

**Level:** Pre-intermediate – Intermediate (A2–B1)

**Age:** Teenagers

**Time:** This lesson can be divided up in various ways to suit the time you have with your students. Below are two options that you can choose from depending on the length of your class. However, these are just suggestions and there are many other ways you could divide the lesson up.

60 minutes – Complete all activities in Human interest stories and Creating a human interest story.

45 minutes – Complete all activities in Human interest stories and Creating a human interest story but students describe the stories instead of writing them.

**Note:** These activities can be spread over more than one lesson.

**Summary:** This lesson is divided into two sections: Human interest stories and Creating a human interest story.

Students will (depending on the length of the lesson):

- 1 talk about news stories they've heard or read;
- 2 talk about magazines;
- 3 make their own magazine.

**Key skills:** Writing, speaking

**Subskills:** Using news story language, writing magazine articles

**Materials:** One copy of Human interest stories per student; one copy of Creating a human interest story per pair; scissors, glue, and plain paper for each group

## HUMAN INTEREST STORIES

1 Ask students to mention some news stories they have heard or read recently. Let them briefly exchange some stories. Then ask them if they read magazines. If so, which ones? Write the following items of vocabulary on the board:

*story, news, human interest*

Ask students if they know or can guess what a human interest story is. Explain that this is a term used in journalism to describe news stories that are about people and their problems or achievements. These stories usually cause the reader to feel some kind of emotion such as sympathy, joy, or sadness. Human interest stories are often criticized as not being "real news," but people enjoy reading them, so most newspapers and magazines include at least a few human interest stories.

Ask students if they know the names of any English-language magazines and, if so, what types of magazines they are.

2 Ask the class what kinds of stories human interest magazines tend to publish. Write their suggestions on the board (Possible answers: *celebrity news and interviews, stories about interesting or incredible things that happen to normal people, vacation stories or suggestions, tips and advice about difficult situations in life*).

3 Hand out the Human interest stories worksheet and read through the examples of language for human interest stories with the students. Can they use any of the language in the Phrasebook to talk about the news stories they shared with you at the beginning of the class?

## CREATING A HUMAN INTEREST STORY

1 Hand out copies of the Creating a human interest story worksheet. Explain that they are going to create the content for a fictitious magazine called *Teen Update*. Ask if they know what *update* means (*to give or learn the most recent information about something*) and why they think the magazine has this name (Possible answer: *The magazine has stories and information about things that teens are interested in at the moment*).

2 Now, draw their attention to the incomplete titles on the worksheet. Ask them to read these, and help with any unfamiliar vocabulary.

3 Divide the class into groups and tell them to complete at least four of the titles, either about real people and events or about imaginary ones. The stories the titles refer to can be completely fictitious.

4. Pairs within each group should take responsibility for writing one or more of the stories for the titles they have just created. These can be short and, once again, can contain information that is completely fictitious. Remind them that the language on the Human interest stories



worksheet is there to help them create articles that are as interesting as possible.

5. When the stories are written, the group becomes an editorial team. They cut out the completed headlines and place them above the stories. Group members then read the stories and decide on the order they should appear in the magazine. Once they have decided, students stick the stories onto blank sheets of paper to create the magazine pages. If you are doing this over more than one class, you might want your students to try and find photos of the events or people in their stories to bring to the next class to add to the pages and make the magazine look more real.

6. The final task is to complete the front cover. Once again, the group should decide which stories from the inside pages to include on the front cover and write interesting titles for them. Students could also find photos to add interest. The magazine can now be put together.

7. The finished magazines should be displayed on a table at the front of the class. Groups then take a magazine to read together. When they have read each other's magazines, hold a class vote on which one they enjoyed most.

## HOMework TASK

For homework, students search the internet, or magazines if they have access to them, for good human interest stories. In the following class, they report back on what they found out, using as much language from the Human interest stories worksheet as they can.



## HUMAN INTEREST STORIES

### PHRASEBOOK

#### Writing a human interest story

- Introducing your news story**

It's hard to believe but true!

An unbelievable thing happened yesterday.

Miracles do happen!

This teenager is a real hero / star!

- Making the beginning of a human interest story sound exciting using the present perfect**

... has just announced ...

... has been seen ...

... has agreed to ...

... has confirmed ...

... has just become ...

- Describing people**

amazingly brave

incredibly talented

unbelievably intelligent

(totally / completely / absolutely)

surprised / shocked / amazed

megastar / superstar / hero

the luckiest girl / boy in the world

## CREATING A HUMAN INTEREST STORY

**TRENDING THIS WEEK...**

**EXCLUSIVE**  
INTERVIEWS WITH THE 5 HOTTEST TEEN SPORTS STARS OF THE YEAR

**teen UPDATE**

**IT'S OFFICIAL!**  
Jess-E's parents say "No deal!" to record company!

**FACT OR FICTION?**  
HOW TO KNOW IF THOSE INCREDIBLE STORIES AND PHOTOS ON THE INTERNET ARE REAL

**IS THAT A THING?**  
WEEKLY UPDATE ON ALL THE LATEST APPS AND HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THEM

**FEATURE STORY**  
INCREDIBLE BRAVERY!  
DOG SAVES TEENAGER FROM DROWNING IN RIVER

**PLUS**

- TIPS FOR TALKING TO PARENTS
- HOW TO MAKE A BUDGET
- WHAT'S IN & WHAT'S OUT

**THE TRUTH ABOUT "HARMLESS" GOSSIP**



# teen UPDATE

Trending this week...

Creating a human interest story worksheet

**EXCLUSIVE!**

**IT'S OFFICIAL!**

\_\_\_\_\_ seen in \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Fact or fiction?  
We reveal the truth  
about \_\_\_\_\_

Who's in the news?  
\_\_\_\_\_, of course!

**BREAKING NEWS**

**HOT!**

\_\_\_\_\_ signs contract  
with \_\_\_\_\_!

Exclusive interview  
with \_\_\_\_\_

## Amy's Advice

- A fight with a friend
- Are his parents too strict?
- My sister uses my stuff!
- Go to college or get a job?

## Style update

Wear \_\_\_\_\_ Don't wear \_\_\_\_\_!

## Best new tech device is

\_\_\_\_\_

