

Starting your own School Newspaper

a media literacy toolkit



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MDDA

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Preface

“Start Your Own School Newspaper” – a media literacy toolkit

The Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) has a mandate to create an enabling environment for media development and diversity that is conducive to public discourse and that which reflects the needs and aspirations of all South Africans. Section 3 (v) of the MDDA Act requires the Agency to support initiatives which promote literacy and a culture of reading. Accordingly, the MDDA proposed a Media Literacy and Culture of Reading Summit as an attempt to support initiatives that promote literacy and a culture of reading amongst diminished language groups and inadequately served communities.

In December 2008 the MDDA Board approved a project partnership with the IAJ and provided support towards the IAJ School Newspaper Programme and development of a Toolkit on Media Literacy Project. The Toolkit called “Start You Own School Newspaper” is a result of numerous consultations with key stakeholders and experts in the field of children/youth media, journalism practitioners, educators and the learners themselves.

In 2009 the MDDA formed a partnership with the Institute for Advancement in Journalism (IAJ), among others to introduce a culture of reading and basic media literacy amongst learners in schools, to promote debate and dialogue on media for learners and to encourage learners to be involved in producing their own media. The partnership with the IAJ began at the inception of the project included training of learners and educators in the basic journalism.

The long-term goal for MDDA and its partners is to see the Media Literacy and Culture of Reading Programme included in the school curriculum and schools producing their own media products. The intention is to assist young people to be more critical consumers and producers of media as well as to stimulate an interest in

media as a field of study. It is envisioned that through this initiative a platform will be set to develop media literacy skills which can be used across the curriculum, thereby contributing to the upliftment of educational standards and promotion of a culture of reading. The promotion of a reading culture amongst South Africans will extend the pool of creativity and communication skills in the country.

The “Start You Own School Newspaper” Toolkit is envisaged to open opportunities for youth to become media entrepreneurs and contribute to the development and diversity of media. Together with the IAJ, the MDDA will continue to provide support to schools and learners that wish to begin producing their own school newsletters.

Re ya leboha!

Lumko Mtimde

MDDA - CEO

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Here are friends who want to start their own school newspaper!

Hi my name is Marcus. I want to be a reporter when I finish university. I've already applied to volunteer at my local newspaper and it would really be a great opportunity for me.

Hi my name is Sizwe Mbhatha and I'm 14 years old. I am a grade 9 pupil who loves drawing and heavy metal music.

Wouldn't it be exciting to read a newspaper or a magazine that is all about you? Hello my name is Thato which means to love. I'm 13 years old and love team work

Hi Muhammed here, also well-known as a poet who regularly recites his writings at school festivals.



1 Introduction

So you want to start your own school newspaper?

Meet Thato. Thato wants to start her own school newspaper. She thinks it will be fun for her and her friends, and informative for their school. She has a number of friends at her school who are interested in working on the newspaper, as well as some teachers who'd like to help sometimes. We'll work with Thato and the rest of her team as they realise their dream.

There are **many reasons** why Thato and her schoolfriends want to have their own newspaper. Mostly they think it will be a fun thing to do.

What about your group? Why are you interested in producing a paper at your school?

Producing a school newspaper will indeed be exciting, challenging and a lot of fun. The paper will give learners and teachers at the school their own publication where they can read all about **events** at the school. It will also provide a place to show off the **talents** of your schoolmates.

And, incidentally, it will mean the people who work on it get noticed by teachers and learners alike. Producing a newspaper involves a lot of hard work. But it will also teach you a lot. If **you want** to pursue a **career in the media** and journalism after school, this is a good place to start. You will learn all about

the **excitement** of producing a newspaper, and you will also start developing a number of other skills that will be useful to you later on.

These are Thato's reasons for wanting to start her own newspaper.

Wouldn't it be exciting to read a newspaper or a magazine that is all about you? About people you know, events you went to and all about your concerns. I like the magazines I can get in the supermarket, but very few of my friends can afford to buy these publications every month. Also, there are only a few things in these magazines that interest me. Imagine if the whole paper is about our lives! That would be so exciting. I can't wait to get started.

Marcus is a friend of Thato and in her class at school. He can't wait for them to get their own newspaper started.

"I want to be a reporter when I finish university. I've already applied to volunteer at my local newspaper and it would really be a great opportunity for me to be able to work on our own newspaper at school.. I'd get all the experience I need.

Having a school newspaper is a good way to show off the talents of your schoolmates. You'll be able to give recognition to **local talent**, and to reflect happenings around you.

Generally the school newspaper will be a fun read. Often you will find that the paper becomes the most interesting and most-loved read for all the schoolmates – more **popular** even than the glossy magazines bought in supermarkets.

Over the next pages we'll take you through all the steps necessary for this process, giving you tips on how to write your stories, how to illustrate them with photographs and other graphics – and who you can consult to make your venture more exciting.

Exercise 1

Why do you want to start your own newspaper?

We've heard why Thato and Marcus are so excited about the newspaper that they are about to start. But what about you?

Why do you want to start your own newspaper?
List your reasons.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Now show this list to a teacher who has shown interest in helping you with the project – like one of your language teachers, for example.

Let's have a look at some of your reasons for wanting to start a newspaper. Do you have anything on your list that is similar to the statements below?

1. You may make some money by selling the newspaper at school.
2. There is no daily newspaper in your neighbourhood and you want to provide one for the residents.
3. You want to follow the news in your area and give people interesting information about their area.

If your reasons here are similar to any of these mentioned above, stop for a moment and have another person look at your reasons. Talk through your plans with a teacher who is interested in supporting the project.

What makes a school newspaper different?

When you see the word “newspaper”, what comes to mind? A publication – sometimes a very thick one – which is designed carefully and usually delivered to you every day or every week?

