



JOURNALISTS' MANUAL

FOR MEDIA LITERACY WORK WITH CHILDREN

Dr. Radmila Rangelov Jusović and Nedim Krajišnik

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JOURNALISM FOR CHILDREN

The journalism and teaching professions have a lot in common. Both teachers and journalists have an audience, an audience to inform, to educate, to inspire to think, to engage emotionally, and also to entertain and engage. Although both teaching and journalism are professions, they are also a calling that cannot be performed well without full commitment, passion, constant learning and personal sacrifice. Journalists and teachers never leave their role – they live it 24/7, twelve months of the year.

Journalists also have a lot in common with children – a passion for research, interest in other people and events, imagination, inquisitiveness and an abundance of adventurous spirit. The skills and abilities that make a good journalist start developing in early childhood. The desire to read and the ability to analyse what is read,

writing skills, stating an opinion – even arguing it – and the ability to ask good questions are just some of them. Good journalists are made in primary school, with the assistance of skilled teachers.

The public has various views about, and attitudes toward, journalists and the journalistic profession. Some are positive, others not. The same goes for children. Still, the media is an integral part of our lives and journalism is a profession that greatly impacts on what we think and do and how we live. Therefore, it is utterly essential to get children acquainted with journalism in the right way. The goal is to make them better and more engaged, but also more critical, consumers of media, and to inspire some of them to pursue journalism as their possible future profession.

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT HOW CHILDREN LEARN

Teaching children is a skill not easily mastered. Firstly, it is important to remember that teaching is not simply stating facts and expecting children to adopt and memorise them. Learning is a challenge and exciting adventure of discovering unknown spaces that you, too, should enjoy along with the children. You can design your classes to inspire curiosity in the children, and include them as much as

If you intend to use a PowerPoint presentation, only use the key words (sentences) you intend to talk about on the slides, not the whole text. Large letters, photographs or sketches will make your presentation fluent, engaging and interesting. During discussion or presentations, ask the pupils to signal when they have something to say rather than letting them call out, and make sure you call on them fairly, ensuring that no



Firstly, here are a few notes on how children learn:

- Children learn best when they are actively engaged in the learning process and are allowed to develop their own understanding of concepts – *Don't tell me, lead me to make my own conclusions.*
- Children learn best when the content is relevant to them, connected to "real life" and their experience – *Ask me if anything similar has ever happened to me; help me understand where I can apply this knowledge.*
- Learning is most efficient when children feel safe and when their ideas are appreciated and valued – *Ask me what I think; listen to me and think about what I'm saying; don't underestimate me or overestimate me.*
- Children need dedicated, enthusiastic teachers – *Show me that what you are talking about matters to you and that you care!*

possible in all aspects. Many strategies can help you achieve this and we hope this short guide will give you ideas to inspire you.

Each of the suggested activities can be organised so that pupils work, talk and/or solve problems in pairs or small groups. This will enable them to actively participate and share their experience and knowledge.

Watch the time! You will not be able to organise all the suggested activities, so you should choose based on available time, the children's age, and their interests as well as yours.

one monopolises the discussion. Children like to be treated fairly. Occasionally make eye contact with children who have not spoken and ask them what they think.

Choose example texts, news and other journalistic forms carefully! Keep in mind that children cannot understand some concepts or may misinterpret them. Be particularly cautious with texts with political or religious backgrounds, addressing or speaking to specific groups, etc. Find content that is appropriate to the children's age and abilities.

BEFORE YOU START

Do not underestimate the value of good preparation in working with children. They are a rewarding but demanding audience, so it is best to have ideas and resources prepared in advance. The planning process always starts at the end – from the outcome or result you wish to achieve. Therefore, before you go into the classroom and meet the children, you have to

be clear about not only what you will do and say, but also what you want children to take away from the process. The efficiency and quality of the learning process are not measured by the amount of content “delivered” or how fun it all was, but by how much your work with children led to permanent changes in their way of thinking, knowledge or skills.



You may ask yourself:

- What is **important to me** to pass on about my calling – what drew me to this profession and why?
- What **significant information** within this subject can they discover, adopt and understand?
- **Why** is the subject relevant to them; how can they **connect** it to their lives?
- How can I inspire their **curiosity** and interest them in the subject?
- What content will provoke **personal reactions and motivate** them?
- How can I **activate** them – not just physically, but intellectually? How can I encourage them to **think, draw conclusions, ask, research**?

