

Project 4

A possible project is to write a news blog covering an event which you think may be of interest to your fellow students, and which is likely to give an alternative view of the news.

You should ask yourself the following questions about your blog:

- How are you going to gather the news – will this be the kind of scheduled event that an editor has in his press diary or are you going to aim for the rather trickier reporting of a surprising or unpredicted event? As a citizen journalist you could yourself attend an event which would not normally be covered by traditional news outlets, or one which is normally reported from the point of view of the powerful (e.g. a protest demonstration).
- What news values are you catering for in your selection of a news story – does your choice of news event conform to the stereotypes of what gets into the news, or are you going to attempt to cover usually neglected topics?
- Whose voices are going to be represented in the news – the usual rich, powerful and important or those whose voices are hardly ever heard? Who will you interview?
- How do your transitivity choices in the clause represent power and responsibility, and do your reporting clauses interfere with the voices represented? Can you use any of the tricks employed by Singapore journalists, as reported by Shieh, against those in power?
- Does your text conform to the norms of representation of women (and other countries) that were found in the surveys in this chapter? Do you try to avoid stereotyping?

In addition, you should revise the work we did on the generic structure of news reports in Chapter 1, where you rewrote the Red Ridinghood story. In the instructions for that rewriting activity, note the hints on how to incorporate the more local features of newspaper language. As this will be an online news blog, you should consider whether you should adopt the traditional style of generic structure for news, that is deductive, point first, or whether a personal account of a news event that you might be involved in, like a protest demonstration, might more appropriately adopt a narrative style. News blogs normally have a 'Read More' hyperlink, and your read more section might be more like a narrative, since the readers are more assured and an inductive structure could be more appropriate. Moreover, blogs tend to be human-interest focused, and a narrative could be more suitable for such a focus.

You might also incorporate other features of online news into your news story – hyperlinks, embedded videos/slide shows, or, if you have the skills, interactive graphics.

You will also have to decide which platform you are going to use for your news blog. An e-portfolio, if your course uses one, your personal internet page/site, if you have one, Facebook, or, perhaps one of the citizen journalists portals like Ushahidi, Demotix, You Witness News, All Voices or Wikinews. Also check out Cplash, Global Voices, and Online Journalism Blog for ideas and opportunities.

This writing will be most useful if, besides the actual report, you produce notes explaining and justifying the linguistic and discourse choices you have made.