

The
Economist

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FOUNDATION

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SPECIAL EDITION

WAR REPORTING: IS IT BENEFICIAL?



This lesson contains content about wars. Please read and check its suitability for your students in advance. For tips on managing sensitive conversations with students, look here: The Economist Educational Foundation bit.ly/sensitiveconversations

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War reporting: is it beneficial?

Teacher support

General advice

Timings

Suggested timings are included in the lesson notes but you can adapt the lessons to your timetable.

Read through the *TEACHER Instructions* and supporting resources in advance of each lesson.

Resources

While printed copies of the resources would be best, you could share resources by showing the PDFs on a projector screen or by copying them onto a board/pieces of paper.

Covid-19

Activities are flexible and should be adapted to any covid-19 regulations in your country.

Get started

Research: what wars are happening in the world right now? How are they being reported on? How is the war reporting you see in your country different from what someone in another country might see?

If English isn't your classroom language, let students discuss their ideas in their own language to build their confidence, before switching to English.

Print and share the glossary for each lesson with students. You could also make a class vocabulary list. For example, topical words (like "propaganda" or "misinformation") or conversational words (like "because" or "I agree/disagree...")

Standpoints

When your students have finished their Standpoints, let the Topical Talk team know about the great discussions that happened in your classroom.

 @Econ_Foundation #TopicalTalk

War reporting: is it beneficial?

Learning journey

Lesson 1

Objective: to understand what war reporting is and explore its different forms

In this lesson students will consider what war reporting is and will explore how information is shared. They will hear from journalists about what it's like to report on wars, before thinking from the perspective of a war reporter to recap their learning.

- What is war reporting?
- What are the challenges of war reporting?
- How do journalists share news about wars?

Lesson 2

Objective: to understand the challenges of war reporting and its impact

In this lesson, students will listen to journalists as they discuss the dangers and difficulties of war reporting. Then they'll explore different scenarios, based on real events, that get them thinking about the impact of different types of war reporting on the wars they cover.

- Can war reporting affect the outcome of a war itself?
- What choices do journalists make when reporting on wars?
- What does good or bad reporting look like?

Lesson 3

Objective: to understand the challenges of war reporting and its impact

In this lesson students will use a drama activity called "news alley" to compare the experiences of news consumers in the past and in the present, before reflecting on how this affects the news we see about wars.

- Where can people find news about wars?
- How has the experience of the news consumer changed over time?
- How do you feel about the amount of news we see about wars?

War reporting: is it beneficial?

Learning journey

Lesson 4

Objective: to form an opinion on whether war reporting is beneficial

In this lesson, students will recap what they have learned so far and take part in a series of mini debates to form their own opinions about war reporting.

- Is being a war reporter a good job?
- Is hearing news about wars a good thing?
- Does war reporting have an affect on the war itself?

Lessons 5 & 6

Objective: to reflect on prior learning to create a Standpoint

In these lessons students will plan, create and share their Standpoints – their final say about war reporting. They will work through a set of tailored activities to refine their skills and opinions, before presenting their opinions in either video, audio or written format.

- What's my final opinion about war reporting? For example, is war reporting beneficial?
- What examples should I use to support my opinion?
- What skills do I need to share my opinion effectively?

LESSON 1

WAR REPORTING: IS IT BENEFICIAL?



Share your thoughts
@Econ_Foundation
#TopicalTalkHeadlines



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About this lesson

Objective: to understand what war reporting is and explore its different forms

Before the lesson you will need to:

- Print the *TEACHER Instructions*, or have them to hand
- Have the *PowerPoint* ready to show on screen (check that the video works in advance. If not, find it here: bit.ly/TT_WRL)
- Print the *Script* and read it through in advance
- Print and cut the *Cards*

This lesson develops

Sustainable Development Goal



Skills



Step 3

I listen to journalists' responses and can tell someone else what they talked about



Step 6

I can explain why it's important to find reliable news sources for journalists' reporting on war

Teacher instructions

Activity

In this lesson students will participate in a “live” show about war reporting. You will be the host and the students will be the audience. Show slide 3 of the *PowerPoint* on screen as the students enter the room.

Work through the *Script* – read the parts in speech bubbles aloud and lead the activities by following the instructions in blue.

Tips:

- Add drama by holding a pretend microphone as you “host” and hold it out for students to share their answers
- Give yourself a character as host, and remain in character throughout the lesson
- Encourage regular applause

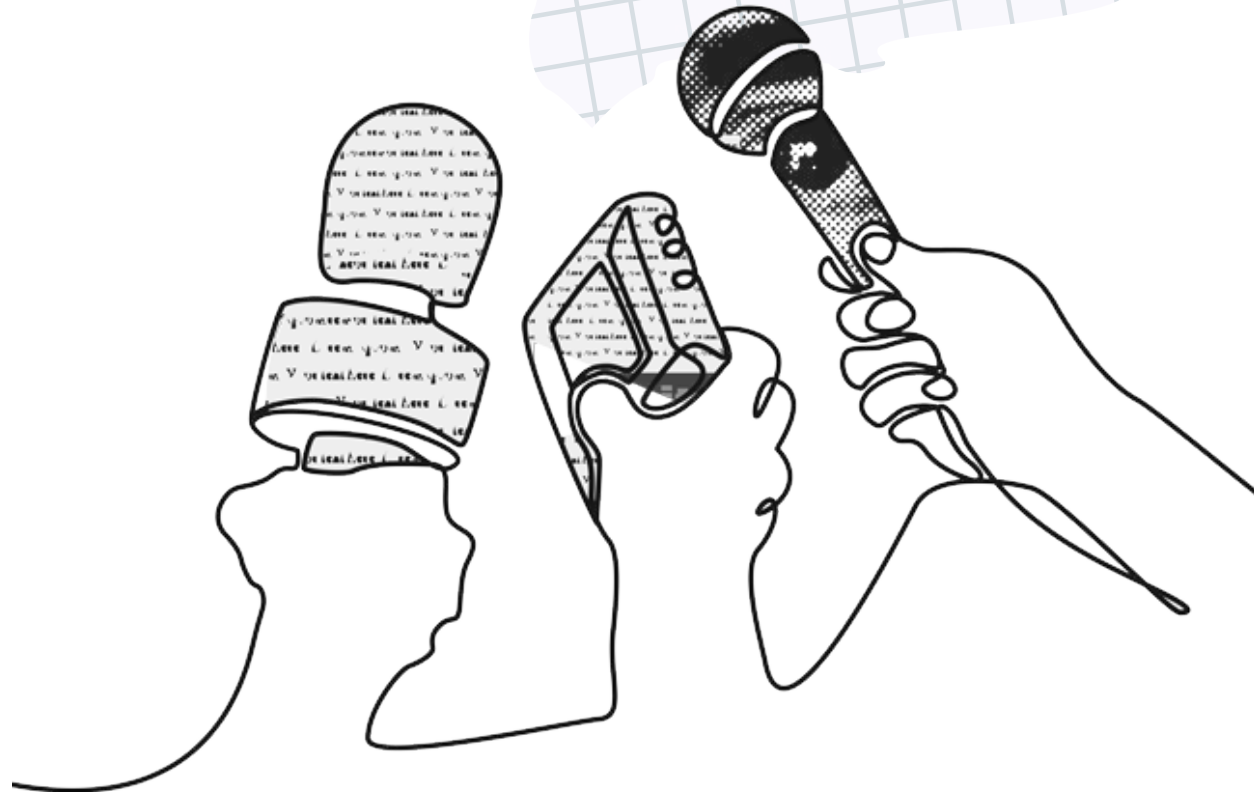
At the end of the show, give time for students to reflect on their learning.

Skills check

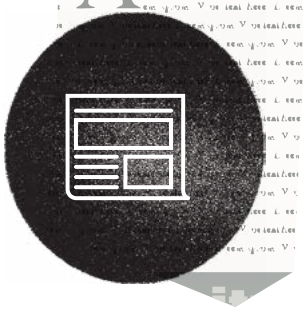
Show slide 6 and discuss the questions together.



Short on time? To make the most of this lesson, complete the blue activity first.



Cards



Question 1

What is war reporting?



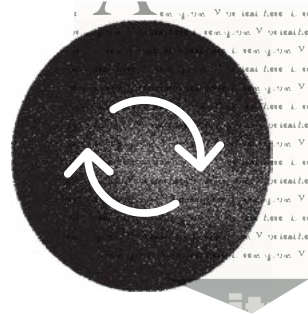
Question 2

What is the role of a journalist who reports on wars?



Question 3

What are the dangers and risks involved with war reporting?



Question 4

What changes have you seen in war reporting over the years?



Question 5

What motivates you to report on wars?



Question 6

How do you find good information sources? And why is it important to do this when reporting on wars?

Script



Part one:

Hello everyone, and welcome. I am your host and I'll be leading the discussion today on "war reporting." Coming up on the show, members of our audience will get the chance to interview some journalists about war reporting to find out what it is and how it's done. But first, I want to ask, "What is war reporting?"

Give time for students to discuss with the person next to them before taking answers. Hand out the sheets of paper whilst they are in discussion.

Thank you for that. We're going to find out from some expert journalists more about war reporting today so, let's get going!

Show slide 4 of the *PowerPoint* on screen and introduce the journalists on the panel today.

Remember to take notes on their answers for each question – just like a journalist would! We'll be using them later on. Let's give a big round of applause to welcome them!



Encourage applause from the students. Choose six students to each hold a *Card*. Play the *Video* on slide 5 of the *PowerPoint*. When a number appears on screen, the student with the corresponding *Card* should read it aloud. As they read their question, pause the *Video* – then press play again afterwards so that the journalists can "answer" the question. Repeat until all *Cards* have been read, then pause the *Video* when you see the "STOP" screen.

Part two:

Thanks everyone and onto the next part of the show!

Thanks everyone and onto the next part of the show!

Thanks everyone and onto the next part of the show... Wait, what's happening? I feel like I'm going backwards.

Ask students to imagine that time is rewinding – you could all pretend to "rewind" using actions and your voices.

Hello everyone and welcome! I am your host and I'll be leading the discussion today on "war reporting." Coming up on the show... Wait a minute... Why does this feel so familiar?

We've rewound back to the start of the show. But rather than repeating ourselves, let's do something different! This time, I'll ask the questions on the *Cards* and you can pretend to be the journalists and answer them, using what you've learnt so far. If you want to have a go at answering from the perspective of a journalist, put your hands on your head and I'll come to you with the microphone! You can use the notes you made earlier to help you.

Script



Read the *Cards* again and give time for students to answer in-role as journalists. After each answer, encourage applause.

Part three:

Great thanks everyone, I think we are now back on track. Next up, we're going to explore a bit more about how journalists do their jobs. There are many different ways for journalists to communicate news about wars. We asked them to explain the tools they rely on to do this. Now, I'm going to divide all of you into five groups.

Divide the audience into five groups (below) and hand them some sheets of paper:

1. Photos 2. Videos 3. Written descriptions 4. Audio 5. Numerical data

Your job in the audience is to take notes on the "journalism tool" that I assign to your group. Draw a line down the middle of your paper so you can write the "pros" on one side and "cons" on the other. We'll be using these notes to have an audience debate afterwards so make you sure you pay attention. Let's take a look at what they said.



Play the second part of the *Video*.

A big thank you to all of our guest speakers! Now it's time to get ready for our debate! You've got two minutes in your groups to discuss why the "tool" you were assigned is the best for reporting on war. Go!

While the audience prepares the debate points for their "tool" write up the following sentence starter on the board:
"Our tool is best for reporting on war because..."

Let's start the first part of the debate! Raise your hand if you'd like to start and I will come over to you in the studio with my microphone. Remember to respond to each other's points by raising your hand before you speak. You can use the sentence starter and your notes to help you.

Show slide 4 of the *PowerPoint* screen so the audience can refer back to the journalists. After ten minutes, write up the following sentence starter on the board:

"Our tool creates the most challenges when reporting on war because..."

Continue the debate, with groups arguing using the new sentence starter.

If there's time, ask the questions below to round up the debate. The audience can vote by standing up if they think their "tool" is the answer to the question.

Script

- Which tool is best for communicating the key information?
- Which tool is best for telling human stories?
- Which tool is best for announcing emergencies?
- Which tool is best for changing opinions?

Let's have a round of applause for everyone!

Part four:

Please return to your seats for the final part of the show: "What would be better?"

I will now ask you some questions and give you two options for each answer. Your job is to applaud in order to vote for the option you agree with more – the option with the louder applause wins. I will then choose some of you to share your reasons.

Ask the first question and its options below. Students should vote for their preferred option by applauding. Choose students with different opinions to share. Repeat the format for the remaining questions and options.

Question one: which would be better?

Option A: a world where we can only read facts for war reporting

or **Option B:** a world where we can only see photographs for war reporting

Question two: which would be better?

Option A: a world with no war reporting

or **Option B:** a world with too much war reporting?

Question three: is being a journalist who reports on wars an important job compared to other jobs?

Option A: yes it is

or **Option B:** no it isn't

Thanks everyone for playing and for sharing your opinions. That's all we've got time for on today's show. Let's end with one more big round of applause!



Video transcript



This is a transcript for the *Video* in lesson 1. Please print and distribute if your students require a written copy or you can't access the *Video*.

Part 1

Question 1:
What is war reporting?

Robert Guest: War reporting is when someone goes and tries to find out what's happening during a war and then tries to tell a large audience about that.

Question 2:
What is the role of a journalist who reports on wars?

Bel Trew: So for me, I think the most important role that I have is to humanise the conflict, to speak to people on the ground, to families, to the elderly, to children, and to express what they're going through to people back home. I think it's very important to remain unbiased, but be very brutally honest when there is a side that you have to take, because there can sometimes be right and wrong in war. It's part of my role, my job, my duty as a journalist, to meticulously document all the evidence that I come across and to put that in investigation form so it could potentially join a body of evidence.

