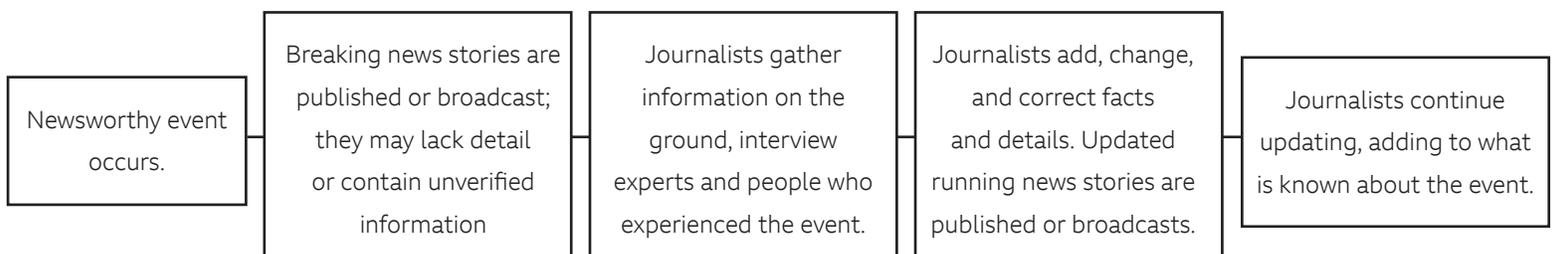
The world is constantly changing. As it changes, our news changes too. As an event or story develops, so the news responds and reports those developments. With 24-hour news available on the internet, television, and radio, a rapidly changing news story can be updated quickly and continually.

Breaking News Think of what happens when an important event occurs. It could be a terrorist attack, a political crisis, a natural disaster, or a smaller, more local event. You might hear early reports of **breaking news** on an internet news site, Facebook, Twitter, or on the **crawl** of a 24-hour news station. As a journalist may be reporting a story as it happens, these first reports are often incomplete, with few confirmed facts. It's even possible that some of the early stories contain inaccuracies, mistakes, or exaggerations. It can be helpful to look at different news outlets as breaking news develops to compare what is being reported. Journalists might do this, too, to check they are not missing anything in these early stages of a breaking news story.

Updating a Story As the **running story** develops, journalists gather more information. They might arrive on the scene themselves, conduct interviews, and check facts. They may speak to experts on the type of event they are investigating. They can **update** their stories with the following:

- **Additions:** Journalists may update their reports with facts and details that give context to the event. They might also **incorporate** new information on themes that arise as the event develops and subtleties that become clear as understanding of the event deepens.
- **Changes:** Journalists may change information they wrote earlier as the story develops and its impact widens. They might need to update the effects of the event on key participants and others involved.
- **Corrections:** Journalists may correct mistakes they made when facts were hard to pin down.

The timeline of a developing news story often goes like this:



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Update!

Directions: With a partner, read the updates to this breaking news story. Notice the additions, changes, and corrections the journalist made as the story developed so the most recent version of what is known is always at the top.



This is the Weston News 14 breaking and developing news blog. Check back as we continue to update this story.

Dec. 11. Weston.

8:15 a.m.

A fire broke out early this morning around 6 a.m. in the 3200 block of Williams Street. Jane Jones, a neighbor who witnessed the blaze, said that a 26-year-old mother and her 4-year-old son lived in the home and were taken to the hospital to be checked out. “They were lucky they got out right away,” said Jones, “because that place went up quickly after that.” We can confirm that a firefighter was also injured in the blaze. The three-alarm fire shut down traffic on Williams Street for a few hours this morning. Investigation into the cause is ongoing.

7:51 a.m.

The house fire this morning was in the 3200 block of Williams Street. The incorrect block was listed earlier.

7:43 a.m.

A fire has fully engulfed a house on the 3100 block of Williams Street. Three injuries have been reported. A mother and child were rescued by firefighters and taken by ambulance to Hillview Hospital. An additional fire station was called to the scene to help. The fire marshal has redirected traffic onto Third Avenue. Please avoid the area and use an alternate route.



