

Front page


To spread the news is to multiply it.
Tibetan proverb

Themes	Media, Globalisation, Environment
Complexity	Level 3
Group size	10 - 24
Time	180 minutes
Overview	<p>This is a simulation of a group of journalists working to get the front page of their paper ready to go to press. People work in small groups as they explore issues about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bias, stereotyping and objectivity in the media. ▪ Images and the role of media in addressing human rights issues.
Related rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The right to freedom of thought, opinion and expression ▪ The right to privacy ▪ The rights to development, life and health
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To stimulate interest in human rights issues through working with images ▪ To reflect on the media and their approach to human rights issues ▪ To develop the skills to communicate and co-operate
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A large room with enough space for two or three small working groups and plenary. ▪ 40 photographs from newspapers ▪ Paper and pens for making notes ▪ Large sheets of paper (A3) size or flipchart paper and markers ▪ Scissors and glue for each small group ▪ Tables with a working surface large enough for the working groups to spread all their papers out
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Select forty to forty-five pictures from a magazine or national newspapers. Note: you need copies of the same 40 pictures for each small working group. You will therefore either have to buy several copies of each newspaper from which you select photographs, or have access to a photocopier. ▪ Display one set of photographs on a table.


Instructions

1. Introduce the activity. Explain that this is a simulation of an evening in a newspaper office where a group of journalists are working on the front page of their paper. Although these are local papers serving the community, each has a policy to keep its readership informed about current global issues, including human rights.


THEMES



MEDIA




GLOBALISATION




ENVIRONMENT

COMPLEXITY




LEVEL 3

GROUP SIZE



10-24

TIME



180 MINUTES

2. Divide the participants into small working groups of eight people. Each group is to imagine that it is an editorial group working on a different newspaper. Their task is to design and layout the front page of tomorrow morning's edition.
3. Ask each group to choose a name for their newspaper.
4. In plenary, briefly discuss the features and layout of a typical front page.
5. Show people the display of photographs. Ask them to walk around the table in silence and not to make any comments at this stage. Explain that these are the images that they have to work with; they may use them and interpret them as they wish.
6. Now set the editorial teams to work. Hand out the paper and pencils, glue and scissors to each group - but not the photographs yet.
7. Go over the instructions. They have one hour to select four or five news stories that they wish to present, to write the headlines, choose the photos and design the layout. Explain that they do not have to write long articles: the headlines and bi-lines are really sufficient. They should focus on the impact the front page makes, rather than actually telling the full stories. Suggest they start by discussing the themes or issues they want to include in their reports. Tell them that after ten minutes they will receive the photographs from the "print department".
8. When the groups have been working for about ten minutes, make the sets of newspaper photographs available to them.
9. When the teams have completed their front pages, they should lay them out for everyone to read. Then go on to the debriefing and evaluation.

Debriefing and evaluation

Start with a review of the activity itself and then go on to discuss the media, human rights issues and commitment.

- How did the groups organise the work? How did they make decisions about how to do the work and about which stories to cover? Did everyone feel they could participate and contribute?
- How did people choose the themes or issues to work with? Which came first, the issue or the picture? That is, did they first identify an issue and then find a suitable picture to illustrate it or were they inspired by a certain picture and then create a story around it?
- What themes or issues were presented? Did any relate to human rights issues? Were there issues that anyone would have liked to have used, but which they had to drop?
- How do the different front pages of the different papers compare? Have the same themes or photographs been used?
- Have different groups used the same image, but in different ways?
- How do people follow the news? In newspapers, on the television, radio or the Internet? Why do – or don't – they follow the news?
- In this simulation did they try to imitate a real front page? Or did they want to do it differently? What were the differences?
- What sort of news dominates the media in real life?
- Is there generally good coverage of human rights issues in the news?
- One of the major points of discussion regarding the media is its "objectivity". Do participants think it is possible to present news objectively?
- Which human rights themes were included in their front pages?

- What image do participants have of young people in other parts of the world?
- Are there important themes missing from the set of pictures?

