

# HOT off the Press!

## NEWSWRITING

News writing offers students the chance to explore the world around them. A news article requires students to find answers to questions through research and interviews. It teaches them the importance of observation and reinforces critical thinking skills. A news story should be timely, informative, factual, and written without bias.



—John Ueland

### introduce the genre

“Get your facts straight!” That principle is at the heart of journalism, the process of collecting, verifying, and reporting news for print and other media. **News writing** encourages students to observe what is going on around them and to determine which events are significant enough to share with others. The building blocks of good news writing are the five W’s—*who, what, when, where, and why*—along with *how*.

“It’s all storytelling, you know. That’s what journalism is all about.”

—Tom Brokaw (1940– ), former news anchor

### spark creativity: story starters

Topics for news stories are everywhere—from the latest winner of the school spelling bee to the school talent show. Use the following activities to have students examine daily events with a reporter’s eye and practice their news writing skills.

**Comprehend.** Reading the newspaper is an important first step to understanding good news writing skills. Select a news story from the front page of a newspaper. Highlight the *who, what, where, when, why, and how* in the story. Use the “Hot off the Press” reproducible to answer each question.

**Get the Scoop.** Attend an event (for example, a school meeting or a sports contest). Write a news story about it. Before writing, consider: What was the most important thing that happened? Who was involved? Where did the event take place?

**Blast From the Past.** Write an article about a historical event. For example, U.S. history stories may include topics such as “Civil War Ends!” or “Women Win the Right to Vote.” Be sure to include facts you’ve learned through research and to address the five W’s and *how*.

### WRITING TIP: Lead Me!

**Hook me in!** The beginning of a news story is called the lead. The lead can be a sentence, a paragraph, or several paragraphs. A lead is sometimes referred to as a hook because its job is to lure readers deeper into the story. Look through a newspaper and choose your favorite lead. Why is it effective?