7:10 a.m.

A mother and one child were rescued from the house fire on Williams Street and transported to the hospital.

6:14 a.m.

We are receiving reports that a house fire on Williams Street has triggered a two-alarm response. No information yet on causes. The house was reportedly unoccupied. This is a developing story.

Directions: With a partner, answer the questions below about the news story in “Update!” One answer has been provided for you. Then list the types of changes and corrections that a developing news story can require, and the causes and effects of those changes. Share your results with the class.

1. What related events did the journalist add after the story “broke”?

[WOL] *The fire marshal redirected traffic.*

[WOL] _____

2. What new, updated information did the journalist add between 6:14 a.m. and 7:10 a.m.?

[WOL] _____

3. What information about the response to the fire changed over time?

[WOL] _____

4. What additional information emerged in reports from a different source? What was the source?

[WOL] _____

5. What inaccurate information was modified or corrected? What effect might the correction have had on news consumers?

[WOL] _____

Answer key

Directions: With a partner, answer the questions below about the news story in “Update!” One answer has been provided for you. Then list the types of changes and corrections that a developing news story can require, and the causes and effects of those changes. Share your results with the class.

1. What related events did the journalist add after the story “broke”?

[WOL] *The fire marshal redirected traffic.*

[WOL] *A mother and child were taken to the hospital; A firefighter was injured.*

2. What new, updated information did the journalist add between 6:14 a.m. and 7:10 a.m.?

[WOL] *A mother and child were rescued and taken to the hospital*

3. What information about the response to the fire changed over time?

[WOL] *The fire changed from a 2-alarm fire to a 3-alarm fire because they had to call in help from an additional station.*

4. What additional information emerged in reports from a different source? What was the source?

[WOL] *The ages of the mother and child who lived at the house. The information came from a neighbor.*

5. What inaccurate information was modified or corrected? What effect might the correction have had on news consumers?

[WOL] *The block of the address of the fire was corrected. This might have allowed news consumers to find a better route around the closed streets.*

1. What is a characteristic of breaking news?

- a. It includes an in-depth analysis of the reasons for an event.
- b. It reports an event that just happened or may still be happening.
- c. It is well-researched and facts of an event have been confirmed.
- d. It reports an event that happened days or weeks before.

2. Where are you most likely to see the first notification of a breaking news story?

- a. in an email
- b. in a daily newspaper
- c. in a weekly news magazine
- d. on the crawl of a 24-hour news station

3. Identify three ways journalists can update a developing news story.

4. What might cause a journalist to change information in a developing news story?

5. Number these steps in the development of a breaking news story.

- _____ Journalists interview subjects and gather information.
- _____ Breaking news story appears online or on television.
- _____ Updates are published.
- _____ Journalists correct and add to initial information.
- _____ Breaking news event occurs.

6. REFLECT Think about a recent, unexpected event that had an impact on your life. It could be in your school, neighborhood, country, or elsewhere. How did you initially hear about the breaking news story? How did the story change over time? In what ways did the event and the reports you heard about it affect you?

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- b. in a daily newspaper
- c. in a weekly news magazine
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3. Identify three ways journalists can update a developing news story.

By adding information, by changing information, and by correcting information.

4. What might cause a journalist to change information in a developing news story?

Answers may vary. Possible response: learning more about the impact of the event and its effects on people.

5. Number these steps in the development of a breaking news story.

- 3 Journalists interview subjects and gather information.
- 2 Breaking news story appears online or on television.
- 5 Updates are published.
- 4 Journalists correct and add to initial information.
- 1 Breaking news event occurs.

6. REFLECT Think about a recent, unexpected event that had an impact on your life. It could be in your school, neighborhood, country, or elsewhere. How did you initially hear about the breaking news story? How did the story change over time? In what ways did the event and the reports you heard about it affect you?

Answers will vary but should include a relevant story.