

Teaching Current Events in the Classroom

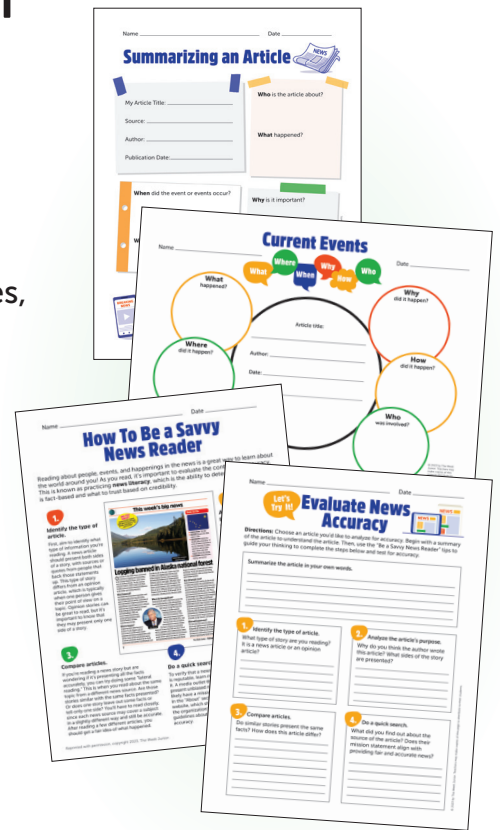
THE WEEK
Junior

Dear Teachers,

Welcome to your current events bundle! These worksheets contain great ways to help students read, understand, and summarize news stories. Utilizing current events in the classroom helps students better understand their communities, new perspectives, and real-world events. With so many news outlets available, it's important to give students the tools they need to determine accuracy and credibility. Using our savvy news reader tips, students will learn how to determine if an article is trustworthy.

Tips for classroom use:

- If you assign a weekly current events assignment, give students the option to use one of our two article summary worksheets to get started.
- Begin a lesson on news literacy. Use our tips to get started and have students complete the corresponding worksheet to evaluate an article's credibility.



***The Week Junior* is an awesome current events resource for kids!**

Give students a news resource they'll love! [*The Week Junior*](#) is a kid-friendly current events magazine that features sections on trending news, new books and movies, sports and culture, recipes and craft projects, and so much more. There's something for every kid. *The Week Junior* is committed to publishing trustworthy, accurate, and unbiased content to enable students to form and express their own opinions, making it perfect to introduce in your classroom.

Get a free magazine issue!



Learn more about *The Week Junior*!



Name _____ Date _____

Summarizing an Article



My Article Title: _____

Source: _____

Author: _____

Publication Date: _____

Who is the article about?

What happened?

When did the event or events occur?

Where did it happen?

Why is it important?

How did it happen?

Summarize the article in 2-3 sentences:



Current Events

Name _____

Date _____



What
happened?

Why
did it happen?

Article title:

Where
did it happen?

How
did it happen?

Author: _____

Date: _____

When
did it happen?

Who
was involved?

Source: _____

How To Be a Savvy News Reader

Reading about people, events, and happenings in the news is a great way to learn about the world around you. As you read, it's important to evaluate the content for accuracy. This is known as practicing **news literacy**, which is the ability to determine what news is fact-based and what to trust based on credibility.

1.

Identify the type of article.

First, aim to identify what type of information you're reading. A news article should present both sides of a story, with sources or quotes from people that back up those statements. This type of story differs from an opinion article, which is typically when one person gives their point of view on a topic. Opinion stories can be great to read, but it's important to know that they may present only one side of a story.

3.

Compare articles.

If you're reading a news story but are wondering if it's presenting all the facts accurately, you can try doing some "lateral reading." This is when you read about the same topic from a different news source. Are those stories similar with the same facts presented? Or does one story leave out some facts or tell only one side? You'll have to read closely, since each news source may cover a subject in a slightly different way and still be accurate. After reading a few different articles, you should get a fair idea of what happened.



This week's big news



DID YOU KNOW?
Alaska has the largest land area of any US state, and its nickname is "The Last Frontier."

Alaska fact file

- **POPULATION:** 733,583
- **HISTORY:** Became the 49th state in 1959
- **GEOGRAPHY:** Alaska has 33,904 miles of shoreline, 17 of the 20 tallest mountains in the US, more than 70 active volcanoes, and the Yukon River, which is the third-longest river in the country.
- **ECONOMY:** Oil production, fishing, and tourism

Logging banned in Alaska national forest

On January 25, the White House announced a new ban on logging and road building in the Tongass National Forest, which covers most of southeast Alaska. The ban reverses a decision made in 2020 to open more than 9 million acres of mostly untouched wilderness to the timber and mining industries.

