



# Lesson Plans

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**NewsBrands**  
Ireland

An Initiative from NewsBrands Ireland.



## Brainstorming session to generate comment pieces



Handout for Brainstorming Opinion Pieces. PDF to print/ photocopy



40-60 mins +

### Material to be used

**Revisit** the “How to enter” section for the **Comment Category** on page 6.

Use the prompts below to encourage discussion of ideas for comment pieces suitable for the Press Pass competition.

- Students could **think** about the prompts individually writing down any of their own ideas
- They could then be **paired** or put into slightly larger groups of three or four.
- Their ideas could then be **shared** with the class as a whole in a plenary style session.

#### Optional Prompts for discussion:

- Students could any issues on which they have strong opinions: (they need to think about things they rant about frequently!)
- From this list they could choose one issue.
- Outline briefly their opinion on this issue.
- Note aspects of this issue that they feel they would need to research or explore further. (Remind them they will need **facts** to back up their opinions!)
- Separate to their opinions on this issue, who else do they feel is affected by it?
- How do they think they could persuade people to pay more attention to this issue?
- Decide on main points might be and how they might sequence the

#### Optional:

You could now set a deadline for submission of an **opinion piece** which conforms to the competition rules.

Depending on your time constraints this can done within class time or as an independent assignment to be completed in their own time.



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## Opinion pieces...

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- List any issues on which you have a strong opinion: (tip think of things that you find yourself 'ranting' about frequently!)
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- Circle the issue that most interests you or that you know a lot about.
- Outline briefly your opinion on this issue.

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- Write down aspects of this issue you feel you would need to research or explore further. (Remember you will need facts to back up your opinion...)
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- Separate to your opinion on this issue, who else do you feel is affected by it? How do you think you could persuade these people to pay more attention to this issue?

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- Have you any ideas on what your main points might be and how you could order them?

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Decide whether you would prefer to write a letter to the Editor or a comment piece.

# The competition

## HOW TO ENTER

As part of the Press Pass initiative, students and schools have an opportunity to enter our prestigious competition, the winners of which will be honoured at a national ceremony early next year. The competition has five categories: News, Features, Comment, Photojournalism and Sport. There are strict and specific rules for each category which must be adhered to.

All entries must be submitted via the competition section of the Press Pass website:  
[www.presspass.ie](http://www.presspass.ie)

## IMPORTANT!

- The work must be your own. It cannot be copied from any other source.
- News, feature and sport articles must be fact and not fiction.
- Any and all quotes you use must be taken from interview(s) you have conducted.

If you do not adhere to the strict guidelines, your entry will not be considered by the judges.

TO ENTER  
GO TO  
[presspass.ie](http://presspass.ie)



## CATEGORIES

### NEWS

For your news article, you can only choose from one of the options below:

- 1) Interview a local personality / politician / celebrity. Write the article based on your interview.
- 2) Identify an issue relevant to you, your school, or your area. Interview people relevant to your subject of choice. Write an article based on your interview.
- 3) Focus on an event in your local area. Write an article, giving details of what is / has happened, how, why, when and who was involved.

### FEATURES

For your feature article, you can only choose from one of the options below:

- 1) Write a profile of a person/ group/organisation you admire.
- 2) Interview a well known personality. Write a feature based on your interview.

Articles must be no shorter than 600 words and no longer than 800 words.

### PHOTOJOURNALISM

Photojournalism covers all the categories: News, Features, Comments, Sport.

Entries include photographs, graphics, cartoons or caricatures. All entries must be submitted in jpeg format with a minimum image size of 3MB.

### COMMENT

For your Comment piece, you can only choose from one of the options below:

- 1) Write a letter to the Editor of no more than 400 words.
- 2) Choose an issue that affects you, or something that you have opinion on. Write a comment piece of between 400-600 words.

### SPORT

For your Sport article, you can only choose from one of the options below:

- 1) Attend a local sporting event. Write an account of what happened - 400 words.
- 2) Write a profile of a sports personality you admire - 500 words.
- 3) Interview a well known sports personality. Write an article based on your interview - 500 words.