Question 3:
What are the dangers and risks involved with war reporting?

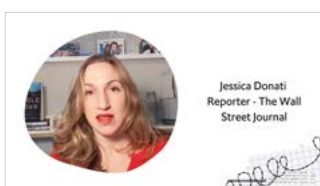
Finbarr O'Reilly: There are so many things to consider about our own safety, our lives, our family and friends who might worry about us being out on the job. A number of friends and colleagues have been injured or killed on the job in places like Afghanistan, in Syria, even in Ukraine now as well. It's challenging.

Bel Trew: So during my last ten years of covering wars, mostly in the Middle East, I've been shot at, and I've had a couple of close calls where things have landed very close to me, or I've been trapped in areas that are under heavy fire. And that's difficult because you've got to get there, you've got to take the risks. You cannot guarantee your safety necessarily, but you need to get the story. You need to get to those areas to talk to people and find out what's going on, and crucially, see things with your own eyes so you can verify them.

Question 4:
What changes have you seen in war reporting over the years?

Jessica Donati: One of the things from the perspective of a journalist working, is that news agencies have become a lot more conscious of security and they're taking greater steps to guarantee the security of journalists when they're out in the field.

Robert Guest: The Falklands War of 1982, for or example, those television pictures took ten days to get from the battlefield, but it was very delayed. We were not hearing about this in real time, whereas nowadays, when you have wars, it's much quicker.

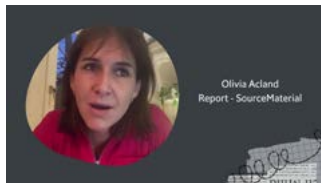


Video transcript



Question 5: What motivates you to report on wars?

Finbarr O'Reilly: So the motivation is really a personal one from my family history. Also growing up in Ireland early in my life where there was a war going on, the story of my grandfather, and then this desire to tell stories that really matter, that resonate, and that will hopefully contribute to bringing the wars that we cover to an end sooner than they might otherwise.

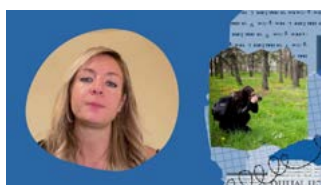


Question 6: How do you find good information sources? And why is it important to do this when reporting on wars?

Olivia Acland: War is dangerous, chaotic, murky, confusing. So it's really important to find reliable sources. Not only people on the ground, eyewitnesses, people involved, but also people perhaps with a bit of distance. So I think a combination of people on the ground who are observing what's happening and people a bit further away who are studying it slightly more academically and can talk to you about the different dynamics.

Part 2

Jen @ Topical Talk: Please can you tell us about how you use photos to report on wars?



Bel Trew: So one of the tools that I use as a journalist is photography. I am a photographer myself and I deliberately taught myself how to take photos because I think they're so important as an accompaniment to any text. So every article that I write, I will provide original photos for the piece and they will also be part of me engaging with my audience on Twitter or and Instagram.

I will share photos with the stories and information about the article that I've just written. There's a very common saying that a picture is worth a thousand words and I think that's very true, particularly when it comes to conflict. It is very hard to express to people sitting back home in their living rooms with a cup of tea just what it is like to be on the front line of a conflict like Ukraine. You can use really powerful language and you can try to describe it, but sometimes a photo will just explain exactly what you're looking at.

Video transcript



Finbarr O'Reilly: The downside of using photography is that wars are brutal because you can't just take a picture of a horrific scene and expect it to be in the newspaper the next day because it'll just make people look away. And you don't want people to look away from the situation. You want them to engage and to be curious and to understand what is happening. So the challenge is really to document people who are sometimes in the most extreme state of suffering or distress and to do that in a respectful way that isn't exploitative, so that you are not kind of stripping them of their humanity. You need to be respectful and not find ways to tell the story without the images being too shocking or graphic.

Jen @ Topical Talk: How does using video as a tool help you to report on wars?



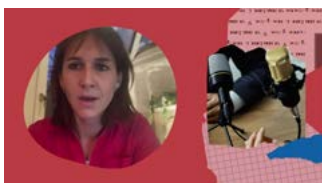
Bel Trew: Video in particular can tell so many stories instantly. And with video you have sound, and that's really important as well because although I can describe in words the shell landing and the boom and the crash, there's something about hearing that and knowing what it means and seeing the fear on people's faces that really brings it home. So I think sometimes we do have to put those images out that might be upsetting to see, but at the same time we need to do it sensitively. We need to do it with the understanding that we're doing this for a greater purpose that is actually going to do good.

Jen @ Topical Talk: How do you use written descriptions to report on wars?



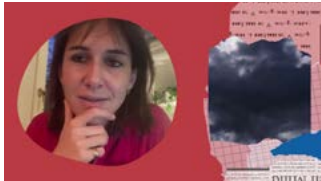
Jessica Donati: As a print journalist, I rely heavily on written descriptions to describe what I'm seeing. I make a note of what I can see, what a person is wearing, the tone of their voice. I make notes of questions that pop up in my mind as I'm talking to them. And obviously all of this is a little bit subjective and so you have to try and be as objective as you can and look as broadly as you can. But some degree of subjectivity is inevitable.

Jen @ Topical Talk: Please can you tell us how you might use audio as a tool to report on wars?



Olivia Acland: Audio is another great tool to report with. With *The Economist* I would often do a podcast as well as an article and it was a real pleasure, I suppose, to be able to let people's voices speak.

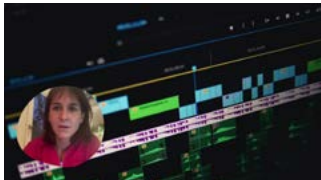
Video transcript



Dymtro from Ukraine speaking in an extract from a podcast from *The Economist*: "People also say you shouldn't turn off the lights if you're staying at home because that might help someone aim at you or something."

Olivia Acland: Then you'd also record some sort of atmosphere sounds to really try and create a visual picture of what's happening.

Dymtro from Ukraine speaking in an extract from a podcast from *The Economist*: "I saw a couple of explosions myself. It's hard to tell what it was. Probably our air defence, I suppose."

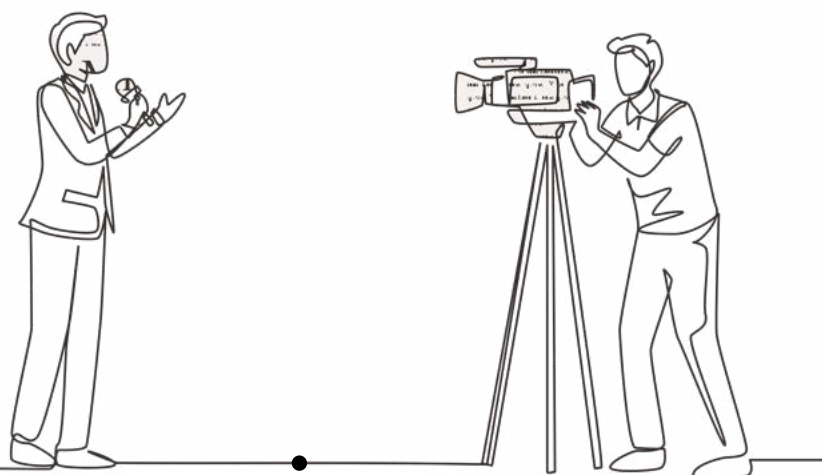


Olivia Acland: Something that's problematic about audio, which is problematic about all kinds of reporting, is that it could seem like you're getting a very honest and clear idea of what's happening just because you've got some people's voices. But then, of course, the journalist has chosen which bit of the interview to use. Which soundbites and which noises. And so you might not be getting as clear a picture as you think.

Jen @ Topical Talk: How might you use numerical data as a tool to report on wars?



Robert Guest: Numerical data, so numbers, graphs, charts, those kinds of things, can be helpful in understanding the scale of a war. A picture or a story might just tell you what's happening to one person or in one place. But the numbers will tell you something about how long the war has been happening for, how many people have been killed, how many people have been injured. It's essential, for really understanding a war, to have some numbers.



LESSON 2

WAR REPORTING: IS IT BENEFICIAL?



Share your thoughts
@Econ_Foundation
#TopicalTalkHeadlines



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students in advance. For tips on managing
sensitive conversations with students, look here:
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bit.ly/sensitiveconversations

About this lesson

Objective: to understand the challenges of war reporting and its impact

Before the lesson you will need to:

- Have the *PowerPoint* ready to show on screen (check that the *Audio* works in advance. If not, find it here: *Interview 1* - bit.ly/TT_IWR1, *Interview 2* - bit.ly/TT_IWR2, *Interview 3* - bit.ly/TT_IWR3, *Interview 4* - bit.ly/TT_IWR4
- Print the *Scenarios*, enough for one set between three (or have the *Audio scenarios* ready to play. Find them here: *Scenario 1* - bit.ly/TT_IWRS1, *Scenario 2* - bit.ly/TT_IWRS2, *Scenario 3* - bit.ly/TT_IWRS3

This lesson develops

Sustainable Development Goal



Skills



Step 8

I explore complex problems
by analysing the causes
and effects of the events in
scenarios



Step 6

I can explain some
different opinions my peers
have formed about war
reporting

Step 10

I can explain how the context
affected a news story about
war and people's opinions
about it in the scenarios

Teacher instructions

Activity one

Explain: in this activity you will listen to an interview with some journalists, who will describe some of the challenges they face when they report about wars.

Play *Interview 1* on slide 8 of the PowerPoint and read the questions. Share ideas together. Repeat for *Interview 2* on slide 9 and *Interview 3* on slide 10. Discuss the activity on slide 11 together.

Activity two

Split the class into groups of three. Discuss the KEYWORDS and questions on slides 12-13.

Give each group a set of *Scenarios* (or *Audio scenarios* if needed). Show the Venn diagram on slide 14.

In groups, students should:

1. Choose a *Scenario* and read (or listen to) part 1
2. Discuss the "pause to think" questions
3. Read (or listen to) part 2
4. Decide where the type of reporting mentioned in the *Scenario* should go in the Venn diagram. Repeat for all scenarios.

Once the *Scenarios* have been sorted, ask students to join up with another group to compare their final decisions. Students should share if someone made them change their mind.

Show the questions on slide 15. For each question, groups should decide on which of the *Scenarios* is the best answer and hold it in the air. Choose groups with different opinions to share.



Short on time? To make the most of this lesson, complete the blue activity first.

Activity three

Play *Interview 4* on slide 16 and discuss the questions together.

Skills check

Show slide 17 and discuss the questions together.

Sergey Ginak / Shutterstock



Scenario 1

Speculation

Part 1:

There are growing tensions between country A and country B due to a struggle for power. A ship from country A sails into the territory of country B. Whilst it's there, an explosion occurs on the ship. Journalists from country A assume this was an attempt to sink the ship by country B. Several reports are released with claims against country B. A few months later a war between the countries breaks out. It is later found that the explosion was unrelated to country B.

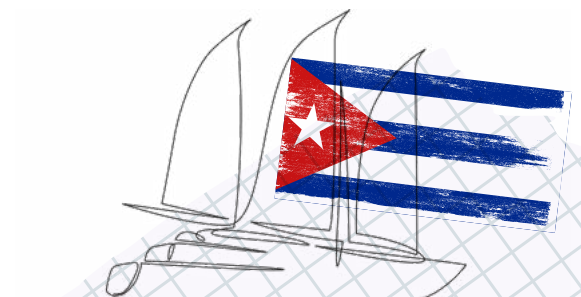


Pause to think:

- How might this reporting cause people to feel, think or behave?
- What positive effects (if any) might this type of reporting have?
- What negative effects (if any) might this type of reporting have?

Part 2:

This is a bit like the reporting that historically led to the “Spanish-American” war in 1898. Cuba belonged to Spain and there were tensions between the US and Spain over who controlled Cuba. A US battleship was sent to a port in Cuba as a “power move”, however, whilst there, an explosion took place on board and sank the ship. Newspapers in the US – along with other reports on the tensions – published rumours that the Spanish sank the ship, even though there was no evidence. A few months later, the Spanish-American war began.



Scenario 2

People's stories

Part 1:

A journalist travels to a country that has been invaded by another country. The two countries are now at war. Many areas risk being attacked and some have already been bombed and destroyed. In response, the journalist interviews some local people so that they can share what it is like to live through the war. Although the journalist's report won't provide many facts about the war itself, it will give readers an idea of what it is like to live in the invaded country.

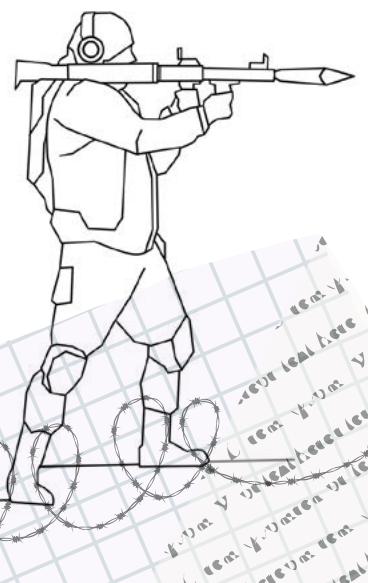


Pause to think:

- How might this reporting cause people to feel, think or behave?
- What positive effects (if any) might this type of war reporting have?
- What negative effects (if any) might this type of war reporting have?
- How might this type of reporting make a difference to the war?

Part 2:

Journalists often choose to tell real-life stories of the people most affected by wars. In 2022 many stories of Ukrainian refugees appeared in the news after Russia invaded Ukraine.



Scenario 3

Propaganda

Part 1:

Country A and Country B are at war. Journalists from both countries are creating reports to try to influence how people in their countries think and behave. For example, the journalist in Country A only shares news about Country A's strongest soldiers and about how the war is going well for them but badly for Country B. Sometimes the journalists' reports are true, but sometimes they are untrue or misleading.

