

NEWS  
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Schools Activity Pack

# Introduction

This is a five-day creative activity pack for Year 4, 5 and 6 classes exploring the theme of news-making. The pack is designed by artists Andy Field and Beckie Darlington as extension of their project News News News, which involves them working closely with groups of primary school children to create their own live TV news shows.

This pack is a dynamic resource for primary school teachers offering a comprehensive and imaginative programme of activities that have been carefully developed by the artists over several years working in schools across the UK and internationally. The project encompasses creative writing, critical thinking, public speaking, performing and play. It also provides children with a unique opportunity to think about the school and their relationship to it, including opportunities to ask questions of and listen to people from across the school community, including teachers, support staff and their fellow pupils.

There are also additional opportunities to engage with a range of online materials created by children in other parts of the UK and internationally as part of the larger News News News project which connect to subjects including the environment, community and health & wellbeing.

In completing this activity pack, teachers will be able to follow a step-by-step guide to enable their class to create their own live news show, a performance written by and starring the children themselves which can be presented in front of the entire school using only the readily available materials and resources contained in this pack, including news jingles and a news logo.

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**BEDFORD**ARTS  
**CREATIVE**



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**BL**  
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# Curriculum

The pack engages with the school curriculum in a number of key ways:

## READING

Through the creation and performance of different kinds of news scripts, the project encourages the children to practice reading, working individually and reading in groups.

## LITERACY

The pack involves a range of unusual writing tasks including creating news headlines, formulating interview questions and writing scripts for a news broadcast, in the process exploring vocabulary & word choices, punctuation, sentence structure, tense and grammar choices.

## ART

The pack culminates in a group performance which the entire class can participate in together, playing the role of news journalists and presenters and putting on a show for the rest of the school.

## GEOGRAPHY

Through the additional online resources the children will explore different towns and cities in the UK and internationally – thinking about their geography and the environmental challenges they face now and in the future – and then use this experience to reflect on their own local environment.

# About the Artists

**Andy Field & Beckie Darlington collaborate with children and young people on creative projects that initiate new and different kinds of conversations between children and adults.**

Website  
**[andyandbeckie.com](http://andyandbeckie.com)**

Instagram  
**[@andy.and.beckie](https://www.instagram.com/andy.and.beckie)**

Twitter  
**[@andyandbeckie](https://twitter.com/andyandbeckie)**

These conversations explore how we live together and the roles we are all able to play within the life of our communities. Some things they have done recently include collaborating with the children of internal migrant workers in Beijing to imagine a different future for their city, creating a social action collective with primary school children in St Helens, and working remotely with children across the Australia and New Zealand to make an audio-walk that takes place in the rain, exploring their experience of connection, localness and distance during the coronavirus pandemic.

Central to all their work is the aim of creating playful and innovative new ways for adults and children to talk, think and imagine together. Spaces of compassion where new kinds of futures can be imagined.

In 2021 they won the Liverpool City Region Culture and Creative Award for Impact in Learning & Education for their project *The Book of St Helens*.

## **Testimonials from teachers about Andy and Beckie's work**

'An incredible project for our year 5 children to be involved in. The project was very sensitively put together to ensure inclusivity, something very important with our cohort of children.'

'They really enjoyed the freedom of the whole project. Sometimes we fall into a trap of giving instructions that are too clear in art and they really enjoyed being able to create whatever they wanted.'

'The children felt like they had great ownership over their work, and really felt listened to. The project was exciting, engaging and really sparked their imaginations. All of the sessions had clear outcomes, and as well as being planned thoroughly had great resources to match.'

'I really think it's made them think about the community they live in and the wider town. They loved taking part in the online sessions and were fantastic ambassadors for the school.'

# Overview

**This is a five-day creative activity pack for Year 4, 5 and 6 classes that invites the class to create together a television-style news broadcast which they can then present in front of the entire school.**

Working together guided by their teacher, the class will write and report the news from their classroom by playing games, having discussions and completing a range of creative activities. In the process the class will have the chance to explore some big questions about the purpose and value of news, who gets to set the news agenda and how children see and experience the world differently to adults.