If you live in a big city like Durban, Johannesburg or Cape Town, some afternoon newspapers come out in several editions – meaning, that more than one issue of the paper is published in a day.

Before you go further, you need to understand the difference between a school newspaper and an ordinary, daily newspaper.

Let's look again at why Thato and Marcus wanted to start a newspaper:

We want a school newspaper that is all about "us" at our school. The publications you see in shops are okay, but they don't reflect what is important to us.

Working on a newspaper will help me start the career I want to have after school. I want to be a reporter – and having our school newspaper will help me train for that.



A school newspaper is not like an ordinary newspaper. You won't have a full-time team producing the newspaper every day. You won't be able to publish the paper every day - and you won't have the staff or the skills to produce all the news.

Finally, you probably won't be able to sell the paper outside the school. What you publish will be the centre of interest for your school and will be the most interesting and exciting publication that your schoolmates will read – because it will be produced by learners themselves, primarily for the learners of your school.

Also, it will be published only occasionally, for example, once every term, or every month, or twice a year.

- It will deal with everyday school activities
- It will concentrate on activities at the school and not in the wider world.

Different types of school newspapers

Have you thought what your newspaper will look like? Here are two ideas for basic school newspapers.

A wall newspaper

A wall newspaper is an easy-to-produce newspaper. Here you use large sheets of flipchart paper as a base, write your stories on smaller sheets of paper, which you paste onto the flipchart pages. Then you attach the flipchart sheets on walls around your school where everybody can see and read the pages with their stories and illustrations.

A printed paper

A printed newspaper is produced in two ways: either by typing up the stories and laying them out on computer, or by typing up stories and sticking them on paper, then photocopying them.

In summary!

Wouldn't it be exciting to read a newspaper or a magazine that is all about you? About people you know, events you went to and all about your concerns. I like the magazines I can get in the supermarket, but very few of my friends can afford to buy these publications every month.

1. Why do you want to start your own school newspaper?

2. What makes a school newspaper different?

3. What are the different types of school newspapers?

4. What is name of your school newspaper?



Marcus

2

Starting a newspaper

What will the newspaper be about?

So now you've decided to start your newspaper. You'll find that a lot of your **planning** occurs before you've written your first story. In fact, you'll find that with every edition of the newspaper you'll have a lot of planning to do beforehand.

Before you start writing, you need to decide on what **topics** you will include in the newspaper.

Newspapers can contain stories about a number of things – “news” about current happenings in the community and the school, or regular events of special interest, like soccer, chess, athletics, or books. If you want as many pupils as possible in your school to read the newspaper, it will be best for it to report on a range of different things.

You'll find that there are a whole range of **interesting activities** to report on in your school – and it would be interesting for you to give voice to the range of talents and interests that you have around you.

What interests you?

For **Marcus**, every weekend is football time. Most weekends he spends at the local soccer pitch, watching his schoolmates compete against other schools, or the neighbourhood children competing with each other. He is also a keen supporter of the local women's soccer league and has helped them make banners and he always turns up at their games. If there is a big derby on, you can be sure he's done extra work at weekends, saved all of his money and bought a ticket early. He also works at the local supermarket packing groceries in order to save money to be able to buy tickets for the big matches.

What do you think Marcus would look for in your school newspaper?

Sizwe loves heavy metal music – which means that he drives his friends (and his family) crazy with his choice of music. But he also has other interests which he can share with his classmates. He loves drawing and whenever he's with a group of his friends, you'll find him with a pencil and piece of paper in hand, making portraits of his classmates. Think of how many of these illustrations you could use in a newspaper.

Kerry. Kerry has one aim in life and that is to be a great fashion designer after high school and at university. She knows all of the big local designers and works in one of the shops of one of South Africa's top designers. She has already started researching some of the best fashion schools in the country and is looking forward to the day when she runs her own boutique stocking only her own designs.

What kind of newspaper would you think that each of Thato's classmates would be interested in producing?

Each of Thato's friends has very **specific interests**. When you're making a paper for your school you will be taking different interests into account. You can't write a specific paper for everybody. You want as many people to read it as possible, so you want to cater for as general an audience as possible. Thato's paper can have Kerry write about local fashions, Marcus do a report on the big soccer matches and Sizwe do illustrations.

A school newspaper is where you can bring all these **interests** together.

Newspapers take a lot of time and effort to put together – but they are fun and rewarding to do. So, start thinking about how often you want to bring out your newspaper. Every month? Every quarter? Every term? You need to decide how often you can bring out the newspaper? Newspapers take a lot of hard work and time – so it might be a good idea to think of a longer time period to do the paper.

Most important, who takes charge of the paper?

In summary!

1. **What are your interests as team?**
2. **Who is your team leader?**
3. **What do you think your team leader would look for in your school**



Sizwe

3 Getting started

Finding your team; your first journalism job; and getting everybody together

Thato has posted copies of a notice around the school, putting the word out that she is launching a newspaper soon. She's been swamped with people at the school wanting to help on the paper.

Thato wanted to get an idea of what skills are on offer and how much time each volunteer had to give to the project.

She asked each of her potential volunteers to write down what topic they wanted to write about.

Thato would like to use as many of her schoolmates' talents as she can. She has therefore made a list of the essential functions or duties she would like on her newspaper:

Do you need a separate person to do each job? No, if you have somebody with different skills – for example, somebody who can illustrate as well as write – they can do both on your newspaper. However, you must be careful that one person is not doing too much work on their own.

Let's have a look at a possible line-up for staff of the newspaper.

Marcus, we know, passionately wants to be a journalist when he **finishes** studying. He's an excellent writer and hopes that Thato will use him to contribute most of the main articles for the publication. However, he also wants to learn some other skills which he hopes he can use at university and once he starts working. So, he hopes that Thato will let him also work with the layout and design of the paper. And he hopes that, if there is a position to be deputy to Thato, she will consider him for the job.

