This book couldn't have been achieved without the enthusiasm and support of colleagues at ITN. Thank you to everyone from ITV News, Channel 4 News, 5 News, News Production, ITN Education and our fantastic technical teams who shared their experiences, thoughts and expertise so readily. Thanks in particular to Lisa Campbell at ITN for getting the project off the ground and for being a constant creative sounding board.

And, finally, thank you to Rachael Roberts, who edited with insight and style, and everyone at Templar for sharing our strong belief in the importance of helping young people understand and engage with how the news is made.



A TEMPLAR BOOK

First published in the UK in 2024 by Templar Books,
an imprint of Bonnier Books UK
4th Floor, Victoria House,
Bloomsbury Square, London WC1B 4DA
Owned by Bonnier Books
Sveavägen 56, Stockholm, Sweden
www.bonnierbooks.co.uk



Text copyright © 2024 by Independent Television News Limited
Illustration copyright © 2024 by Terri Po
Design copyright © 2024 by Templar Books



1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2
008 0923

All rights reserved

ISBN 978-1-80078-259-4

This book was typeset in Sofia Pro, BD Supper and Gambado Sans
The illustrations were created digitally

Written by Jane Marlow
Edited by Rachael Roberts
Designed by Chris Stanley and Adam Allori
Production by Neil Randles

Printed in China







FSC

HOW THE NEWS WORKS

WRITTEN BY
JANE MARLOW

ILLUSTRATED BY
TERRI PO



templar

Different rules for different countries

Every country in the world has its own rules and laws about who can publish news and what they can say, so the laws in some countries might be more lenient than others. Some countries might not insist that their news has to be impartial, which is why it's important to know whether the news you're getting is balanced or if it supports a specific a point of view.



Making your mind up

Hearing a range of views about a topic can often help you form your own opinions. Sometimes it's easy to know what you think about things. Do you like strawberries? No. Do you think koalas are cute? Yes. Do you like going on holiday? Absolutely!

Other times, questions are more complicated and it's important to have as much information as possible before making your mind up. Is nuclear power good or bad? Should school exams be banned? Should 16-year-olds be allowed to vote?

The news often looks at these trickier questions, so it's essential to know if a news platform has a specific opinion about the issues they're covering. That way you can work out if you're only hearing one side of a story or if you need to look elsewhere to find a balanced view.



It's my way or the highway!

Some news organisations make commitments to produce news that is impartial. Some examples are ITN, the BBC and the Associated Press. These values apply to all their platforms; whether you go to their social media pages, websites or watch them on TV, their content follows the same standards and rules.

But news platforms that aren't impartial can sometimes support the views of the person who owns them. Let's say a news organisation is owned by someone who makes lots of money from selling lemonade. It might not be in its interest to write reports that criticise lemonade, even if they are true. In fact, it could be more likely to report news that shows lemonade in a good light and only criticises other fizzy drinks.

Another big influence on news is politics. Just like the lemonade seller, news platforms might only publish positive news about a political group their owner supports and leave out negative facts and opinions. It's really important to make an informed decision on big topics like this, so it's a good idea to find another platform that reports the other side of the story too, or one that covers both.



NEWS ALERT

WHAT IS CLICKBAIT?

Clickbait describes a headline that is so outrageous or tempting that it makes you click through to read the whole story. The more clicks or views this content gets, the more money the owner makes from advertisers. They might look like real news stories but a headline about a celebrity that sounds a bit bonkers should trigger a warning to think more deeply about whether the story is true. Think about whether you want these stories to make more money through your clicks!



ON ASSIGNMENT

NEWSPAPERS VS. BROADCAST NEWS VS. ONLINE NEWS

Find three versions of the same news story: one from a news organisation you know and trust, one from a news website you don't know and another in a print or online newspaper. Can you work out if they are fair and balanced or whether they have a specific point of view?



WHAT IS FAKE NEWS?

The most important thing about the news is that it's trustworthy. But what about when it's not? Fake news is exactly that – news stories that are false. Whether inaccurate stories are reported accidently or on purpose, they can have harmful consequences.

Fake news can make you believe things that are untrue and might even make you change your opinion based on false information. Even worse, it can lead you to mistrust all news.

Don't believe the lies!

Fake news is dangerous because it can make you believe things that aren't true. Have a look at this situation and see if you can spot the sneaky ways it can trick you into believing lies. Look out for the ways fake news tries to look real, how it uses unreliable sources and how it exploits emotions and fears.



How fake news creates mistrust



Not only can fake news make you believe in lies, but over time, it can lead to you mistrusting news as a whole. How does this work? Let's look at a scenario...

Imagine Aisha invites you to her party. Result! Aisha's parties are great and last year you had a blast feeding llamas at the farm. Later, your friend Adam says that everyone at Aisha's party will go in a hot-air balloon. Amazing! You share the news with everyone and get super excited, but when you arrive at Aisha's party, there is no hot-air balloon. It's just a regular party. You end up feeling disappointed and will probably think twice about believing Adam again.



Fake news has the same effect, but false reports about important topics can have more serious consequences than a party going from amazing to meh. If you believe a news report and later discover the information it provided was untrue, you may think twice about trusting that news organisation again. While questioning news organisations that provide unreliable information is an important skill, it becomes a problem if the experience leads you to mistrusting other news providers. You might start to question whether you can trust any at all, leading you to doubt factual and reliable news.