This activity pack is an extension of artists Andy and Beckie's News News News project. Versions of this project have been presented in towns and cities across the UK and in New Zealand. As part of this project the children film their own TV news investigations – you can watch these news films on Andy and Beckie's video channel, and an additional set of activities at the end of this pack provides a guide to incorporating these films into your teaching.

This activity pack is intended to be completed together by an entire class. Each day's activity session should take around 2 hours. The only materials necessary should be pens or pencils and paper. A small number of the activities will involve the children leaving the classroom in groups to interact with other classes and other members of school staff. The activity pack is designed to conclude with a 'performance' by the class which ideally would take place in front of the rest of the school as part of an assembly, but if this is not possible it could happen just in the class for the benefit of the children taking part. This performance has been designed to enable every child in the class to take part should they want to.

# DAY

# 1

## Collecting the News Headlines

Every news broadcast begins with the news headlines. These are most important stories of the day. A news story could be any recent event. We think of news stories as being about serious or very important events – things like Brexit or the pandemic or premiere league football results or things the prime minister has done – but really, anything could be a news story if someone decides it is important enough to tell people about. In this project you are the ones who get to decide what is an important news story that makes it into the news headlines.



# DAY 1

## Collecting the News Headlines

Today the class will begin by thinking about news headlines from their own lives, then they will head out into school to gather news stories from children across the school and then come back together to decide which of these news stories get to be included in your list of News Headlines.

### What is a News Headline?

A headline is the main title of a news story - printed in large letters at the top of a story online or in a newspaper, or spoken by a newsreader on tv or radio. Headlines are designed to grab someone's attention and make them interested to know more. They should be short and snappy - summing up the story in as few words as possible. Sometimes headlines are playful and use alliteration or rhyming words, but mainly they want to intrigue people and give them an idea what the story is about.

### ACTIVITY 1 Writing Your Own News Headlines

To help us to start thinking about the kinds of news stories that might make up our news headlines, everyone is going to write their own set of news headlines from things that have happened to them in the last week.

Children can work on their own or in pairs. Each pair or individual should be given a copy of the News Headlines Questionnaire (Print Out A) to fill out. This should only take five or ten minutes. Once everyone has completed the questionnaire, if there is time they can take turns to read out their news headlines.

# DAY 1

## Collecting the News Headlines

### ACTIVITY 2 Gathering News Headlines

Now that the children have an idea about the kinds of things that might make good personal news stories, it is time to head out into school and start gathering some themselves!

The class can work in groups. Each group should take a pen or pencil and paper and go to another of the classes in school to try and collect some news stories from them. Each group should only need to go to one class. They should write each news story down on their piece of paper. Try and collect at least seven or eight news stories from the class. They can use the prompts from the News Headlines Questionnaire as examples of the kinds of questions they might want to ask the class.

### ACTIVITY 3 Choosing Your Final News Headlines

Once everyone has returned, each group should choose three or four of the most interesting news stories they collected to share with the class, with the teacher writing them on the board as they go.

This should leave you with a list of around 15-25 news headlines. The class now has to decide together on just 10-15 of these headlines to be the final headlines for your news programme.

You could do this by having everyone vote on their top three news stories and choosing the 10 that have the most votes, or simply by deciding together as a group which you think are the 10 most important, asking people to explain why they think one or other of the headlines should stay and which can be discarded.

*[NB - Please type up the final list of news headlines and keep this list safe as you will need it for the end of the project]*



DAY

2

## A News Investigation

After the news headlines, a news programme often then has a more in-depth report. Whereas the news headlines are just short sentences that explain things very simply, a longer news investigation will involve the reporters actually trying to find something out by asking people questions and listening to their answers.



# DAY 2

## A News Investigation

Today the class will do their own news investigation. To help decide on the topic for this news investigation they will begin by thinking together about the kinds of stories that get to be on the news, and what the children think doesn't get talked enough about. Then they will decide upon a question about the school they want to try and answer, before heading out to try and answer it.

### ACTIVITY 1 Thinking About News Topics

Today's activities begin by having a conversation together about the news. Here are some questions to ask the children.

- Who watches the news?
- What do you think about the news?
- Are there subjects you think they talk too much about on the adult news?
- What things do you think are important and wish they talked more about on the news?

You might want to turn any answers to this last question into a list of possible news subjects, written on the board to help inform the questions the children come up with in the next activity.

