

BBC Learning English

Talk about English

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News and the media



About this script

Please note that this is not a word for word transcript of the programme as broadcast. In the recording process changes may have been made which will not be reflected here.

Jackie: Hello I'm Jackie Dalton. You're listening to Talk About English – live from our offices in London.

Callum: I'm Callum Robertson. Today in the programme

News clips

Jackie: Media and the language of news.

Callum: Your views on the media in your country.

Jackie: And how to win an mp3 player by sending us your own reports.

Callum: That's all coming up in Talk About English.

And our special guest today, who'll be helping us understand the media and the language of news is a very experienced journalist, now Assistant Editor of BBC World Service Business programmes Alex Ritson. Hello.

Alex: (responds)

Jackie: Well, news really is a big topic, with lots of different areas to look at. But let's start simply by looking at what news is. What do we mean by the word 'news'? Obviously it's something that's happened that's reported in newspapers or on television reports. But let's get the perspective of a journalist – Alex for you, what is 'news'?

Alex: (responds)

Jackie: Let's look at some of the language surrounding how news is delivered through the media. I think broadly speaking, nowadays, we can divide it into three main sections. Broadcast news, print news and more recently online.

Callum: Yes, so broadcast journalism means any news that goes out through television or radio – it's broadcast. We've got quite a recent form of journalism now – online journalism, which refers to news published on the internet. Then there's an older form of journalism - print journalism - refers to newspapers, we sometimes talk about 'the printed media', or 'the press', which includes things like magazines as well.

Jackie: And here in the UK we have two main different types of newspaper don't we?

Callum: Yes, they are what we called broadsheet newspapers, which traditionally – although that's changing – were the bigger kinds of newspaper. They're generally seen as taking a more serious look at important stories.

Jackie: So that's broadsheets, the more serious papers, then we also have tabloids.

Callum: (explain tabloids)

Jackie: Alex, so we've got broadsheets and tabloids – traditionally the two types of newspaper, but recently we've seen some changes and the arrival of the 'qualoid'...

Alex: (responds)

Jackie: Do you think the media has a lot of power in the UK?

Alex: (responds)

Jackie: Now let's have a recap of some of the words we just heard.

Recap

Broadcast news – "Television and radio both provide broadcast news."

print journalism – "Some people think print journalism is losing popularity."

online news – "I use the internet everyday to catch up with the latest news online."

broadsheets – "I find broadsheets really boring, they're so intellectual."

tabloids – "As for the tabloids, they're just full of gossip."

Jackie: Now let's look more closely at some of the more recent changes in news, and some of the language that's come with it. One of these is the arrival of 24 Hour News. Alex, can you tell us what this is?

Alex: (explains)

Jackie: What about some of the language that's come about from this or at least phrases that have become more popular because of the rise of 24 hour news?

All: rolling news
breaking news – not new, a term we hear nearly all the time now
news flash
'we bring you the news as it happens'
up to the minute news
news just in
'bringing you live coverage of...'

Jackie: Let's here more examples of this language in use.

Recap

Breaking news...tune in for our 24 hour news coverage...your rolling news channel...news just in...we bring you the news as it happens...bringing you live coverage of

Jackie: We're going to look at another of the more recently developed areas of journalism and news now, which is online journalism – news on the internet. Some people think it's going to lead to the death of the newspaper – people will stop buying newspapers because they'll read the news online instead. Tamsen Booth is the Media Editor of the international weekly newspaper, The Economist. She's going to tell us what she thinks about the future of the newspaper - a word she'll use which it might help you to understand is 'giveaways'.

Callum: A 'giveaway' is something that you give people for free.

Jackie: For example, if you buy a women's magazine you might get a free lipstick with it. The idea being that you're more likely to buy the magazine if you get a free gift with it.

Callum: This was not something that newspapers in the UK, particularly broadsheets, used to do. But that's changed and you often get free CDs or DVDs with newspapers now.

Jackie: Let's listen to Tamsen of the Economist now.

Tamsen

Jackie: Tamsen says more and more people going online means newspapers are dying.

Callum: So couldn't newspapers just survive by putting their material online instead, if that's where more and more people are going for their news?