PHASE ONE - INTRODUCTION TO THE SUBJECT

The first phase of teaching is similar to writing the title and first paragraph of a text. It is the most important and often the only chance to hook readers and ensure that they read the whole text. In this phase, the readers or pupils are trying to find out what it's about, connect

the new with the familiar, and there is already a multitude of questions they want to be answered. Most importantly, this is when they decide if "reading" further has any sense or purpose for them.

IDEAS TO GET STARTED

We all learn best when we seek out the answers to our questions ourselves, follow our interests and connect new knowledge with previous experience and knowledge.

This is why learning has to start with the experiences of the pupils, with what they already know, or think they know, about journalism.

After introducing yourself, you can start with one of these simple questions: "Yes, I am a journalist – but what do you think that means? What do I actually do?"

Or: "Why do you think journalists even exist?"

Give them a minute or two to think and let them know that, because children do not work "at the touch of a button."

Allow them to say whatever they think, without interfering. If communication is difficult, ask additional questions: where do you think I work, who do I meet, what is the result of my work?

Ask them to think about their day and remember when they might come across the work of journalists – news, online portals, newspapers, documentaries, interviews... See if they read or listen to any journalism. What is it and what do they think about it?

Another question is what journalists or other types of author children read – and whether what they are reading is the product of journalists or others? Who are the "authors" and do the children trust them?

What do journalists do?

List different forms of journalism on A4 sheets and pass them out to groups of children (if they are sitting in three rows, one pair can turn around to face another pair to form a small group), each group taking one sheet. The sheets can list the

Why are the different types of journalists/ journalistic work important?
What is the difference between the work of journalists and presenters, for instance in a news programme?

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- news journalist,
- entertainment journalist,
- sports journalist,
- columnist,
- radio journalist,
- TV reporter,
- investigative journalist,
- online or e-journalist.

following types of journalistic work, but you are free to adapt, add or remove anything you want: Write the assignment on the sheets (or explain it orally): Imagine you got this job – what are all the things you think you'd be doing?

Give them time to make lists of tasks as groups and present them. Lead the discussion by asking sub-questions, asking other pupils to give their opinion, and finally, by additionally clarifying the role of journalists and journalistic work.

What are journalists like?


Make copies of the outline of a person. Ask pupils to work in pairs and write on the paper:

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Head – what should journalists know?

Arms – what should journalists be able to do, what skills do they need?

Near the heart – what sort of people should journalists be? What traits should they have?



Ask them to take turns presenting what they have written.
Ask them to clarify why that is important.

What do journalists learn at university, and what is this sort of university or school called?
Present the Department of Journalism to them.

MAIN PART

Again, just like in a news article, after introducing the readers to the article through the opening paragraph, the goal is for them to read the article in full.

In the second phase of working with children,

you should offer them activities that will lead them to new knowledge and present them with new information. This is the age of learning by doing new things and trying new ways of thinking.

School newsroom

Tell the pupils that they are now the newsroom of their school magazine (make sure that the children know what a newsroom is and what the different editorial roles are: for example,

who the desk editor is, the sub-editor, the photographer...).

Ask them what the magazine will be like, what it's going to be called...

Type of text	Ideas for articles/stories they would include in their magazine:
I - inform	
E - entertain	
C - convince	



Explain that newspaper articles can have different goals and purposes, but they are mostly written to:

I - inform (present news, offer facts and data, inform readers about something...)

E - entertain (offer interesting facts, make people laugh, entertain them...)

C - convince (make people think about something or even change minds, prompt them to take action...)

After a short exchange of ideas, ask them to help you fill out a table:

Let them think and pitch ideas for articles to include in their magazine, just like in a real

newsroom. What would they write about? What would they cover?


What articles would they like to find in their own local magazines or newspapers?

How is news made?

For children to master news logic, pick a short news article and cut it into segments, making sure that each segment covers one

of the five or six key questions: who, what, when, where, how, why.

Print each of the questions on a separate sheet.



WHAT (happened)?

WHO (was involved)?

WHERE (did it happen)?

WHEN (did it happen – date and time)?

