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To the Teacher

This book, one in a series on using media literacy to teach critical-thinking skills, focuses on two media with which teenagers have very different relationships. Magazines, targeted toward specific age groups and interests, are still among teenagers' favourite sources of information, whether in their printed form or as electronic editions. Newspapers, on the other hand, are in terminal decline with teenagers just as with the wider world. Electronic options have eroded both the newspaper's market share and their previously central role.

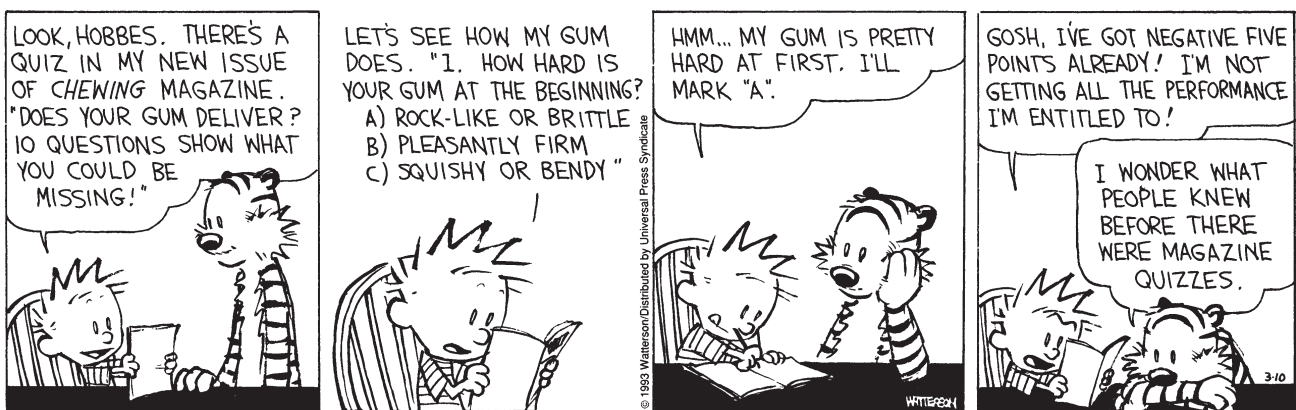
While this book is primarily concerned with the print model of publication for both newspapers and magazines, it also discusses the emergence of new technologies that are currently threatening to make it obsolete. Most of the activities in this book can apply to publications in both their printed and electronic forms.

Contemporary discussions of print media commonly assume that the content delivery of newspapers and magazines has already begun to shift completely to electronic media. As the mode of delivery changes, the content will also adapt. Nevertheless, people's need and desire for the types of information that newspapers and magazines currently provide has not decreased.

Similarly, while several examples featured are American in nature, they are illustrative of issues and concepts that are universal and therefore applicable to Australian students and readers.

The units in this book provide students with information about newspapers and magazines as entertainment media, as businesses and as sources of cultural exchange. The activities require students to describe this information and apply it in varied exercises. Students will analyse and evaluate how newspapers and magazines chronicle and shape their lives and the lives of others. They will encounter ethical considerations and economic issues. Students are also provided with opportunities to develop their own creativity and ideas.

Ultimately, this book strives to help students read critically both newspapers and magazines and to help them think critically about the events and ideas presented in these media, in whatever form they take them.



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To the Student

IF YOU ARE LIKE MOST teenagers, you probably see newspapers and magazines as two very different media. There are far fewer teenage readers of newspapers than their publishers would like. However, many magazines successfully reach the teenage readers whom they are designed to attract. The definitions of newspapers and magazines are changing. Newspaper and magazine publishers realise that you and other readers rely more on electronic sources of information. Many observers believe that paper and ink versions of most newspapers and magazines will cease to exist completely during your lifetime. Although newspapers and magazines will probably survive, many will do so solely in electronic form.