Jackie: Well Tamsen thinks not. Why does she think newspapers can't survive just by putting all their content online?

Tamsen

Callum: Tamsen said online is not as 'profitable' as print. Which means it doesn't make as much money through advertising. 'Advertising revenue' – the money firms make from advertising is after all what keeps most newspapers alive.

Jackie: She says it's difficult for newspapers because even though they do have to move onto online there's no guarantee - it's not certain – they'll be able to make enough money.

Next we'll hear from Alan Rusbridger, the Editor of one of Britain's broadsheet newspapers, The Guardian. He'll share his views on the future of newspapers.

Callum: We'll hear the phrase 'advertising revenue' again, he'll also talk about 'circulation' – which is how many copies of a newspaper are sold each day or each week. For example, the newspaper with the highest circulation here is the tabloid, the Sun, it sells the most copies.

Jackie: Now what does Alan think? Does he think that all newspapers should be able to survive if they put their material on the internet? Listen to find out.

Alan

Callum: Alan says times are difficult for newspapers and they will have to put a lot of money into online journalism. But he says he's not convinced everyone will 'make it' – which means he doesn't believe all newspapers will be able to survive.

Jackie: But what about his newspaper? The Guardian has created one of the most popular online news sites alongside its normal printed newspaper. Alan says it is making good money – revenues from online are going up fast. By how much?

Alan

Callum: Alan says online revenues are going up 50% a year.

Jackie Alan says he's ambivalent about how we consume news. We shouldn't get hung up on print on paper. What does that mean – first of all ambivalent?

Callum: It means you don't really care.

Jackie: To consume news.

Callum: To follow the news, to read it or watch it.

Jackie: We shouldn't get hung up on print on paper.

Callum: 'To be hung up on something' means to be obsessed with it, to think it's important. Alan thinks we shouldn't be hung up on the idea of print on paper – in other words, newspapers.

Jackie: Let's have another recap of some of that new vocabulary.

Recap

A giveaway – "Newspapers nowadays include so many giveaways....it's the only way people will want to buy them."

Circulation – "The newspaper boosted its circulation by doing more advertising."

Advertising revenue – "We must increase our advertising revenue otherwise we won't make it."

END OF PART ONE

Jackie: You're listening to Talk About English with me, Jackie Dalton and Callum Robertson. Our guest today is journalist Alex Sullivan. We've been asking you to send in comments about the media in your country...do you trust it? Is there anything you would change about it? We're going to hear some of your comments now, read by actors. The first is from Brigita in Slovakia. Does she trust the media?

Brigita

Media all around the world often **brainwashes** people. I do not trust them. It is all about how they want the news to sound. They create stories which are often not true or they add or leave out whatever they want to. The media are the same everywhere and unfortunately many people **take them as they are**.

Jackie: Brigita doesn't trust the media. She thinks the media tends to brainwash people – what do we mean by that Callum?

Callum: (explains brainwash)

Jackie: She also says many people just take the media as they are – what does that mean?

Callum: (explains)

Jackie: Alex, what do you think people think of the media here in the UK – are they trusted or do many people think the media sets out to brainwash people?

Alex: (responds)

Jackie: Let's hear a reading of a message from Victor about his country, Moldova – this is his personal opinion. What does he think is the problem with the media in his country?

Victor

In Moldova there's a big problem with media because the communist government tries to **restrain** the independent media and to have everything under control. Thus the news controlled by government isn't so **credible**. **Independent media** are too weak to spread their news to all ears. I hope in the future the things will be better...

Callum: That was Victor's personal opinion about the media in his country. Do send us an email to talkaboutenglish@bbc.co.uk to share your thoughts – or let us know if you disagree with what's been said.

Jackie: So what did he think was the problem with the media in his country?

Callum: His view was that the government tries to restrain independent media.

Jackie: What does that mean?

Callum: (explain 'restrain' and 'independent media')

Jackie: Victor says government controlled news isn't so credible.

Callum: (explains 'credible')

Jackie: Now let's hear an actor read some of Konrad's thoughts from Poland.

Callum: Does Konrad think the media in his country has recently gotten better or worse?

