Unit 2.3

We are journalists

Publishing a newsletter

1 About this unit

Software: Microsoft Word / Microsoft PowerPoint® / Purple Mash 2Publish+
Outcome: A school newsletter

Introduction
Do children in your class enjoy talking about, and celebrating, what happens at school? How often do they get the chance to share news with everyone in the school community? In this unit, the children get the opportunity to publish a school newsletter to be distributed to children and parents.

Assessment
This unit covers ICT AF1 and AF3. For a more detailed analysis of the assessment focuses addressed and suggestions for progression, see page 28.

Curriculum and Framework links

Primary Framework
› Literacy: Non-fiction – Non-chronological reports

ICT PoS
› Finding things out (1a, b)
› Developing ideas and making things happen (2a, b)
› Exchanging and sharing information (3a, b)
› Reviewing, modifying and evaluating work as it progresses (4a, c)
› Breadth of study (5b, c)

Suggested subject links
› Literacy: Writing is varied to suit the purpose and reader, and ideas are developed and assembled on screen.
› Art and design: Children decide on the positioning of content in the layout of their school newsletter.
› Citizenship: This unit provides an opportunity for the children to contribute to the life of the class and school.
› This unit could link to any subject if the newsletter or any of the articles are related to topics the children are studying, or have studied.

Every Child Matters
› Enjoy and achieve
› Make a positive contribution
› Stay safe

Learning expectations
Children work in groups to produce an article about something that has happened at school. Collectively, the class collate the articles to produce a newsletter that is sent out, or emailed, to children and parents.

By the end of this unit, children will have achieved the following learning objectives:
› To know and follow the rules for keeping safe and communicating responsibly online
› To develop word-processing skills
› To develop skills in combining images and text
› To gain skills in digital photography, including taking, selecting and importing images
› To develop collaboration skills when working as a group
› To develop an understanding of their intended audience
› To suggest suitable improvements to their own and others’ work

Variations to try
› The newsletter could report on events and people in the local community rather than being focused just on the school.
› Children could produce a magazine about themselves and their lives at home.
› Children could produce a fictional newsletter called News Tales. It could report on traditional tales as if they were real events, and contain articles such as ‘Woman sleeps for 100 years’. (There are possible links, here, with Unit 2.2 – We are painters.)
› This unit could be linked to a topic being studied in another subject area. For instance, if linked to history, children could produce a newsletter about a particular event / time. If linked to science, they could produce a newsletter reporting a series of experiments they have completed.


2 Getting ready

**Things to do**

- Read the Core section of Running the task on pages 26–27.
- Decide what software you would like to use. Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint® and Purple Mash 2Publish+ can all be used to create articles.

Video tutorials are supplied with 2Simple software.
- Spend around 45 minutes familiarising yourself with the most appropriate software / tools.
- Read the Extensions section of Running the task on pages 26–27. Do you want to use any of the extras provided?
- Ensure that parental permission for taking and using children’s photographs covers use within a publication that will be shared within school and beyond school, if this is appropriate.
- Speak to your ICT technician about using available discussion forum tools or comment tools on your learning platform.

**Things you need**

- Ensure sufficient laptops and / or computers are available, or book the ICT suite, if necessary.
- Ensure appropriate software is installed on the laptops / computers.
- Ensure that you have uploaded the facts table and article template to the school network or learning platform, and that you have access to them from Step 2 onwards of Running the task.
- A selection of newspapers and links to online news articles.
- Digital cameras (one per group should be sufficient).
- Video cameras, audio recorders and microphones, if required for interviews.
- Paper and pencils for note taking.
- Visualiser, or data projector, if appropriate (see Step 1 of Running the task).

**Think about . . .**

- Make sure that you have a variety of children’s newspapers / news sites to suit a range of abilities. Some children will need pictures with captions, but other children will be able to cope with more text.
- It might be worth visiting [www.newspaperindex.com/](http://www.newspaperindex.com/) before starting this unit to collate suitable links into a list for children.
- When organising roles within the groups, ensure that, eventually, each child has a go at everything.
- There are only a few newspapers aimed at children, but they can also look at magazines and news websites aimed at their age group.

