

Student Handout: Unit 1 Lesson 4



News as Drama: If it Bleeds, it Leads

Suggested time: 60 - 75 Minutes

What's important in this lesson:

In this lesson, you will move from fictional, or invented drama, to “real life” non-fictional drama. We will explore the question: Are there any similarities between the stories we see on stage, and the stories we see in our streets, towns, countries, and around our world?

Complete these steps:

1. With the teacher or a partner, briefly discuss the different types of conflict, and consider where some of these types of conflict might appear in the news, or in your personal experiences. You may want to take notes during this conversation for future use. Be sure to listen to the comments, observations, and examples given by others during the conversation, and participate effectively yourself.
2. Listen to the explanation you are given about the features and purpose of the “5 W’s Chart” graphic organizer. Look over the example you’re given of a completed “5 W’s Chart”. It is based on an imaginary news article about a story you may or may not have already read in this unit. (It doesn’t matter if you have read it or not – these are just for demonstration and reference purposes). Ask about anything you’re unsure of with these.
3. Read the brief article from a local newspaper, given to you by the teacher. Take your time to carefully complete the “5 W’s Chart”, giving as much accurate detail as possible. Hand in the completed chart to the teacher for marking.
4. Your teacher will introduce the Writer’s Notebook. Throughout the course, you will be given opportunities you reflect in writing about what you’re learning and working on, this is the first of those opportunities. Hand the booklet back to the teacher when you’ve finished the first Reflection Activity. You’ll get it back the next time you need it.

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Hand in the following to your teacher:

1. Completed “5 W’s Chart” based on Newspaper Article.
2. Completed Reflection in the Writer’s Notebook. You will look for all of the elements of drama studied in the first three lessons in a story taken from the newspaper.

Questions for the teacher:

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5 W's Chart For Organizing a News Article

<p>What happened? (Give the most important event if more than one thing happened.)</p>
<p>Who was there? (Include main participants, key witnesses, relationships to the event.)</p>
<p>When did the most important event happen? (Usually yesterday in most newspaper articles, but sometimes the same day.)</p>
<p>Where did the most important event happen? (If more than one key place exists for the story, make the sequence and relationships clear.)</p>
<p>How did it happen? (Sometimes included in the What? or Why? Sections, but more complicated events may need separate attention to the How? question.)</p>
<p>Why did it happen? (Start with the most important event and with the immediate reasons leading to that event; you may fill in the original or long-term causes too.)</p>

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Local Boy Suffers Severe Skateboarding Injury

Thursday, October 22nd, 2005

Port Credit, ON –

A Grade 10 student at Mike Tyson Secondary School in Port Credit is in the Intensive Care Unit at a local hospital, after suffering a serious head injury yesterday. James Turner Watson, 15, is listed in critical condition. Doctors at Port Credit General Hospital refused to predict the boy's chances of making a full recovery, when questioned by reporters.

Witnesses said that the student had been attempting skateboarding tricks at the skateboarding park close to the school.

"It was almost like he'd never been on a board before," said one witness, Rick Simpson. "He was trying the craziest stuff, but didn't even know enough to wear a helmet!"

According to several other witnesses on the scene, Watson had been attempting a skateboarding move known as a "rail slide", when he lost balance and fell head-first onto the concrete. Quick reaction on the part of other students allowed emergency paramedics to arrive within minutes of the accident.

"Some people thought it was cool, like they'd never seen anybody make a 911 call. All I know is that my hands were shaking so much I could barely hit the numbers on my cellphone," continued Simpson. "Some of the guys were actually laughing at JT, but I hope he's going to be O.K."

No one on the scene seemed sure of why Watson would have been trying dangerous stunts without proper protection. Some witnesses suggested that Watson was expected to try out for the school skateboarding team, while others insisted that they had never even seen Watson at the park before Wednesday's disastrous incident.

Police have closed the skateboard park until their investigation is complete, and the principal of Mike Tyson Secondary School has suggested that the skateboarding team might be forced to miss the upcoming city-wide championship.

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5 W's Chart For Organizing a News Article

<p>What happened? (Give the most important event if more than one thing happened.)</p> <p><i>J.T. Watson suffers major head injury in a skateboarding accident</i></p>
<p>Who was there? (Include main participants, key witnesses, relationships to the event.)</p> <p><i>J.T. Watson, along with Ricky Simpson and other skateboarders; later, paramedics arrive on the scene</i></p>
<p>When did the most important event happen? (Usually yesterday in most newspaper articles, but sometimes the same day)</p> <p><i>Wednesday afternoon, October 21st – day before skateboarding team tryouts</i></p>
<p>Where did the most important event happen? (If more than one key place exists for the story, make the sequence and relationships clear.)</p> <p><i>At the skateboarding park attached to Mike Tyson Secondary School in Port Credit, Ontario; Watson then taken to Port Credit General Hospital</i></p>
<p>Why did it happen? (Start with the most important event, and the immediate reasons leading to that event; you may fill in the original or long-term causes too.)</p> <p><i>Watson in training for the skateboarding team tryouts; different opinions on J.T.'s actual skateboarding skill or experience</i></p>
<p>How did it happen? (Sometimes included in the What? or Why? Sections, but more complicated events may need separate attention to the How? question.)</p> <p><i>attempting a risky trick called a "rail slide" but without wearing the necessary protective helmet; loss of control and balance, followed by head-first fall onto concrete</i></p> <p><i>witnesses called paramedics</i></p>



Writing a News Report – Basic Guidelines

Before You Write:

- Gather all of the available information in an organizer
- Use the **5 W's** as your guide: your article will need to answer the questions *Who? What? When? Where? Why?* Some situations will need you to consider *How?* as well.
- If possible, get direct quotations from witnesses or experts on the scene
- If necessary, consider a headline which is an attention-grabber

Writing a First Draft:

- Remember that in newspaper articles, all the information comes in extremely short paragraphs – usually no more than two sentences each
- The first paragraph is called the **LEAD**: it summarizes the event, often answering the key questions *What?* and *Who?*
- Depending on the topic of your article, you need to answer the remaining key questions in a series of one- to two-sentence paragraphs called the **BACKGROUND**. Frequently, the questions *When?* and *Where?* are answered before giving attention to the *Why?* and the *How?*
- Choose at least one or two points in the article where you can use the direct quotations from witnesses or participants in the event. Usually, the quotation will be brief, and will be all there is in that short paragraph. Remember that it might be necessary to give a brief identification of who the person you're quoting is, and to indicate his or her relationship to the story (e.g., a witness, an investigating officer, the victim, a family member)
- Plan and write a **CONCLUDING STATEMENT**, which will express the current situation, or in the case of a story which hasn't been resolved, state the probable next step (e.g., "The accused will make her first court appearance in the morning." or "Police are continuing their investigation." or "The team now proceeds to the semi-final round in the tournament.")

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- Remember that news articles do *NOT* talk directly to the readers, and do *NOT* give the writer's personal opinions or emotions at any point.

Getting it Ready to Publish:

- Correct your grammar, spelling, and punctuation (especially the paragraphs with direct quotations).
- Double-check your FACTS!