It is important to study newspapers and magazines because they significantly affect the way we see our world and ourselves. The newspaper and magazine industries are constantly analysing teenagers' habits, desires and needs – they are trying to “get into your head”. Therefore, it is important that teenagers investigate the newspaper and magazine industries.

There are probably several words in this book that you are not familiar with. You will find a glossary at the back of the book.

This book's purpose is to

- present you with methods for evaluating the content presented in today's newspapers and magazines
- encourage you to investigate your relationship with print and electronic media
- help you become more knowledgeable about the business of printing newspapers and magazines

The objectives of this unit are to help students

- appreciate the historical and cultural contexts of print media
- understand that the presentation of information in print media is formulaic
- understand how publishers' social and economic agendas affect editorial decisions

THIS UNIT INTRODUCES students to the reasons why contemporary newspapers and magazines came into existence. The activities discuss many of the common practices used in print journalism to help students understand the narrative structure of newspapers and magazines. Students also learn that readers use newspapers and magazines for a variety of purposes, and that readers often selectively expose themselves to publications that support rather than challenge their viewpoints.

In this Unit ...

The Anatomy of a Newspaper has students examine the presentation of information in newspapers and identify the different purposes newspapers serve.

The Forms of Magazines provides students with information about different categories of magazines. Questions require students to generate judgments about the reasons for conventional publishing practices.

Who Reads What? involves students in a discussion of newspapers with an older adult, preferably a senior citizen. Students then compare how teenagers and older adults receive information from newspapers.

Ladies' Home Journal provides historical information about that magazine's appeal to young American women a century ago. Students evaluate the role played by parents and other older adults in the lives of teens today and investigate whether magazines provide substitutes for this role.

Keep It Simple! introduces students to readability indexes and has students evaluate the efforts by print journalists to simplify their writing. Students then identify words that are unknown to them in a newspaper, find dictionary definitions for those words and suggest better words.

Where in the World? asks students to consider how newspapers portray the conditions of other nations. Students read a daily newspaper and identify a nation of which they know little or nothing and conduct independent research to learn more about the nation in question. They are then asked to provide qualitative opinions about that nation.

THE PUBLICATION OF NEWSPAPERS in Australia began in the days of early colonial New South Wales. The first issue of the *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* was published on 5 March 1803. It was the first Australian newspaper. At the time the colony of New South Wales was

A major challenge for the first newspapers was profitability.

just fifteen years old, and had a population of about 7000.

The publisher and editor of the *Gazette* was George Howe. He had been transported to New South Wales in 1799 for shoplifting. His paper was

hard on lawbreakers but friendly to those former convicts who seemed to be working to make a new life for themselves. A major challenge for the first newspapers was profitability. In the early days Howe had to fight not only paper shortages and printing problems, but subscribers who failed to pay their bills and Government House trying to censor him!

In some ways, not much has changed. Today newspapers in Australia, like newspapers all over the world, have to struggle to remain financially viable while digital editions and other sources of news erode their traditional customer base. Newspapers in colonial times relied on circulation rather than advertising for most of their income and, from the earliest days, newspaper publishing in Australia could be a difficult business.

The *Gazette* recorded the colonists' early encounters with the strange animals of their new land. The first koala to be taken into captivity was noted for the "graveness of the visage (appearance)" which would "seem to indicate a more than ordinary portion of animal sagacity (intelligence or wisdom)!"

The *Gazette* was published until 20 October 1842 – even today, a pretty impressive length of time for one publication to be around.

Australia's longest-running newspaper, however, is the *Sydney Morning Herald*, first published as the *Sydney Herald* in 1831. The *Herald's* rival, *The Daily Telegraph*, first appeared in 1879. Throughout the nineteenth century it was weekly rather than daily newspapers that were the most important feature of Australia's media landscape in the nineteenth century. Australia's first daily national newspaper was the *Daily Commercial News*, first published in 1891. It wasn't until the second half of the twentieth century that other national newspapers started to be published.