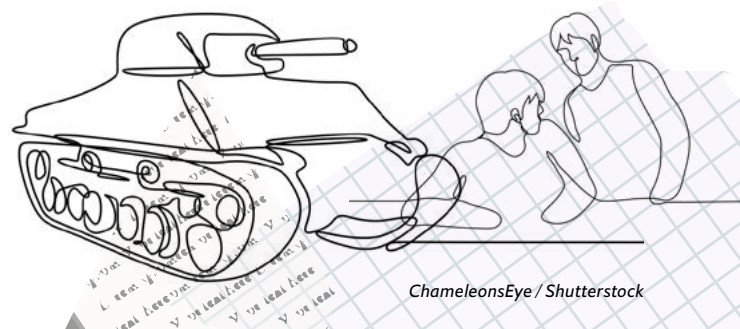


Pause to think:

- How might this reporting cause people to feel, think or behave?
- What positive effects (if any) might this type of reporting have?
- What negative effects (if any) might this type of reporting have?
- How might this type of reporting make a difference to the war?

Part 2:

This is a bit like Russia and Ukraine using propaganda to affect people's opinions about the war. For example, Ukrainian reports have spoken about Ukrainian acts of bravery that didn't happen. At the same time, Russian news sources have said they are not responsible for the war in Ukraine. In Russia, the government controls the media, which means Russian people cannot easily access any other information besides this type of propaganda.



Interview 1, 2 & 3

Transcripts

These are transcripts for the *Interviews 1, 2 and 3* in lesson 2 . Please print and distribute if your students require a written copy or you can't access the *Audio*.



Bel Trew,
The Independent

Interview 1

Jen @ Topical Talk: In this Topical Talk discussion we are hearing from Bel Trew, an international correspondent for *The Independent* newspaper. Bel, thanks for being with us. Can you tell us, how might journalists be put at risk when reporting on war?

Bel Trew @ The Independent: Sadly, we've lost many journalists. My own friends. I lost a friend in this war. He's a camera operator for one big TV news organisations. He was killed in shelling. We've lost journalists previously in other wars. For example, Marie Colvin was killed in Syria. Tim Hetherington was killed in Libya. There is no way to completely guarantee your safety, and this job does come with serious risks, and you have to understand that there isn't a guarantee that you'll come out of it alive. And that's distressing for family and friends back at home.

Interview 2

Jen @ Topical Talk: In this Topical Talk discussion we are joined again by Bel Trew, an international correspondent for *The Independent* newspaper. Bel, what are the challenges that come with 'freedom of the press' laws?

Bel Trew @ The Independent: Obviously, as a journalist, there are many issues with freedom of speech or press freedoms, particularly in some countries where there's a big crackdown on journalists. Here in the war, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, we've seen this play out quite seriously in Russia. The state has made it very clear that you cannot criticise the invasion of Ukraine. And so there has been censorship on state media and also some organisations fearing that they might get into trouble and so practising self-censorship. And that's why the media is so powerful, because the people in power, they know that journalism is an incredible tool that can communicate the truth to people. So if you can control the media, then you can control what people know and think. And that's what makes journalists so dangerous to them.

Interview 3

Jen @ Topical Talk: In this Topical Talk discussion we are hearing from Jessica Donati, a reporter for *The Wall Street Journal*. Jessica, thanks for being with us. How do you find reliable information sources and what are the risks involved in this?

Jessica Donati @ The Wall Street Journal: When covering any war, it's really important to try to speak to all the sides involved, even though the sides generally have an agenda and are likely to cover up when things go wrong or when things are going badly. Another of the challenges that you have is actually getting to the places where the war is going on. It can be very dangerous. And so as best as we would try, for example, in Afghanistan, when you did access areas that were very dangerous, you couldn't be there for very long, and that would also limit your reporting. So all of it is quite a balancing act of doing the best you can with the resources that you have and trying to make it balanced. We would often, for example, ask the Taliban to give us access to areas that were under their control, and they would say, "We can't guarantee your safety and so don't go there". And that really limited our chance during the years that I was there to report on the other side.



Jessica Donati,
*The Wall
Street Journal*

Interview 4

Transcripts

This is a transcript for *Interview 4* in lesson 2. Please print and distribute if your students require a written copy or you can't access the *Audio*.



Jon Fasman,
The Economist



Alexandra
Suich Bass,
The Economist

Interview 4

Jen @ Topical Talk: Hi everyone and welcome to this Topical Talk discussion about responsible reporting. Today I'm going to be speaking with Jon and Alexandra, who are journalists with *The Economist* newspaper. Our main questions are: what is responsible reporting? Why is it important?

Jon @ The Economist: The question "what does responsible reporting mean?" is really broad. So I'll just highlight a few things that I think are essential. The first and most obvious is you have to tell the truth. You just have to. You also have to check your information. You should be really suspicious when someone tells you something that sounds good to you. When someone tells you something that lines up with what you believe, that's when it's all the more important that you make sure it's accurate – and that you're not just drawn to it because it conforms to what you want it to.

Jen @ Topical Talk: what advice would you give to people who are reading news about wars?

Alexandra @ The Economist: There's a lot of information that one can find online, but not all of it is accurate. So whenever I look at a news story, I am sure to try and note the outlet and make sure that it's an outlet that provides professional news and reliable information. When I'm looking at citizen reports on social media, I try to do my best to understand whether or not they're truthful and accurate, or whether they might be misleading. There can be fake videos. Edited clips. We saw that with the Ukrainian president's recent speech to Congress where Russia edited it and made him say something that he wasn't saying at all. So it's always really important to try and verify facts. And then of course, while it's important to read the news, sometimes we can get overwhelmed by what we see. And so it's always important to feel that one can take a break from it and talk to someone if there's something extremely upsetting or concerning – as often today's news can be.

LESSON 3

WAR REPORTING: IS IT BENEFICIAL?



Share your thoughts
@Econ_Foundation
#TopicalTalkHeadlines



This lesson contains content about wars.
Please read and check its suitability for your
students in advance. For tips on managing
sensitive conversations with students, look here:
The Economist Educational Foundation
bit.ly/sensitiveconversations

About this lesson

Objective: to understand how the experience of the news consumer has changed

Before the lesson you will need to:

- Have the *PowerPoint* ready to show on screen (check that the audio works in advance. If not, find it here: *Interview 5* - bit.ly/TT_INWR5, *Interview 6* - bit.ly/TT_INRW6)
- Print, and cut up the *Phrases*

This lesson develops

Sustainable Development Goals



Skills



Step 1

I can imagine the difference
between consuming news in
the present and consuming
it in the past and can say
what I imagine



Step 7

I can explain how bias
affects the news I see and
hear in news stories
about wars

Teacher instructions

Activity one

Give students one minute in pairs to create a list of as many news sources as possible by “rallying” their ideas back and forth to each other, as if they are in a tennis match. When the time is up, ask students to take it in turns to “rally” one idea to you – create a class list on the board. Examples could be Twitter, radio, word of mouth etc.

Activity two

In pairs students should label themselves as A and B.

Explain: the As will now “go back in time” to 1965. The Bs will stay in the present.

Show the “hints” on slide 19 of the PowerPoint and ask the following questions:

- What is life like in your time period? For example, what is your home like?
- What might you do in your spare time?
- What technology do you have?
- What are the biggest differences between your time periods?
- Which time period would you prefer to live in? Why?

Show slide 20 to reveal some of the news sources from the different time periods.

Ask: How might the news we receive be different now to 1965? Share ideas together.

Listen to *Interview 5* on slide 21 and discuss the question together.

Activity three

Listen to *Interview 6* on slide 22. then split the class into two lines facing each other to create a “news alley” in the middle.

Explain: In this activity you will experience the news in different ways by walking down our news alley.

Work through the following three rounds. Display slide 23 the whole time.

Round one: hand out the “round one” *Phrases* along the alley. Select one student to be the “news consumer.” They should start at one end of the alley and walk down the middle slowly. Students in both lines should say their *Phrase* once when the consumer passes them. Discuss the information and questions on slide 23 together. **Note:** there might not be enough *Phrases* for everyone in each round but this is OK. Space them out along the alley.

Round two: choose a new person to be the news consumer. Hand out the “round two” *Phrases*. This time as the news consumer walks down the alley, students should repeat their *Phrases* continuously. Reflect on the questions on slide 23 together.

Round three: choose a new person to be the news consumer. Hand out the “round three” *Phrases*. This time as the news consumer walks down the alley, students should say their *Phrases* only once. Reflect on the questions on slide 23 one final time.

Show slide 24 and discuss the questions together.

Skills check

Show slide 25 and discuss the questions together.



Short on time? To make the most of this lesson, complete the blue activity first.

Cincila / Shutterstock



Round one: algorithms

Phrases

Thongyod / Shutterstock



Taylor Swift is the
best singer ever!



Taylor Swift is one
of the top artists of
our time.



Music queen,
Taylor Swift,
is the world's
favourite artist.



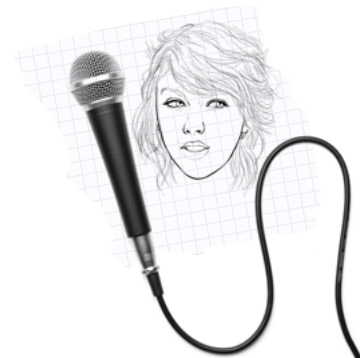
Taylor Swift is
the most popular
chart-topper.



There is nothing
Taylor Swift
CAN'T do!



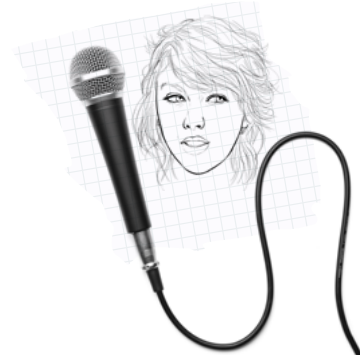
She really is the
best! Our girl:
Taylor Swift!



Taylor Swift will
be remembered
as the greatest
musician ever.



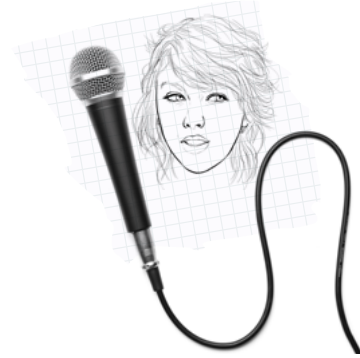
It's all about
Taylor and
her talent.



The greatest
female artist has
to be Taylor Swift.



Taylor Swift is
a fan favourite
yet again!



Round two: infodemic

Phrases



	Humpty Dumpty has had a catastrophic fall.			Sign this petition: Humpty was pushed and he wasn't protected.	
	The rise and fall of Humpty Dumpty: What really happened?			The Humpty Dumpty documentary is out this week.	
	Did Humpty fall or was he pushed?			Humpty speaks out about injustice towards him.	
	Humpty Dumpty starts to crack under pressure.			Humpty Dumpty signs book deal after media attention.	
	Humpty Dumpty to run for president.			Why didn't Dumpty defend himself?	
	Humpty's fall calls for investigation.			Is Humpty Dumpty getting weaker?	
	Why Humpty Dumpty's fall was more than what it seemed.			10 facts you didn't know about Humpty Dumpty.	
	Humpty Dumpty dropped from a great height.			10 ways to protect yourself from falls.	
	Where were the King's men when Humpty fell?			What can we learn from the Humpty Dumpty trial?	
	Humpty took a tumble. Oh well!			Why Humpty Dumpty's trial will never be forgotten.	
	Why everyone's talking about Humpty Dumpty.			We care about Humpty Dumpty and you should too!	
	What will become of Humpty Dumpty?			If it wasn't for Humpty, we'd all fall down!	
	A closer look at the Humpty Dumpty mystery.			The Humpty Dumpty interview: Who pushed who?	
	Humpty's fall from grace won't be forgotten.			If it wasn't Humpty's fault, then whose fault was it?	
	Join the protest to fight for Humpty Dumpty.			I don't think Humpty Dumpty is that stupid.	

Round three: misinformation

Phrases



Rainbow elephants
are to be released
into the wild!



Banks will soon be
run by toddlers!



A dog was seen
flying with
actual wings!



Chimpanzee to
become the first
animal lawyer!



Babies said to be
physically stronger
than adults!



Goldfish can see
into the future!



An ant has been
hired to work for
top tech firm!



Flamingos have
created their own
parliament!



Pigs to take
teacher training!



Cats seen building
their own homes!



Interview 5 & 6

Transcripts

This is a transcript for the *Interviews* in lesson 4. Please print and distribute if your students require a written copy or you can access the *Audio*.



Robert Guest,
The Economist

Interview 5

Jen @ Topical Talk: In this Topical Talk discussion we are joined by Robert Guest, the Deputy editor for *The Economist* newspaper. Robert thanks for being with us. Can you tell us how news reporting about wars has changed over the last 50 years?

Robert @ The Economist: I think the main change in the past 50 years is that there are just many more people able to do it, who are not necessarily professionals, who are being paid to do it. They're not necessarily journalists. They can be just ordinary people who can take photographs, who can film things. But some things have not changed. If you're a journalist thinking about these things, wars are still very unpredictable, they're very chaotic. You don't know what's going to happen next. And it can be very dangerous.

Interview 6

Jen @ Topical Talk: In this Topical Talk discussion about algorithms and misinformation, we are hearing from Robert Guest, Deputy editor from *The Economist* Newspaper. Robert thanks for joining us again. Can you tell us how algorithms impact the news we see?