**e-safety**

- School policy should be followed for the use of any photographs or videos of the children.
- This unit provides an opportunity for children to consider appropriate and responsible behaviour in taking and using photographs or videos. In general, permission should be obtained from the subject of any photograph or video.
- Take precautions over the protection of children’s identity if they share work they create with the wider community, particularly if this includes their comments, or photographs of themselves.

**Useful links**

Before you start, you might want to refer to these weblinks.

- Wallwisher is an online notice board maker. See [www.wallwisher.com/](http://www.wallwisher.com/).
- The BBC Newsround website is a good starting point. Visit [www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/news/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/news/).
- Although aimed towards lower KS2 upwards, First News is a useful publication, available online and in a paper-based format (it is a subscription-based product). See [http://info.firstnews.co.uk/](http://info.firstnews.co.uk/).
- Making the News (MTN) 2 is a website designed to introduce children to online media publishing and broadcasting. Registration allows you to create a home page for MTN for your school, and accounts for your children. See [http://mtn2.e2bn.org/mtn/](http://mtn2.e2bn.org/mtn/).
Watch a news programme, such as BBC Newsround, and talk about the similarities and differences between this and a newspaper. (Ensure your school has a valid TV licence and that you are covered by an ERA licence, this is a short one-line introduction followed by more detailed information, similar to a newspaper, and can include action as it happens (live action). Encourage the children to watch BBC Newsround at home, so that they can discuss the news in school the next day. When considering what articles to include in their newsletter, the children could consult other children and adults in school.

Core:

**Step 1**

- Use a visualiser or data projector to show some of the basic features of a newspaper. (Alternatively, you could project an electronic version of First News on the IWB – see Useful links.) Encourage the children to think about the structure of the newspaper by asking some questions, e.g. ‘Why are the titles in a larger font?’; ‘How are captions used?’; ‘What are the journalists’ names?’; ‘Talk about why captions are used for photographs in newspapers.’ Explain to the children that they are going to be journalists and produce articles about school life for a school newsletter. As a class, brainstorm the different types of articles found in a newspaper, e.g. news, sport, cartoons, letters, features, and reviews. These ideas could be collated using Wallwisher (see Useful links) or a discussion forum tool on your learning platform, if available. Decide which articles will go in the newsletter.

**Step 2**

- Get the children to agree on the criteria for the articles, e.g. each article will need to be at least eight lines long, have an eye-catching title, be factual, etc.
- Split the children into groups of 5–6 and assign an article type (as discussed in Step 1) to each group. You may wish to give the children a brief outline of what their article will be about, e.g. a newspaper review, a ‘day in the life’ feature, etc. Remind the children how to use a digital camera, including safety issues, e.g. where to find this file and remind them how and where to save it.
- Allow the children time to gather all the information they need to write the article (for example, by asking questions, noting down their own experiences, or interviewing staff) and to take any photographs they want to include.

Extensions:

- Depending on time, children could use mP3 recorders to interview the people who are going to feature in their articles (ensure children are confident in using the mP3 players beforehand). These recordings could then be imported into the article (see Unit 1.3 – We are storytellers).
Step 3
- Show children where to find the article template (provided on the CD-ROM) and remind them how and where to save it. If the children used the facts table in Step 2, show them how to copy and paste this text directly into their article. Alternatively, ask children to type directly into the text boxes in the article template.
- Encourage children to think about how to format their text, e.g. could they use different font sizes and styles for different elements of the article?
- Encourage the children to view all the photographs they have taken and to choose the most appropriate one for their article. Some children may need support uploading and saving photographs on to the computer. Demonstrate how to insert their picture into the article template.
- Once each group has completed their article, remind them of the article criteria agreed at the beginning of Step 2. Encourage them to read through their article and edit it, if necessary.

Step 4
- Once all the articles are complete, they need to be collated into one document. Support each group as they open their article and copy and paste each element (title, text, picture and caption) into the class newsletter. You may wish to show children how to select all elements by pressing ‘Control’ and ‘A’ on the keyboard at the same time. Remind the children to save the document as each article is added.
- As a class, upload the newsletter to the school learning platform or website.
- Show the children how to leave comments about the newsletter.
- Encourage children to show the newsletter to their family, friends and other children in school, asking them to leave feedback on what they like best by adding comments to the learning platform, or emailing you. Remind the children about responsible use of the Internet: they should not make a comment they would not like someone else saying to them.

