

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

### Level 2: 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 the literal meaning of the word *fiend* is a *very evil* person, but it is more frequently used in phrases such as 'fresh air fiend' or 'health fiend', with the meaning given in this exercise.

**Key:**

- |                     |                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. <i>biased</i>    | 6. <i>inundated</i>   |
| 2. <i>drained</i>   | 7. <i>opt out</i>     |
| 3. <i>ration</i>    | 8. <i>appealing</i>   |
| 4. <i>cut out</i>   | 9. <i>acknowledge</i> |
| 5. <i>sceptical</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 1 they may say 'It's the other way round', 'It's the opposite', or similar.

**Key:**

1. *False. Even more people avoid the news in those countries.*
2. *True*
3. *False. She has been actively avoiding the news for years.*
4. *False. She reads them later in the day.*
5. *True*
6. *False. They get news through podcasting.*
7. *True*
8. *True*
9. *True*
10. *False. More people will read the story about a heat wave.*

#### 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 by looking in the text.

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**Key:**

1. *actively avoiding the news for years*
2. *much larger than she would ever have imagined*
3. *waiting until later in the day*
4. *roughly one hundred million American adults*
5. *a lot of very bad news*
6. *things which you can't do very much about*

### 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.