Robert @ The Economist: Algorithms do affect the news that you see because they will quite often look at what you've liked in the past and feed you more of it. Which means if you start looking at a good reputable source like the BBC or the *Financial Times*, it will give you more things like that, which means probably some fairly accurate, reliable news. But if you start looking at unreliable news (and there's an awful lot of unreliable news out there because there are many governments that like to tell you things that are not true). It'll give you more of it and it'll seem to come from lots of different sources. There's a lot of fake news out there, you have to try to find out: what are the sources and who's telling you this stuff? And that requires a bit of research.

Jen @ Topical Talk: Is misinformation a problem?

Robert @ The Economist: Misinformation has always existed. It's a weapon of war. I mean, you think back even to mythical times, the Trojan Horse was a piece of misinformation and that didn't really happen, probably, but the war itself did happen. There was a war between Troy and Greece and the idea that the attackers of the city pretended to go, and left behind a wooden horse as a kind of offering to the Gods. And then the Trojans foolishly thought that they'd gone and decided that they were going to capture the wooden horse and take it into their cities. And then the soldiers burst out of the wooden horse. I mean, that's a story that's thousands of years old and it's not necessarily true, but it does capture something about war, which is that the armies will often try to beat each other, not just by strength and better weapons, but also by deception, by fooling the other side. So deception has a long history in war. I think what's changed is just the volume of lies that you can hear. If you go on to Twitter and start following some of the disinformation accounts, there is an enormous amount of untrue stories. And so as someone who looks at the news, if you really want to understand what's happening in the world, you have to be very cautious about what you're fed.

LESSON 4

WAR REPORTING: IS IT BENEFICIAL?



Share your thoughts
@Econ_Foundation
#TopicalTalkHeadlines



This lesson contains content about wars. Please read and check its suitability for your students in advance. For tips on managing sensitive conversations with students, look here: [The Economist Educational Foundation bit.ly/sensitiveconversations](https://bit.ly/sensitiveconversations)

About this lesson

Objective: to form an opinion on whether war reporting is beneficial

Before the lesson you will need to:

- Have the *PowerPoint* ready to show on screen
- Print, copy and cut *Cards*, enough for one *Card* each
- Print and copy the *Mind maps* (large paper recommended)

This lesson develops

Sustainable Development Goal



Skills



Step 7

I speak engagingly by using facts and examples to support my points about war reporting

Step 13

I speak influentially by changing the structure of my points to best persuade the listeners in a debate



Step 6

I can explain why it's important to find reliable news sources about wars

Step 10

I can explain how the context affects a news story about war and people's opinions about it in the debate

Teacher instructions

Activity one

Show slide 27 of the *PowerPoint* on screen. In pairs, students should label themselves A and B and argue that the option for their letter is better. Afterwards they should decide who out of the two of them made the strongest argument. Ask one winning "A" and one winning "B" to share their strongest arguments. Repeat for slides 28-29.

Show slide 30 and discuss the question together.

Activity two

Hand out a *Card* to every student. Students should take five big steps around the room and turn to face the nearest person to form a pair. They should discuss the questions on each other's *Cards* – encourage students to reflect on their learning from previous lessons. Then they should swap *Cards* and take five more steps to find a new partner. Repeat the activity until students have had a chance to discuss most questions. If students need support, replay some of the *Interviews* or *Videos* from lessons 1-3 (in the *PowerPoint*).

Give time for students to share a piece of information they heard from someone else that jogged their memory or made them think differently.

Activity three

Ask students to reform their pairs from ACTIVITY ONE and remind themselves of who was A and who was B.

Ask pairs to join together to form four groups – one in each corner of the room. Give each group a *Mind map* – one person should read the question in the middle aloud. The As within the group should plan arguments for the "yes" side of the debate; the Bs should plan arguments for the "no" side of the debate. Give groups time to hold a mini debate. Afterwards, they should write their best arguments on the correct side of the *Mind Map* and feedback to the class.

Challenge: students should read the ideas that other groups have added to their *Mind maps*, then try to think of arguments that have not already been used.

Show slide 31 and read the questions aloud. Share ideas together.

Show slide 32 and give students time to discuss their opinions – students should reflect on their previous discussions. Have a vote on the answer. Choose students with different opinions to share.

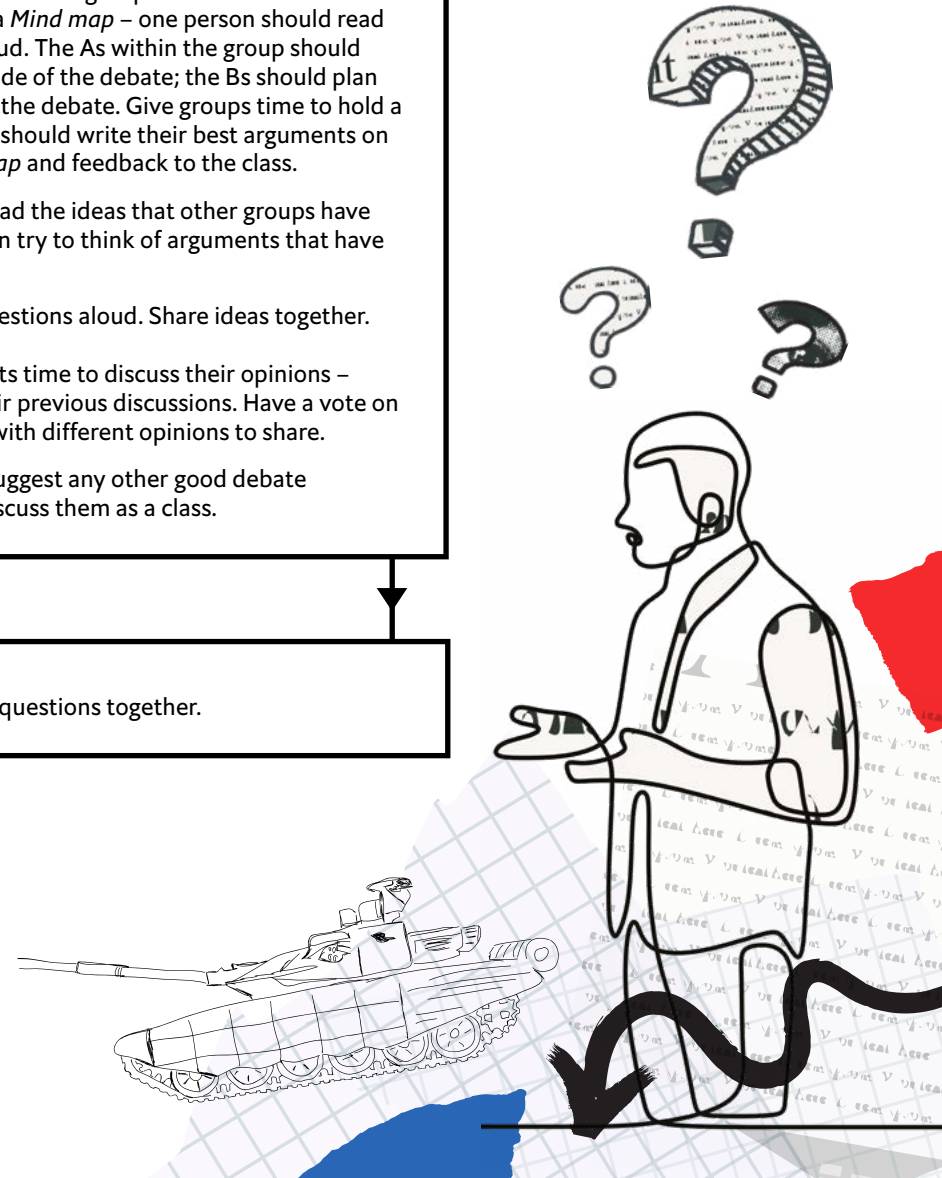
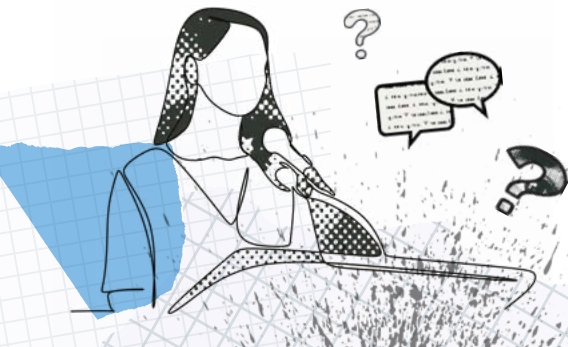
Extra time? Ask students to suggest any other good debate questions for this topic and discuss them as a class.

Skills check

Show slide 33 and discuss the questions together.



Short on time? To make the most of this lesson, complete the blue activity first.



Cards

What is responsible reporting?

What should we do if we are upset by the news?

Why do some journalists choose to report on wars?

How has reporting about wars changed in the last 60 years?


Why can reporting on wars sometimes be a difficult or dangerous job for journalists?

Why is freedom of the press important?

Where can we find news about wars?

What are the pros and cons of reading written descriptions to find out about wars?

Cards



What are the pros and cons of looking at photos to find out about wars?




How do we find reliable news sources?




What are the pros and cons of watching video footage to find out about wars?



What is misinformation and how does it affect war reporting?




What are the benefits of looking at numbers and data to find out about wars?



What effect do personal stories about wars have on the consumer?

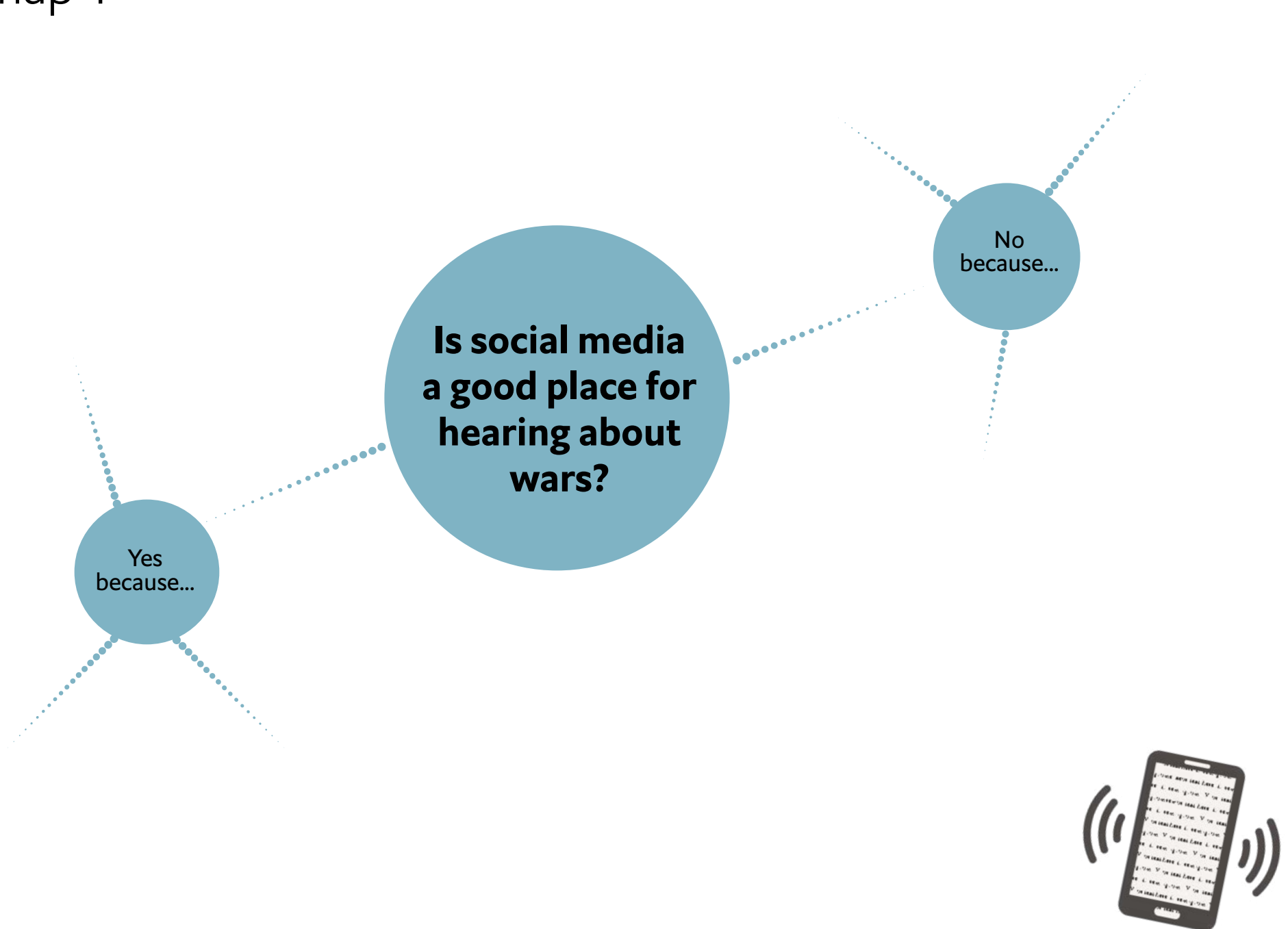


How do journalists find reliable sources?

