My Local News

What do you know about your community? Who lives there? What are their interests? Let’s do a little research to find out.

1. Use the U.S. Census
Every 10 years, the U.S. government conducts a census – a survey of the population. The census data is freely available at http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/. Look up your city and complete the profile.

City/State: __________________________

Data year: __________________________

Population: __________________________

Females: ________% Males: __________%

Median age, 18 years and over: __________

Education, high school graduate or higher: __________% 

Median household income: $ __________________

Another piece of information that you find interesting: _____________________________

2. Interview a resident
Individuals who have lived in a community watch the people, buildings and activities change over the years – or remain the same and become a tradition. Interview someone who has lived in your community for at least 20 years. Write five questions to ask this person.

Name of person: __________________________

Year he or she moved to your community: __________________________

1. ______________________________________

2. ______________________________________

3. ______________________________________

4. ______________________________________

5. ______________________________________

Record the resident’s answers on a separate sheet of paper.
3. Read the local newspaper
A newspaper reflects the community by providing information that residents want, need and should know. Read a local newspaper’s front page and answer the questions below.

Name of newspaper: ________________________________________________________________

How many stories are about an event or action that took place outside of the U.S.? _______
Focus of those stories:  Adam the way(s) in which the stories relate to your community: _____________________________________________________________

Describe the way(s) in which the stories relate to your community: __________________________

How many stories are about a national event or action? ______________________________
Focus of those stories:  _____________________________________________________________

The way(s) in which the stories relate to your community: ________________________________

How many stories are about a state event or action? ________________________________
Focus of the stories:  _____________________________________________________________

The way(s) in which the stories relate to your community: ________________________________

How many stories are about a local event or action? ________________________________
Focus of the stories:  _____________________________________________________________

The way(s) in which the stories relate to your community: ________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
Choose the News Gallery Guide

Visit the Today’s Front Pages Gallery (Level 6)
The Newseum receives more than 800 front pages daily from newspapers across the country and around the world. Here we display 80 of these front pages. Some days the stories on the front pages are all very similar; some days they are very different.

Find a newspaper from a state where you have relatives or friends and a newspaper from your home state and compare them:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper 1</th>
<th>Newspaper 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home state:</td>
<td>Other state:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper:</td>
<td>Newspaper:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead story:</td>
<td>Lead story:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many stories are on the front page?</td>
<td>How many stories are on the front page?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many of those stories are local?</td>
<td>How many of those stories are local?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National?</td>
<td>National?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International?</td>
<td>International?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many photos or graphics are on the front page?</td>
<td>How many photos or graphics are on the front page?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Editors often select a variety of stories for the front page. Here are some factors they use in the decision-making process:

**Impact** (How many are affected?)
**Proximity** (Where it happened?)
**Timeliness** (When it happened?)
**Fame** (Who was involved?)
**Human Interest** (Appeals to our emotions)
**Novelty** (Is unusual, a first)

What kinds of stories are the lead stories? Are they a combination of these types?

Home newspaper stories: ____________________________

_________________________________________________

_________________________________________________

Other newspaper: ____________________________

_________________________________________________

_________________________________________________

Pick one story from each of the two front pages that you would not have included if you were the editor and explain why.

Home newspaper story you would cut: ____________________________

Why? ________________________________________________

_________________________________________________

_________________________________________________

Other newspaper story you would cut: ____________________________

Why? ________________________________________________

_________________________________________________

_________________________________________________
Use the stories and images on each front page to deduce three things the communities care about.

Home newspaper: 

Other newspaper: 

The Medium Shapes the Message

Why does the news look different depending on where it’s published? How does the type of news media shape the story being covered? Use this worksheet and four news media examples to find answers to these questions.

Source that appears to cover the most stories:

Source that appears to cover the fewest stories:

Source that appears to cover the broadest range of topics:

Source that appears to have the narrowest range of topics:

Story that appears in more than one source:

Story that appears in only one source:

Source that uses the most pictures:

Source that appears to have the most multimedia offerings:

Source with the most local stories:

Source with the most national stories:
Source with the most international stories: 
________________________________________________________________________

Source with the best layout (most interesting and clear), in your opinion: 
________________________________________________________________________

Source with the worst layout, in your opinion: 
________________________________________________________________________

Source with the most interesting headlines, in your opinion: 
________________________________________________________________________

Source with the least interesting headlines, in your opinion: 
________________________________________________________________________

Source that seems the most up-to-date: 
________________________________________________________________________

Source that seems the most out-of-date: 
________________________________________________________________________

Story that you were surprised to learn about: 
________________________________________________________________________

If you had to pick only one of these news sources to follow for the next month, which one would you pick? Why? What do you like about it?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________