

## **Israel/Palestine Media Literacy - Breaking News**

Variation of [Common Sense Education This Just In!](#) and [The Sift: Breaking News in a War Zone](#)

### **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, discuss the downsides of our "always-on" news media culture, and identify the unique challenges of breaking news during a time of war.

### **Grade Level**

8-12

### **Time**

Total: 60 minutes

Warm up (10 minutes), Breaking Down Breaking News (20 minutes), Breaking News in a War Zone (20 minutes), wrap up (5 minutes)

### **Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- Define breaking news, and explain 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.
- Explain the necessity of professional and ethical standards to producing quality journalism and apply understanding of those standards to discern credible information and sources for themselves.

### **New Jersey Content Standards**

9.4.5.IML.1: Evaluate digital sources for accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance.

9.4.8.IML.2: Identify specific examples of distortion, exaggeration, or misrepresentation of information.

9.4.12.IML.2: Evaluate digital sources for timeliness, accuracy, perspective, credibility of the source, and relevance of information, in media, data, or other resources.

N.J.A.C. 6A:8-1.1(a)3: Twenty-first century themes and skills, including critical media literacy, integrated into all content standards areas.

## Common Core Standards

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

## Resources Needed

- [Breaking News Slides](#)
- Breaking News [Student](#) and [Instructor](#) Handouts
- Instructor device with internet and projector access
- Student devices for [lesson quiz](#)

## Warm-Up Activity

1. Project **Slide 1** 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 2**)

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 3**. Possible responses may include:

### For Individuals

- Gain more followers, "likes," and shares
- Be viewed as important or more knowledgeable
- Excitement of the moment; being in the know

### For News Outlets

- 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 4** 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.

## Breaking Down Breaking News

1. **Distribute** the **Breaking News! Student Handout** (Appendix A) and project **Slides 5-7**. Students are going to first focus on Part 1.

*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 **Slides 8-10** 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 11**) Bias can be found even in credible reporting.

5. **Review** "Critical Eye for Breaking News Tips" on **Slide 12**. 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.

## Breaking News in a War Zone

1. **Distribute** the [Dig Deeper: Gaza Hospital Blast Student Handout](#).
2. Read “[Confusion Over Gaza Hospital Blast Shows Challenge for Journalists Covering Israel-Hamas Conflict](#)” (Alexandra Bruell, The Wall Street Journal).
3. Use the handout to take notes on how various news organizations covered the Gaza hospital blast on Oct. 17, 2023.
4. Write a headline to inform the public about the Gaza hospital blast.

## Wrap-Up Activity

**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.

Have students complete the [Lesson Quiz](#).

Optional: send home the [Family Activity](#) and [Family Tips](#).

## Appendix A: Breaking News Student Handout

### Part 1: Directions

Use the news alerts below to complete the "What I Think Is Happening" column in the table that follows.



**The Seattle Times** 🟡 @seattletimes · Dec 4



The stock dropped 1.6% on Monday, declining for a 11th consecutive session in what is the longest rout since **Starbucks'** public debut in 1992.



**Jane Doe**  
@JaneDoe



My friend who works at Starbucks told me she had a bunch of her shifts cut because of the company's recent financial losses. It's sad for the workers but the boycott is working! Keep it up!

2:22 PM · Dec 7, 2023



**Starbucks Workers United**  
@SBWorkersUnited



We have an idea on how to help Starbucks with slumping sales 🤔

Stop ignoring demands for better business practices!!! 🙏

News Source	What I Think Is Happening	What's Missing or Inaccurate?
Seattle Times Social Media Post		
Jane Doe Social Media Post		
Starbucks Workers United Social Media Post		

**Part 2: Directions**

Read the news story below and work with your group to complete the "What's Missing or Inaccurate?" column from Part 1.

**[Starbucks suffers record 11-day rout as sales concerns build](#)**

By Janet Freund and Katrina Compoli, Bloomberg

Starbucks shares suffer a record run of losses as concern builds that sales trends at the coffee giant have cooled in recent weeks.

