



LESSON PLAN

Print media and elections

Learning outcome 3.12

Examine case studies of the use of digital or other media in a political election or referendum

Students will learn

- ▶ How newspapers have evolved over time
- ▶ The role of print media in the reporting of elections
- ▶ About the importance of reading critically

Materials

- ▶ Slide show
- ▶ Worksheet 1: Analyse a newspaper story – one for each pair of students
- ▶ Worksheet 2: Create a newspaper story – one for each pair of students
- ▶ Scissors and glue or sticky tape for students to use

Assessment for learning/Key skills

- ▶ Think, pair, share
- ▶ Working with others
- ▶ Being creative



1 Discuss the forms of print media

SLIDE 3

Open a discussion on the forms of print media we use today. Note that newspapers are the oldest form of media still in use today.

Ask students to name the Irish newspapers they know. See how many the class can name.

Don't forget your local newspapers and free newspapers.

2 Focus on newspapers

SLIDE 4

The slide shows the most prominent Irish national newspapers. Many of them provide a web version. TheJournal.ie is available only on the web, with no print version.

SLIDE 5

Click the link to open the *Irish Times* archive and display the edition of this day 100 years ago. Ask the class for their observations.

Next, show the edition from 50 years ago and discuss as before.

Finally, show today's edition (you could bring a copy of the printed version or show the online version).

Keywords for discussion: Front page, headlines, images, colour, top news story, advertisements.

3 Newspapers v. social media

SLIDE 6

Show the NewsBrands Ireland video.

Note: NewsBrands Ireland's #JournalismMatters campaign calls on the Government to support independent journalism in Ireland. NewsBrands Ireland is the representative body for all national newspapers, print and online. Find more information at www.newsbrandsireland.ie/journalismmatters/#videos

Hold a discussion on newspapers v. social media as a source of information about politicians during an election.

- ▶ Where do students look for information about current events?
- ▶ How do they judge whether an information source is reliable?
- ▶ Why should people pay for a newspaper when they can get so much information for free via social media?

Explain that social media is unregulated, whereas the press in Ireland is regulated by the Press Council of Ireland. The Press Council is independent of government and the press.

SLIDE 7

Discuss the quote on the slide from the Press Council of Ireland.

SLIDE 8

The Press Council of Ireland has a Code of Practice for the Irish press.

The slide shows just some of the 11 principles of the **Code of Practice**.

Hold a discussion on the importance of these principles in reporting on elections.

4 Worksheet 1: Analyse a newspaper story

SLIDE 9

Select and print a number of newspaper stories covering either the local elections of 2019, the European election 2019 or the general election 2020. If possible, choose stories that refer to politicians who stood in your constituency. Choose a variety of types of story, such as news story, feature and opinion piece.

Give each pair of students a newspaper story and a copy of **Worksheet 1: Analyse a newspaper story** (see page 5). Ask students to read their stories and fill in the worksheet.

5 Worksheet 2: Create a newspaper story

SLIDE 10

Give each pair of students a copy of **Worksheet 2: Create a newspaper story** (see pages 6-7). Provide scissors and glue.

Ask students to cut out and paste in the photograph, strap line and paragraphs of their choice and glue them into the template. Their choices will influence whether the story is more positive or negative about the fictional candidate. For example, they might choose the text with:

- ▶ active words such as “campaigned”
- ▶ positive words such as “successfully”
- ▶ descriptive words such as “packed”

After the students have created their stories, ask them to read them out and say whether they are positive, negative or neutral about the candidate.

Open a discussion on whether students think the newspapers in Ireland are neutral or biased.

Note: This may cross over with the oral language and reading strands of the Junior Cycle English specification, in particular “Understanding the content and structure of language”.

→ Extension activities

During an election or referendum campaign, have students gather newspaper headlines and reports.



Worksheet 1:

Analyse a newspaper story

Name of newspaper	
Author	
Type of article	e.g. news, feature, opinion

HEADLINE

Write the headline here	
Think of an alternative headline and write it here	

IMAGE

Does the story have a photograph or other image?	
If so, why do you think this image was chosen?	

BODY

What are the key ideas in the article?	1.
	2.
	3.
Overall, how truthful and accurate is the piece?	
Does it distinguish fact from comment?	
Does the story focus more on political ideas and policies or on the people in politics?	
How would you describe the language, style and tone of the story?	



Worksheet 2:

Create a newspaper story

Choose one photograph, strap line and paragraph from each box. Cut them out and stick them in the newspaper template to create a news story about local election candidate Tim Simms.

Write your own headline to complete the story.

Photo		
Strap Line	A new independent candidate, Tim Simms, joined the race for a seat on the local council yesterday.	Tim Simms officially launched his campaign for election to the local council yesterday.
Paragraph 1	Simms is a community activist and campaigned successfully for a new bus route for the town last year. This is his first time to stand for election.	Simms is a newcomer to politics. Although he was involved in a campaign for a new bus route for the town, he has never stood for election before.
Paragraph 2	“My priority issue is transport,” said Simms. “If I’m elected, I will fast-track plans to widen the main road through the town.” The controversial road project has been delayed by protests and objections. Although commuters will benefit, local residents say the road works will cause months of disruption to their lives.	“My priority issue is transport,” said Simms. “If I’m elected, I will fast-track plans to widen the main road through the town and put an end to the appalling congestion.” The plans have been welcomed by commuters, whose spend hours every week in heavy traffic.
Paragraph 3	Simms’s campaign launch yesterday was well-attended by his supporters. However, he will have to campaign hard to win a seat in the face of well-established and popular members of the council who are standing for re-election.	Simms’s campaign launch yesterday was packed with supporters. Although the members of the council who are standing for re-election are well-established and popular, he may be in with a chance to win a seat.

NewsLine



Write your headline here

Paste a strap
line here

Photo

Paragraph 1

Paragraph 2

Paragraph 3