Reporting Part I: What Matters to Me

With their grounding in what news is and where it comes from, students select and report on a topic of personal interest, then share their work with their peers.

**GRADES:** 7-12

**DURATION:** More than 90 minutes

**MATERIALS**

* Handout: What Matters to Me worksheet, one per student or small group (included in this packet). Note: You may wish to omit pages four and five for more advanced writers.
* A Google site, blog or desktop publisher to create a “publication” that will showcase student articles
* Poster: Is It News?
* Tipsheet: Getting to the Source

**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Tell students it’s time to take what they’ve learned about news and apply it to their own lives, not as news consumers, but as news creators.
2. As a class, begin brainstorming topics that students are interested in exploring further to write a news story. Encourage them to think about the things that really matter to them, whether that’s events or issues that affect their daily lives at school or at home, or issues they wish they saw more coverage of in the mainstream media. Remind students that they are creating a news article. They can refer to the Is It News? poster to make sure their work meets the criteria.
3. Distribute the worksheet and give students time to work individually to select and refine a topic to report on. They will also brainstorm possible sources of information for their topic. (Note: You may wish to omit pages four and five, which provide a suggested research and content outline for a news article, if your students are already advanced writers.) Give students a deadline of one or two days for turning in their reports, just as real reporters must complete their work in a set amount of time to keep up with the news cycle.
4. When students have completed their articles, create a “publication” (students can brainstorm a name for it) to showcase their work. This could be done using a blog or simple Google site or as a printed collection. Give students time to read their peers’ work.
5. As a class, discuss the articles they’ve produced, using the questions below to guide the conversation.
6. If desired, have students revise their work based on your class discussion and then share the collection of revised articles beyond your classroom, with fellow students or in the community.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

* Do all of the articles qualify as news? Apply questions from the Is It News? poster to double-check.
* What sources were used to create each article? Do they seem reliable? Ask the questions from the Getting to the Source tipsheet.
* Which articles stand out to you, and why?
* What have you learned from reading these articles?
* With whom (other than your peers in this class) would you like to share this content? Why?

**Name: Date:**

Reporting: What Matters to Me

What will your news article be about?

Why did you choose this topic?

What do you already know about this topic? List facts or ideas below. Continue on another piece of paper if needed.

What would you like to know about this topic? List at least three questions you want to answer. (If you have more questions, write them on another piece of paper.)

1.

2.

3.

What sources might be helpful as you seek out information to write your news article? Consider both people (who) and documents/books/reference materials (what). List at least three possibilities for each.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Possible sources** — **who?** | **Possible sources** — **what?** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

**My deadline:**

**Gathering Information**

Use this page to organize the information you gather. (Use additional sheets as necessary.)

**Question 1 (from page 1):**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Source** |  |
| Answer and/or  useful information |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Source** |  |
| Answer and/or  useful information |  |

**Question 2 (from page 1):**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Source** |  |
| Answer and/or  useful information |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Source** |  |
| Answer and/or  useful information |  |

**Question 3 (from page 1):**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Source** |  |
| Answer and/or  useful information |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Source** |  |
| Answer and/or  useful information |  |

**Getting Ready to Write**

When it’s time to write your report, think about using the reporter’s questions (the 5 W’s and an H) to help structure your article and make sure you convey all of the information you’re gathered.

* Introduction — The Basics
  + **What** is this article about?
  + **When** and **where** did the events or issues in question take place or have an impact?
  + **Who** is involved/impacted?
* Body — The Meat
  + **Why** is this topic important?
  + **How** is this topic impacting the reader/the community/the country?
* Conclusion — The Bottom Line
  + **What** should readers take away from this article?

Look back at the answers and useful information you gathered. Begin to organize them for your article using the outline chart below. Write the facts/information in the section where they should appear, then number them to indicate the order in which they will appear. (Use your own paper to add to the chart as needed.)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Introduction** — **The Basics** | |
| Facts to include |  |
| **Body** — **The Meat** | |
| Facts to include |  |
| **Conclusion** — **The Bottom Line** | |
| Facts to include |  |