As of 2012, Australia has two national and ten state or territory daily newspapers. There are 35 regional daily newspapers and more than 470 other regional and suburban newspapers across the country. This might seem like quite a few newspapers for a country with a fairly small population. But keep in mind that all the major metropolitan newspapers are owned by either Rupert Murdoch's News Limited or Fairfax Media, except the *West Australian* newspaper.

Melbourne and Sydney have both News Limited and Fairfax Media daily newspapers: *The Herald Sun* and *The Age* in Melbourne and the *Daily Telegraph* and *Sydney Morning Herald* in Sydney. Brisbane, Adelaide, Darwin and Hobart all have only one major metropolitan newspaper each – all of them owned by News Limited. There are currently only two daily national newspapers in Australia: *The Australian*, published by News Limited, and *The Australian Financial Review*, published by Fairfax.

Newspapers and Magazines Buzz

Technology has brought many changes to the newspaper industry. The arrival of commercial radio in the 1920s and then television in 1956 meant these “new media” began to compete with newspapers for money from advertisers. Printing advances brought the use of colour photography and graphics to newspapers: slowly at first, but becoming widespread in the 1990s. Today, the biggest challenge to the existing order of newspapers is playing out in front of our eyes: electronic media, especially the Internet, threaten not only the idea of the newspaper as the best source of news but also the idea of a newspaper as a printed object. The Internet has well and truly changed the way that the public thought about the timeliness of news. The expression “that’s as old as yesterday’s news” became “that’s so fifteen minutes ago”. Gone were the days when newspapers were the first with news stories: today, news breaks on the Internet well before newspapers can go to print. Whether there will even be printed newspapers in a few years, or whether they will be solely published electronically, is a question that no one can really answer yet.

Magazines

Magazines became popular at about the same time as newspapers, and for some of the same reasons. In the United States, its railways integrated their rail systems in the 1870s. This meant that manufacturers of goods could ship their products throughout the nation. Mass manufacturing and mass distribution of products created a demand for mass marketing (and vice versa). Because industrial technology allowed manufacturers to make millions of items every day, manufacturers had to sell millions of items every day. In an age before radio and television, print media provided advertisers with their

best opportunity to promote their products. Many magazines in the past century were general-interest magazines, aimed at a large audience. While some general-interest magazines are still popular, hundreds of magazines appeal to specific **demographic** and **psychographic** groups. Demographics are statistics about people grouped by such information as age, gender, ethnicity, geography and income. For example, we know the demographic group that is most likely to read *Cosmopolitan* is women. Psychographics identify people by their interests, attitudes, values and habits (including buying habits).

Print Production

The production of a newspaper or magazine can be a complex process involving hundreds or even thousands of people. Publishers are the people responsible for the business decisions that affect newspapers and magazines. Editors are responsible for the editorial content (articles and stories) of each newspaper and magazine. Often, different editors supervise different sections of a publication. For example, a daily newspaper will usually have a sport editor, a front-page editor and so on. The editor-in-chief is the person who supervises the activity of each editor. Editorial content, including news stories, **feature stories** and other text, comes from several types of writers. Some writers may be permanent employees of the publication who receive a regular salary. Other writers may be correspondents, who are regular contributors to a publication but are paid for each story that is accepted by the publication. Some newspapers and magazines accept unsolicited stories. In these cases, writers submit their work to publications and ask for it to be published.

Keep It Simple!

AS DISCUSSED in the Buzz for this unit, magazines and newspapers became popular in the late nineteenth century, when many more people had learned to read. However, magazines and newspapers are still careful today about making sure that their articles and stories are easy to read. Readability factors include the layout of a page. For example, writing that is too small is hard to read (it makes the reader tired). In addition, publications have found that dividing stories into columns makes reading a page of text easier. Also important are such considerations as the length of sentences, the length of paragraphs and the average number of syllables in words, which affect the ease or difficulty of reading a publication.

Two of the most commonly used readability tests are the Gunning Fog Index and the Flesch-Kincaid Index. Both indexes try to determine the educational level a person would have to attain in order to understand an article or story. The indexes are shown in the box below.

