

**Final Project**  
*Integrating Technology into the Classroom*

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## **Creating a Classroom Newspaper**

Language Arts  
Grades 3 & 4

### **Description:**

This unit is designed to teach students the many facets involved in creating a classroom newspaper. Skills include prewriting, writing, revising, editing, drawing, scanning, taking pictures with a digital camera, using the computer and understanding how to use Microsoft Publisher in creating, designing and publishing their work.

### **Faith Integration:**

Since the students will be collecting stories from around the school and also outside of school, we will be using nature as part of our narratives. Also with every edition, the students might choose a favorite Bible verse to print and illustrate. If space is available, the students may also write their own version of a favorite Bible story, incorporating themselves into the story (example: Daniel, my best friend, was thrown into the Lions' Den, I was an Israelite child crossing the Red Sea).

### Curriculum Benchmarks:

(1) Technology standards (NETS): "Students will use technology tools to enhance learning...and promote creativity,...prepare publications and produce other creative works."

- (2) Students will collect and compose news stories
- (3) Students will revise, proofread and edit stories
- (4) Students will take pictures with a digital camera
- (5) Students will download pictures onto the computer
- (6) Students will learn to use Microsoft Publisher templates for creating and publishing their stories with digital pictures
- 7) Students will demonstrate a variety of skills by typing, using spell check, justifying margins, experimenting with different fonts, downloading pictures, etc. in the publication of their newspaper

### Materials/Hardware/Software:

computer  
printer  
24 lb heavyweight paper (prevents ink leaking through the pages)  
paper/pencils  
digital camera, program, connections  
Microsoft Publisher software  
scanner & software

### Teacher Preparation

- 1) several newspapers each week to examine for models
- 2) software for camera & Microsoft Publisher ready on computer
- 3) weekly mini lessons (*see page 8 for ideas*)
- 4) folder in which to keep unfinished work
- 5) preparation of a computer schedule (*allowing for total number of kids and total number of computers in your classroom*)

### Student Preparation

- 1) know how to take pictures on a digital camera
- 2) know how to download pictures
- 3) know how to scan and save artwork, etc.
- 4) know how to navigate Microsoft Publisher until newspaper template is set up
- 5) know how to save their work

### Time Frame

*This unit is structured to be a one day a week class, with the intention of producing one newspaper by the end of each month, totaling seven or eight by the end of the school year. Below (under Activities/Procedures) is an outline of the first several class periods until the newspaper template is set up using Microsoft Publisher. A suggested weekly schedule is found on page 4 for when students are able to load their pictures, artwork and articles onto the template.*

### Activities/Procedures

- 1) Begin by distributing newspapers among students to examine and discuss
- 2) Introduce the idea of creating their own classroom newspaper
- 3) Read story *The Furry News: How to Make a Newspaper* (Loreen Leedy, published by Holiday House, March 1993, available in used form through Amazon.com)  
*This is a book based on a zany group of animal characters that explain how a newspaper is organized and published, hopefully motivating students to try one themselves*
- 6) Determine the extent of news to be covered, what would be of general interest (field trips, new kids, special activities, what's going on in their own classroom, riddles, jokes, puzzles, cartoons, etc.); possibly divide the class into news departments, making each group or individual student (depending on your class size) responsible for gathering their own news and taking their own pictures

- 7) Brainstorm a name for your newspaper, your regular columns and features, your artwork space, etc.
- 8) Go to the computer where the teacher will introduce the newspaper software (Microsoft Publisher); load a newspaper template and begin (type in using whatever font) with the name for the paper, including *Volume One Issue One*, and save under the *name of the paper* or just *Newspaper*; this will begin your permanent template.
- 9) Take a picture with the digital camera and demonstrate how to load the picture onto the front page of the newspaper; have the students repeat the same
- 10) Allow them to "dictate" an article to you and show them how to fill in the story in the template article sections, including the caption; have students repeat the procedure with a made-up article of their own (they might handwrite it first if you so choose) until they understand the concept of how to do it (good time to insert a mini lesson on news writing).
- 11) After an article is put on the template, show them how to edit by using *Spell Check* and how to set the *Justify* margins. Encourage them to read their article two or three times to check for errors. Introduce journalism terms such as "copy" and tell them a first attempt is a "sloppy copy" until their article is free from errors.
- 12) Finally, print their "first page" attempt, showing them how to print from the program; make enough copies for everyone.

## Suggested Weekly Schedule

*These activities are based on four days a month after kids are familiar with technology - the activities can be broken down any way that would fit your classroom*

### Week One

- a) Begin *each session* with a 10 - 15 minute mini lesson. Page 8 offers a suggested list of mini lesson topics that can cover any area of language arts that would naturally be included in a newspaper.
- b) Decide what to include in your paper this month, what pictures to take, who takes them, who will write what articles, what artwork to include, where to place it in the paper
- c) Allow time to begin writing, drawing, designing puzzles, writing riddles, putting themselves in a favorite Bible story, etc.
- d) Collect work and put in a folder YOU won't lose!