Step 5
- Evaluate the newsletter as a class, taking account of any feedback received. Discuss how the next edition could be improved.
- Ask the children to complete the self-assessment sheet, which is on the CD-ROM.

Some children could be given the option to research and produce one or more articles on their own, outside of school.

With support, children could copy and paste their article text into a school/class blog page, and upload any associated photographs.

With support, children could create a class email to the head teacher explaining how they created their newsletter, and attaching the newsletter file.

With support, the children could upload their news articles to Making the News 2 (see Useful links for more information).

The children could read news articles that children from other schools have written and decide which ones they consider to be the most successful in terms of engaging the reader.

Share your children’s work at www.switchedonict.co.uk.
**Assessment guidance**

Use the text below to relate the ICT skills children demonstrate to the assessment focuses and National Curriculum levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AF1 Planning, developing and evaluating your work</th>
<th>AF3 Finding, using and communicating information</th>
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**Children working at LEVEL 1 should be able to:**

- Explore the newsletter template
- Understand that a newsletter can be created using ICT tools
- Talk about how they used ICT to create their article

- Select a picture to use in an article
- Add text to an article
- Follow instructions about communicating safely online

**Children working at LEVEL 2 should be able to:**

- Combine text and images in their article and edit some aspects of their work
- Comment on how effective their article was at conveying information
- Discuss how they used software to create their article

- Find and select information and photographs for their article
- Use text and images together to good effect, understanding that they should reinforce each other
- Remember some ways to communicate safely online, and and know these apply to their use of ICT outside school

**Children working at LEVEL 3 should be able to:**

- Plan how they will search for information and structure their article
- Discuss the strategies they used to find information for their article
- Format and edit their work to improve clarity and purpose
- Discuss with the class how successful they have been in creating an article for their audience
- Evaluate the feedback they receive about the group’s article, and the newsletter, and make improvements as necessary

- Select the most appropriate information and images to include in their article and explain the choices they make
- Use text and images together to good effect, ensuring they enhance each other
- Understand and apply the rules for keeping safe and communicating responsibly online, inside and outside of school
- Understand that many images on the Internet have copyright and should not be used without permission

**Progression**

The following units will allow your children to develop these skills further:

- Unit 3.2 – We are comic writers
- Unit 4.1 – We are co-authors
- Unit 5.3 – We are bloggers
- Unit 6.6 – We are publishers
Taking it further

When you’ve finished, you might want to extend the project in the following ways.

- Continue to publish regular issues of the newsletter, perhaps with other classes contributing articles. Ideas for articles could include Sports Day, local issues, a visit from a VIP, etc.
- Consider establishing a school club that produces a newsletter or podcasts which could be uploaded to the school’s learning platform or website.
- Look for opportunities to use collaboration tools, such as Wallwisher, to collect ideas for other topics and subject areas.
- Encourage children to save future work on the learning platform for other children to see.

Cross-curricular ideas

Practical suggestions to bring this unit alive in the classroom.

Role-play

- Children could help to plan and create a newspaper office role-play area. This could contain laptops and / or computers for the journalists to write articles for the newspaper, and cameras for the photographers to use. It could also include notepads and pencils and MP3 recorders for the journalists to use when they go out and interview people. The technologies could be real or defunct, such as old computer keyboards and old mobile phones.
- Children could help to plan and create a television news studio role-play area. This could contain a news desk with a video camera so that the children could film themselves as newsreaders.

Classroom ideas

- A display explaining what a newspaper is, what it contains and the basic elements of an article. This could capture the discussions in Core Step 1.
- Research local newspapers and their history, either online or through a local library.
- Children could create original artwork to illustrate events covered in the newsletter.
- An important item of news could form the basis of a school assembly.
- Children could take part in a newspaper club.

Visits

- Invite a journalist or press photographer to talk to the children about his or her work.
- A visit to a museum that includes the history of photography, such as the National Media Museum, Bradford; The British Museum, London; or the Fox Talbot Museum, near Chippenham.

Weblinks

- BBC Bitesize offers some mini-games to help build confidence in sentence construction and punctuation: www.bbc.co.uk/schools/ks1bitesize/literacy/.