Tips for facilitators

When choosing the pictures to use in this activity, make sure that you have a good variety of images and that you avoid stereotypes. The news are often full of murders, wars and other disasters and more rarely contains positive messages. (There is more that happens in Africa than war and famine!) Let the pictures you select give the participants an opportunity to pick images of “good” news as well as the “bad” news. There should be a good geographical spread, gender balance, images of young people, and things relevant to the everyday lives of young people, including positive images of how they can make a difference. Include images relating to hot news events and personalities, as well as images relating to issues of living in a multicultural society and a global world. The following list will give you some ideas. (It is based on the list of images used in the activity, “The news factory”, described below under “variations”).

TV news presenter- woman	Seller on the beach	Demonstration in the Philippines
Globe	Market place in Asia	UN troops in Yugoslavia
Camera team in the Third World	Lonely woman	Fighter plane
Women making dam	Slums in Brussels	Guerrilla
Unemployment benefit	Overfull bin	Two dead soldiers
African miner	Sorting out cans	Piled up grain bags
Pesticides	Black boy with guitar	Women’s meeting
Advertising a hamburger restaurant	Rock star	Family planning
Dry soil	State police	AIDS prevention
Children playing in water	Graffiti	Crowd of people
Washing a car	Parliament	Public transportation
Burning oil	Drugs	Car exhibition
Greenpeace action	Refugee camp	Traffic jam
Plume of industrial smoke	Children in asylum centre	Young man with microphone
Advertisement for alcohol	Football player	Mobile telephone
Advertisement: for Coca Cola	Action by Amnesty International	

When introducing the activity and discussing the features and layout of a typical front page you should draw the participants’ attention to the way the headlines are written to be attention-grabbing and the way the stories are then presented; first there is usually a short summary of a couple of column centimetres and then the finer text with the fuller story. Discuss how pictures are used to support the story or to capture the reader’s attention. Point out also what the pictures don’t show! Talk about how they have been cropped to draw the viewers’ eye to what the photographer - or the picture editor - wants to show. Also point out the way in which captions are written.

Variations

An alternative way of presenting this activity is to present a radio or television news programme. If you choose to work on a television broadcast it is highly recommended that you use slides (diapositives) in a blacked-out room to give the “feel” of watching the television. There is a set of slides which have been specially prepared for such an activity, available for loan from EFIL, the European Federation for Intercultural Learning.

Key date **Suggestions for follow-up**

3 May
World Press Freedom Day

Discuss aspects of the rights selected by the groups for their news. For example, how are they addressed in your country?

Participants could contact a local newspaper or radio or television station and talk to journalists about how they work and discuss issues of objectivity and the way global and human rights issues are presented in the media.

If the group enjoy activities that involve quick thinking, they could do “Just a minute”, on page 150, which is about the relationship between sport and human rights.

Ideas for action

Many local radio stations have opportunities for community groups to make their own broadcasts. Work on a group project to research and produce a radio broadcast about issues of concern to them, for example, under the headline: “think globally, act locally”.

Further information

Some starting points for reflection about the themes addressed in the activity:

a) Media

1. Young people, as well as adults, are continually swamped with a mass of information through all the different media. We can ask ourselves: what do we do with this information? Does it mean that we are all better informed?
2. The media are becoming more and more commercialised and the simplification of the message, stereotyping and sensationalism are alarming developments. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find quality news.
3. Finding quality news is especially true in relation to news about inequality issues, particularly where developing countries are concerned. Non-western news is often seen only through western eyes. This very often results in negative and dismal news.

b) Human rights issues

The media are obviously important for raising the public’s awareness about human rights. But we should be aware of how the issues are presented and the motives. Everyone needs to be critical of what is - and is not - given to us, and the way information and facts are presented. For example, in a war, fighters may be described either as freedom fighters or as terrorists in different papers depending on different political viewpoints. People of other cultures may be presented in non-objective ways. For example, the Inuit may be presented as being exotic, hardy people fighting to preserve their traditional way of living in igloos, but when it comes to a discussion about whaling, then they are described as “murderers”.

c) Commitment

Some of the images used in the simulation should picture opportunities for people, especially young people, to commit themselves in very practical ways. As teachers, youth workers, etc., we wish to motivate young people to work for a better world. We ask ourselves how best to encourage young people to become engaged, and may question whether or not the existing opportunities are in fact attractive to young people. We may get some indication to the answers from the slides which the young people choose.