Thabo. What special skills does he have? You know you're looking for some general writers. Can Thabo be one of them?

Sizwe, metal head? Illustrator? Cartoonist – you don't have to have photos with everything.

Paolo / Mozambiquan

Muhammed – music and poetry, yes?

Kerry is one of the specialist writers and she hopes to contribute a regular fashion section to the paper – writing about what is hot, and looking at what her schoolmates and other people in the neighbourhood are wearing, and what is trendy. Kerry also loves photography. It is part of her creative spirit, she says. She hopes that she will occasionally be allowed to contribute some photographs to the newspaper.

Besides being passionate about heavy metal music, Sizwe hopes that his skills as a cartoonist and illustrator will be of use to the newspaper. He has asked Thato if he can draw a regular satirical cartoon for the paper, in addition to doing illustrations for the stories.

Muhammed is not only the school's track-and-field champion, he is also well-known as a poet who regularly recites his writings at school festivals. He knows that Marcus will be writing about him a lot when he's competing on the field. However he'd also like to write for the newspaper, and has asked if he can regularly contribute poetry.

Planning before you start writing

What is the easiest way to make sure that the production of your newspaper does not turn into a headache? Planning. The more you do some thinking up-front about what you want, the easier it will be for you in the long run.

The first part of the planning will be:

1. Who will be on your team? Make a list of learners who have said that they are interested, others who have talents, and those you already know who write well.
2. Ideas: what are the first ideas you and your team have for the newspaper?
3. And timetable and deadlines. How long will it take to get all your stories together? Do you want to set deadlines long before publication date? Setting deadlines long before the publication date will give you more time to work on the stories. However, that might also mean that you could miss out on stories that take place just before publication. It's best to

get in the bulk of your stories on time before publication, and then see if there's anything of interest to include just before you finish the newspaper.

True, your first edition will require a lot of work – with a lot of unforeseen circumstances delaying its production. Every edition takes a lot of work, but you'll feel such pride when your first edition is out, both in what you and your classmates have done, as well as having an actual paper to show to everybody.

It's fun to produce a newspaper and a lot of hard work. That is why you need a group of people on the team who can be counted on to be there with every issue that comes out. It's important to have a core team you can rely on. Think of the friends you have at school. What are they good at that could help in your newspaper?

Now, think of what hobbies people around you have, as well as special interests they are keen on – for example, athletics, chess, computers, music. Special events.

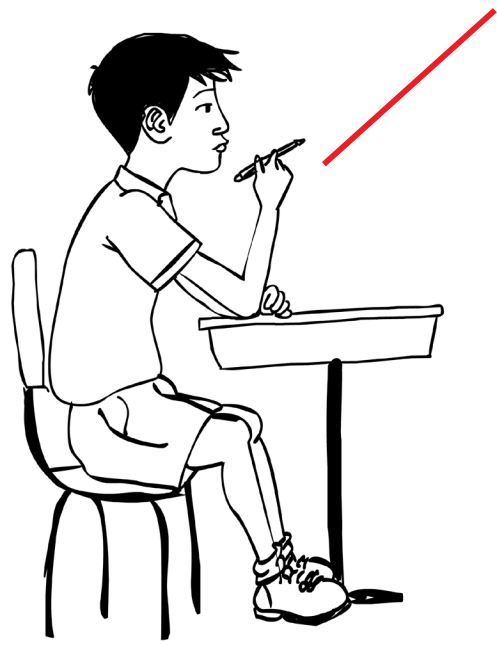
1. Name and interest
2. How can you use the talents they have?

NAMES AND TOPICS ????????

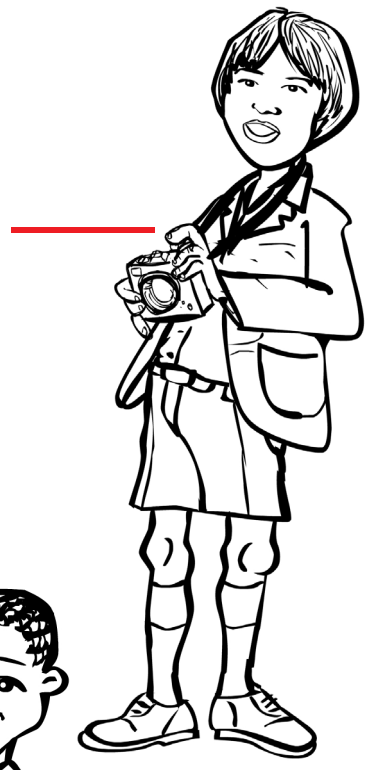
Not only would these people be interesting to interview, letting them talk about their interests for the newspaper, they could also be asked to write special columns or articles for the newspaper.

Have another look at the two lists that you have made. Are there any other people you could have added? Are there any people outside school who have talents that you know of, or who are good writers?

An editor (who can also be the team leader)



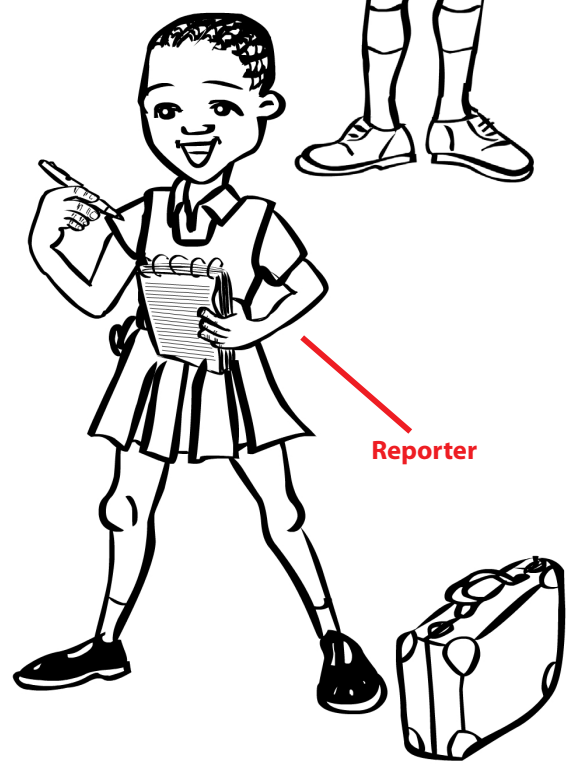
Photographer



Illustrator/cartoonist



Reporter



In summary!

