

You Can... **Use newspapers**

Newspapers are found in many houses; from free papers to broadsheets. Sometimes religious and other community groups have their own newspapers and in many areas newspapers are written in different languages. Local papers are often central to the community: they not only advertise events but also highlight local stories and community campaigns. Begin the National Year of Reading by putting the community at the heart of reading.

Thinking points

- Look at community issues in a newspaper and invite someone who is involved with the issue (such as a new housing development) to explain how the newspaper has helped or hindered their cause.
- Visit offices of a local newspaper.
- Teaching children how to use and to read newspapers can provide reluctant readers with a 'way in' to reading. Texts can be quite short and are often illustrated with pictures. The brevity of newspaper headlines can engage some reluctant readers.

Framework links

Although newspapers are not a recommended text type in every year, they can often be used to reinforce specific objectives.

- Strands 1-4: Use newspapers for speaking and listening activities, such as information for debates.
- Strands 5-6: Use headlines as the basis for reading and phonics work; use articles and highlighter pens for spelling investigations.
- Strands 7-8: Use newspaper stories as free model texts to explore shaping a text in a given number of words, using bias, creating interest or informing.
- Strands 9-10: Let the children write stories and create their own newspaper, linking to ICT.

Tips, ideas and activities

- Ask children to bring (old!) newspapers into school. Suggest that they bring as many different types of newspaper as they can collect in their house. This should ensure that you gather the variety of newspapers that are available in your community.
- Introduce technical language children will need to talk about newspapers. www.nnieag.org.uk/glossary.htm provides a useful glossary of relevant terms from which you can select those that are most relevant for the age of your class.
- Together, look through the newspapers and discuss features they all have in common. Can children distinguish adverts from stories? Do they know the function of the different sizes and fonts? Can they work out how to follow a story through the paper?
- Make a database of newspaper features. Discuss why some features are common to most or all newspapers whereas some are less common. What distinguishes them?
- Look at the organisation of the newspapers. Traditionally, sport has been at the back of the paper. *Is that true for your selection? Where are regular features like television listings and weather? Is there a rationale that the children can detect for where in the newspaper different stories are placed?*
- Let groups of children choose a story from their newspaper and then follow it up first in other newspapers and then online. *Is the same information consistently available? Discuss what might prompt different publications to make different decisions regarding what to write about. In particular, focus on sports reports. Why might a local paper in one part of the country present a football match report differently to another paper?*
- Look at headlines and discuss how the words in them are chosen. *Are any of the headlines particularly eye-catching or memorable? Discuss what makes them so.*