Types of fake news

Not all fake news is the same. This is because there are different ways that false information can be reported. While all fake news is harmful, it's not always intentional. There are two main types of fake news and it's important to know the difference between them.



DISINFORMATION is when someone lies on purpose. For example, if Adam had deliberately made up the story about the hot-air balloon to try and create a bad atmosphere at Aisha's party.



MISINFORMATION is when someone gets their facts wrong by mistake, like, if Adam had genuinely believed there would be a hot-air balloon at Aisha's party but he turned out to be mistaken.

NEWS ALERT

CRYING FAKE NEWS

Sometimes people use the phrase 'fake news' to describe a fact or a news story they don't agree with, even if it's definitely true. This is still harmful as people could end up believing them and not checking the facts for themselves.



WELCOME TO THE NEWSROOM

You've probably seen news stories written as articles online or maybe in newspapers. Well, TV news works in a similar way. It's a selection of the most important news stories of the day but instead of being published as something to read, they're grouped into programmes called news bulletins that are broadcast live at the same time every day. Let's take a tour around the newsroom to see how things are done.



ON ASSIGNMENT
BE A PRESENTER



Newsreaders wear an earpiece while presenting so the director, producer and production assistant can give them instructions, updates and information during the bulletin. Throughout all this, the newsreader must keep presenting without stopping, pausing or looking confused.

How about giving it a go? Get a friend to talk to you on the phone while you read a news report out loud and see how you get on. It's harder than it looks!

A newsreader's day: behind the scenes!

Presenting the news is so much more than just reading the bulletins. Follow the timeline below to see what a newsreader does throughout the day.

12.00 – Arrive at the newsroom.

14.30 – Meet with the news team and decide which stories will be featured.

15:30 – Get dressed for the show.

16:30 – Work with the programme editor to write the headlines.

17:00 – Read and edit the script for the bulletin to suit the newsreader's voice.

18:15 – Arrive at the studio.

18:20 – Fit and check the earpiece to make sure it works.

18:30 – Go live on air!



Meet our newsreader

When you watch a news bulletin, you'll spot someone who guides you through the reports. That person is called the newsreader, and today that is me! I'm going to show you what happens as we prepare to broadcast live.

Live bulletins spark a buzz in the studio. In front of me are the cameras, camera operators and the studio floor manager. Through my earpiece, the production assistant counts down the seconds until we're live.



1. With seconds to go, I do a final run through of the programme in my head. Each story can affect a viewer in a different way – it can teach them something they didn't know before and it can be both informative and emotional. The biggest part of my job is to make sure the viewer understands and trusts the news I'm delivering is impartial and fair, so how I say my words is very important.



2. My prep has been done before I even step into the studio. I've written my headlines, researched the reports that will be aired and looked over the questions I'll ask our news correspondents and guests. I've also read the scripts aloud to make sure they're correct and sound like me.



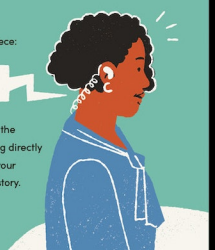
3. When I reach the studio, the scripts have already been loaded onto the autocue, but I also have a paper copy on my desk. Using paper is old-school, but it's a lifesaver if any of the tech breaks down!



4. The opening tune starts to play and I take a deep breath. Then I hear the director's voice in my earpiece:

Cue headlines.

And we're off! As I look into the camera, I feel like I'm talking directly to you. In my head, I'm on your sofa with you telling you a story.



And that's not all...

The newsreader might be who you see on screen, but they're just one member of a huge team that creates the bulletin and gets the programme on TV. So, let's meet the journalists, editors, producers, tech operators and everyone else who brings the news to our screens!



WHO'S WHO IN THE NEWS PROCESS

Editors

Lots of news happens all over the world every day, but it would be impossible to include every single story. That's why there are editors to decide which stories will be reported. Whether they work in the TV newsroom, for a print newspaper or news website, it's the editor's job to pick the most interesting story for their audience. Here are a few that work in my newsroom.

Each bulletin has a **PROGRAMME EDITOR**. They work with all the reporters and editors to develop their news stories, then they decide which ones will go on air.

SPECIALIST EDITORS focus on finding stories about specific topics like entertainment, sports or politics. They work on their stories with the **HOME NEWS EDITOR** if it's about something in their country, or the **FOREIGN NEWS EDITOR** if the story is about something happening abroad.

DIGITAL EDITORS create short reports called explainers, blogs and special bulletins that are designed specifically for online platforms. They also cut down reports made for the TV bulletin and put them online and on social media.



On the road team

Often journalists work on their reports in the newsroom, but the on the road team are the people who leave the newsroom to report the news wherever it's happening, at home or abroad.

REPORTERS go out and find news stories and when they think they've found something interesting, they tell an editor. If the editor is interested in the story and believes it will appeal to their audience, the newsgathering process kicks off. The reporters research the story by finding out facts and interviewing people to hear their views.

CAMERA OPERATORS decide what images will help tell the news story in the most engaging way possible. They have to position their camera in a good spot for static interviews, find the best angles for interview close-ups and shots to set the scene, and be ready to film on the move.

PRODUCERS are journalists too, but they work behind the camera. They help the reporter with research, securing interviews and fact-checking, and they make sure the whole process – including filming the report – runs smoothly.