HOW (did it happen – connection)?

WHY (did it happen – reasons)?

First, ask the children to arrange the provided segments into a news piece the way they would write it. Then, ask them to explain why they chose this arrangement. Did everybody do it in the same way? Why is that important?

Distribute question cards and ask them to connect parts of the news piece with the question each part answers.

- Examples (news segments):
- goals were scored by Osmanović and Perić
- earned a 3 – 1 win
- in a rematch

- Centar FC
- Gimnazija FC
- first victory of the home team
- in the Visoko stadium
- last Saturday, 12th May 2019, at 5 p.m.

The text could go something like this:

In a rematch that took place last Saturday, 12th May 2019 at 5 p.m. in the Visoko stadium, Centar FC earned a 3 – 1 win against Gimnazija FC. This was the first victory of the home team, and the goals were scored by Osmanović and Perić.

Write your own news

In the next phase, you can suggest topics or fun headlines for articles, asking pupils to work in pairs or small groups to compose an imaginary piece of news, taking care to answer all the key questions. Apart from the article, they should also come up with a headline that will be compelling, interesting and reflect the story in the article.


Here are some possible subjects/prompts for the news:

- Elephant escaped from the zoo
- Children plant trees
- Extremely heavy snowfall
- Boat race held on the river
- The premiere of a new children's movie

Ask the children to read their news articles and check if all the key questions have been answered.

Improve your news

What could you do to make your news or article better?



For example, you can:

- interview persons related to the story and quote (or paraphrase) their statements
- include different opinions, citing the sources
- collect and include more details, information, data, opinions
- describe the atmosphere, location, people's reactions, etc.
- add interesting or unusual facts or information


If there is time, elaborate on one of the children's news items together, by adding a made-up interview, descriptions, data, etc.

Why are facts important?

It is very important for a journalist to provide true and accurate information, i.e. to substantiate their text with facts.

How are facts different from opinions?

Why is it important to separate facts from somebody's opinion or conjecture when we write (or read) an article?



FACT is something that is true and can be **proven, substantiated with data.**

OPINION is something based on **personal beliefs and feelings.**

Example: spring

Fact: Spring is the season that starts on 21st March.

Opinion: Spring is the most beautiful season.

Example: rabbits

Fact: Rabbits are herbivores.

Opinion: Rabbits are fun and nice to play with.

Conjecture: Rabbits could destroy the cabbage we planted.

Take a look at the news you wrote – what pertains to facts, and what is somebody’s (or your) opinion?

- Can the information you provided be checked?
- Are the sources of information you used reliable?
- Did you precisely quote the sources of information, and identify them, by name?

- Is the information relevant to the news?
- With older pupils, you can talk about more complex issues:
- A published article contains falsehoods. How can you know that? What can you do?
 - Press and Media Code of Ethics – why is it important?

Age of inaccurate and false information (for older pupils)

Because children are bombarded daily with so much information, news, video content, etc., it is important to address the subject of fake news and false information being presented as true and factual.

Unlike most journalists, who have proper training for their profession and comply with the Press and Media Code, a large number of persons producing media content do not adhere to these rules. We are not implying that only an educated journalist is a good journalist, but it is necessary to follow certain professional rules.

Ask the children to think about which contemporary media they consume. You will probably get

answers including YouTube and social networks – after all, that is how children spend most of their time.

Talk to them about what mechanisms we should develop, in order to be better consumers and not “fall for” inaccurate and false information that can have real consequences, from influencing events to being very damaging to certain people.

Once you jointly conclude that we have to check sources, authors, signatures and legal notice, facts, opinions and all the other things you talked about, let the pupils work in groups to write a “recipe” for smart use of media:



FIVE TIPS ON HOW NOT TO FALL FOR FALSE INFORMATION 😊

As a fun activity, you can give them a photograph depicting an action scene, with several participants (be careful about what photographs you choose, as you are working with children) and ask them to do the following:

- give headlines from different perspectives,
- the headlines should be sensationalist, biased and, if possible, false.

For example:

Dog’s perspective: I was running away from people. I even swam.

People’s perspective: Dog grabs log and refuses to return it.

In the end, explain that this was just an attempt to rescue the dog. Of course, you are free to find other examples.

