

Write On Wednesday with The Seattle Times

July 7, 2016

Learning Objectives

- Students will analyze the structure of “hard news” and “soft news” newspaper articles.
- Students will create their own original newspaper articles.

CCSS Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.5

Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of the ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.5

Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7-12.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

Materials

- **Sunday, July 3, 2016** e-Edition of The Seattle Times
- **Computers (and/or pencil and paper)**

Warm Up/Reading: Types of News

With a partner, look through The Seattle Times Sunday, July 3rd e-edition and read the following stories, categorized as either “Hard” or “Soft” news (you might want to split the articles up between the two of you). From what you read, brainstorm a definition for hard news and a definition for soft news. What kind of topic does each article cover? What is the tone of each article? What characteristics do the hard news articles share? What characteristics do the soft news articles share? What is different between hard and soft news?

Hard:

- FBI investigators question Clinton over email server (Main, A2)
- Death toll reaches 28 after commando raid ends Dhaka standoff (Main, A4)

- Germs cling to hard-to-clean medical scopes, study confirms (NW Sunday, B1)

Soft:

- Quiet fireworks let colors do the popping (Main, A6)
- Ageless Wonder (Sports, C1)
- Expanding Tribal youths' universe (NW Sunday B1)

Discussion: Defining Hard News vs. Soft News

Compile a class definition for hard news and a class definition for soft news. Compare your class definitions with the following definitions from encyclopedia Britannica:

- *Traditionally, so-called **hard news** relates the circumstances of a recent event or incident considered to be of general local, regional, national, or international significance. Hard news generally concerns issues, politics, economics, international relations, welfare, and scientific developments.*
- *By contrast, **soft news** usually centers on the lives of individuals and has little, if any, perceived urgency and focuses on human-interest stories and celebrity.*

Are these definitions similar to what you came up with as a class? Can you think of any examples in which the line between hard news and soft news might be less clear? What makes each type of article effective? Which type of news do you find most engaging? Challenge: see if you can find an article that could be potentially both hard and soft news.

Write On: Story Remix

As a class, brainstorm a list of topics that interest/appeal to you. Choose one of the topics and write your own news story about it. After you finish, reflect: did you write your article as a hard or a soft news story? How do you know? Could you have written in the opposite way? Did any of your classmates choose the same topic as you? If so, did they write their story as hard or soft news?