Reporting the news

Journalists working to very tight deadlines deliver their ‘copy’ by phone or email. If they don’t make the deadline, the paper goes to press without their piece and editors won’t want to use their work again. This is your chance to have a go at this kind of writing.

You will write a report on the events in Pagus Parvus for the local newspaper, ‘The Parvian Gazette’. You will have to decide your own journalistic style. You could either write in the chatty, informal style of a tabloid newspaper, or in the formal style of a broadsheet newspaper.

Task one

Find an example of a ‘local interest’ story from a tabloid newspaper and a broadsheet newspaper and look at the differences in style between the two.

Task two

Look at the example from your chosen style of newspaper and make a flowchart which maps out the structure of the article. You will use a similar structure when you come to write your own article.

Planning and drafting your report

1) Think through the following stages to make sure you meet the deadline and sell your story.
   a. Find a story to tell that the public will be interested in – you could focus on the mysterious Joe Zabbidou, for example, or you could focus on the downfall of Jeremiah Ratchet.
   b. Plan the structure, using as a model the structure that you examined in task two above.

2) Plan your piece, paragraph by paragraph. Write notes to remind yourself of any facts, details or quotations you want to include. If you want to make up some quotations from the Pagus Parvians to add detail to your story, you could do that. You could also make a list of words which you think will help your readers picture the scene or understand the issue.

3) Draft an exciting headline to attract the reader’s interest to your story in ‘The Parvian Gazette’.

Editing

Once written, the report goes to an editor. Editors make sure the report makes sense and is the right number of words. They also add the headline. This needs to both attract the attention of the reader and to give some idea of what the report is about.

You will have to edit your own report, though you can ask a friend or family member to check it for you.

Teacher notes

There is clear potential here to word process these stories and create a class newspaper about the events of the novel. Students could take roles such as editing the stories or typing them up. To reduce the ‘need’ for students to use endless Word Art, use Teachit Publisher as a template.