### Week Two

- a) Begin with mini lesson (suggested topic or your own)
- b) Distribute work from last week
- c) Discuss: where are you in your article? are you still working on the drawing? how is the riddle coming? how about a quiz or crossword puzzle? are their pictures we still need to take? what about the dumb jokes page? what Bible story are you working on? how do you fit in it?
- d) Allow time to complete or continue work
- e) Collect their work and put it in your folder

### Week Three

- a) Begin with mini lesson (suggested topic or your own)
- b) Kids revise their work prior to:
- c) Putting their work on computer (see your computer schedule)
- d) Students not finished continue working
- e) Collect work and put it in your folder

## Week Four

- a) begin with mini lesson
- b) finish up any remaining work on paper
- c) print
- d) distribute

### Management Plan

- 1) This unit plan is designed for at least one hour, one day a week for group work on the newspaper
- 2) Depending on the size of your classroom crowd, divide the students into work sections so everyone is busy with something:
  - a) handwriting their articles
  - b) at the computer putting an article in place
  - c) creating artwork to be scanned and downloaded
  - d) using the digital camera
- 3) Refer to your computer schedule so everyone has time to become familiar with the software. *You may want to have two newspaper templates to begin with, one for practice, one for the actual paper*

### Ethics Plan

The ethics plan is aimed at being sure there is equality in the classroom as far as computer use is concerned. All students, regardless of race, gender, loud, quiet, manageable or unmanageable (!) will be allowed equal scheduled access to the computer. The activities utilized on the computer through technology will be designed to match the interest levels of all students, not just the "good" ones. Help is to be given to all students and negative attitudes, while they will not be tolerated, will be explored, not just "squashed." Finally, praise will be given for accomplishments and willing "attempts," not just for those who cooperate the best.

Assessment/Evaluation

CATEGORY	4 Excellent	3 Good	2 Satisfactory	1 Needs Improvement
<b>First Draft</b>	a) has good lead sentence b) organized c) good information/ideas d) beginning of final draft	includes at least three elements	includes at least two elements	includes one or no elements
<b>Revision</b>	a) story is more cohesive b) no off topic sentences c) more vivid word choice d) sense of audience	includes at least three elements	includes at least two elements	includes one or no elements
<b>Editing/Mechanics</b>	no errors in:  a) capitalization b) punctuation c) grammar d) spelling e) consistently follows rules for standard written English	one or two errors in:  a) capitalization b) punctuation c) grammar d) spelling e) generally follows rules for standard written English	several errors in:  a) capitalization b) punctuation c) grammar d) spelling e) some inconsistency in following rules of standard written English	many errors in:  a) capitalization b) punctuation c) grammar d) spelling e) basically does not follow rules of standard written English
<b>Holistic Process Scoring</b>	writing demonstrates all aspects of the writing process; final draft is clear, interesting, free of mechanical errors	writing demonstrates most of the aspects of the writing process; final draft has good ideas and few mechanical errors	writing demonstrates some of the aspects of the writing process; final draft has an emerging style with frequent mechanical errors	writing demonstrates little or no aspects of the writing process; no clear ideas with many mechanical errors

<b>Technology Skills</b>	student demonstrates excellent skills using the computer for newspaper project, including software, camera, scanner, Internet access	student demonstrates good skills using the computer for newspaper project, including software, camera, scanner, Internet access	student demonstrates fair number of skills in using the computer for newspaper project, including software, camera, scanner, Internet access	student demonstrates poor skills in using the computer for newspaper project, including software, camera, scanner, Internet access
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*Follow-up/Extension Activities*

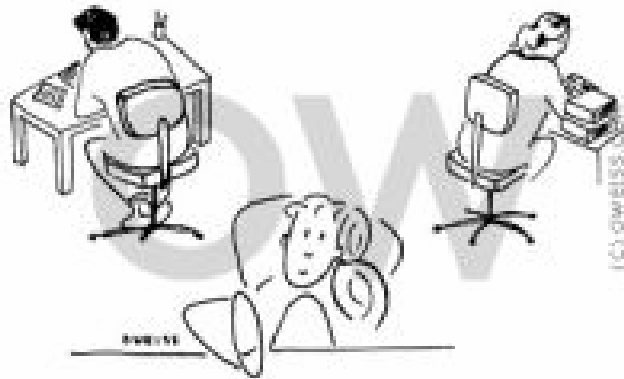
- 1) Plan a field trip to the local newspaper office
- 2) Invite a reporter to come talk to the class

# Suggested List of Newspaper Mini Lessons

writing headlines  
writing leads  
including who, what, when, where, why  
article writing  
writing good sentences, including:  
using nouns, verbs, adjectives, clarity  
proofreading your story  
developing an editing checklist  
writing good paragraphs  
learning journalism terms  
writing different kinds of stories  
drawing cartoons  
how to interview someone  
taking a survey  
making a graph (using a spreadsheet)  
writing a sports story  
writing want ads  
using descriptive words in your writing  
how to write quotes  
punctuation  
photojournalism  
develop an advice column

# Eternal Early Finishers

*ideas to keep them busy!*



design a logo for the newspaper  
design comic strips to scan  
design a word search  
read their own articles to each other  
write about a favorite Bible story putting  
yourself in the story  
use peer review for revision  
write stories that continue from issue to  
issue