- 1. Give a brief description of what a news reporter does?***

- 2. Does your team have a photographer and what sort of camera does he use?***

- 3. What are the activities listed in your planning chart?***

Hi Muhammed here, also well-known as a poet who regularly recites his writings at school festivals. I knows that Marcus will be writing about me a lot when I'm competing on the field. However I would also like to write for the newspaper, and have asked if I can regularly contribute poetry.



Muhammed

4

Making this a school project

Pulling together the strengths of classmates/ roles in a newspaper

Newspapers can be fun for each of us involved, but even if you work on the biggest newspaper in the world, the important thing to remember is that every newspaper produced is a team project. That means that a newspaper is produced by a particular group of people – and will be read by a particular audience. For you, finding your audience is fairly easy, because you already know them, and the topics they might be interested in.

What does it mean to work on a team?

- A. There will be a **TEAM LEADER**
- B. There will be **TEAM MEMBERS**

TEAM LEADER – somebody who makes sure that everything is happening on time. You get some power, but you also get all the ultimate responsibility when things go wrong, or when there is a lot of outstanding work to finish up.

TEAM MEMBERS – these are the people you work with, often your friends. They will help you put together the newspaper. Without them, you would not be able to produce the newspaper.

Are there other people you can call in to help? Maybe a teacher is interested in the project? What would be their role?

For good team relations, it's best if you can agree beforehand what goes into the newspaper. Have a plan of the stories you want to produce, long before the deadline. It will also help if you have a production schedule, meaning that with every issue the same process happens in producing your newspaper.

What does the team leader do?

Team leaders on newspapers are called editors.

The editor is in charge of the project and makes sure that everything runs until you have a final, published newspaper.

The team leader doesn't always have to be in charge for every edition – for example, you can rotate the position.

The editor must read over all the stories that will be published. If there is a problem, discuss the problem with the team and decide on the way forward.

The editor must make sure that all staff fulfill their duties and that work is handed in on time.

What do the rest of the team do?

- Produce the stories, making sure they're interesting and in line with the special interests of the classmates.
- Work together as a team.
- Let the editor know as soon as there is a delay or a problem.
- Deliver all work on time.
- Help out wherever needed.

In summary!

- 1. What are our strengths and roles as classmates?***
- 2. How many team members are involved in this newspaper?***
- 3. What does a team leader do?***



Team leader

5 School news

What is news? In our case, what is school news?

Every day there are events happening around us. Every day we read about dramatic happenings in the world. Nearer home, at school too, there are events happening: prize-givings, examination results, sporting events, achievements by learners.

All of these news events can form part of your reports for your newspaper. Giving space to school news is important because it will help you reflect major happenings in your school, your world, and will give space for achievements.

Exercise 2

What is news at your school?

Make a list of recent events and happenings that you would like to include in your school newspaper.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Thato's first edition

Thato and her team would like to include some local news in their first edition. For her team, news is any report on a recent happening in their neighbourhood. For example, here are some of the stories they will be covering:

- Muhammed Elmi and Sharon Carolus winning the athletics championships.
- The school receiving a donation of books from a local publisher.
- Kerry planning an end-of-term fashion show at the school.

Let's have a look at one of the stories that Marcus wrote on the donation of books that the school received:

The school received 500 new books this term. This happened after a donation from Khulumani Publishers. The donated books included novels, history books and biographies of inspiring figures like Fatima Meer and Cissy Gool.

Sharon Pillay from Khulumani Publishers said they want to get young people to read more.

“It’s important for learners to enjoy reading. It’s not only a way to get information and learn important facts, but reading is a lot of fun,” she said.

The school says they want to get learners to read the books as soon as possible. Learners will be able to lend the books for a seven-day period from next Wednesday.

Quick tips for writing news:

- Keep a diary of upcoming events at your school – sporting events, prize-givings and ceremonies.
- Put the most important information on top. (For example: Hambanathi High School is this year’s netball champions.)
- Keep it short.
- Keep the focus. The news report should be about one subject: for example, a prize-giving ceremony.
- Interview one or two people to get short quotes.

In summary!

1. *What is news in your school?*
2. *Do you have upcoming events at your school?*
3. *What is an interview?*



Thato

6

Covering local events

The sport championships

Marcus has just been given his first assignment for the launch edition of the school newspaper. The story he has been assigned is to cover the big inter-schools athletic championships taking place this weekend. Muhammed is racing in the event, representing his school against a number of rival schools.

There has always been fierce competition between the schools and they each have a number of very good runners. Muhammed has the support of his whole school – and he's confident he will win this weekend.

Thato is giving Marcus tips on what she'd like to see in the story. She says that they will wait for his story to arrive before they finalise the paper.

Thato's guidelines to Marcus:

- It is important to have colour and action in the story.
- Colour is when you describe your surroundings. For example

It was a warm, sunny morning when the schools gathered yesterday for the annual five-school athletics championships.

- Action is when you describe the sporting action that actually happened. For example:

Muhammed had a stunning finish, outpacing all his opponents and winning the race by a head.

- Keep your story short. Too much detail will make it confusing.

Marcus is excited about his first assignment. He prepares his questions the day before the event, wanting to have prepared questions when he goes to the event. He wants to ask interesting questions.