### ACTIVITY 2 A News Investigation!

The class is now going to conduct their own news investigation. The investigation should be related to the school, the teachers or the students in some way. Begin by asking the children to propose questions they might want to try and answer – they could be general questions like, 'What do people think about school?' or 'What's it like being a teacher?' or they could be more specific questions, 'How does the

# DAY 2

## A News Investigation

school get money?' or 'Why do we get homework?'. When they are coming up with questions, encourage the children to think about the subjects they wanted to see more of on the news. Choose one of the children's proposed questions as the subject of your class's news investigation.

Working in groups, each group should decide on someone in school who they think can help them answer their question. They should then go and ask them the question (if the person they chose is not available to answer that question, they should try to think of someone else). Remind the children to write the answer they are given down on a piece of paper so they can remember it.

### ACTIVITY 3 Writing Your News Investigation

The final part of today's investigation is to write up the things the children found out into a single news story. Working as a class, get them to help you complete these prompts, and write down the answers as you go.

- And now, an in-depth report from our News News News reporting team. We wanted to investigate...
- We wanted to investigate this story because...
- We spoke to... and they told us... [repeat for all the groups that spoke to someone for the news story]
- Through our investigation we have learnt that...
- Our message to you the audience is...

*[NB - Please type up the final script of the news investigation and keep this document safe as you will need it for the end of the project]*

# DAY 3

## Interviews

Another important part of any news programme is a good news interview. There are a number of different reasons why you might want to interview someone. Interviews are a helpful way of finding out interesting things from knowledgeable people. They are also a good way of challenging people who might not be telling the truth. And interviews can help news reporters to learn what people think. Perhaps the most important part of a good interview is listening. If you are really paying attention to what your interviewee is saying, then you will notice the interesting and unexpected things they say.



# DAY 3

## Interviews

Today the class will practice two very different kinds of interviews. To help prepare for this they will begin by playing a game of two truths and lie, which challenges them to listen closely to what people are telling them and think of good questions to find out more information.

### ACTIVITY 1 Two Truths and a Lie

Begin with a game of two truths and lie. First you should think of two true facts about yourself and one plausible lie. Rather than immediately guessing which is true and which is the lie, challenge the class to ask you questions to find out more about each of the supposed facts you have told them. After they have asked a few questions, you can get them to vote on which they think is the lie.

### ACTIVITY 2 Vox Pops

One common kind of news interview is when a news reporter asks the same questions to lots of ordinary people on the street. This is called vox pops – which is short for vox populi (which means voice of the people in Latin). This is a really useful way of finding out what ordinary people think about an important topic.

In pairs get the children to come up with something they could ask to the whole class (for example, 'What's your favourite video game', 'Which football team do you support', 'What is the most annoying thing adults do?').

Then, when each pair has a question, give the whole class 10 minutes to move around trying to ask everyone else their question, making sure they note down the answers.

If there is time you could ask if anyone found out anything surprising about the class.

# DAY 3

## Interviews

### ACTIVITY 3 Long Interviews

If vox pops are about asking lots of people one question, a long interview is about asking one person lots of questions. This is a good way of finding out lots of interesting things about someone.

Working in groups of five or six, the children should prepare an interview for either you, a classroom assistant or another adult who is in the class. The children get to decide the subject of the interview. Each group should fill out the interview prep sheet (Print Out B). Then they should decide, in their group, on three people to read the prepared questions, with the others given the (equally important) job of thinking of 'follow-up' questions – these are questions the interviewer thinks up on the spot in response to something else that the interviewee has said.

At the end of the session, each group should have the chance to conduct their interview with their chosen interview subject.

DAY

4

## Sports & Tomorrow's Headlines

We're nearly at the end of our week of news making. Already you've done some of the most important and serious parts of the news – gathering news headlines and deciding what are the most important stories of the day, conducting a detailed news investigation to discover new things about school, learning how to be great interviewers. But at the end of a news report there should always be some more fun parts to the news as well, and that's what we're going to concentrate on today.



# DAY 4

## Sports & Tomorrow's Headlines

The first two parts of today's session are about the sports news – playing a game together and then thinking about how to turn that game into a story, with characters and a beginning, middle and an end. The final part is a fun writing exercise, encouraging the class to imagine news headlines from far in the future.

