



Berkman

The Berkman Center for Internet & Society
at Harvard University

MODULE: HEADLINE CUT-UPS

DRAFT



Youth and Media

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Overview

In this module, participants will engage with news stories from an ongoing event and have the opportunity to discuss and map how stories develop over time. Participants will also discuss the importance of recognizing multiple sources of information, while exploring the relationship between headlines and story content.

Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- Understand how news stories are constructed and developed over time
- Explain to others how to find, evaluate, and verify credible information
- Examine how creative and strategic word choices can shape a reader's perception of reality
- Explain why multiple credible sources of information are important

Age/Grade

Ages 14-19 years old

Grades 9-12

Audience

Intermediate level – some exposure to news stories necessary

Duration

70 minutes

- Warm-Up (10 minutes)
- News Stories Activity (25 minutes)
- Timelines (25 minutes)
- Conclusion (10 minutes)

Materials

- 5 different news stories about an ongoing event from different sources and different dates (printed)
(*examples listed below*)
- Printed cut-ups of the following: headlines, authors/source, dates, and news story bodies
(**enough copies for groups of 2**)
- Computers
- Blank paper
- Pencils/Markers
- Projector
- Camera

Note: In order to remember which cut-up corresponds to which article, it is possible to create a system with colors or letters. The activity can also be more challenging if extra (but plausible) headlines are included.

Sample Articles

Note: These articles are from the 2011 E. coli bacteria breakout, which led to a food crisis in Europe.

Deadly E. coli outbreak claims first victims

May 24, 2011 12:19 CET

DPA/DAPD/The Local

<http://www.thelocal.de/national/20110524-35217.html>

Spanish cucumbers may be E.coli source, Germans say

Thu May 26, 2011 5:45pm EDT

By Sebastian Huld and Kate Kelland. Reuters. Hamburg/London

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/05/26/us-germany-ecoli-idUSTRE74P3ND20110526>

E.coli cucumber scare: Germany seeks source of outbreak

May 30, 2011 Last updated at 11:43 ET

BBC. Europe

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-13592765>

Egyptian Seeds Are Linked to E. Coli in Germany and France

June 29, 2011

By William Neuman and Scott Sayare. New York Times.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/30/world/middleeast/30ecoli.html?pagewanted=print>

Germany declares deadly E. coli epidemic over

July 26, 2011

Author: Matt Zuvela (AFP, Reuters, dpa)

<http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,15270740,00.html>

Extraneous headlines:

“Outbreak of Infections Kills 10 in Germany”

“Germany: 365 More Sickened in Bacterial Outbreak”

“Germany says sprouts source of killer bacteria outbreak”

Warm-Up

(10 minutes)

Goal: To familiarize participants with key questions for today's workshop.

Materials: None

Say: Today we're going to be talking about different kinds of news sources. So:

- How do you get your news?
- How do you know that you can trust these news sources?
- How do you **assess** their credibility?
- How do you know that something you learn is true?
- What happens when information is wrong or exaggerated?
- Do you think it is important to follow the news? Why or why not?
- How do you learn more as a news story develops?

News Stories Activity

(25 minutes)

Note: Because of the next activity, it is important not to reveal the correct order of the cutups!

Goal: For participants to explore the relationships between headlines, news stories, and key words.

Materials: news story cutups, paper, writing utensils

[Ask students to form groups of 2.]

[10 minutes]

Say: I am going to hand out 5 news stories (just the body text) about the E.coli breakout in Europe. On a blank sheet of paper, take notes on the different stories. Answer the following:

- What are the facts in each story?
- Where do these stories take place?
- Can anyone tell me what a **protagonist** is?
- Who are the protagonists in these stories?

[5 minutes]

[As groups finish, provide them with the cut-ups of headlines, authors/sources, and dates. Ask them to match the cut-ups to the news stories. When everyone has finished, ask them to take turns presenting. Then display the correct versions.]

Say: Would anyone like to share what they learned?

- How did you match the different cut-ups?
- What were the facts in these stories?
- How did these facts help you match up the different cut-ups?
- Do you have a general idea of what the story is about?
- How did the story develop over time?

Language

- Which words in the headlines helped you match up the stories to the headlines?
- How effective were the headlines in telling you what the stories were about?
- What are the important words – the key words – for each story? Why?
- How are the keywords related to the headlines?

Authorship

- How did you match up the authors/sources to the news stories? What about the dates?
- How did the name of the author/their organization influence your decisions?
- Did the nationality of the organization influence your decisions? Why?
- How are these news stories different from each other? What is the background information – the **context** – for each story?

Timeline

(25 minutes)

Note: If you would like students to work online, it is possible to introduce **Dipity** (<http://www.dipity.com>) for the creation of a timeline using visual material available online.

Timeline presentation: it is possible for each group to simply present the timeline on paper, but it is preferable to show them on the projector. Use a camera (or cellphone) to photograph the timelines of each group and project them.

Goal: For participants to understand how to create and read timelines of news stories.

Materials: links/handouts of sample timelines, paper, pens, and markers (plus miscellaneous art supplies)

Say: Sometimes, it's easier to understand how an event in the news happened if we can make a list of what happened. Can anyone tell me what a **timeline** is?

For this news story we've been following, create a timeline in your group. Make sure to highlight at least **five** important points from the articles which you read. Try to be creative in representing these stories. What symbols or pictures can you include? You have **fifteen minutes**.

[Ask students to present their work.]

Say:

- How were everyone's timelines similar? Different? Why?
- Did making a timeline for this story change the way you matched up the cut-ups? Did you move any around? If so, why?
- Have you seen any timelines of news stories before? Which ones?
- Do you think timelines are useful? Why/why not?

Wrap-Up Discussion

(10 minutes)

Note: If you want to introduce an element of competition, it is possible to create a scoring table on the board so that each group gets points for each correct match. The team with the most correct matches is the winner.

Goal: To discuss the limits of breaking news and understand how and why we follow news stories over time.

Materials: Link to correct matches in chronological order:

<http://www.dipity.com/vvva/e-coli-food-crisis>.

Say: Here is the correct match up of all the different pieces of the headlines-articles. What were some things that surprised you?

[Compare the differences between the students' versions and the correct one.]

- What made this activity difficult? Why?
- What were some of the easier things to match up? Why?
- What do you think are the limits of breaking news?
- How do you learn more as a news story develops?
- Why do you think it is important to follow news stories over time?
- Is it better to learn about a news story as it develops, or to wait until it's over and you can read a summary of it?
- How can you apply what we did today to how you learn about the news in the future?
- If you had to tell your friends about what you learned today, how would you sum it up in one sentence?

Additional Resources

Example Timelines

- **Trapped Chilean Miners**
<http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/americas/08/30/chile.miners.timeline/index.html>
- **Egyptian Protests**
<http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/02/03/egypt.protests.timeline/index.html>
- **Michael Jackson 1958-2009**
<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/news/la-michael-jackson-timeline,0,7025513.htmlstory>

Student-Created Timelines (for E.coli outbreak)

- <http://www.flickr.com/photos/vvvamobile/5987551429/in/photostream>
- <http://www.flickr.com/photos/vvvamobile/5987546841/in/photostream>
- <http://www.flickr.com/photos/vvvamobile/5988104008/in/photostream>