

Students often read newspapers for a wide variety of reasons, not least of which is to keep informed in English. As you know, newspaper writing style tends to have three levels: Headlines, leading phrases, and article content. Each of these has its own style. This lesson focuses on calling students' attention to this type of writing style on a deeper, grammatical level. It ends with students writing up their own short articles with a follow-up listening comprehension opportunity.

Aim: Improved writing skills and understanding newspaper writing style

Activity: Writing short newspaper articles

Level: Intermediate to upper intermediate

Outline:

- Use the provided example newspaper article, or take a newspaper into the class.
- Ask students to read the newspaper article and summarize the contents.
- Have students analyze the difference between the headline, leading sentence and article content in terms of tense usage and vocabulary in small groups (3-4 students).
- As a class, check that the differences between headline, leading sentence and article content are clear. Here is a short guideline to the main differences:
 - Headline: Simple tenses, idiomatic, flashy vocabulary, no use of function words
 - Leading sentence: Present perfect tense often used to give general overview.
 - Article content: Proper tense usage, including a change from present perfect to past tenses to give detailed, specific information about what, where and when something happened.
- Once the differences have been understood, have students split up into pairs or small groups (3-4 students)
- Using the work sheet, small groups should write their own newspaper articles using the headlines provided or come up with their own stories.
- Have students read their newspaper articles aloud allowing you to incorporate some listening comprehension into the lesson.

FAKE VAN GOGH SELLS FOR \$35 MILLION

A fake painting supposedly by Vincent Van Gogh has been sold for \$35 million in Paris.

Paris June 9 2004

Imagine this: It's the chance of a lifetime. You have the necessary cash and you have the opportunity to buy a Van Gogh. After purchasing the painting and placing it on your living room wall to show to all your friends, you discover that the painting is a forgery!

That's what happened to an anonymous telephone bidder who purchased *Sunflowers in the Wind* at the Peinture Company in Paris, France. The first (supposed) Van Gogh painting to have been auctioned since last year's record sale of \$40 million, the forgery was sold for \$35 million. The painting had also been reported to be the last ever offered for sale, Britain's Daily Times reported Thursday.

Unfortunately, shortly after the masterpiece had been transferred to the buyer's home, the Academy of Fine Arts released a statement saying that *Sunflowers in the Wind* was a fake. Upon further investigation, the report proved to be true. The unlucky buyer was forced to recognize that he or she had indeed purchased a forgery.

Choose a Headline and Write Your Own Newspaper Article

Newspaper Article 1

TRUCK CRASHES INTO LIVING ROOM

Leading sentence: *provide your leading sentence*

Article content: *write at least three short paragraphs about the incident*

Newspaper Article 2

LOCAL COUNCIL: ACTION NOT PROMISES

Leading sentence: *provide your leading sentence*

Article content: *write at least three short paragraphs about the incident*

Newspaper Article 3

LOCAL FOOTBALL PLAYER WINS BIG

Leading sentence: *provide your leading sentence*

Article content: *write at least three short paragraphs about the incident*