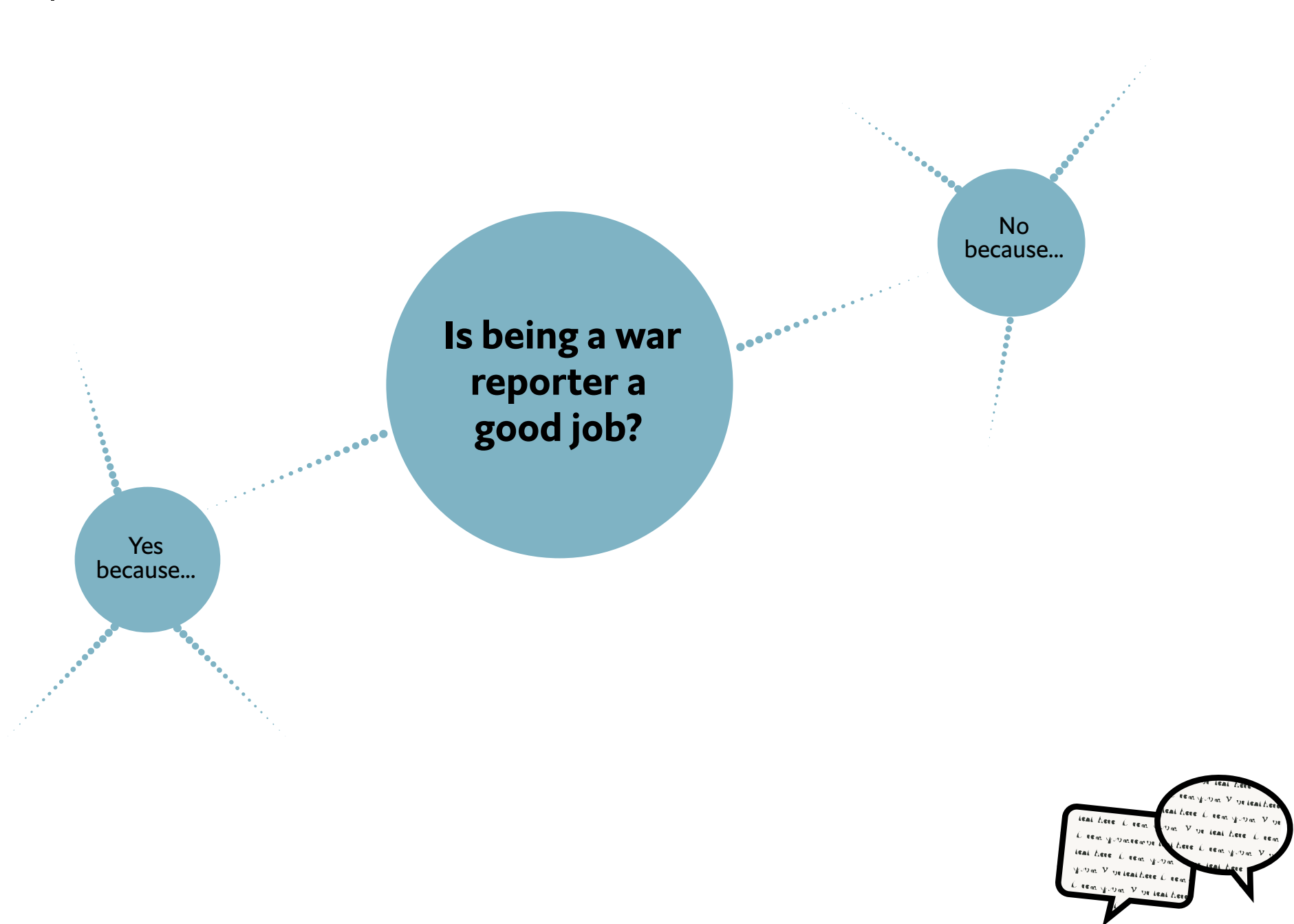


What is the main role of a journalist who reports on wars?

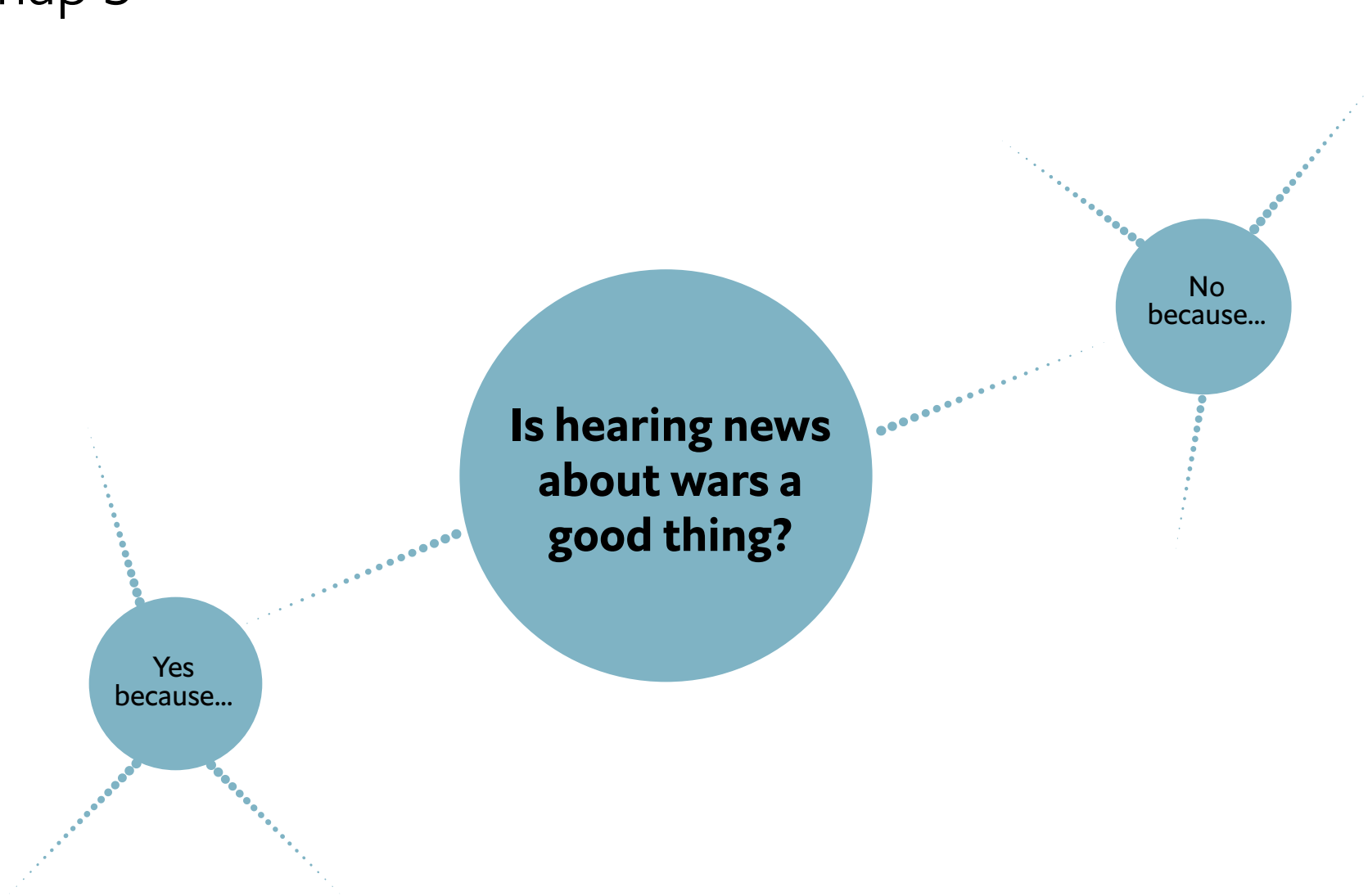
Mind map 1



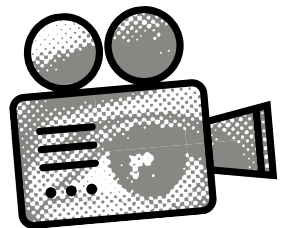
Mind map 2



Mind map 3



Mind map 4



LESSONS 5 & 6

WAR REPORTING: IS IT BENEFICIAL?



Share your thoughts
@Econ_Foundation
#TopicalTalkHeadlines



These lessons contain content about wars. Please read and check its suitability for your students in advance. For tips on managing sensitive conversations with students, look here: [The Economist Educational Foundation bit.ly/sensitiveconversations](https://bit.ly/sensitiveconversations)

About these lessons

Objective: to reflect on prior learning to create a Standpoint

Before the lessons you will need to:

- Have the *PowerPoint* ready to show on screen
- Print the *Planning sheets*, enough for one each (large paper recommended)
- Print the *Standpoint sheets* according to the formats chosen
- Have the *Activity list* to hand

Skills



Step 7

I speak engagingly by using facts and examples to support my points in my Standpoint



Step 10

I listen critically and think about where differences in perspectives about war reporting come from



Step 5

I explore problems by thinking about the pros and cons of possible solutions in my Standpoint



Step 8

I develop my opinions about war reporting by using mind mapping



Step 8

I can explain what is meant by historical, economic and cultural context in my Standpoint



Step 10

I can explain how the context affects news stories about war and people's opinions about them



Spread these activities over two lessons. You will need at least two hours.

Teacher instructions

Activity one

Ask students to list the five “main ingredients” journalists need to report on wars. For example, bravery. Write all ideas on the board and then have the class vote for the top three.

Activity two

Show slide 35 of the *PowerPoint* on screen and go through what a Standpoint is.

On the board, **write:** “Is war reporting beneficial?” Hand out a *Planning sheet* to each student. Students should write the question into the central box.

Students should work through the *Planning sheet* to form their ideas for their Standpoint. Show slide 36 for prompts to help during this activity.

Activity three

Ask students to decide the format they want to use for their Standpoints: video, audio or written. Alternatively, you could assign them a format if you’d prefer for all students to work on the same format.

Then pick a couple of the most relevant activities from the *Activity List* to do with your students.


Activity four

Give each student the corresponding *Standpoint sheet* for their format. Give time for students to plan and create their Standpoints.

Activity five

Give time for students to present their Standpoints to each other and give feedback using the success criteria on the *Standpoint sheet*. Praise students both on their Standpoints and on the constructive feedback they give.

Don’t forget to let the Topical Talk team know about the great discussions that happen in your classroom!

 @Econ_Foundation #TopicalTalk

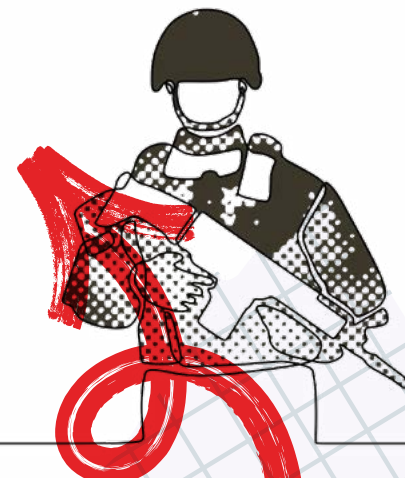
Skills reflection

Ask students to move around the room until you shout “stick” – they should turn to the person nearest to them and take turns to ask each other the first question on slide 37. Shout “twist” to allow students to move around the room again. Repeat until students have discussed all questions.



Short on time? To make the most of this lesson, complete the blue activity first.

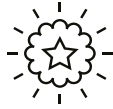
ChameleonsEye / Shutterstock



Activity list



Activity



Helps with these skills



Helps with this Standpoint format

Students should make a pair. Shout out an emotion, for example, happy, anxious or frustrated. Students should take it in turns to convey that emotion using only the sound "mmhmm", their facial expressions and their body language.

Speaking
STEP 9: I speak engagingly by using tone, expression and gesture to engage listeners

Audio, Video

Shout out a word relevant to the topic. Students have to come up with 10 connotations (10 things that the topic word makes them think of) on a sheet of paper.

Listening
STEP 8: I show I am listening by summarising or rephrasing what I have heard

Writing, Audio, Video

Invite one student to read one sentence from their Standpoint. **Ask** the rest of the class to draw something to go with it, then share ideas together. Repeat. Give time for students to look through their plans and decide if they want to include any visual aids, for example, pictures, graphs or maps, to help explain their points.

Listening
STEP 5: I listen to others and record important information as I do

Video

Ask students to think of their favourite story from a book or film. Challenge them to summarise it in three sentences, one sentence and, finally, five words. **Ask** them to do the same for their chosen Standpoint topic or news story.

Listening
STEP 8: I show I am listening by summarising or rephrasing what I have heard

Writing, Audio

On the board, **write**: "And then, it was gone!". **Ask** students to read it aloud with different emotions. The rest of the class should try to guess the emotion. Give time for students to try this with sentences from their Standpoint before choosing which is most appropriate.

Speaking
STEP 9: I speak engagingly by using tone, expression and gesture to engage listeners

Audio, Video

Read a few sentences from a student's Standpoint badly – for example, sitting in a strange way, mumbling and with a blank facial expression. Students should take it in turns to give you directions about how to improve until they all agree you are doing it right. Give students a chance to read their own Standpoints and be directed.

Listening
STEP 1: I listen to others and can remember short instructions

Speaking
STEP 9: I speak engagingly by using tone, expression and gesture to engage listeners

Audio, Video



Activity list

In pairs, students should take it in turns to read a few sentences of their Standpoint script. While one person reads, the other should make facial expressions and gestures as though they are the person speaking. The person reading should make a note of anything they thought was effective so they can recreate it in their recording.

Problem-solving
STEP 3: I complete tasks by finding information I need myself

Video

Speaking
STEP 9: I speak engagingly by using tone, expression and gesture to engage listeners

Students should pair up with someone who is writing about the same topic. Each student should secretly write down three keywords for their topic. Students in a pair should take it in turns to describe a word without saying it. If their partner guesses correctly, they win a point for their pair. The pair with the most points after 60 seconds, wins! **Challenge:** give students other related words that they are not allowed to use in their descriptions.

Listening
STEP 8: I show I am listening by summarising or rephrasing what I have heard

Writing

On the board, write: "The mouse was feeling good." **Ask** students to take it in turns reading the sentence aloud – each time they should put emphasis on a different word. For example, first "The mouse was *feeling* good", then "The mouse was feeling *good*" and so on. Each time, discuss how the emphasis changes the meaning of the sentence. Give time for students to highlight the words they should emphasise in their Standpoint scripts.