Here's the story that he gave to Thato:

Our track star, Muhammed Elmi, was again the inter-school champion at the competition this weekend. More than 20 athletes gathered for the first track-and-field event of the year. The five schools all sent their best athletes. Muhammed told me before the first race that he was especially excited this year.

"I can't wait to get on the track," Muhammed said. "I have a good feeling about the races I'm taking part in."

Muhammed outpaced his closest rival, Robert Walker from Excelsior High. The girls' heats were won by our own Sharon Carolus, in Standard/Form 7. Excelsior High won the long jump and shot-put events. There were other attractions at the races. There was a singing contest - and the grounds were full of stalls that offered a lot of excellent food.

- He gave the results of other races. (*Muhammed outpaced his closest rival, Robert Walker from Excelsior High. The girls' heats were won by our own Sharon Carolus, in Standard/Form 7. Excelsior High won the long jump and shot-put events.*)

What tips can you remember for writing sports stories?

- Keep the story short and to the point.
- Tell readers about some of the surroundings (colour) as well as what happened (action).
- Prepare the questions you want to ask before the event, preferably the day before.
- Put the important facts – the results of the contests – at the top of the story.

Writing tips for sports news

Let's have another look at the story Marcus gave to the first edition of the new school newspaper. Have you noticed the following reporting points?

- Marcus put the most important fact of the story – that Muhammed has won his race – right at the top of the story. (*Our track star, Muhammed Elmi, was again the inter-school champion at the inter-school competition this weekend.*)
- When he mentioned Muhammed in the story for the first time, he used Muhammed's name and surname.
- He also gave more background to tell readers about how many other schools were competing. (*More than 20 athletes gathered for the first track-and-field event of the year. The five schools all sent their best athletes.*)
- Marcus included a quote from Muhammed. (*"I can't wait to get on the track. I have a good feeling about the races I'm taking part in," said Muhammed.*)

Reporting on sports for your school newspaper

What is the most popular sport in your school?
Who are the most popular athletes?

Reporting on sports forms an important part of a lot of newspapers. Sport is very popular.

Often newspaper readers will see sports reporting as important as news reporting.

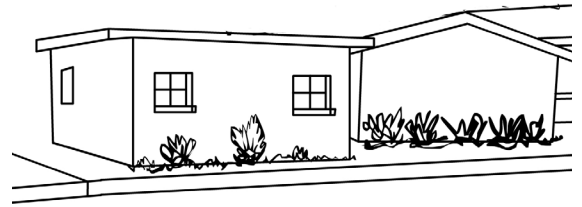
In your newspaper, there is a lot you can do to get the attention of sports fans and cover sports successfully.

Your sports coverage can be both news stories (like the one that Marcus wrote). You can also have an interview with the athletes like Muhammed.

One of the easiest ways is to have a number of volunteers who will cover sports for your newspaper. (These volunteers from outside your team are called “stringers”.) They should be able to give you suggestions on what the big stories are to cover. You can cover both local sports news, as well as writing about your schoolmates’ favourite sporting heroes.

At the same time, make a list of the sports that you can cover. There are various sports that people are interested in – football, track events, netball, hockey. There are also games like chess which will be interesting to cover.

1. Make a list of all upcoming sporting events at your school.
2. Make a list of upcoming sporting events nationally.



News reporter

The editor must read over all the stories that will be published. If there is a problem, discuss the problem with the team and decide on the way forward.

The editor must make sure that all staff fulfill their duties and that work is handed in on time.

What do the rest of the team do?

- Produce the stories, making sure they're interesting and in line with the special interests of the classmates.
- Work together as a team.
- Let the editor know as soon as there is a delay or a problem.
- Deliver all work on time.
- Help out wherever needed.

In summary!

- 1. What tips can you remember for writing sports stories?***
- 2. Reporting on sports for your school newspaper***
- 3. What do the rest of the team do?***



Team leader

7 Profiles - Local celebrities and newsmakers

What is happening in your school? In your neighbourhood?

An effective answer to these questions is to identify the people who are making the news in your area. Find out what they are doing and you're more than likely to find out what's happening both at your school and in your neighbourhood.

You'll find that to write a profile of somebody is a sure way to discover the affairs of interesting people – and what they are doing.

A profile is a story that focuses on one person and tells us more about their lives or their skills. For example, if you're writing about an athlete who won this week's athletics races, it could read something like this:

Muhammed always thought that he was too tall for his age. Since primary school, he can remember always teased as "the tall one" or "stringbean". But this weekend, when he won the 100m sprints, he was hailed as a champion.

Muhammed was born in Mogadishu and says that since he was a child his parents have been telling him stories about Nelson Mandela.

They always wanted to visit the "land of

Mandela". Their family came here after fleeing the civil war in his home country.

"This weekend I felt like a champion," Muhammed said after winning his race. "I felt like the Nelson Mandela of the track."

What stood out for you about this profile?

- Did you notice that the profile was about one person only?
- It concentrated on a single event.
- It had one or two quotations from the person who is the focus of the story.
- The writer has included one or two interesting details about the subject's/person's life or background (for example, that Muhammed was born in Somalia; that he's always been teased because he was so tall; and that Nelson Mandela has been an important figure in his life whom he identifies with).

Profiles are interesting to read because they tell us more about people. They also give us one or two extra facts about the lives of people who are achieving big goals.

If there is a big sporting event, for example, you can talk to the winners and get to know what their magic formula is. If there has been a cultural event, you can ask somebody in your school who writes poetry, etc, to tell you what inspired them.

Subjects of profiles can be linked to events (like a sports event, a cultural happening or a prize being won), or about generally interesting people.

Writing your profile

Not all profiles need to be driven by events. There are also people who are very talented and interesting who would be good to hear from. Some of your teachers, for example, might have an interesting story to tell.