The Gunning Fog Index

Reading Level (Year level) = (average number of words in sentences divided by the percentage of words of three or more syllables) x 0.4

(A "serious" broadsheet might have an average Fog Index of 11–12. *Time* magazine has an average Fog index of 11.)

The Flesch-Kincaid Index

Reading Level (Year level) = (0.39 x average number of words in sentences + 11.8 x average number of syllables per word – 15.59)

Robert Gunning, who created the Gunning Fog Index, and Rudolph Flesch, who created the Flesch-Kincaid Index, served as consultants to newspapers and news services in the 1940s and 1950s. They helped newspapers and news services develop articles and stories that were easier to read. Gunning told newspaper reporters, "Write as you talk. Why should a police reporter say an accident victim suffered 'contusions and abrasions' when he really means cuts and bruises?" In 1952, Gunning claimed that he had been able to help the newspapers he worked for lower their average reading level from year eleven to year nine.

Source for quote: "The Unreadable Press", *Time*, 3 March 1947, p. 71

To Show or Not to Show?

IN 2004, people around the world were shocked and saddened to see photographs of American soldiers torturing Iraqi prisoners at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. After seeing the pictures, then US President Bush condemned what he saw in the photographs, saying, "[I]t does not reflect the nature of the American people. That's not the way we do things in America. I didn't like it one bit." Several of the soldiers involved were punished for their involvement and their commanding officers were disciplined. Although American television was the first news source to show the photographs of prisoner abuse, newspapers around the world reprinted the photographs.

Many who opposed the United States' presence in Iraq used the photographs to support their criticism of the occupation. Some of the people who supported the occupation complained about the repeated showing of the photographs. For example, Col Allan, then editor-in-chief of the *New York Post*, said, "Clearly, the images are serving the political agenda of many newspapers." James Inhofe, a United States senator representing Oklahoma, said that he did not understand why some people were so upset about the photographs. Inhofe said, "I'm probably not the only one ... that is more outraged by the outrage than we are by the treatment [of the prisoners] ... Many of [the prisoners] probably have American blood on their hands and here we're so concerned about the treatment of those individuals."

Imagine that you are the editor of a daily newspaper. Australia and its allies are involved in a war against another nation that we will call Kamaria. One of your reporters in the war zone photographs the abuse of Kamarian prisoners of war by Australian troops.

Answer the following questions. Use another sheet of paper, if necessary.

1. What would be a good reason to publish the photographs? Explain your answer.
2. What would be a good reason not to publish the photographs? Explain your answer.
3. Would you publish the photographs? Explain why or why not.

Activity 6 (continued)

To Show or Not to Show?

Once again, imagine that you are the editor of a daily newspaper. Australia is involved in a war against Kamaria. One of your reporters photographs the abuse of Kamarian citizens (not soldiers or prisoners of war) by Australian soldiers.

4. Explain how this situation is different from the situation involving photographs of torture of prisoners of war.
5. Would you publish the photographs of the Australian troops torturing Kamarian citizens? Explain why or why not.
6. Explain why your answer to question 5 is different from or the same as your answer to question 3.

Another controversy regarding photography and the press arose during the US military's involvement in Iraq in 2003–2004. Some newspapers and magazines published photographs of dead soldiers' flag-draped coffins arriving in the United States from Iraq. The military's official policy prohibits the photographing of soldiers' caskets. American military leaders say that these photographs violate the privacy of the dead soldiers and their families.

7. Do you agree that taking photographs of soldiers' caskets violates the privacy of the soldiers and their families? Explain why or why not.

Some of the people who have wanted photographs of soldiers' caskets published say that these photographs help remind us of the human costs of war.

8. Do you agree? Explain why or why not.
9. Imagine that you are an Australian newspaper editor during the time of a military conflict. Would you publish photographs of dead soldiers' coffins? Explain why or why not.