

# 1c

## The World in 22 Minutes: Constructing a TV News Lineup

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An important part of understanding the constructedness of media is recognizing that choices are made and that those choices can influence people and society. The decision of what to include and what to leave out is made all the time as media creators struggle to balance competing needs. By enacting the role of news producers and organizing a simple 22 minute TV newscast, students experience the process of making the critical choices about what gets aired and what is never seen.

**Objectives:** Students will be able to...

1. Experience the role of news editor.
2. Define factors that go into news judgments.
3. Explore the constructed nature of news media with a consciousness of the way subjective choices influence the news that gets reported.

**Correlation With McRel National Standards:**

Language Arts Standards and Benchmarks

- Grades 6-8: (S9/B2), (S10/B6)
- Grades 9-12: (S9/B11), (S10/B3)

Civics Standards and Benchmarks

- Grades 6-8: (S19/B3) (S19/B6)
- Grades 9-12: (S19/B6)

**Materials/Preparation:**

1. Several sets of the front pages of two different newspapers from the same date. (See Teaching Tip on p. 20) You will need enough copies of both newspapers so that each group of 4-6 students can have one copy each.
2. Copies of Handout 1C: “The World in 22 Minutes.” (You may alter the titles of the sample news stories if you wish to make the exercise more real to your own locality.)
3. Chart paper and markers.

**Teaching Strategies:**

**I. Comparing Newspapers**

- Distribute to each group of 4-6 students, a set of two front pages that appeared on the same day in two different newspapers. Have groups discuss and answer the following questions:
  - ? Compare *front pages*. Which stories are on both front pages? Which are only on one front page? What feelings or impressions do you get from the different front pages?
  - ? Compare *headlines* for the same story in the two papers. How do the headlines differ in tone and implication? How do the headlines influence the way one could read the story?
  - ? Compare *photographs* connected with the same story in the two newspapers. In what ways are the photos similar or different? What do the photos suggest about the story?
  - ? What are some ways you see that headlines and photographs affect interpretations of news stories?

## II. Constructing the TV lineup

- Distribute handout 1C to each group plus a large piece of chart paper and markers.
- Each team will arrange a 22 minute news broadcast by evaluating the sample news stories, discussing their competing importance, strategically choosing which stories to include and which to leave out, and arranging them in order. Explain the “Rules of the TV News Game” and the competing needs of each rule.
- Each teams should print their list of stories large and post it on the wall for the whole class to see. One student from each team should present their team’s lineup, explaining why they selected certain stories and left others out.

## III. Reflecting on Differences and Similarities

- Compare and contrast program lists posted on the walls.
  - ? What similarities and differences exist?
  - ? How do you feel about what you had to drop?
  - ? What were some of the hard decisions?
  - ? What insights does this give you about the news broadcasts that you watch everyday?



### ***Teaching Tip: Front Pages from Around the World***

Finding a variety of newspaper front pages is easy on the website of the Newseum, an interactive museum in Washington, D.C. devoted to the news and a free press. You can download front pages from over 400 newspapers in 47 countries; the “map view” helps you locate your own local newspaper as well as cities near and far. However, as smaller cities often focus on their local area news, check major city newspapers to find different treatments of the same national or international stories. Pages print out 8 1/2 x 11. <http://www.newseum.org/todaysfrontpages>

# The World in 22 Minutes

## *Exercising Your News Judgment*

As the producers of the local TV newscast, *The World in 22 Minutes*, your team must exercise “news judgment” and select the best lineup of stories that will keep your viewers watching!

### Rules of the TV News Game

Making decisions about what stories to include – and in what order – takes lots of strategic thinking. Plus you must keep in mind the following rules:

1. **Newsworthiness** – What is the importance of the story? Does the story contain critical information that your viewers should know about? What will hold your audience’s interest? Will it move them?
2. **Strive for Balance** – Include the positive as well as the negative; breaking news as well as “human interest” features; stories of success as well as stories of conflict.
3. **Timeliness** – Do you need to run the story today or will the story keep for another day?
4. **Picture Quality** – TV news needs good quality pictures and graphics to keep viewers watching. Choose wisely.
5. **Time Restrictions** – Can the story fit into the 22 minutes allotted for your broadcast?

### Tips to keep in mind

- Make sure to select stories that add up to no more than 22 minutes. (commercials and promos take the other 8 minutes.)
- Your first story (the “Lead”) should be the one that is most compelling in both content and pictures. You don’t want your audience to click over to the competition!
- Please note that these sample news stories are unusually long for the purpose of this exercise. Most news stories rarely last more than two minutes and are often as short as 15 seconds.

## *Sample News Stories*

Story Summary	Picture Quality	Length
1. Community group protests toxic waste disposal site.	so-so	1.5 mins.
2. Vice President comes to visit regional high school.	good	2 mins.
3. Striking workers arrested after violent outbreak.	good	2.5 mins.
4. Opening of community center for kids at risk.	so-so	2 mins.
5. Former mayor dies suddenly of heart attack.	good	3 mins.
6. Football team makes state regionals.	so-so	2.5 mins.
7. Local insurance company charged for defrauding elderly.	good	2 mins
8. Pop star comes home for charity event at local hospital.	good	2 mins.
9. Welfare recipients say lines are getting worse.	so-so	1 mins.
10. Weather report with pending storm graphics.	good	2 mins.
11. Profile: local citizen with a garage full of TVs.	good	2 mins.
12. Monsoon devastates rural parts of Indonesia.	good	1.5 mins.
13. Economists predict gas prices will continue to rise.	so-so	1 min.
14. Pomegranates: the new miracle food.	good	2 mins.
15. New ab machine boasts more muscle for less workout.	good	2 mins.
16. Popular SUV recalled for faulty seatbelts.	poor	1.5 mins.