Who in your school has a list of interesting hobbies or who has visited an interesting place recently?

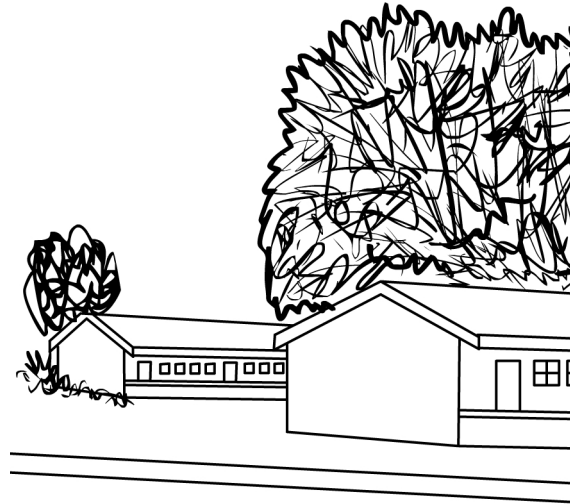
There might also be some “local celebrities” in your area who would be good to interview.

When writing profiles, it’s important to remember the following:

- It’s easier to do a profile if you focus on one thing about that person that you’d like your readers to know. If you try to tell too much at the same time, it can be difficult to write, and also sometimes confusing to read. Also, you run the risk that people will miss the most important facts that you want them to notice if you tell too many different sides of the story or have too many details.
- Ask yourself: what is most interesting about this person? What is the ONE thing I’d like people to focus on, and focus on that in your questions.
- Write down your questions beforehand.
- Write down specific questions, not just suggestions or broad topics. Being focused will help you plan for later questions.
- Decide before the interview if you want to take a photograph of the person or want to ask them to bring a photo with them, or want your cartoonist to illustrate them..
- If you are talking to somebody about a particularly interesting event – like a trip that they took, a prize that they won or somebody famous that they met - they be willing to share a photograph of the subject. Make sure you credit it and return it as soon as it’s been used.
- They can be of a variety of lengths. Some can be a few paragraphs, others can be an essay.

Exercise 3

1. Think of one person you'd like to write about for your newspaper. Now answer the following questions:
2. Why would it be interesting to talk to this person?
3. Who else would be interested in reading this profile besides yourself?
4. Write down four questions you would like to ask this person.
5. Talk to your friends and classmates – what questions would they like to ask this person?
6. Make a final list of the four most interesting questions to ask them (bringing together your original question plus the ones from your friends.)



In summary!

1. What is happening in your school? In your neighbourhood?

2. Define what a profile is and what does it focus on?

***"This weekend I felt like a champion,"
Muhammed said after winning his race.
"I felt like the Nelson Mandela of the
track."***



Muhammed



Using illustrations and photographs in your newspaper

Thato and her team have most of their stories written for their first edition. At the same time, they don't want the paper to just have words on it.

Why not?

Illustrations and photographs make a newspaper more interesting. It would be very boring to have only words on a newspaper page – and it wouldn't make the paper very enticing to read.

Thato and her team are having a brainstorming session and they are discussing how to make the newspaper look good and interesting. Here are some of the points that they've raised:

- They don't have money to do colour photocopying or colour printing of photographs, so everything will have to be in black-and-white.
- Thato is keen to make use of Sizwe's drawing talents. Therefore she suggests that they have illustrations as well as photographs.
- Marcus suggests that they have cartoons as well. He thinks they will bring humour to the newspaper.

Using Illustrations in your newspaper

Besides illustrating the stories that you will be

writing, using illustrations and photographs can also make your newspaper fun, thoughtful and good to look at.

Thato will be photocopying her newspaper and so all of her photographs will be in black-and-white. Decide what will suit your budget – colour or black and white photographs.

Colour looks more attractive, but at the same time, how will you reproduce every edition with colour – except by huge printing costs? It will be cheaper, and look better to reproduce, if you are photocopying your newspaper pages.

Using photographs in your newspaper

Not every story needs a photograph or illustration. You will probably use one on the front page and then to illustrate a few on the inside stories, including the sports pages.

Your opening edition suggests an "action" photograph of one of the school athletes on the sports page. You might also want a "head and shoulders" photograph of prize winners of competitions or visitors to the school – and possibly a picture on an inside page of one of the prize exhibits.

Lastly, you might want to publish a photograph simply because it's fun or interesting, for example a photo of an open-air sculpture.

In summary!

1. What sort of photographs and illustrations have you collected?

2. Who are the illustrators and photographers in your team?

"Thabo and I will be using drawings as well as photographs taken by me. These pictures will be included in the school newspaper"



