

DOWNEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Middle School Course Outline

**Course Title:** Journalism (One Semester)  
**Grade Level:** 7,8  
**Prerequisites:** Students reading at or above grade level

**Course Description:**

Students enrolled in Journalism will achieve competency in the writing areas that will enable them to produce a newspaper. These areas include new stories, editorials, sports reporting, headline writing, features, and reviews. The techniques of research, interviewing, and proofreading will be emphasized. Students will demonstrate increased analytical thinking skills in evaluating newspapers and magazine stories as well as their own work.

**Student Performance Objectives for this Course:**

Students will

1. distinguish among the major types of material in a newspaper.
2. discover the nature of news through class discussion.
3. identify the "5 W's and 1 H" in news leads on written sample tests.
4. compose effective leads for news stories according to specified criteria.
5. write news stories using "inverted pyramid" organization, after demonstration by the teacher.
6. write definitions of journalism vocabulary words such as lead, beat, dummy, crop, caption, etc.
7. use proofreaders' symbols on a variety of work samples to demonstrate their understanding of proofreading, proper English, and news style.
8. practice writing novelty leads (i.e., questions, quote, suspense, background, etc.).
9. analyze newspaper editorials to judge the adequacy with which conclusions are supported by data.

10. write well-organized editorials, clearly stating problems, and suggesting solutions.
11. after demonstration by the teacher, produce headlines, (following such journalism standards as the use of active, vivid, present tense verbs).
12. define a feature story and identify possible types of feature stories.
13. write at least one news feature, one human interest feature, one personality feature, one humorous feature, and one historical research feature.
14. plan for and conduct interviews and write stories.
15. write sports advance stories, game reports, and sports features, after the teacher has discussed the elements of sports reporting, (i.e., accuracy, relevancy, emphasis on major plays, and stats).
16. perform editing functions efficiently and accurately – copy reading, headline writing, and proofreading.
17. contingent on availability of video cassette recorders, gain experience in simulating a news telecast of special middle school events, such as fund raisers, sports, dances, field trips, and special class activities.
18. contingent on availability of computers, produce news articles on the computer.

## **Journalism - continued**

### **Instructional Strategies**

1. Large and small group discussion incorporating Bloom's Taxonomy
  - a. Knowledge – recalling previously learned information
  - b. Comprehension – grasping the meaning of the material
  - c. Application – applying the learned material to new and concrete situations
  - d. Analysis – breaking down the material into its component parts
  - e. Synthesis – putting the parts together to form a new whole
  - f. Evaluation – judging the value of the material for a given purpose
2. Group and individualized instruction
3. Lecture
4. Written and oral assignments
5. Group and individual projects
6. Audio-visual aids
7. Teacher and student critique

### **Suggested Instructional Units**

- Unit I: Introduction
- A. Pre-quizzes on grammar
  - B. News story writing
  - C. Introduction of students
  - D. Computer literacy (if applicable)
- Unit II: Components of a newspaper
- Unit III: Proofreading and proofreading symbols
- Unit IV: Style
- A. Discuss news style
  - B. Class develops style sheet to be used by school newspaper
- Unit V: Leads
- A. Discuss 5 W's and 1 H
  - B. Practice writing straight and novelty leads

## **Journalism – continued**

Unit VI: Inverted Pyramid (important facts first)

Unit VII: News stories

A. Mock press conferences – take notes, write

B. Read around and editing in groups

Unit VIII: Interviews

Unit IX: Editorials

Unit X: Features (humorous, surveys, human interest, personality, advice columns, and puzzles)

Unit XI: Sports

Unit XII: Headlines

Unit XIII: Entertainment reviews

Unit XIV: TV vs. newspaper (optional)

A. Viewing logs

B. Survey questionnaire

Unit XV: School “Eyewitness News” (optional)

*Students divide into groups of 5 or 6 to put together a news broadcast of 22 minutes from school news.*

Unit XVI: Commercials and advertising (optional)

Unit XVII: Reviews and exams

## **Evaluation**

Student progress will be measured by:

Completion and quality of assignments

Attendance

Class participation

Tests/Quizzes

Homework

Teacher observation

Teacher evaluation

Student performance

## **Journalism – continued**

Portfolio assessment  
Authentic assessment  
Rubrics

## **Materials and Resources**

*No textbook has been adopted for this course.*