

Lesson 1

The newspapers around us

Who they inform. How they inform. What they communicate.

Learning objective	The students are introduced to a variety of print media. They understand the differences in content structure.
Student tasks	The students collect and analyse newspapers and magazines that are commonly read in their communities. They create a poster to record their results.
Resources	Newspapers, scissors, glue, large sheets of paper.
Method	Group work.

Conceptual learning

The term “print media” refers to printed sources of information – the so-called classic media – including newspapers, magazines, books, catalogues, prospectuses, flyers, maps, diagrams, postcards, calendars and posters.

Print media are usually printed on paper. The printing technologies are undergoing rapid change, and digital printing is becoming increasingly common.

The lesson

Several weeks before this lesson is to begin, the teacher asks the students to collect all the newspapers and magazines they can lay their hands on and bring them to school. To support the students in their work, it is recommended to set aside a table in the classroom that can be used for presentations. With luck, a student may be able to obtain an old newspaper rack from a newsagent, which provides an ideal means to present the newspapers and magazines. The teacher should ensure that all the main daily newspapers are included.

The teacher begins the first lesson by informing the students about the objectives and tasks of this unit. The teacher should emphasise that this unit is the beginning of a project that can and should be continued for at least half a school year. The students should also realise that this project offers them the opportunity to gather practical experience of journalism. Experience has shown that future journalists have often taken their first steps in projects of this type.

The students form small groups, preferably of three or a maximum of four students. Each group is to analyse a different newspaper or magazine. The students are guided by the following questions:

- What sections are included in the newspaper or magazine?
- In what order do the sections appear?
- Which target groups do the sections address? Which members of the family are particularly interested in reading a certain section?
- Which topics are covered in the sections of the issue that the group is examining?
- Choose one typical article from each section. Cut out these articles and stick them on a sheet of paper to make a poster.

The poster should carry the name of the newspaper or magazine, ideally with an original heading, and the questions shown above should be answered. The students should be reminded of the importance of a clear and orderly layout.

At this stage, it is important for the students to have understood the basic structure of their newspaper, thus enabling them to present and explain it clearly in class.

The groups prepare their presentations for the next lesson as though they are advertising their newspaper or magazine, emphasising all its advantages and strengths. After having heard all the presentations, the class should decide which newspaper they consider to be the most interesting and informative. The purpose of this step is to obtain free delivery of this newspaper for a few weeks, a service that many newspaper publishers are willing to provide to schools.

In this phase, the teacher has an advisory role. He/she will support the groups in exploring the inner structure of the newspaper, as not all papers are equally easy to analyse. The teacher should also monitor the students during their group work to ensure that each group is able to make a good presentation and finish their work by the end of the lesson. Trying to be too perfect will disrupt the time budget for this activity.