

PSHE Citizenship

THE MEDIA

This time it's the media that are under the spotlight through a story raising issues about what news is, what 'the public interest is' and the way that the media choose to report events. The story focuses on the way a local radio station reports news of theft at a nearby hospital radio project.

Before using the audio resources:

The programme drama deals with a radio station, but the significance of the theme covers all other elements of the media, including the internet. 'News' pages could be printed and posted on the notice board alongside conventional newspaper articles (perhaps covering the same story).

Television and radio stories obviously cannot be displayed in the same way, but attention may be drawn to them by means of programme schedules (from newspapers or magazines such as the Radio Times) Another useful introductory activity would be to post media related vocabulary (e.g. editor, reporter, headline etc.)

Using the audio resources:

1. Discussion.

What is 'news'? Where news outlets are pupils aware of (newspapers / radio / tv / internet)? What are the main stories typically about? What should be 'in the news'?

2. Drama, part 1. See below for a synopsis. Introduce the first part of the drama and remind pupils to listen carefully because soon it will be their opportunity to discuss what happens. The main characters in the story are:

Mickey Arnold - a wannabe radio DJ
Mr Arnold - Mickey's Dad, who manages the local hospital radio station

Shazza Bright - a journalist for Free Air 12, the local commercial radio station
Radio station manager

You may wish to display a suitable image to act as a focus while listening to the drama. Use the online resources to display a large version of the radio studio. Display this during Part 1 of the drama.

3. Discussion.

At the end of Drama, part 1 discuss/consider the following:

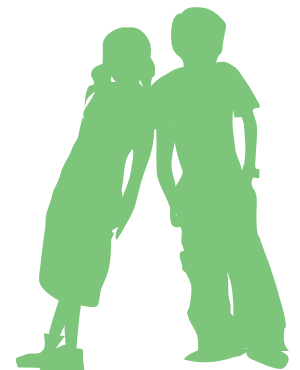
Why is the local radio station interested in the story of the missing money?
 Is Mickey's Dad right to feel the way he does?
 Why has the local radio station chosen to report the way it has?

4. Listen to Voxpops 1. See below for a transcript.

Listen to Voxpops 1 either to help promote discussion/consideration or to reinforce the ideas the children have already expressed. In the audio the children talk about what the words 'news' means to them.

5. Drama, part 2. See below for a synopsis. Explain that it's time to listen to the second part of the story, in which we'll find out how Mickey attempts to redress matters with the local radio station.

Use the online resources to display a microphone used for an interview in a radio station. Display this during part 2 of the drama.





6. Final discussion.

At the end of Drama, part 2 discuss the following:

Are there any stories that shouldn't appear in the news?

What does 'in the public interest' mean?

Which stories are in the public interest...and which ones are not?

7. Have your say! When you've discussed/ considered the questions above please use the **Contact us** page of the School Radio website to let us know what you think about the story.

The significance of the theme:

This is another major theme of the citizenship strand of the PSHE and Citizenship curriculum...

Pupils should be taught:

2k to explore how the media present information

The various branches of the media reflect the interests of the various communities they serve. The 'news', whether personal, local, national or international will provide a multitude of issues for discussion. Pupils will be able to review the news for evidence of bias and should be encouraged to distinguish between fact and opinion (cf. the National Literacy Strategy)

Follow-up activities:

Use a pre-selected news story and get the pupils to rewrite it imaginatively from different viewpoints. Did the original story omit any viewpoint? Why might this have happened? Did it matter? Why?

Create a front page. Work to a deadline. Use desktop publishing where available, but traditional cut and paste will suffice. Pupils should work in pairs/small groups.

Discuss interviews and consider the skills needed for interviewing. Are there items of school/ local interest that could be reported through interviews? Let the pupils decide who should be interviewed and then prepare appropriate questions. The interviews could be recorded and edited into a school radio broadcast or they could be transcribed / summarised for a school / class newspaper.