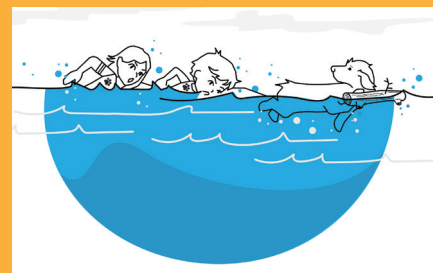


Illustration: Hana Kevij

Interview

Start by asking the children to think of a person they admire and know a lot about. It can be a family member, friend, or even an actor or actress, sports personality, musician or a fictional character from a movie or story. Let the children imagine they are about to interview the person. What would they ask?

Ask the children to make a list of possible questions for the interview.

- Name:
- Questions I wish to ask them:

If there is time, the pupils can act out the imaginary interview by playing the role of journalist and interviewee.

Discuss the questions proposed by the pupils. Which questions do they like the most? Why? What makes a good interview question?



Remind them of the most important features of good interviews:

- Ask important questions – things that can make other people think or help them.
- Ask open questions (as opposed to questions with a yes or no or single-word answer).
- Ask sub-questions – additional questions to prompt the person to provide a better answer.
- LISTEN CAREFULLY, try to be interested and to care about the interviewee.

The questions game

Make cards with as many questions as there are pupils. Let each pupil draw one card. Walking around the classroom, the pupils will approach each other and ask their question. After that, they will exchange cards and move on to another pupil. If there is no time to allow this kind of circulation in the classroom, you can use the questions when practising an interview – let the pupils interview each other in pairs and they can either draw the questions or choose from the list.

Interview questions:

What are your goals this year?

What do you like the most about yourself?

Is there something that people don't know about you, but that you would like them to know?

Who is the person with the most influence on you? Tell me something about them.

What we learn from failure can be very important to future success. What have you learned from a failure?

What problem have you successfully resolved, or do you wish to resolve?

Do you think this is a good school – why do you think that?

Which teacher has influenced you in some way, and how?

What do you consider to be your greatest success?

What was the happiest moment of your life?

What is the most difficult thing you've ever had to do?

Who is your favourite cousin, and why?

What would you like your friends to say about you someday?

How would you like to be remembered by your teachers?

FINAL ACTIVITIES

A good text makes us go on thinking about what we have read, opens up new questions, or inspires us to take action.

These final activities with the children have the same goals. In this phase, we help them sum up what they've learned, connect it with something outside the specific learning context, and apply it by creating a new value.

At the end, you can talk with the children about what they have learned:

- From now on, will you read news and other newspaper articles more, or differently?
- Would you be interested in starting your own

- magazine, or joining the school newspaper?
- Perhaps you would like to see your articles published (give them ideas on how and where to send their work, start their blog, etc.).
- What did you find particularly interesting? What would you like to say to journalists?

After the class, at home, they can write a news article about your visit to the school and send it to you or the school newspaper, take additional statements from you, or interview a family member, neighbour, person doing a job they are interested in, etc., and write an interview.

JOURNALISTS' CODES OF ETHICS:

Albania:

<http://bit.ly/38RW1xc>

The Journalist's Code of Ethics was drafted and proposed by a group of Albanian experts, with international consultancy. The Code was introduced to and discussed with journalists, media organizations, and media experts in 2018, reflecting their respective suggestions. Since in Albania consolidated self-regulatory mechanisms are still missing, the enforcement of the Code remains up to the individual will of journalists and newsrooms. The drafting of the Code was coordinated by the Albanian Media Institute and the Albanian Media Council, supported by a joint project of the European Union and the Council of Europe.

Bosnia and Herzegovina:

<http://bit.ly/3aUWdh5>

Montenegro:

<https://bit.ly/2UgAQ3U>

North Macedonia:

<http://bit.ly/2tTbmz2>

Serbia:

<http://bit.ly/2RFDCyZ>

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Media for Citizens – Citizens for Media is a project by seven media development organizations (**Foundation “Mediacentar”, Albanian Media Institute, Macedonian Institute for Media, Montenegro Media Institute, Novi Sad School of Journalism, Peace Institute, SEENPM**) in the Western Balkans aimed at building the capacity of civil society organisations in the region to advance media and information literacy (MIL).

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