

GRADE 8

This Just In!

How should we react to breaking news?



OVERVIEW

With mobile phone alerts, social media updates, and 24/7 news cycles, it's hard to escape the daily flood of breaking news. But do kids really understand what they're seeing when stories first break? Help students analyze breaking news with a critical eye for false or incomplete information, and discuss the downsides of our "always-on" news media culture.

Students will be able to:

- Define breaking news, and understand why individuals and news outlets want to be first to report a story.
- Analyze breaking news alerts to identify clues of false or incomplete information.
- Reflect on the consequences of reacting right away to breaking news alerts.

Lesson Snapshot

Estimated time: 45 mins.

Warm Up:	Who's First?	10 mins.
Analyze:	Breaking Down Breaking News	20 mins.
Apply:	Canceled Concert	10 mins.
Wrap Up:	Trusted Source	5 mins.

Key Standards Supported

Common Core ELA

L.8.6, RI.8.1, RI.8.4, RI.8.8, RI.8.9, RI.8.10, SL.8.1, SL.8.1b, SL.8.1c, SL.8.1d, SL.8.2, SL.8.6, W.8.10

CASEL

1a, 1b, 2a, 2c, 2d, 3a, 3b, 3d, 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d, 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e, 5f

AASL

I.A.1, I.A.2, I.B.1, I.B.3, I.D.1, I.D.2, I.D.3, I.D.4, II.A.2, II.A.3, II.B.1, II.B.2, II.C.1, II.C.2, II.D.1, II.D.2, II.D.3, III.A.1, III.A.2, III.B.1, III.B.2, III.C.1, III.C.2, III.D.1, III.D.2, IV.A.1, IV.A.2, IV.A.3, IV.B.3, I'

ISTE

1d, 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 6a, 7b, 7c, 7d

What You'll Need

Spanish-language student and family resources available soon!

- Lesson Slides
- Student Handout: Breaking News! **Student Version Teacher Version**
- Student Handout: Canceled Concert? **Student Version Teacher Version**
- Lesson Quiz **Editable Google form Answer Key**

Take-home resources

- Family Tips
- Family Activity
- Family Engagement Resources

LESSON PLAN

Key Vocabulary:

24/7 news cycle

24-hour, seven-day-a-week investigating and reporting of news via television, radio, print, online, and mobile app devices

bias

showing a strong opinion or preference for or against something or someone

breaking news

information being reported about an event that has just happened or is currently occurring

Warm Up: **Who's First?**

10 mins.

1. **Project Slide 4** and read the questions aloud. Allow students a minute to reflect, and then say: *Who wants to share out? I'll call on the first hand I see.*

Call on the first hand and ask them to share out. Students may say they feel *interested, worried, curious, or concerned*. Explain that **breaking news** is *information being reported about an event that has just happened or is currently occurring*. (**Slide 5**)

2. **Explain** that you said "I'll call on the first hand I see" because wanting to be first is a big part of breaking news. Ask: *Have you ever wanted to be the first one to tell someone something or share something online?*

Invite students to respond and explain that there are many reasons individuals and news outlets want to be first. Ask: *Why do you think that is? Why do people want to be first to report something?*

Invite students to respond. Capture their answers in the chart on **Slide 6**. Possible responses may include:

For Individuals	For News Outlets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gain more followers, "likes," and shares - Be viewed as important or more knowledgeable - Excitement of the moment; being in the know 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have more viewers/readers - Make more money because of higher ratings/more advertisers - Be well-known or famous - A reporter wanting to be promoted or gain recognition

3. **Project Slide 7** and explain that because of technology and everyone being connected all the time, being first means actually reporting something as it's happening or at least right after. This creates the **24/7 news cycle**, which refers to *24-hour, seven-day-a-week investigating and reporting of news via television, radio, print, online, and mobile app devices*. News outlets are battling to report the news first, which means we get news faster, but it also means we have to be more careful about making sure news is accurate.

Analyze: **Breaking Down Breaking News**

20 mins.

1. **Distribute** the **Breaking News! Student Handout** and project **Slide 8**. Students are going to first focus on Part 1: Skatepark Story.

Ask: *Let's imagine you just received these news alerts on your phone or device you're using. What would you think is happening? Write your initial thoughts in the first column (Part 1) on your handout.*

Allow students a few minutes to capture their responses, and then have them share out.

2. **Point** students to Part 2 of the handout and read the directions aloud. Call on students to read the article aloud to the class. Allow time for students to work in groups to identify what was missing from the news alerts and complete **the second column from Part 1**.
3. **Invite** students to share out. Use the **Teacher Version** to verify missing details.
4. **Explain** that although it can be hard to tell whether a breaking news story is missing something, there are a few things you can look for. Project **Slide 9** and review the callouts.

For the third callout, explain that **bias** is when someone *includes their own opinion about a topic or uses words and phrases that lead the reader to feel a certain way*. (**Slide 10**) Bias can be found even in credible reporting.

5. **Review** "Critical Eye for Breaking News Tips" on **Slide 11**. Have students **fill in Part 3** of their handout as you read to them. Emphasize that whenever a news story is breaking, students should resist the temptation to react right away. Instead, they should slow down and try to get the full story.

Apply: **Canceled Concert**

10 mins.

1. **Distribute** the **Canceled Concert? Student Handout (Slide 12)** and read the directions. In pairs, have students analyze the news alerts to identify any clues that they might not be getting an accurate story. Have them answer the three questions on the handout.

Use the **Teacher Version** to review answers with students.

Wrap Up: **Trusted Source**

5 mins.

1. Ask: *Why do you think it's important to get the full story before reacting to or sharing breaking news?*

Invite students to respond. Highlight the possible consequences of sharing false or incomplete information.

- Causes people to make choices based on incorrect or incomplete information.
- Confuses people.
- Creates unnecessary arguments or divides people over issues.
- Blurs the lines of truth and falsehood.

2. Have students complete the **Lesson Quiz**. Send home the **Family Activity** and **Family Tips**.**Extension Activity:**

Have students explore **Checkology** by the News Literacy Project, and complete the InfoZones lesson for more practice identifying newsworthy sources and evaluating breaking news. Print out the **Legit-O-Meter** poster. Have students use it to evaluate news stories they find online.



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