What happened?
Tom Vilsack, the US secretary of agriculture, said that logging (cutting down trees for lumber, paper, or other products) and the construction of new roads would no longer be permitted in the national forest. It was the latest move in a 20-year battle over how Tongass should be managed. Federal officials first blocked logging and road building in 2001, but former President Donald Trump overturned that decision in 2020. Current President Joe Biden made the latest change.

What is Tongass?
Tongass has been called "America's Amazon." It is the biggest national forest in the US and the world's largest temperate rain forest (a woodland with a mild climate, heavy rainfall, and abundant species of animals and plants). Bordered by the Pacific Ocean on the west and the Coast Mountains and

Canadian border on the east, it spans more than 16 million acres (slightly larger than the state of West Virginia). The trees, rivers, mountains, and untouched wilderness in Tongass provide habitat to salmon, bald eagles, Sitka black-tailed deer, and black bears, among other species. The forest's ancient hemlock, cedar, and Sitka spruce trees are up to 1,000 years old and 17 stories tall. Tongass is home to about 70,000 people and 32 communities, including Juneau, the state capital.

Why is the ban significant?

Conservationists said it's important to protect the forest's biodiversity (the variety of living things in an area). The ban on logging also helps fight climate change (the long-term changes in weather patterns, including temperature, largely due to human activities). Trees help prevent climate change by storing carbon dioxide (CO₂, a gas that traps heat in the atmosphere and contributes to climate change). The trees in Tongass are particularly important because they hold more than 10% of the CO₂ captured in all US national forests. Native American leaders fought hard for the ban because people of their nations have lived in, protected, and sustained the forest for thousands of years.

Tongass is a vital part of their livelihood, culture, and history. The ban also preserves the fishing and tourism industries, which are larger than the state's timber business.

How did people react?

Native American leaders said the decision is vital to "address the climate crisis and finally listen to the Southeast Tribes that will continue to be most impacted by climate change." Kate Glover, of the environmental group Earthjustice, said, "This is great news for the forest, the salmon, the wildlife, and the people who depend on intact ecosystems to support their ways of life and livelihoods." Logging industry officials, however, said the ban would make it hard to stay in business. "Our local economies cannot survive," said Issa Avelon, head of an association that represents timber companies. Mike Dunleavy, governor of Alaska, criticized the ban. "Alaskans deserve access to the resources that the Tongass provides—jobs, renewable energy resources, and tourism," he said.

What will happen next?

The new rules have gone into effect, putting a stop to any logging or road-building projects. Along with the restrictions, the US government will spend \$25 million on local sustainable development, which will go toward projects aimed at improving the health of the forest.



Tom Vilsack

4.

Do a quick search.

To verify that a news company is reputable, learn more about it. A media outlet that aims to present unbiased news will most likely have a mission statement in the "About" section of its website, which should include the organization's purpose and guidelines about fairness and accuracy.

2.

Analyze the article's purpose.

The purpose of a news article is to give readers the facts of an occurrence. It is not trying to convince a reader to believe something. This makes the story credible. If both sides of an occurrence are shared, you know the writer is not trying to keep information from you or change your opinion. Other articles may try to get you to believe something, such as why you should support a cause. That doesn't mean you shouldn't read those stories. They can be interesting. What's important is that you realize stories can have different purposes. Knowing a story's purpose can help you interpret it.

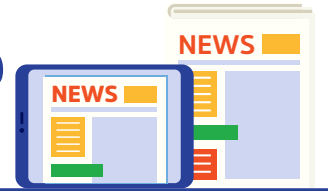


Name _____

Date _____



Evaluate News Accuracy



Directions: Choose an article you'd like to analyze for accuracy. Begin with a summary of the article to understand the article. Then, use the "Be a Savvy News Reader" tips to guide your thinking to complete the steps below and test for accuracy.

Summarize the article in your own words.

1. Identify the type of article.

What type of story are you reading?
Is it a news article or an opinion article?

2. Analyze the article's purpose.

Why do you think the author wrote this article? What sides of the story are presented?

3. Compare articles.

Do similar stories present the same facts? How does this article differ?

4. Do a quick search.

What did you find out about the source of the article? Does their mission statement align with providing fair and accurate news?