Speaking
STEP 9: I speak engagingly by using tone, expression and gesture to engage listeners

Audio, Video

Speaking
STEP 11: I speak adaptively by planning for different possible responses of listeners

On the board, **write:** the numbers one to ten. Explain that ten is the loudest voice possible and one is a very quiet whisper. Point to each number, working your way up from one to ten – for each one students should say their name at the corresponding volume. Then increase the challenge by pointing to random numbers. Together discuss which volume would be best for presenting Standpoints.

Speaking
STEP 6: I speak effectively by using appropriate tone, expression and gesture

Audio, Video

Have a ball to hand. On the board, **write:** "and...", "because...", "but...", "however...", "so...", "although..." and "therefore...". Say a statement aloud, for example: "I like chocolate cake". Pass the ball to a student – they must use one of the words on the board and say something that connects to your statement, for example: "but only with ice-cream". They should then say a new statement and pass the ball to someone who wants to complete it. Repeat.

Speaking
STEP 5: I speak effectively by using appropriate language

Writing

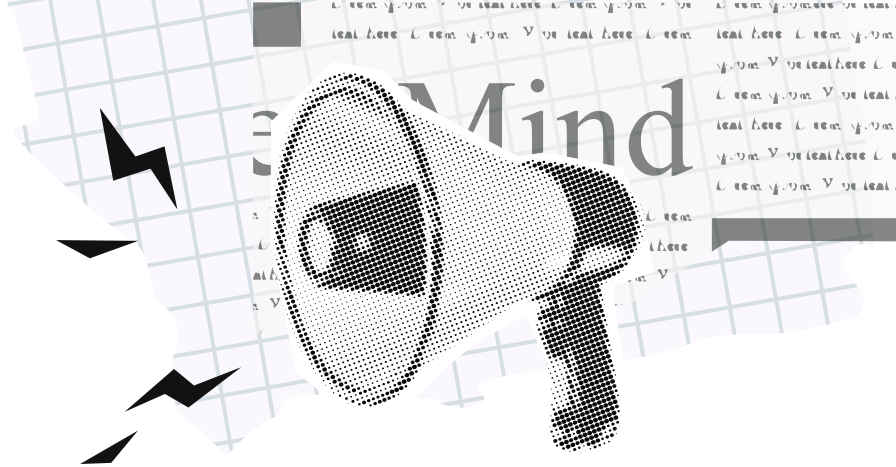
Listening
STEP 4: I listen to others and can tell why they are communicating with me



Planning sheet

What do you want to say?

Use this sheet to guide your planning – start with the middle bubble then add notes to the others as you do more research. If you run out of space, use the back of this sheet.



!

Key information

What would you like people to learn from your Standpoint? Write the key pieces of information below:

Vocabulary bank

What important words should you make an effort to include? What do they mean?

Standpoint focus area

What topic or news story will your Standpoint focus on? Why is it important for you to talk about this?

Other perspectives

Who else is it important to hear from? For example, people who are directly affected by your chosen topic or people who have spoken out in the news. What are their opinions? Try to include someone who agrees with what you think and someone who disagrees with what you think.

Perspective one:

Perspective two:

Your opinion

What do you think about this? What facts or examples support your opinion?

What next?

What should happen next for your news story? For example, should certain people do something? Or is there a problem that must be solved?

Henry Tricks writes every week for *The Economist*.



Henry’s top tips for good pieces of written journalism are:

- Make sure your writing has a clear beginning, middle and end
- Have a balance of long and short sentences
- Explain technical words as you go
- Make sure every sentence says something new
- Say things as simply as possible

Standpoint success criteria

Be clear!

- ☐ Summarise the topic you’ve chosen
- ☐ Use appropriate language
- ☐ Make your points in a logical order
- ☐ Explain your points in under 400 words

Share your opinion!

- ☐ Evaluate more than one perspective
- ☐ Use facts and examples to support your opinion
- ☐ If you mention a problem, suggest possible solutions and evaluate their pros and cons

Check your work!

- ☐ Read your work through to check it makes sense
- ☐ Check your facts are reliable
- ☐ Make it clear what’s fact and what’s your opinion

Standpoint sheet: writing

How do you want to say it?

Use this sheet to start writing your Standpoint – read the top tips first and stay on track by using the success criteria. If you run out of space use the back of this sheet.



Step one

Introduce your topic or news story
Here’s where you introduce the topic and say why it’s important to you. Keep this bit to around 100 words.

Step two

Share a range of perspectives
Here’s where you say who is affected by this topic and how. Share some opinions from perspectives that are different from yours. Keep this bit to around 150 words.

Step three

Share your opinion
Here’s where you share what you think, using facts and examples to support your points. Keep this bit to around 150 words.

Step four

Finish your piece
Put the parts of your Standpoint together – you might need to add questions or linking sentences to help the information flow.

Check your piece against the success criteria. Tick off the things you have done and edit the things you haven’t. Use Henry’s tips to help you make any final edits. For example, could you improve your sentence structures or use better vocabulary?

Harriet Shawcross
produces and directs films
for *The Economist*.



Harriet's top tips for good pieces of written journalism are:

- Speak slowly and clearly
- Change the tone of your voice depending on what you are saying
- Make sure your facial expressions match the mood of your Standpoint
- Use your body language to help communicate points
- Hold up visual aids such as pictures or charts (if they are relevant)

Standpoint success criteria

Be clear!

- ☐ Summarise the topic you've chosen
- ☐ Use appropriate language
- ☐ Make your points in a logical order
- ☐ Explain your points in under two minutes

Share your opinion

- ☐ Evaluate more than one perspective
- ☐ Use facts and examples to support your opinion
- ☐ If you mention a problem, suggest possible solutions and evaluate their pros and cons

Check your work

- ☐ Read your work through to check it makes sense
- ☐ Check your facts are reliable
- ☐ Make it clear what's fact and what's your opinion

Standpoint sheet: video

How do you want to say it?

Use this sheet to start writing the script for your Standpoint – read the top tips first and stay on track by using the success criteria. If you run out of space use the back of this sheet.



Step one

Introduce your topic or news story
Here's where you introduce the topic and say why it's important to you. Keep this to around 30 seconds long.

Step two

Share a range of perspectives
Here's where you say who is affected by this topic and how. Share some opinions from perspectives that are different from yours. Keep this bit to around 45 seconds long

Step three

Share your opinion
Here's where you share what you think, using facts and examples to support your points. Keep this bit to around 45 seconds long.

Step four

Finish your script
Put the parts of your Standpoint together – you might need to add questions or linking sentences to help the information flow.

Check your script against the success criteria. Tick off the things you have done and edit the things you haven't. Use Harriet's top tips to have a go at presenting your script!
For example, you could add notes about when to show a visual aid or about how to use body language.

John Prideaux writes and produces podcasts for *The Economist*.



John's top tips for good pieces of audio journalism are:

- Speak slowly and clearly
- Change the tone of your voice depending on what you are saying
- Speak directly to the listener as if you know them
- If you use technical words, explain what they mean
- Make sure sound effects or music are not distracting for the listener

Standpoint success criteria

Be clear!

- ☐ Summarise the topic you've chosen
- ☐ Use appropriate language
- ☐ Make your points in a logical order
- ☐ Explain your points in under two minutes

Share your opinion!

- ☐ Evaluate more than one perspective
- ☐ Use facts and examples to support your opinion
- ☐ If you mention a problem, suggest possible solutions and evaluate their pros and cons

Check your work!

- ☐ Read your work through to check it makes sense
- ☐ Check your facts are reliable
- ☐ Make it clear what's fact and what's your opinion

Standpoint sheet: audio

How do you want to say it?

Use this sheet to start writing your Standpoint – read the top tips first and stay on track by using the success criteria. If you run out of space use the back of this sheet.



Step one
Introduce your topic or news story
Here's where you introduce the topic and say why it's important to you. Keep this to around 30 seconds long.

Step two
Share a range of perspectives
Here's where you say who is affected by this topic and how. Share some opinions from perspectives that are different from yours. Keep this bit to around 45 seconds long.

Step three
Share your opinion
Here's where you share what you think, using facts and examples to support your points. Keep this bit to around 45 seconds long.

Step four
Finish your script
Put the parts of your Standpoint together – you might need to add questions or linking sentences to help the information flow.
Check your script against the success criteria. Tick off the things you have done and edit the things you haven't.
Use John's top tips to have a go at presenting your script! For example, you could add notes about when to change your voice or when to speak more slowly to stress a point.

War reporting: is it beneficial?

Lesson 1

Objective: to understand what war reporting is and explore its different forms

Lesson outline

In this lesson students will consider what war reporting is and will explore how information is shared. They will hear from journalists about what it's like to report on wars, before thinking from the perspective of a war reporter to recap their learning.

Suggested timings

Activity 1






Skill check



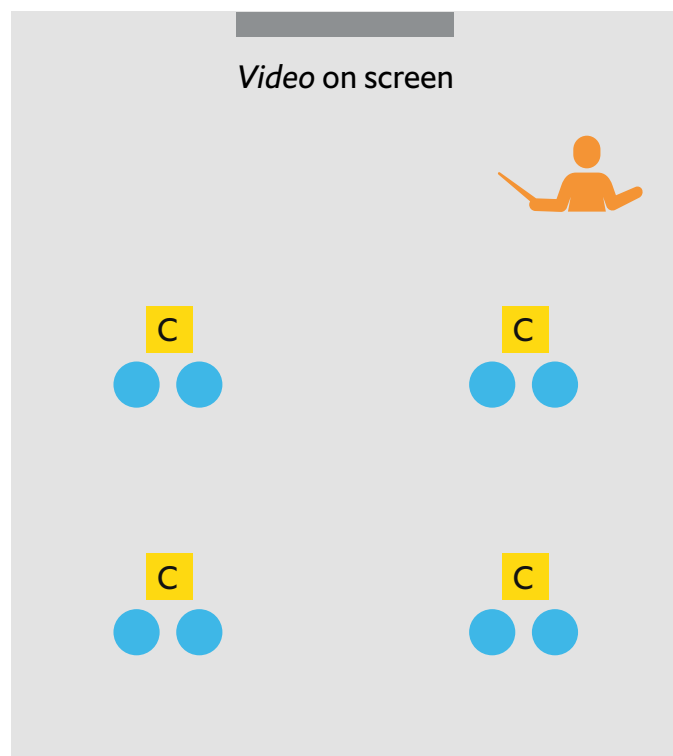
Classroom set-up

Activity 1

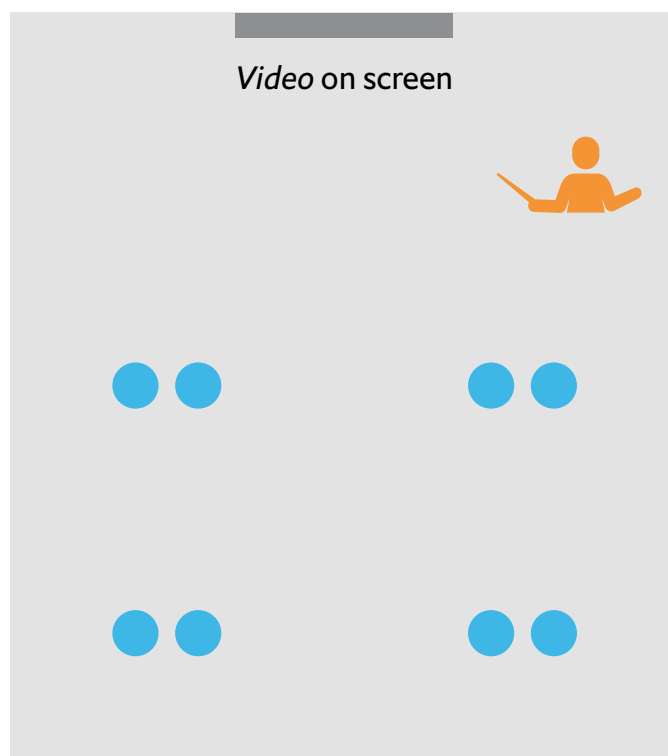
For this activity, you should set up your class:

Teacher =  Student =  Card = 

Part 1 and 2



Part 3 and 4



War reporting: is it beneficial?

Lesson 1 glossary

To broadcast

= to share a programme or information by television or radio.

verb

*"They wanted to **broadcast** the news at 9pm every night."*

Conflict

= a serious disagreement or argument – for example, a war.

abstract noun

*"The **conflict** between Russia and Ukraine has made a lot of people homeless."*

To influence

= to change someone's behaviour or opinions.

verb

*"The **government** is trying to influence the opinions of the general public."*

Journalist/reporter

= someone who finds and shares information about the news.

*"The **journalist** reported that explosions had taken place in Ukraine."*

War reporting: is it beneficial?

Lesson 1 glossary

Misinformation

= false or misleading information.

abstract noun

*"**Misinformation** can be spread online, so it's important to find reliable news sources."*

Visual journalism

= a type of journalism that you experience with your eyes – for example, photographs and written articles.

abstract noun

*"They used **visual journalism** to show how damaged the buildings were."*

War reporting: is it beneficial?

Lesson 2

Objective: to understand the challenges of war reporting and its impact

Lesson outline

In this lesson, students will listen to journalists as they discuss the dangers and difficulties of war reporting. Then they'll explore different scenarios, based on real events, that get them thinking about the impact of different types of war reporting on the wars they cover.