### ACTIVITY 1 Playing a Game

To begin today the whole class should play a game together. This can be a game that the class regularly plays together or something new that you make up specifically for this occasion.

### ACTIVITY 2 Turning Your Game into a Sports Story

The key to a good sports story is turning the random events of a game, into something that feels like it has characters and a beginning, middle and end. Working together as a class, see if you can create a script for your sports story using the following prompts. Write this script down as it is created.

- How did the game start? Who was there? Were people nervous? What was the feeling in the room?
- What happened in the game? Who won and how did they win? Did anything surprising happen?
- What was the mood at the end of the game? What did the winner say about winning? What did other people think about that person winning?

*[e.g. As the game of Top Trumps started every was nervous. The class looked around at each other with deep suspicion. You could cut the tension with a*



# DAY 4

## Sports & Tomorrow's Headlines

*knife. Then the game began. Lucy was the first one out, she sat at the side and looked devastated. Rennae tried to console her but it was impossible. Eventually Hassan was the winner. He roared a great victory roar and raised his fists in the air. Everyone was exhausted. "It was a tough game but I think I deserved to win," Hassan said, "I am a born champion." "I could have been a contended," said Lucy, "I still don't know where it all went wrong."]*

At the end, if there's time, one or more children from the class could read out this news report in the style of sports reporter (i.e. trying to make it all sound as exciting as possible!).

### ACTIVITY 3 Tomorrow's Headlines

Often at the very end of a TV news report, the presenters show you what the headlines on tomorrow's newspapers will be (because the papers are sent them in advance by the newspaper companies just before they go to print). We are going to use this idea but push it to the extreme, by imagining what the news headlines might be not just tomorrow but many years in the future.

The children should work in groups, with each table working together. Get them to answer the following questions by writing the news headlines down on a piece of paper. You can explain that a news headline should be a simple and punchy description of an event (e.g. 'Sheep falls into a river and is saved by a dog' or 'Everyone in the entire country has to take a maths test'). Encourage the children to come up with imaginative answers they don't think any of the other groups will have written.

- Write a happy news headline you think could happen tomorrow.
- Write a sad news headline you think could happen in one year's time.
- Write a news headline about an amazing discovery you think could happen in 10 years' time.

# DAY 4

## Sports & Tomorrow's Headlines

- Write a news headline about a terrible disaster you think could happen in 100 years' time.
- Write a news headline about something really tiny you think could happen in 1000 years' time.
- Write a news headline about something really colourful you think could happen in a million years' time.
- Write a news headline about anything you think could happen in a billion years' time.

Once each group has written their answers to each of these questions, go around and let each group share their answers.

Collect the answers in at the end and compile your favourites into a list of tomorrow's headlines, beginning with, "And finally, here are tomorrow's headlines..." and ending with "that's all from News News News, thank you and good night."

*[NB - Please type up the sports report and the tomorrow's headlines and keep these documents safe as you will need them for the end of the project]*

DAY

5

**Practicing For  
Your News  
Broadcast**

Now you've done all your news collecting, the only thing left is to practice for your news show! Everyone will have their own role, but working together you will make an entire news programme happen.



# DAY 5

## Practicing For Your News Broadcast

Today is all about preparing for the final presentation that marks the end of this project. Working together as a class, the children will present their own news show. This has been designed to be performed at an assembly for the whole school, but could also be something that is done in the classroom at the end of today's session for the benefit of the children involved.

Prior to the start of this day's activity, a few things need to be done:

- Firstly, you need to decide which children are going to do which parts of the news show – some parts involve more reading than others (e.g. The news investigation and the sports) and this may be one of the factors informing who does which part.
- Secondly, it would be helpful to print off copies of the news headlines, the news investigation, the sports and the future headlines from earlier in the week, so that the children reading those parts can practice with them today.
- Finally, you need to persuade the headteacher (or another senior teacher at the school) to give up 10 minutes to come and be interviewed as part of the news show!