Additional information:

www.holdthefrontpage.co.uk

A Newspapers in Education website with a useful collection of resources and ideas.

www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/

Newsround - the BBC site with up-to-the-minute news online for kids

www.childrens-express.org/

Children's Express - news and comment on current topics by young people. A programme of learning through journalism for young people aged 8-18

The websites of national and local newspapers.

The BBC is not responsible for the content of external websites.

Drama, part 1 synopsis:

Scene 1.

Mickey Arnold is at home in his bedroom. He's practising his DJ routine because he hopes that one day he'll have his own show on the hospital radio station run by his father, Ralph Arnold.

Mr Arnold calls up and asks Mickey to turn the music down. Then he comes into Mickey's room and switches the tape-recorder off. He says he has a splitting headache and has obviously had a bad day.

Mr Arnold's mobile phone rings but he's reluctant to answer. 'It'll only be trouble'. When he does answer it the conversation that happens clearly adds to his distress.



Then he tells Mickey about his dreadful day. There's been a robbery at the hospital radio station: over £1000 for new equipment that the radio station had received through fundraising activity has been stolen. The local media have been hounding Mr Arnold and suggesting that it may be one of the radio station's own volunteers that is responsible.

Mr Arnold's mobile rings again. This time it's Shazza Bright, a young reporter from the the newsdesk at Free Air 12 Radio. She invites Mr Arnold to be interviewed live on the news and Mr Arnold agrees - it's an opportunity for him to put his side of the story.

Scene 2.

Live on air at Free Air 12. Shazza Bright interviews Mr Arnold. But the interview is far from what Mr Arnold expects. She pushes the line that the hospital radio station has been irresponsible with the public's money and that the radio station is more or less culpable for the theft. She demands to know why the public should ever trust the hospital radio organisation again. Mr Arnold is lost for words.

Scene 3.

Home again, after the radio interview and Mickey is trying to console his dad with a cup of tea. Mr Arnold is feeling bitter about the interview and doesn't feel he was given any opportunity to put over his point of view. He recalls that in the past he had tried very hard to get the local media interested in the work of the hospital radio station - but they were never interested until there was something bad to report.

Mickey appears determined to do something to put things right again.

Voxpops 1, transcript:

'News' sounds like 'new', so I think it's probably things that have just happened.

It's a true fact that's important.

News is what's going on around the world that you should be aware of.

News is what's happening in the world, but it can also be small news - about your family, to pass by word of mouth, like if a new baby's born.

I think news is something that doesn't usually happen, but has happened and it's special for someone.

Drama, part 2 synopsis:

Scene 4.

It's the evening and Mickey is in his bedroom again practising his routine. But this time the mood is different. It's a soulful show – dedicated to his dad. As Mickey speaks we learn more about his dad – about Mr Arnold's tireless work for the hospital radio station he runs...how his commitment to the organisation grew stronger during his mother's illness...

But now, Mickey has determined, it's time to get things straight: he's going to visit the news editor for Free Air 12 in the morning.

Scene 5.

The following morning and Mickey is welcomed to Free Air 12 by the news editor. Mickey explains why he feels upset at the treatment of his father - he says his dad didn't deserve to be treated like that.

The news editor explains more about his approach too news. He knows that Mr Arnold is something of a local 'star' and he doesn't feel the report is an attack on Mr Arnold. Instead it's about the missing money and the public's right to know. He goes on to say that 'Good news can be boring.' Free Air 12 has to compete – they need listeners in order to secure advertising revenue. That's why they must make the news as exciting as possible.

**Scene 6.**

Live on air at Free Air 12 with Shazza
Bright reporting. There has been a dramatic
development. A local person has been arrested for
the theft at the radio station and all the money
has been recovered. The police statement makes
it clear that no-one from the radio station was
involved in the theft.

Then Shazza links live to the hospital radio station
where a delighted Mickey is waiting to talk to her.
Shazza asks what the good news will mean for the
hospital radio organisation and Mickey brings his
father on air to explain (and this time he really will
get to put his side of the story). The hospital radio
organisation can continue now with their good
work, helping people in hospital, free from any
suggestion of wrong-doing. As Mickey says: 'it's
the good news that's made the news...and it's the
plain simple truth.'