Suggested timings

Activity 1



Activity 2



Activity 3



Skill check

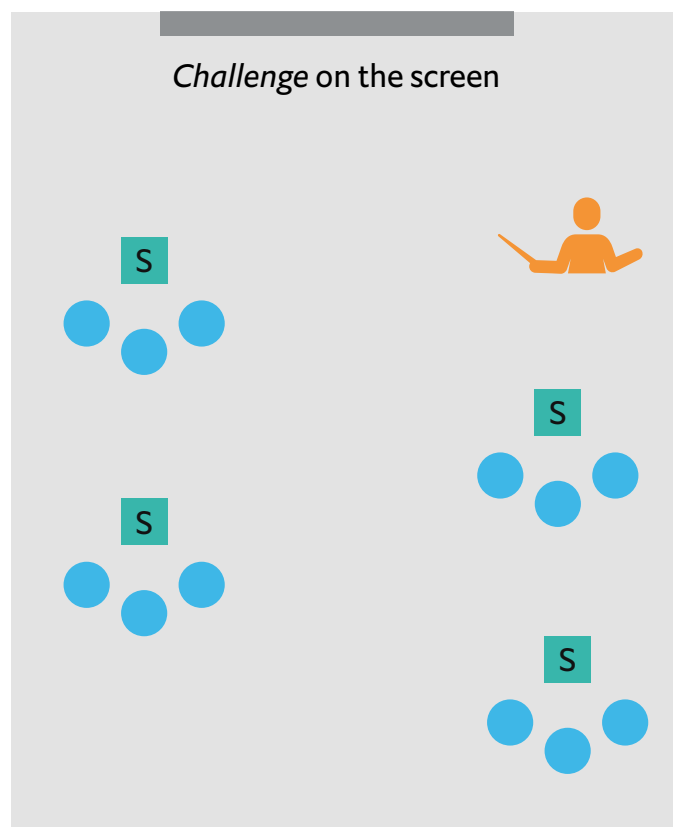


Classroom set-up

Activity 2

For this activity, you should set up your classroom like this:

Teacher =  Student =  Scenarios = 



War reporting: is it beneficial?

Lesson 2 glossary

Citizen journalism

= when people, who are not journalists, report information about the news.

abstract noun

"Citizen journalism has allowed events to be shared online more quickly."

Freedom of the press

= when the media has the freedom to report about anything and share anyone's opinions.

abstract noun

"Freedom of the press is important for journalists to allow them to report without being censored."

Journalism

= when news is prepared so it can be shared.

abstract noun

"The quality of journalism in the newspaper was high and the stories were factually correct."

Media outlet

= a company that transmits news, stories or other information to the public through print, broadcast or online.

noun

"This particular media outlet released global news every day."

War reporting: is it beneficial?

Lesson 2 glossary

Propaganda

= information given to people to try to influence their opinion.

noun

*"They released **propaganda** encouraging people to be brave and fight for their country."*

Scenario

= a description of a possible event or outcome.

abstract noun

*"The most likely **scenario** is that they settle on a plan by the end of the day."*

To speculate

= form a theory about a subject without firm evidence.

verb

*"People may **speculate** when they want to know more about a news story but don't have all the facts."*

Territory

= an area of land under a specific ruler.

noun

*"The ship had sailed into Russian **territory**."*

War reporting: is it beneficial?

Lesson 3

Objective: to understand how the experience of the news consumer has changed

Lesson outline

In this lesson students will use a drama activity called “news alley” to compare the experiences of news consumers in the past and in the present, before answering questions that help them to reflect on the news they see about wars.

Suggested timings

Activity 1



Activity 2



Activity 3



Skill check

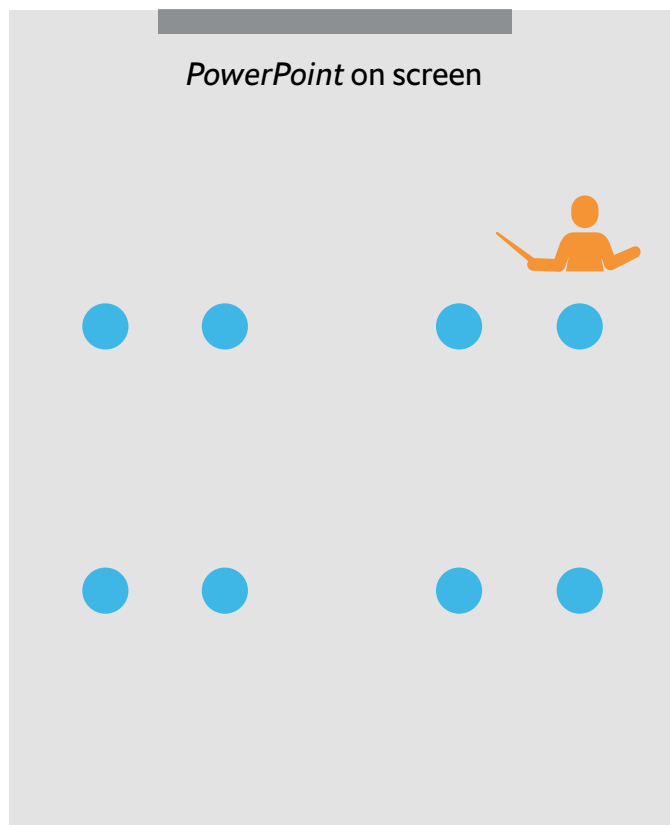


Classroom set-up

Activities 1 & 2

For this activity, you should set up your classroom like this:

Teacher =  Student = 



War reporting: is it beneficial?

Lesson 3

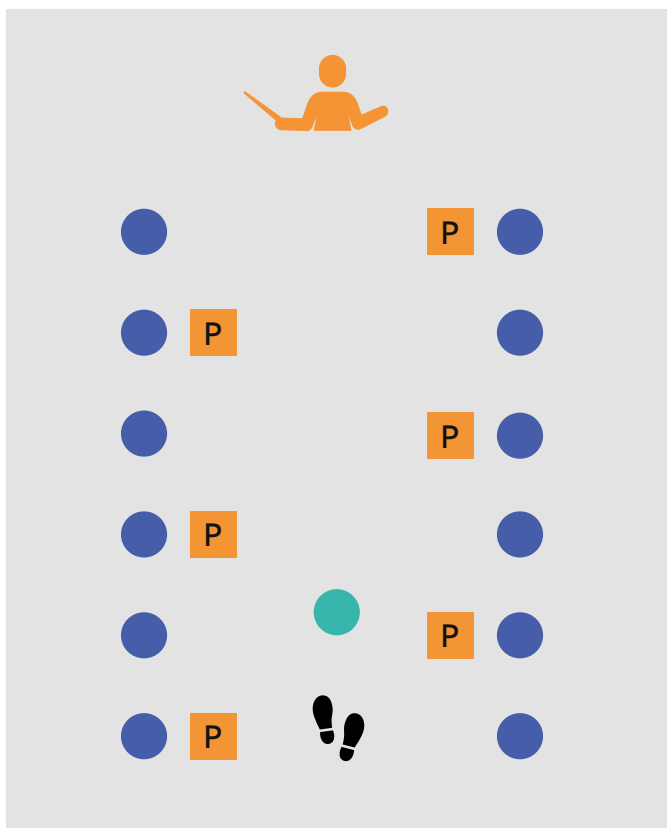
Classroom set-up

Activity 3

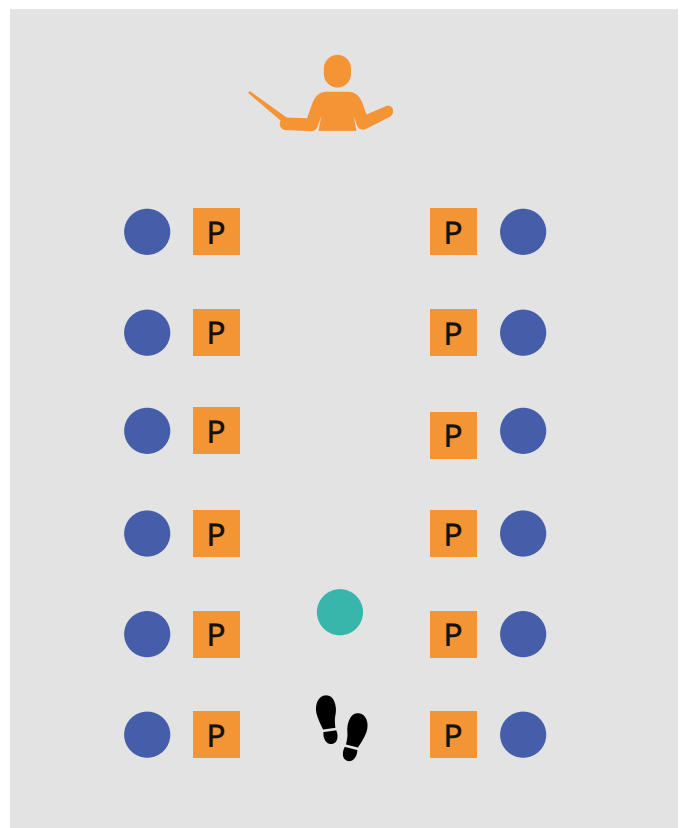
For this activity, you should set up your classroom like this:

Teacher =  Student =  News consumer =  Phrases = 

News alley 1 & 3



News alley 2



War reporting: is it beneficial?

Lesson 3 glossary

Algorithm

= a set of rules that are followed to help make a decision – for example, on social media, algorithms rank content based on how likely individual users are to interact with it. This might mean people see similar information or opinions from one perspective. It can stop people from getting a balanced view.

abstract noun

*"On social media, an **algorithm** will repeatedly show content based on how likely the user will interact with it."*

To consume

= to take something in – for example, information

verb

*"They would often **consume** news from the same news channels."*

Infodemic

= when people are rapidly given lots of news about the same story. This could include facts, misinformation, fake news, important updates and opinions.

abstract noun

*"The amount of news shared during covid-19 led to an **infodemic** on social media."*

Misinformation

= false or misleading information

abstract noun

*"**Misinformation** can be spread about events, so it's important to find information from reliable news sources."*

War reporting: is it beneficial?

Lesson 3 glossary

Social-media platform

= any website or app that lets users communicate with one another – for example, Twitter, Facebook or Snapchat.

abstract noun

*"A **social media platform** allows people to share their own content online."*

War reporting: is it beneficial?

Lesson 4

Objective: to form an opinion on whether war reporting is beneficial

Lesson outline

In this lesson, students will recap what they have learned so far and take part in a series of mini debates to form their own opinions about war reporting. For example, is reporting on wars a good job? Is hearing news about wars a good thing? And is social media a good place for hearing about wars?

Suggested timings

Activity 1



Activity 2



Activity 3



Skill check

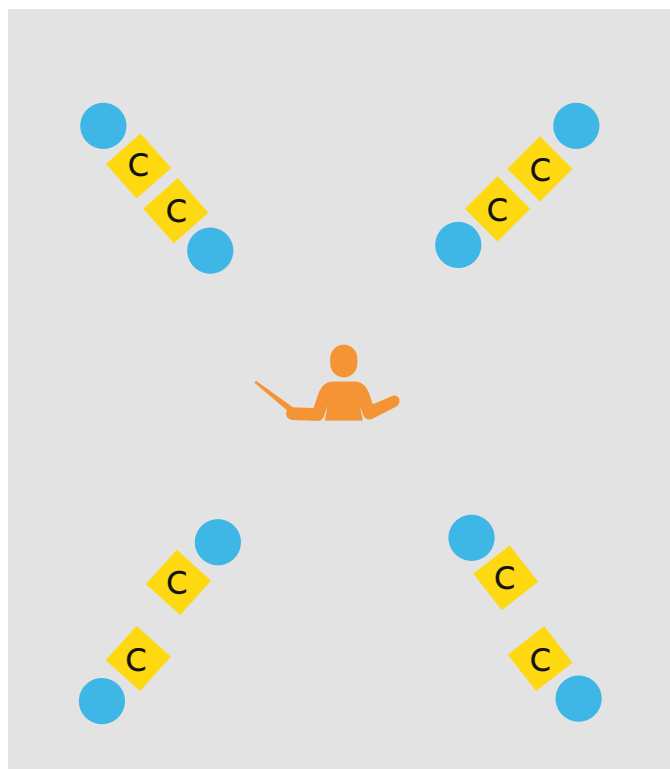


Classroom set-up

Activity 2

For this activity, you should set up your classroom like this:

Teacher =  Student =  Card = 






War reporting: is it beneficial?

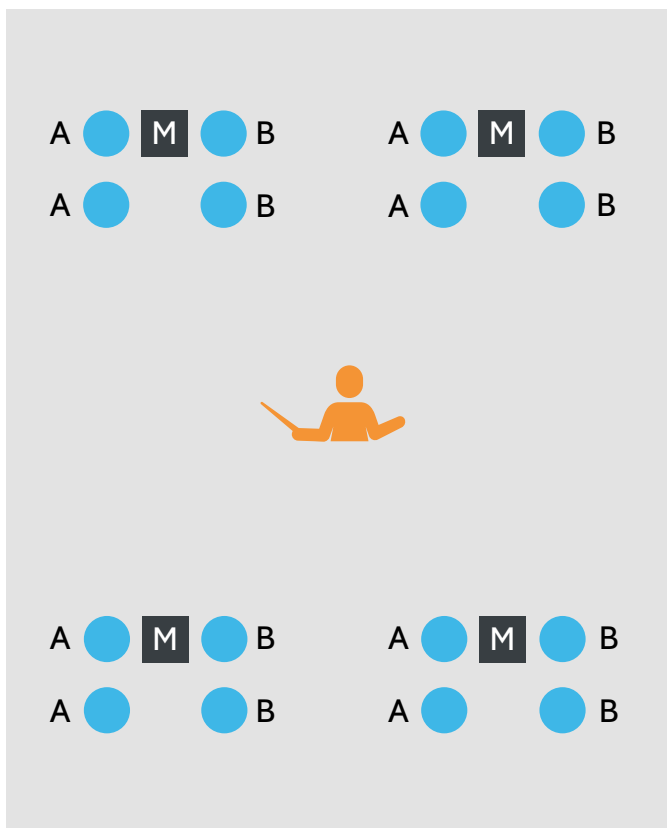
Lesson 4

Classroom set-up

Activity 3

For this activity, you should set up your classroom like this:

Teacher =  Student =  Mind map = 



War reporting: is it beneficial?