Marcus

9 Making it fun

Cartoons and graphics

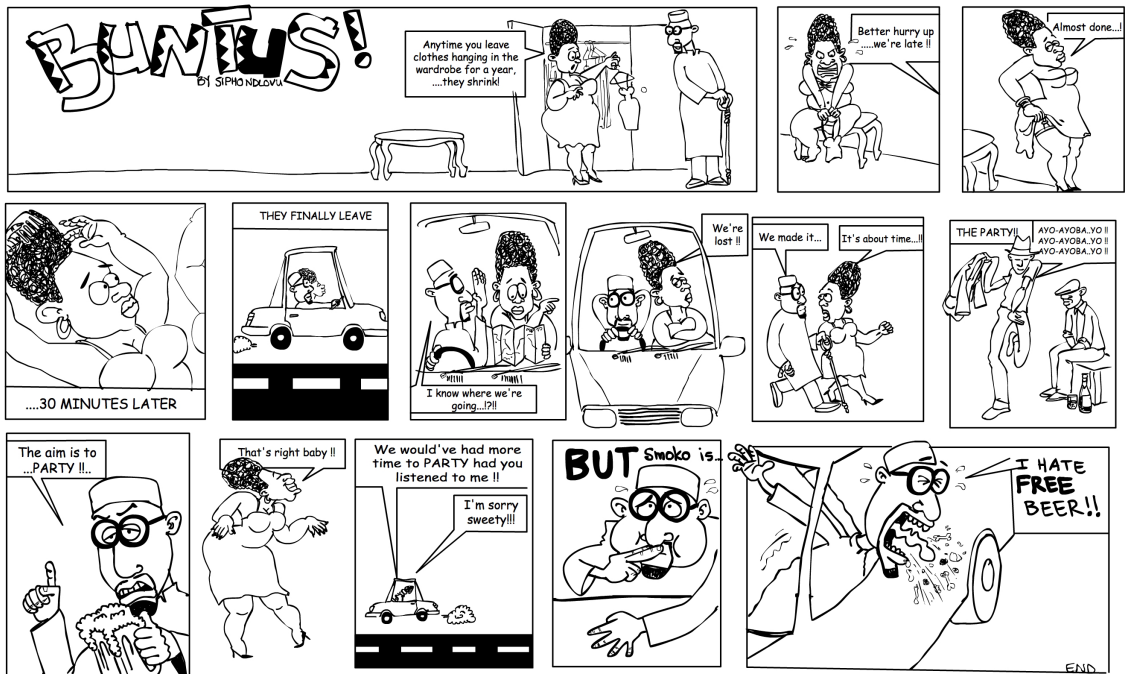
You don't have to rely on photographs to add illustrations to your newspaper. Cartoons and other illustrations will often work just as well.

Cartoons can be very funny and stand on their own in your newspaper – i.e. they don't just have to be part of your story.

Giving photos and illustrations credit

Remember that with every photograph or illustration you use, you need to give a photo credit.

That is, you need to say who took the photograph, or who did the illustration. (It's the same as writing a story, where you must acknowledge the name of the writer. This is called a byline – or story credit.)



In summary!

- 1. Name a few well known newspaper cartoonists in SA?**

- 2. What are the activities listed in your planning chart?**

"If you know any classmate or friends that are so good at drawing cartoons. Ask them to contribute their work in your newspaper, this could be so interesting. You could be telling stories about your school and neighbourhood in a form of cartoons"



Sizwe

10 Ethics

Being right or wrong, good and evil

Being a journalist is a rewarding occupation. Really. Writing stories about people and events and how they interact usually involves making some sort of judgment about them. You very seldom write a story that does not involve you making an ethical decision in the process of writing the story. More often than not you will be faced with an ethical dilemma.

What are ethics?

There are two key aspects of understanding what ethics are.

The first: ethics is the ability to choose between good and evil. In other words, to choose something good over something bad.

The second part is about being ethical. Being ethical means the ability freely to choose to act in a good way as opposed to a bad. In other words, being ethical means allowing you to make a good choice about a problem presented to you.

What is an ethical dilemma?

Most stories you write will involve you with an ethical dilemma. This means a problem focused on something that matters. Ethics is about choices which matter – and these choices which matter are called dilemmas. The word dilemma comes from ancient Greek and means “two horns” - in

other words, you are faced with two issues and you can only choose one, which – as people say – you are on the “horns of a dilemma”.

How do I know if I’m faced with a dilemma?

The easiest way to know if you are faced with an ethical dilemma is to ask yourself if you have a difficult choice to make about something you think matters or is important. If the answer is yes, then it is quite likely that it is an ethical dilemma you are dealing with.

For example, at school during a test you see a friend copying someone else’s work. What do you do? Do you tell the educator? Or would you say something to your friend? Or would you do nothing?

Why are these choices important?

All journalists – including the best journalists in the world - all struggle with ethical dilemmas. What sets the good journalists and the bad ones apart is how they deal with ethical dilemmas.

The tricky thing about dilemmas is that most often there are no clear or easy answers – if there were, they wouldn’t be hard to solve.

We must remember that simply because things are hard to solve doesn’t mean they cannot be solved or that there aren’t tools to help us solve them.

One of the most useful tools that journalists all over the world use is a set of ethical principles. This means a group or set of rules that we can apply to ethical dilemmas that will help point us in the right direction.

Tools for solving ethical dilemmas

While there are many ethical principles that can be identified, the following five principles are the most common and useful for journalists. If you stick to these five in your reporting you will be well on your way to being a good journalist.

- Seek truth and report it as fully as possible.
 - In other words, in your stories always do your very best to ensure you are getting all the facts, that what you are reporting is accurate and that you tell as much as you can in the story.
 - Another aspect of this principle is to “give voice to the voiceless” – in other words, ask people who you think don’t normally get a chance to speak or have their voice or opinion heard. In many instances this is likely to be other children.
 - Make sure you try and find out as much as you can about as many different aspects of your story as you can. In other words, knowing more about lots will help you be a better reporter.
 - Hold the powerful accountable. This is one of the most important aspects of being a reporter, to highlight to others what is happening. So if there are children who come to your school and they are hungry, you should not be afraid to write a story about this and show how the children’s needs are not being met,

and who needs to do something about it. It may be the care-givers, the school or the government.

- Act independently
 - This means you must do your best not to be influenced by one view alone. Always try and tell different sides to a story. If your story is about cheating you might ask some why it is bad but you may also ask others why they cheat.
- Minimise harm

Always remember that reporting can cause harm to people. In other words, reporting can make people embarrassed, hurt, ashamed or angry. Being a good reporter isn’t about showing somebody up or embarrassing them, it is about telling your readers about something that has happened.

If you think there is a chance that somebody will be harmed, hurt, embarrassed or ashamed by one of your stories, then you need to ask if there is a way the story can be told that will limit or reduce how much harm will be caused.

