

# APPENDIX I

## NEWSPAPERS: STRUCTURE, PROCESS, CULTURAL POINTS

### And some classroom activities

To find resources...

Topics: mass media, the press, quality newspapers (full-format papers), the popular press (the gutter press, tabloids, mass-circulation papers), yellow journalism, investigative journalism; group dynamics, nonviolent communication strategies...

Material easy to find: information from the magazine *Speak Up* (The Press 1 and 2), textbooks devoting some space to the issue, real newspapers, films like "All the President's Men" or TV series like "Periodistas"... Surfing the Net, of course.

The world of newspapers...

### 1. Paper contents

A newspaper runs stories written by journalists, who refer to them as their pieces.

Editorials express the paper's opinion or line on a particular issue.

→ *Research activity: Analyse format and contents of front pages in different papers.*

#### - News articles

According to the inverted-pyramid presentation of contents (who, what, why, when, where, how) the point comes first and then it is expanded following the order of relevance of the other facts. This structure allows readers to learn the most relevant points without reading the whole article and editors to cut articles which are too long without harming the shape or meaning of the piece.

→ *Research activity: Analyse a press release.*

#### - Editorial letters

Readers express their opinions (provided they are no a thoughtful analysis!)

→ *Research activity: What type of letters do the newspapers in your country publish? (Topics, tone, relation to news...)*

#### - News report

The structure is the following:

1. Lead: a catchy lead sets the scene and grabs the attention
2. Billboard: a sentence or paragraph outlines the main ideas and thesis
3. Development: main ideas are developed chronologically or thematically
4. Kicker: a forward-looking conclusion reinforces the thesis

→ *Research activity: Analyse a news report and present your description in class.*

### 2. Paper people:

The editor (director) is in charge of the content of the newspaper. He or she calls daily meeting with the newspaper's staff to discuss which stories should appear, where they should go and what the newspaper's line should be on the particular subject. Journalists can be columnists (fixed space for writing their opinions) or journos (slang; writing articles).

→ *Research activity: analyse the job journalists have in the TV series "Periodistas" or the film on p. 9.*

### 3. Paper process and types:

This may vary a great deal depending on the country and resources. There are important differences between the daily press (and between tabloids and full-format papers), the weekly press and monthly publications. Computers and sophisticated programmes have simplified the traditional processes to a great extent.

→ Research activity: Visit a newspaper office, or interview (or invite to the school) a journalist who can describe the job and the process.

### 4. Cultural info:

#### - The Yellow Press

Outcault was a cartoonist working for *The New York World* in the 1880s, a paper owned by Joseph Pulitzer. Using the latest technological advancements in the paper, they created the comic strip The Yellow Kid, about a bald and toothless child from the slums of New York in a baggy yellow shirt. Pulitzer was trying to create a "democratic newspaper" alternating reports on social problems with crimes and stories "of human interest". In 1895, a former employee of Pulitzer's, William Randolph Hearst, created *The New York Journal* and hired Outcault. Pulitzer hired another cartoonist to do The Yellow Kid and so this character appeared in both papers. The competition between Hearst and Pulitzer exploited sensationalism, and all the papers doing so became known as The Yellow Press. (Bibliography: Bermeosolo, F., *El origen del periodismo amarillo*, 1962.)

#### - Fleet Street

A street in London where Britain's national papers concentrated before the 1980s. Rupert Murdoch is known as the "press baron" for he owns several papers and other media interests. Progressist people see him as one of the big fish of mass manipulation. Bibliography: Bordzy, V. (ed.), *Fleet Street: The Inside Story of Journalism* 1966.

#### - Quality papers

Quality papers sometimes support investigation into fishy or unfair matters by concerned journalists (see p. 9). True quality papers are concerned with objectivity and plurality. They resort to reasoned analysis and avoid sensationalism or the exploitation of prejudices.

Their 10 commandments are:

1. Wide and profound information of international affairs, economy, arts, science and education.
2. Use of an interpretative kind of journalism: articles are presented with essential background information.
3. Typographic seriousness.
4. Absence of sensationalism.
5. Predominance of news reports and articles analysing affairs.
6. Cultural tone that eliminates populism.
7. Impartial, complete and honest treatment of the news: serious points of view.
8. Imagination, morality and interest for human and democratic problems.

9. Excellent editorials.
10. News avoid any kind of "localism".

- Investigative Journalism

Investigative reporting is a style of journalism deeper than most daily news journalism. It uses research techniques to pursue in-depth stories. A well-known example of this was the Watergate scandal, out of which a film was made starred by Dustin Hoffman and Robert Redford (see next section and p. 9).

More information: IRE, Investigative Reporters and Editors, a grassroots nonprofit organization formed in 1975 in the USA and dedicated to improving the quality of investigative reporting, found in <http://www.ire.org/history>, and the Australian Centre for Independent Journalism in <http://www.journalism.uts.edu.au/acij>.

Bibliography: *Lifting the Lid: A Guide to Investigative Research* (Cassell Global Issues Series) by David Northmore, 1996; *Investigative Journalism: Context and Practice* by Hugo De Burgh (Editor), 2000; *Investigative Reporting: A Study in Technique (Journalism Media Manual)* by David Spark, 1999.

→ Research activity: Compare an alleged quality paper and a sensational paper in your community, watch and analyse the film on the Watergate scandal or list subjects which could be investigated for the public knowledge. See next page for examples.