



Lesson Plans

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NewsBrands
Ireland

An Initiative from NewsBrands Ireland.



Brainstorming Session to generate news story ideas

Pages:

6 7



40 minutes +

(session length dependent on group and/or time allocated)



Handout for Brainstorming News Stories. PDF to print/ photocopy

Material to be used

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

Use the prompts below to encourage discussion of ideas for articles 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 to generate news story ideas:

- What are the main local/ national/ international stories in the news at present?
- Do any of them have any interest or significance for your area or for you?
- Have any events of interest happened locally recently?
- Are there any upcoming events of local/ national importance?
- Who do you think you could speak to or interview in relation to any of the events you have thought of?

Optional:

You could now set a deadline for submission of a news article which conforms to the competition rules.

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



News Stories...

List any of the main local/ national/ international stories you can think of which are in the news at the moment:

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Do any of these stories have any interest or significance for your area or for you?

Yes because: _____

No because: _____

Name any events of interest which have happened locally recently?

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Are there any upcoming events of local/ national importance?

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Who do you think you could speak to or interview in relation to any of the events you have thought of?

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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

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



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.



Dan the Man – A Hidden Hero

By Síomha Ní hAiniféin
Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne, An Daingean

Life is a journey” chuckles Dan O’ Hara, his dancing blue eyes crinkling like raisins. He sinks into a battered, old arm chair, abandoning a children’s rocking horse he had been working on. His home, a yellow bungalow, smells of freshly cut wood. Slightly musty with a tang of spice, it evokes the Moroccan deserts he once tirelessly explored under the blistering sun. Now” exclaims Dan, as gunshots from a John Wayne film crackle from the television, “where should I start?”

Hearsay had lured me to this home, nestled amongst the lush fields of Annascaul. A much travelled war veteran with many the tale to tell, Donald ‘Dan’ O’ Hara was born in 1925 in a bustling Lancashire village. Walking, wandering and wondering from eight months old, it was clear that to appease his wanderlust, Dan would live a life of adventure and accomplishment.

Dan’s hankering for the high way, or in his case the high seas, led him to join The Royal Navy aged fourteen. His ambition was simple as Dan longed to see his brother, a fellow Allied fighter. It is now that Dan’s voice begins to shake. He pauses for a moment, running his tattooed fingers through his unruly hair. His hair, like the incessant waves of Dunkirk, is wild and scary, akin to Dan’s feelings when he reminisces about D-Day. Feeling he bears an uncanny resemblance to ‘Alex’, Harry Style’s character in the film, Dan survived ‘Dunkirk’ and indeed D-Day but it was



Learn from last year’s winner

also the first time Dan encountered true human cruelty and it frightened him. Recalling this memory, he solemnly glances towards the sky, lost in turbulent thoughts.

Haunted by these thoughts of the “awful, bloody war” and determined to right wrongs, Dan trained as a welder and a deep sea driver. To escape fear you have to go through it, not around it, and in Dan’s case, he brazenly swam through it, decommissioning Nazi bombs in English Ports. I asked why he voluntarily faced the possibility of death once more, “Ah lass, ‘twas my calling”.

Yet not even the zealous industriousness of the Wehrmacht could deploy enough bombs in England to keep Dan in this job for too long. A post war period of economic boom and exploration ensued, enticing Dan’s welding torch to travel from oil rigs and exploration sites to such diverse places as Morocco and Argentina during what Dan

called the ‘Dirty War’.” I enjoyed the job, the pay was good and I’ve travelled all over,” remarks Dan of a career which continued well into his seventies.

It was during this time that Dan and his second wife made a dérive to the then tired village of Annascaul on the edge of the remote Dingle Peninsula. To a small community under dark and dreary skies, emblematic of the area, the duo brought vibrancy and vigour. An accomplished sheep breeder and chicken keeper, my first memory of Dan was of his boisterous black hens and a cock that became my brother and I’s alarm clock, much to our parent’s chagrin. Dan lets out a throaty laugh as I share this memory. ‘I always wanted the rarest chickens in the village, the only problem with those buggers, they could not fly that high but high enough to hide eggs in trees.’ Much to his doctor’s displeasure, the then eighty year old Dan would scale the steep Sycamore trees

in search of breakfast. If Dan’s doctor was worried then if he heard what he accomplished five years later, he’d keel over. When Dan travelled to Australia for his eighty-fifth birthday he achieved world records for skydiving and freefalling.

So I ask a man of endeavour how does one unwind from a busy day plunging from planes, chasing chickens and extracting oil? “I love John Wayne Westerns and making model boats and saddles”. My father remembers jumping into ditches for cover as if they were trenches in Normandy when he heard the gallop of Dan’s wild pony. Dan rode side-saddle mimicking his cowboy hero. These days you are more likely to see Dan aged ninety three cruising up strenuous slopes on his ride-on lawnmower after his car licence expired.

Like our other local ‘Fame Laureate’ Tom Crean, Dan is a true hero, who beat adversity, to live an eccentric life of ‘devilment’ and bravado. In an era that sometimes smacks of vices rather than virtue, it is nice to sit back and immerse yourself in the story of Dan O’Hara, a man who graduated from the school of life with an ‘A’ in courage and in character. As I shut the red door of this extraordinary man’s home, the author Bodi Ashton’s quote “Heroes are made by the paths they choose, not by the powers they are graced with,” springs to mind.

“ Press Pass gives students the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of the media, how it works and who to trust by learning to do journalism themselves. If a student knows how good journalism is made, then they are better equipped to interrogate the information that bombards them daily.”

Prof. Michael Foley, Chairman
of the Judging Panel



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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