Lesson 4 glossary

News source

= a place where someone can find news – for example, a website, a television programme or a newspaper.

noun

*"Some **news sources** are more reliable than others."*

Responsible

= when someone has a duty, commitment or expectation to do something.

adjective

*"People must decide who is **responsible** for supporting refugees."*

To debate

= when people share opposing arguments before a decision is made.

verb

*"People in different countries often **debate** about what support to give refugees."*

War reporting: is it beneficial?

Lessons 5 & 6

Objective: to reflect on prior learning and create a Standpoint

Lesson outline

In these lessons students will plan, create and share their Standpoints – their final say about war reporting. They will work through a set of tailored activities to refine their skills and opinions, before presenting their opinions in either video, audio or writing.

Suggested timings

We advise that you set aside at least 2 hours for students to prepare, create and share their Standpoints.



Top tips for Standpoints

- Create a class bank of vocabulary and useful phrases
- If students need more support, they could look at the resources from previous lessons
- Students should complete the Standpoint sheet verbally with a partner, then write their ideas down
- If students choose to make video or audio Standpoints, you should prepare recording equipment for them – for example, phones, tablets or cameras

PLANNING SHEET

What do you want to say?
Use this mind map to guide your planning – start with the middle bubble then add notes to the others as you do more research. If you run out of space, use the back of this sheet.

Key information
What would you like people to learn from your standpoint? Write the key pieces of information below:

Vocabulary bank
What important words should you make an effort to include? What do they mean?

Standpoint focus area
What topic or news story will your standpoint focus on? Why is it important for you to talk about this?

Other perspectives
Who else is it important to hear from? For example, people who are directly affected by your chosen topic or people who have spoken out in the news. What are their opinions? Try to include someone who agrees with what you think and someone who disagrees with what you think.

What next?
What should happen next for your news story? For example, should certain people do something? Or is there a problem that must be solved?

Your opinion
What do you think about this? What facts or examples support your opinion?

Perspective one:

Perspective two:

War reporting: is it beneficial?

Skills and knowledge guide

Topical Talk skills and knowledge

Each lesson in this Special Edition provides opportunities for students to practise the knowledge and critical-thinking and communication skills that are important for understanding and discussing the news. The skills and knowledge break down into steps that show progress. You can find more information about these on the next page.



Listening



Speaking



Problem solving



Creativity



Knowledge

The skills and knowledge steps that each lesson develops are shown on the cover pages.

TOPICAL TALK

About this lesson

Objective: to reflect on prior learning to create a Standpoint

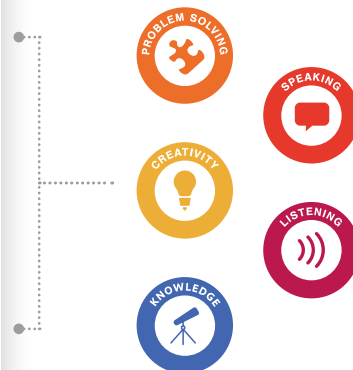
Before this lesson you will need to:

- Have the PowerPoint ready to show on screen
- Print the Planning sheets, enough for one each (large paper recommended)
- Print the Standpoint sheets according to the formats chosen
- Have the Activity list to hand

Skills

Step 7 I speak engagingly by using facts and examples to support my points in my Standpoint	Step 10 I listen critically and think about where differences in perspectives about war reporting come from
Step 5 I explore problems by thinking about the pros and cons of possible solutions in my Standpoint	Step 8 I develop my opinions about war reporting by using mind mapping
Step 6 I can explain what is meant by historical, economic and cultural context in my Standpoint	Step 10 I can explain how the context affects news stories about war and people's opinions about them

Shutterstock images: Sergey Gritsk and ChameleonsEye



Skills and knowledge

The essential skills and knowledge needed to think and speak for ourselves about current affairs.

The four skills frameworks come from the Skills Builder Universal Framework at www.skillsbuilder.org

The knowledge framework was devised by The Economist Educational Foundation in collaboration with senior editors at *The Economist* and teachers.



Good listeners learn more.

STEP AND STATEMENT

- 0 I listen to others without interrupting
- 1 I listen to others and can remember short instructions
- 2 I listen to others and can ask questions if I don't understand
- 3 I listen to others and can tell someone else what it was about
- 4 I listen to others and can tell why they are communicating with me
- 5 I listen to others and record important information as I do
- 6 I show I am listening by how I use eye contact and body language
- 7 I show I am listening by using open questions to deepen my understanding
- 8 I show I am listening by summarising or rephrasing what I have heard
- 9 I am aware of how a speaker is influencing me through their tone
- 10 I am aware of how a speaker is influencing me through their language
- 11 I listen critically and compare different perspectives
- 12 I listen critically and think about where differences in perspectives come from
- 13 I listen critically and identify potential bias in different perspectives
- 14 I listen critically and use questioning to evaluate different perspectives
- 15 I listen critically and look beyond the way speakers speak or act to objectively evaluate different perspectives



Good speakers have discussions that help everyone to learn, including themselves.

STEP AND STATEMENT

- 0 I speak clearly to someone I know
- 1 I speak clearly to small groups of people I know
- 2 I speak clearly to individuals and small groups I do not know
- 3 I speak effectively by making points in a logical order
- 4 I speak effectively by thinking about what my listeners already know
- 5 I speak effectively by using appropriate language
- 6 I speak effectively by using appropriate tone, expression and gesture
- 7 I speak engagingly by using facts and examples to support my points
- 8 I speak engagingly by using visual aids to support my points
- 9 I speak engagingly by using tone, expression and gesture to engage listeners
- 10 I speak adaptively by changing my language, tone and expression depending on the response of listeners
- 11 I speak adaptively by planning for different possible responses of listeners
- 12 I speak adaptively by changing my content depending on the response of listeners
- 13 I speak influentially by changing the structure of my points to best persuade the listeners
- 14 I speak influentially by changing the examples and facts I use to best persuade the listeners
- 15 I speak influentially by articulating a compelling vision that persuades the listeners



Good problem-solvers can work out what's really going on and what should be done about it.

STEP AND STATEMENT

- 0 I complete tasks by following instructions
- 1 I complete tasks by finding someone to help if I need them
- 2 I complete tasks by explaining problems to someone for advice if I need
- 3 I complete tasks by finding information I need myself
- 4 I explore problems by creating different possible solutions
- 5 I explore problems by thinking about the pros and cons of possible solutions
- 6 I explore complex problems by identifying when there are no simple technical solutions
- 7 I explore complex problems by building my understanding through research
- 8 I explore complex problems by analysing the causes and effects
- 9 I create solutions for complex problems by generating a range of options
- 10 I create solutions for complex problems by evaluating the positive and negative effects of a range of options
- 11 I analyse complex problems by using logical reasoning
- 12 I analyse complex problems by creating and testing hypotheses
- 13 I implement strategic plans to solve complex problems
- 14 I implement strategic plans to solve complex problems and assess their success
- 15 I implement strategic plans to solve complex problems and draw out learning to refine those plans over time



Creative people can come up with ideas about what might be going on and what could be done about it.

STEP AND STATEMENT

- 0 I imagine different situations
- 1 I imagine different situations and can say what I imagine
- 2 I imagine different situations and can bring them to life in different ways
- 3 I generate ideas when I've been given a clear brief
- 4 I generate ideas to improve something
- 5 I generate ideas by combining different concepts
- 6 I use creativity in the context of work
- 7 I use creativity in the context of my wider life
- 8 I develop ideas by using mind mapping
- 9 I develop ideas by asking myself questions
- 10 I develop ideas by considering different perspectives
- 11 I innovate effectively when working in a group
- 12 I innovate effectively by seeking out varied experiences and stimuli
- 13 I support others to innovate by sharing a range of tools
- 14 I support others to innovate by evaluating the right creative tools for different situations
- 15 I support others to innovate by coaching them to be more creative



People with good current-affairs knowledge can make informed opinions.

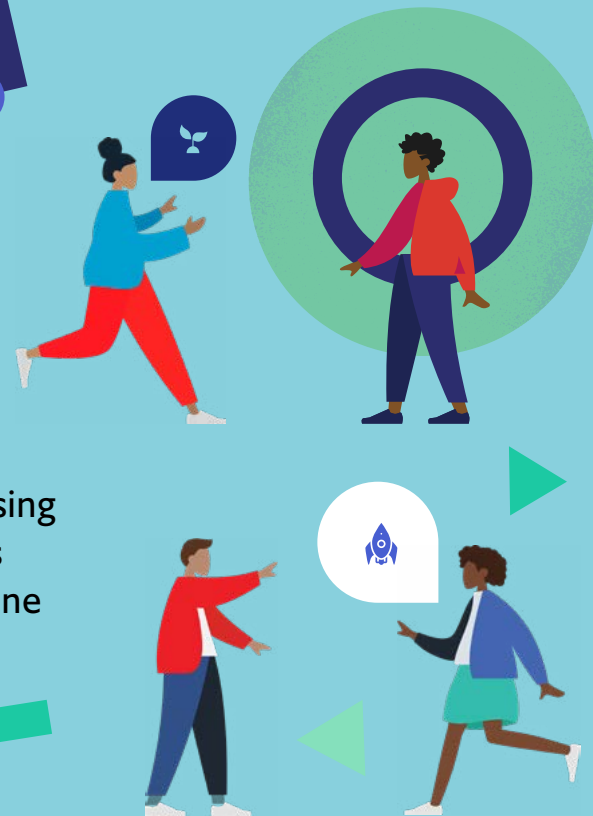
STEP AND STATEMENT

- 0 I know a definition of the news
- 1 I know what counts as the news
- 2 I know relevant vocabulary about the news and media (for example, "social media")
- 3 I know what power, justice and scarcity mean
- 4 I know more than one perspective on a specific news story
- 5 I know the main facts about a specific news story
- 6 I know some content or history around a specific news story
- 7 I know relevant vocabulary for a specific news story (for example, "climate change")
- 8 I know relevant vocabulary for questioning the news (for example "bias" and "sceptical")
- 9 I can explain what makes a trustworthy news source
- 10 I know what misinformation is and how to spot it
- 11 I know there are different factors which affect the news I see
- 12 I use vocabulary to support making connections (for example, "similarly" and "in contrast")
- 13 I make connections between different events in the news
- 14 I make connections between the news and school subjects
- 15 I make connections between news stories and news concepts

SUPPORT YOUR STUDENTS

Ideas to make Topical Talk inclusive for all learners

Help your class to access Topical Talk discussions by using the ideas below. Remember – you know your students best, so feel free to adapt the resources so that everyone can take part in the learning.



IDEA 1

Visualise it

What pictures or photographs could you show before a discussion?

Ease students in with familiar images first.

EXAMPLE

Show a picture of people moving house before a discussion about migration. Ask about the similarities and differences.

WHY?

Visuals can prompt vocabulary retrieval and help make links to prior learning.

Can students draw their answer, rather than articulate it?

Ask students to show, rather than tell.

EXAMPLE

Try a 60-second sketch (with or without labels) or sum up a news story in symbols.

WHY?

Students might know what they think but not how to say it. Talking about a picture might be easier than talking directly about their opinion.

How do they feel?

Ask students to respond to faces that show emotions.

EXAMPLE

Print the *Emoji sheet* (or use Makaton, or other accessible faces) and ask students to share how they feel about something by pointing to a face. Then ask, “why have you pointed to that face?”

WHY?

Students might know how they feel, but not how to say it. Talking about a picture might be easier than talking directly about their own feelings.



IDEA 2

Share it

Who do they agree with the most?

Instead of coming up with their own ideas, ask students to listen to their peers first.

EXAMPLE

Ask students to point to who they agree with most and say what they heard.

WHY?

Repeating other people's answers is a great way to build confidence.

Who can work together?

Challenge students to work in pairs and small groups.

EXAMPLE

Set an activity in mixed-ability groups. Support this by assigning suitable roles (like "reader" or "questioner") and pair those with complementary skills.

WHY?

Peer support can be underused – make it comfortable to ask for help from a teammate.

Have they heard it first?

Display the resources before each activity and read them aloud.

EXAMPLE

Show one of the news resources on the board, read it to the class and underline the keywords as you go.

WHY?

Hearing correct pronunciation of key vocabulary will help students to use it independently.



IDEA 3

Communicate it

Can they say it more than once?

Give students time to rehearse their answers before sharing them.

EXAMPLE

Build towards a group discussion in pairs, groups of four, then eight.

WHY?

It might be the audience that makes students nervous. Work up to this in smaller stages.

Does it have to be written?

For students who find writing difficult, ask them to record their answer instead.

EXAMPLE

Record an answer, play it back and see what changes they would make.

WHY?

Topical Talk encourages communication in all forms – we value spoken and written ideas equally.

Can you break it down?

Provide easy-access opinion prompts that students can complete each week.

EXAMPLE

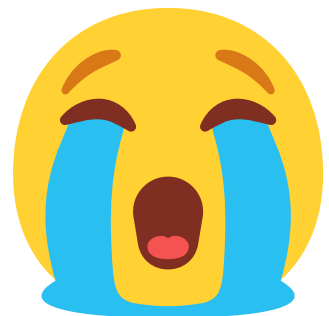
Print the *Sentence starters* and use these in a paired discussion.

WHY?

Sometimes saying the first word is the most difficult – give students a head start and build a reliable bank of familiar phrases.

Emoji sheet

Point to the emoji that shows how you feel. Can you say why?



Sentence starters

Choose a sentence starter and finish it to share your opinion.

***I think this is
good because...***

***I think this
is bad
because...***

***This makes me
feel... because...***

***I don't
like...
because...***

***I like...
because...***

***This reminds
me of...***

***I agree with...
because...***

***I disagree
with...
because...***