### ACTIVITY 1 Explaining the Roles

Begin by explaining what each of the roles are and who is going to be doing what part. The roles are:

- **News Headlines** (up to 5 children)
- **News Investigation** (up to 5 children)
- **Vox Pops** (up to 5 children)
- **Interview** (up to 5 children)
- **Sports** (up to 5 children)
- **Tomorrow's Headlines** (up to 5 children)

# DAY 5

## Practicing For Your News Broadcast

### ACTIVITY 2 Rehearsal

Each group of children will have some time to practice their section of the news show. This can happen simultaneously, one group at a time or a combination of the two. Here are some notes for each group:

#### News Headlines

- Split the headlines evenly between each of the children
- Get them to look up and make eye contact with the audience after each headline they have read
- Use confident voices

#### News Investigation

- Split the story up evenly between each of the children
- Use confident voices
- Reading slowly and clearly

#### Vox Pops

- This group should choose a vox pops question they want to ask the audience (the audience will be the other children in the school who are watching the show, or their classmates if it is happening in class)
- Practice each child asking two or three different people their question
- Trying to ask at least one 'follow-up' question based on their answer

# DAY 5

## Practicing For Your News Broadcast

### Interview

- This group will have the chance to interview the head teacher or a senior teacher at the school as part of the news show
- Get them to fill out an 'Interview Prep Sheet' (Print Out B) for this person, thinking about what questions they might want to ask.
- Practice with someone else standing in for that interviewee

### Sports

- Split the story up evenly between each of the children
- Confident voices
- Reading slowly and clearly

### Tomorrow's Headlines

- Split the headlines evenly between each of the children
- Get them to look up and make eye contact with the audience after each headline they have read
- Confident voices

## ACTIVITY 3 Final Rehearsal

To finish today's session bring all of these bits together into a final rehearsal, with one group handing over to the next group so that the whole news show (hopefully) runs like one seamless programme.

# DAY 5

## Practicing For Your News Broadcast

To do so, it might make sense to have a central 'news presenting' area, where all the performing takes place, and to get the groups who are waiting to perform to line up in order on one side so that it is always clear which group is up next.

In the activity pack there are some short audio files that can be used with the news show. A 'news intro' that can be played at the beginning, a series of shorter 'news jingles' that can be played in between each section, and a 'news song' that can be played at the end of the news show.

Once the news show is over, everyone involved can be given a News News News Reporters Club certificate to show that they graduated journalism school and are now fully trained News News News reporters!

# Additional Activity

## Engaging with Online Resources

As part of the wider News News News project, we have created a library of short news films made by children in different parts of the UK and beyond. Once groups have created their own news programme this library can be used as a resource to encourage them to think about how events and issues in their own community are similar to and different from those faced by other children in different parts of the UK and even elsewhere in the world. These films are also resources that can open up a range of wider topics such as the environment, geography and health & wellbeing.

To help navigate this library we have provided a number of suggested activities that might connect your classes with this online material.

### ACTIVITY 1 Environment

Watch these two short films from the News News News Library:

- [News News News shorts | Air Pollution in Manchester](#)
- [News News News shorts | Mount Maunganui Beach](#)

Now think about the following questions:

- How do pollution and climate change affect children differently in Mount Maunganui and Manchester?
- Are there any ways in which you think their experiences are similar?
- Think about the environment near to your school – do you think it is more like Manchester or more like Mount Maunganui? Why?
- Working in groups, write a short introduction to an environment story you could make about your own neighbourhood.

### ACTIVITY 2 Community

Watch these two short films from the News News News Library:

- [News News News Shorts | Community in Norwich](#)
- [News News News shorts | Kindness in Leighton Buzzard](#)



# Additional Activity

## Engaging with Online Resources

Now think about the following questions:

- What examples can you remember from the films of people trying to help one another? Are there any similarities between the people involved?
- What makes a good community?
- What examples can you think of from your own neighbourhood of people being kind or helping one another?

Working in groups, create a list of people you would like to interview if you were going to make a news film about the good things happening in your own community.

### ACTIVITY 3 The Future

Watch this short film from New Zealand:

→ [News News News shorts | What will our future be like?](#)

Now think about the following questions:

- What do you think was the most interesting thing the reporters learnt about their future?
- What did you learn about the future of Mount Maunganui?
- How do you think the future of your town or city will compare to the future of Mount Maunganui? What challenges will be different and what will be similar?

Working in groups, write a list of 5 questions about the future of your town that you'd like to know the answers to, and then for each question think of a person you think might be able to give you an answer.