For example, you decide to do a story about child abuse and you speak to a child who has been beaten by his father. If you name and photograph the boy you will cause him and his family great harm. This doesn’t mean though that you shouldn’t do the story but it does mean you need to try and minimise the harm that might be caused. So instead of saying Thapelo was physically beaten you might rename him and explain that you haven’t used his real name.

You would also ensure that if you use a photograph nobody can recognise him.

Always treat the people you interview (even if you don't like them) with respect, and be polite.

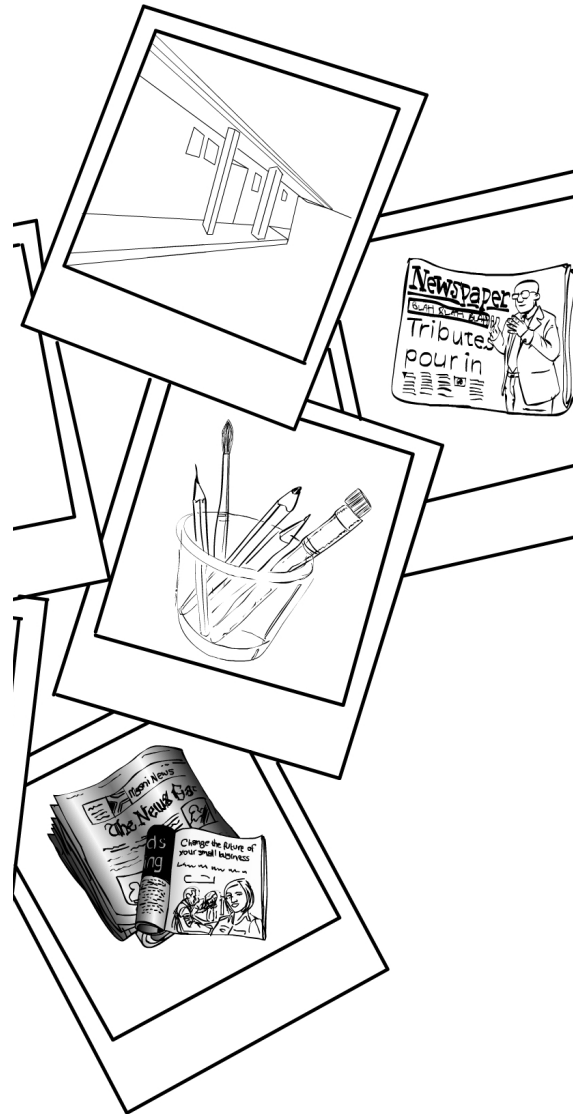
- Accountability
 - It is very important for reporters to be accountable to their readers. If some people are not happy with how you wrote a story, it is important that you are able to explain and support why you did a particular story. If you have followed the other principles above and reported fully, and have spoken to different people in the story from different sides, then you should be easily able to explain and support why you wrote that particular story in that particular way.

Act in the best interest of the reader

Make sure that, if you are doing a story about children, then it is in the child's interests to do the story. Children have special protection and laws. Ask yourself if doing the story may cause the child harm or to be upset or to be embarrassed. If this is the case then you might want to think about making sure you don't let others know who the child is. For example, if you do a story on bullying and you talk to someone who has been bullied they might feel embarrassed and ashamed if you publish their name and picture in your paper. It might be better to give the child a different name and not show the child's picture.

Each of these principles can be used to help solve ethical dilemmas that may emerge in writing your story and which will help make you a better, more ethical reporter.

With thanks to Poynter Institute's Bob Steele; and Franz Kruger; and William Bird for Media Monitoring Africa.



Handout 1

Questions to ask yourself before getting started

Getting started – Have you asked yourself the following?

1. What work needs to be done on your paper?
Cartoonist/illustrator, typist, editor, etc.

2. Will there be the same editor for each edition, or will you rotate being the team leader?

3. What is the name of your paper?

4. How often will it be published?

5. Will it be a wall newspaper, photocopied or printed?

6. What stories do you want to include?

Handout 3 – Deadline checklist

1. You are getting close to deadline – how prepared are you?

2. Do you have all your stories?

3. If you don't have all the stories, do you have a date (a deadline) for getting them?

4. Who is going to edit the stories?

5. Who is going to type up the stories (if you are going to have a formal layout)?

6. Do you need photographs, drawings or cartoons to go with particular stories?

7. Have you asked somebody to do the illustrations?

8. Do you have all the resources that you need (for example, paper, ink, staples, etc)?

9. Have you given photo and story credits for all the relevant stories?

10. Have you alerted relevant people who help in the production process – for example, typists, the photocopiers, etc?

11. Do you have a publication date?

GLOSSARY:

banner – A headline in large letters running across the entire width of the first page

body Copy– The main part of a story.

byline – or story credit – giving the name of the story writer

caption – A title or explanatory phrase accompanying a picture. The larger type over a cutline

deadlines – the date by which a story needs to be handed into the editor

editions – Each time you produce a newspaper, that is a specific edition. So, if you produce a newspaper in June, that will be edition 1, in July that would be edition number two, etc.

editorial – An article expressing the opinion of the newspaper regarding a certain subject

folio – The number (s) of the page.

general audience – a group of people with mixed, everyday interests

gutter – The margin between facing pages where the fold lies

Hard News – Factual news stories without opinion

headline – An explanatory title over a newspaper article summarizing the main point for the reader

reporter – A person who finds out facts about a story and then writes the story for the newspaper

jump – To continue a story from one page to another

justify – To space out a line of type so that each line fits flush to the margin

layout (also known as Makeup) – To position editorial, pictorial and advertising elements on a page to prepare it for the camera and printing.

proof – A page on which newly set copy is reproduced to make possible the correction of errors.

production schedule – the timetable to getting your newspaper published

typo – Short for “typographical error,” a mistake made during the production of a story

quotes – direct speech



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