The stock dropped 1.6% on Monday, declining for a 11th consecutive session in what is the longest rout since Seattle-based Starbucks' public debut in 1992. In total, the slump has erased 9.4% of Starbucks' market value, a decline of nearly \$12 billion...

The sales slowdown was driven by softer trends at Starbucks, analyst Matthew Goodman wrote in a note on Dec. 1. This marks the third straight week of decelerating trends amid boycotts and recent labor strikes, including on Red Cup Day (Nov. 16), which affected as many as 200 locations in the US.

**Part 3: Directions**

Fill in the blanks below as the teacher reviews the **Critical Eye for Breaking News** tips.

Before reacting, slow down and...

- Check the \_\_\_\_\_. Is the news from a reliable news organization?
- ★ If not, it may be questionable. See if other news organizations are reporting the same thing.
  
- Look to see \_\_\_\_\_. Does the article mention important details that aren't yet known?
- ★ If so, it may be better to wait for the whole story before deciding what to think or sharing.
  
- Analyze for \_\_\_\_\_. Does the author or source organization have an agenda or purpose for talking about the story?
- ★ If so, look for a different source.

## Appendix B: Breaking News Instructor Handout

### Part 1: Directions

Use the news alerts below to complete the "What I Think Is Happening" column in the table that follows.



**The Seattle Times** ✓ @seattletimes · Dec 4



The stock dropped 1.6% on Monday, declining for a 11th consecutive session in what is the longest rout since **Starbucks'** public debut in 1992.



**Jane Doe**  
@JaneDoe



My friend who works at Starbucks told me she had a bunch of her shifts cut because of the company's recent financial losses. It's sad for the workers but the boycott is working! Keep it up!

2:22 PM · Dec 7, 2023



**Starbucks Workers United**  
@SBWorkersUnited



We have an idea on how to help Starbucks with slumping sales 🤔

Stop ignoring demands for better business practices!!! 🙏



News Source	What I Think Is Happening	What's Missing or Inaccurate?
Seattle Times Social Media Post	Starbucks is having unprecedented financial problems.	Starbucks's financial problems are unprecedented and have been impacted by boycotts and strikes.
Jane Doe Social Media Post	The Starbucks financial losses are because of a boycott and workers are losing shifts.	The boycotts are one reason that Starbucks is experiencing losses. There is no confirmed evidence that workers are losing shifts.
Starbucks Workers United Social Media Post	The Starbucks financial losses are because of their labor practices.	The strikes due to labor practices are one reason that Starbucks is experiencing losses.

## Part 2: Directions

Read the news story below and work with your group to complete the "What's Missing or Inaccurate?" column from Part 1.

### [Starbucks suffers record 11-day rout as sales concerns build](#)

By Janet Freund and Katrina Compoli, Bloomberg

Starbucks shares suffer a record run of losses as concern builds that sales trends at the coffee giant have cooled in recent weeks.

The stock dropped 1.6% on Monday, declining for a 11th consecutive session in what is the longest rout since Seattle-based Starbucks' public debut in 1992. In total, the slump has erased 9.4% of Starbucks' market value, a decline of nearly \$12 billion...

The sales slowdown was driven by softer trends at Starbucks, analyst Matthew Goodman wrote in a note on Dec. 1. This marks the third straight week of decelerating trends amid boycotts and recent labor strikes, including on Red Cup Day (Nov. 16), which affected as many as 200 locations in the US.

## Part 3: Directions

Fill in the blanks below as the teacher reviews the **Critical Eye for Breaking News** tips.

Before reacting, slow down and...

- Check the **source**. Is the news from a reliable news organization?

- ★ If not, it may be questionable. See if other news organizations are reporting the same thing.
  
- Look to see **if there's more information to come**. Does the article mention important details that aren't yet known?
- ★ If so, it may be better to wait for the whole story before deciding what to think or sharing.
  
- Analyze for **bias**. Does the author or source organization have an agenda or purpose for talking about the story?
- ★ If so, look for a different source.