The Guardian

one stop english

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

Level 1: Elementary / Pre-Intermediate – 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 *the news.* 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.* 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*

2. Key words

a. Ask students to do the exercise individually and then compare their answers in pairs or small groups. Point out that *roughly* has the same meaning as 'approximately' or 'about'. You can be inundated with various forms of communication – questions, complaints, criticism, requests etc – but the idea is that there is a very large number of these and you may not be able to deal with so many.

Key:

1.	*depressing*	6.	*point out*
2.	*biased*	7.	*appeal*
3.	*drained*	8.	*inundated*
4.	*roughly*	9.	*conflict*
5.	*sceptical*	10.	*instance*

3. Comprehension check

a. Ask students to work individually to answer the questions and then compare their answers in pairs or small groups. The answers given are not the only possible answers. For example, in item 9, students may say 'good news' or similar.

Key:
1. *42%*
2. *Because they think it is biased.*
3. *That the news might create arguments.*
4. *Because their numbers are growing.*
5. *through podcasting*
6. *They think it is too negative.*
7. *exhausted*
8. *good Ukrainians resisting bad Russians*
9. *positive news stories*
10. *the one about hot weather*

4. Key language

a. Students can check their answers in the text after completing the exercise. Note that *constant* can also go with; *change,* but the solution given in the key is the only one which uses all the words.

Key:

1.	*e*	4.	*a*
2.	*c*	5.	*d*
3.	*f*	6.	*b*

5. Discussion

a.   Allow students time to note down their ideas and encourage them to give reasons for their answer.

6. In your own words

a.   This could also be done as homework. Allow students to search for news in their own language and then summarise them in a few sentences in English. Remind them to choose simple news so that they can describe them in English.