

## Broken and distrusting: why Americans are pulling away from the daily news

### Level 3: Advanced – Teacher’s notes

**Article summary:** The article discusses the attitude of many Americans to the news, and concludes that many people avoid it because it is too depressing.

**Time:** 45 – 60 minutes

**Skills:** Reading, Speaking, Writing

**Language focus:** Vocabulary

**Materials needed:** One copy of the worksheet per student

#### 1. Warmer

- a. The purpose of this activity is to introduce the topic of *news* and the way people access it. The newspaper with the biggest circulation in the world is *Yomiuri Shimbun* (Japan) with a daily circulation of over nine million. Nine of the ten newspapers with the biggest circulation are Asian. In tenth position is *USA Today* (the US). There is some doubt about the world’s oldest newspaper, but the *Wiener Zeitung* (Vienna) has been published continuously since 1703. The first actual news programme was broadcast in Detroit, USA, in 1920. Although the founder of *Reuters*, Paul Reuter, was German, he established the news agency in London. With an audience of 2 billion, the Olympic opening ceremony had the biggest audience for a news broadcast. Interestingly, more people watched the funeral of Michael Jackson than watched the funeral of John F. Kennedy. The world’s first 24-hour news broadcaster was *CNN* (started in 1980).

**Key:**

1. Japanese
2. Austrian
3. 1920
4. England
5. 2008 Olympics opening ceremony
6. CNN

- b. Students briefly discuss the questions.

#### 2. Key words

- a. Ask students to do the exercise individually and then compare their answers in pairs or small groups. Point out that the word *hoary* is normally used with the word *joke*, as in ‘That’s a hoary old joke’, for a joke or story that everyone has heard many times before. Note that the word *trough* rhymes with *cough*. A barrage of questions, complaints, or criticism keeps coming in large numbers or amounts, and if it is relentless, it doesn’t stop.

**Key:**

- |                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. <i>untrustworthy</i> | 6. <i>relentless</i> |
| 2. <i>biased</i>        | 7. <i>barrage</i>    |
| 3. <i>overwhelmed</i>   | 8. <i>dissonance</i> |
| 4. <i>drained</i>       | 9. <i>hoary</i>      |
| 5. <i>trough</i>        | 10. <i>viral</i>     |

#### 3. Comprehension check

- a. The answers given are only suggested answers and students may correctly answer the questions in different ways, e.g., in item 4 they may say ‘She stopped watching TV news and waited till later in the day to read newspapers’ or similar.

**Key:**

1. *Because it is depressing or they just don’t believe it.*
2. *Because they think it is untrustworthy or biased.*
3. *They think it might start arguments.*
4. *She stopped watching TV news.*
5. *Because their numbers are growing.*
6. *up*
7. *podcasting*
8. *bad news*
9. *Do people really want good news stories?*
10. *one that predicts a heat wave next week*

#### 4. Key language

- a. Students could be asked to do this exercise individually and then compare their answers in pairs. Encourage them to check their answers in the text. In item 8, the text uses ‘there’s some truth to it’ but *in* is also an acceptable answer.

## Broken and distrusting: why Americans are pulling away from the daily news

### Level 3: Advanced – Teacher's notes

**Key:**

- |              |                   |
|--------------|-------------------|
| 1. <i>of</i> | 5. <i>with</i>    |
| 2. <i>to</i> | 6. <i>of</i>      |
| 3. <i>at</i> | 7. <i>on</i>      |
| 4. <i>to</i> | 8. <i>to (in)</i> |

### 5. Discussion

- a. Allow students time to note down their ideas about each statement and encourage them to say why they agree or disagree with each one.

### 6. In your own words

- a. The task could also be done as homework, and students could then present their reports to the class. A variation of this task is to ask students to report the news from their birthday date. This will ensure everyone presents a different set of information.