Konrad

In recent years in Poland we have made big step forward after the communist era. Now in Poland there are many of different newspapers, TV channels and radios which show **different points of view**, so anybody can chose the one which suits him best. I think this **pluralism** in media is very valuable and shows us that there is no one “proper” way of thinking, as there was in the past. I think pluralism in media enriches our culture and help us to understand other people who might not share our beliefs.

Jackie: The answer to the question is Konrad thinks the media in Poland now is better than before – he says there's been a big step forward. And he says now the media provides different points of view.

Callum: (explains 'different points of view')

Jackie: Now Ana Paula in Brazil's comment. Which type of news does she like the least?

Ana

I think media in Brazil is pretty good. Especially nowadays, the media works like "the eyes of the population" on our politicians. They open our eyes to what politicians are doing, so more and more we demand crystal clear behaviour of the politicians. Newspapers, magazines and the radio, in my opinion are **more reliable** than TV channels in my country. Some of the TV channels do not have an **in-depth** approach to some important issues.

Jackie: The answer to the question is Ana Paula thinks print media and radio are more reliable than television. 'Reliable' – a word that relates to an expression we heard before – 'credible'.

Callum: (explains)

Jackie: Ana Paula also says TV doesn't always do such 'in-depth' news.

Callum: (explains)

Vocab

to brain wash – "Some people think the government tries to use the media to brainwash people."

credible – "That newspaper is not at all credible, a lot of its stories are just lies."

reliable – "He is very reliable, you can always trust him."

independent media – "Countries where there is press freedom usually have a range of independent media."

different points of view – "News should show different points of view, not just one person's story."

in-depth – "And we'll be providing in-depth coverage of the crisis in Lebanon."

STING END OF PART TWO

Jackie: You're listening to Talk About English, with me Jackie Dalton, Callum Robertson and our guest Alex Ritson. We've talked about some changes we've seen in the way news is delivered over recent years...24 hour news, more online news and so on. But we've also seen the rise of something called 'citizen journalism'. Alex, can you explain what this is?

Alex: (responds)

Jackie: Kelly Shepherd works for the BBC's new media section, which explores different ways of using technology to deliver news. More and more the BBC, like many other news organisations are using sounds, images and written accounts from audiences as part of their news. As you listen to her try to answer this question:

Callum: Does she think 'citizen journalism' at the BBC will replace traditional journalism?

Kelly

Jackie: The answer to the question is no.

Callum: Kelly sees traditional journalism as a way of adding to existing news reporting, but not replacing it. She talks about 'eye witness accounts', which is when you see something happen for yourself and tell other people about what you experienced and saw.

Jackie: More and more people seem keen to contribute their stories and images to news bulletins. Listen to Kelly again. On what kind of occasions are people most likely to send in their material?

Kelly

Callum: Well the answer was 'large scale events' – things like September 11th or the July 7th bombs tend to get audiences sending in their own pictures and eye witness accounts.

Jackie: She said they add a 'sense of being there'. Alex, that's a very important part of news reporting, isn't it?

Alex: (responds)

Jackie: Of course there are sometimes downsides to using things sent in by audiences. What does Kelly say is one of them?

Kelly

Callum: Kelly says one of the problem is faked material. People manipulating images, which means changing them so they look different.

Jackie: She used the word 'verify'...

Callum: To verify – to check that something is true or real.

Jackie: Now Kelly is going to tell us about some of the things to look out for, to make sure the material is real.

Kelly

Jackie: Alex, has anyone ever tried to trick you?

Alex: (responds)

Jackie: Well, speaking of citizen journalism, now it's time for details of our competition.

Callum: We want you to send us your eye witness accounts of events you've lived through.

Jackie: You can write it for us, or send it as an audio mp3 file or even video.

Callum: It can be about anything, from a serious event like a war or a demonstration. Or something lighter, maybe something funny that happened to you.

Jackie: The competition closes in two weeks. You'll be able to find more details of exactly what to do on our website. You'll also find example of eye witness reports. But Alex, while we have you here, we'd like to hear your advice for people entering the competition on how to do good eye witness accounts.

Alex: (responds)

Jackie: Well, good luck if you're entering our competition – more details will be available on our website.

Callum: That's all for now, but join us again soon for more Talk About English.

All: Good bye!