

Learning Situation

AMATEUR vs. PROFESSIONAL NEWS



Competencies

- C1-Interacts orally in English
- C2-Reinvests understanding of texts

Student's name : _____

Date : _____

*Eugene Abrams, English teacher
CÉA LeMoyne-D'Iberville, CSMV, August 2018*



SITUATION:

The water in an entire neighborhood seems to have been poisoned and many people are getting sick. The first people on the scene are young students with cell phones. They film the event and interview some people. The video is exciting, as are the interviews. However, since the reports have been done by amateurs, not by professional journalists, there is a risk that some of the details may not be accurate. In this situation you will either be one of the students trying to sell their news report or else the editor who must decide whether or not to publish it.

THIS LEARNING SITUATION HAS TWO (2) TASKS FOR YOU TO COMPLETE:

TASK 1: Amateur vs. professional journalism: What do bloggers think?

In this task, you will read and take notes on blog posts about the phenomenon of amateur versus professional journalists and discuss this issue with a partner or your teacher.

TASK 2: Should students or professionals cover the story? What do you think?

In this task, you will select a role to play in a telephone conversation regarding an amateur video coverage of a water emergency in your neighborhood. After preparing notes in a graphic organizer, you will carry out the dialogue with a partner and/or your teacher.

In 2004, during the massive earthquake and tidal wave that hit Southeast Asia, it was simple citizens, armed with cellphones, who were on the scene before any journalists arrived. Here is just one example of the personal videos taken during that catastrophe:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-8Tp3y_Tes



With the widespread use of technology to take photos and videos of emerging news stories around the world, a new controversy is emerging: how should the work of amateur journalists be dealt with by major news sources? How will this new reality affect the status of professional journalists?

TASK I: Amateur vs. professional journalism: What do bloggers think?

Read about amateur versus professional journalists (at least two of the blogs below) and take notes. Discuss with a partner (or your teacher) about what the trend is presently and what it might be in the future.

The citizen journalist: How ordinary people are taking control of the news:

<https://www.digitaltrends.com/features/the-citizen-journalist-how-ordinary-people-are-taking-control-of-the-news/>



Citizen journalism vs. professional journalism:

<https://journalismthefuture.wordpress.com/citizen-journalism-vs-professional-journalism/>



Citizen Journalism and Professional Journalism: Ordinary people using social media to make journalism:

<https://pdgc2012a.wordpress.com/2013/07/05/citizen-journalism-and-professional-journalism-ordinary-people-using-social-media-to-make-journalism-2/>



Defining the Journalism vs. Blogging Debate, with a Science Reporting angle:

<https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/a-blog-around-the-clock/defining-the-journalism-vs-blogging-debate-with-a-science-reporting-angle/>



Journalism Practice

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17512786.2015.1030131>



TASK 2: Should students or professionals cover the story? What do you think?

Prepare for a discussion about one of the two situations below. In both cases, your objective is to convince your partner (or the teacher) of your recommendation. Use information from the journalism blogs above.

SITUATION 1

You are a newspaper editor (or producer of a television news program) and there is an important news event in your city. The water in an entire neighborhood seems to have been poisoned and many people are getting sick. The first people on the scene are young students with cell phones. They film the event and interview some people. The video is exciting, as are the interviews. However, you cannot confirm the truth of the images or the comments. If you publish them on your online news service (or news program), you will beat all of your competitors and will attract millions of viewers. However, if some of the images or comments are false then you could be criticized and your job could even be compromised. Should you go ahead and publish or else wait until the professional journalists from your newspaper (or news program) arrive at the scene?

You receive a phone call from a student who wants to sell you photos, videos of interviews, etc... from the event. Tell him/her whether you accept or not. Use information from the online articles whose links are provided, as well as any recent examples you can find of amateur versus professional journalism to justify your decision.

SITUATION 2

You are a student, possibly interested in becoming a journalist one day. You have taken photos and written about a local news event that no professional journalists have reported on. The water in an entire neighborhood seems to have been poisoned and many people are getting sick. Call the editor (your teacher) of a news service (newspaper, online news service, etc...) to try to persuade them to publish your work. Use information and examples from the blogs above to convince the editor to give you a chance. You may also use any recent examples of amateur versus professional journalism to persuade them.

Take notes in the rubric below in order to prepare your oral interaction:

Task description	
Greetings	
Your opinion	
Three arguments With supporting facts, quotes, etc...	I st argument: -facts 2 nd argument -facts 3 rd argument -facts
Possible counter arguments	First argument : Second argument :
Conclusion	