Newpapers contain a great deal of information—it takes a very long time to read a newspaper from cover to cover. Readers use skills to find the information that they want. Journalists and editors also know how to arrange the information in an effective way to ensure that they are providing you with the information that you are seeking.

Items that might be found inside a newspaper include:

- local news
- weather
- international news
- reviews
- advertisements
- letters to the editor
- editorial
- feature articles
- cartoons
- entertainment guides
- photographs
- business information
- investigative articles
- charts
- death notices
- birth notices
- comics
- job advertisements
- marriage notices
- informative articles
- classifieds
- celebrity gossip

**Skimming and scanning**

In order to read a newspaper effectively, readers skim and scan the articles quickly. They may look quickly at the headlines and pictures to decide what they want to read, then read the articles that interest them. If the paper has supplements and sections they enjoy reading, they may turn to these first.

**Newspaper terms**

The first part of a newspaper is generally split into news sections that cover global, national, state, regional and local news. Articles tend to be ‘above the fold’ or ‘below the fold’. Those above the fold are the most important because they are on display to the public. In the example here, we are just looking at the front page, but the same principle applies: the main article is about the devastating earthquake in Haiti. The article below the fold is about the United States Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, cancelling her trip to Australia so that she can respond to the crisis in Haiti.
**Breakingaway Tasks**

**Remembering**

1. Using the front page of your local daily newspaper, identify each of the elements above.

2. Access the website of a leading daily newspaper and identify the elements above on their home page. What changes (if any) are made for the electronic medium?
Tabloid versus broadsheet

Newspapers come in two sizes, tabloid and broadsheet; the broadsheet is twice the size of the tabloid format. While they essentially cover the same things—news, sport, politics—tabloid and broadsheet newspapers deal with these elements in different ways.

Tabloids have a reputation for sensationalism over accuracy.

Broadsheets, on the other hand, provide well-researched articles with analysis.

Think my way

The newspaper is divided into sections, each with its own purpose and function. One of the most important sections contains articles of opinion, commentaries and views. Traditionally, this is the second section of the newspaper. In a democratic society, this section provides an arena for public debate. Anyone can be a participant in this great democratic process as people try to persuade others of their point of view ... and likewise, in this section you have the opportunity to tell people why your opinion on an issue is right!

Events versus issues

An event and an issue are not the same. Just because an article appears in the newspaper doesn’t mean that it is necessarily designed to persuade you to a point of view. Some articles are simply news articles; that is, their purpose is purely to inform.

It is when people begin to talk about these events and to think carefully about their implications that issues begin to emerge. In order for something to be an issue, it must have at least two sides to it. A reasonable person should be able to debate fairly about the issue that is being discussed.

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### Applying

1. Collect as many different newspapers as you can. Decide which of the newspapers are tabloids and which are broadsheets. Are there any other elements of each style that you can identify?

### Analysing

2. Compare the tabloid and broadsheet coverage of one particular issue. You could make a chart of the differences or put the articles on poster paper and highlight the differences.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Tabloids</th>
<th>Broadsheets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Lower level of education</td>
<td>Higher level of education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>Approximately A3 paper size. Can be read easily on public transport</td>
<td>Approximately A2 paper size. Ideally read at a table or desk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of visuals</td>
<td>Photographs and cartoons feature heavily throughout the paper</td>
<td>Photographs are used more sparingly. Cartoons are often political and make reference to philosophical ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Can be informal and colloquial. Changes to suit story being told</td>
<td>Usually formal, often analytical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headlines</td>
<td>Often dominate pages, puns feature heavily</td>
<td>More conservative in approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stories</td>
<td>Short and written to entertain as well as to inform</td>
<td>Can be quite lengthy. Often intended to analyse and give several perspectives on an issue or event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Cover local issues in some depth. Cover celebrities and sports in depth. May sensationalise events and push populist messages</td>
<td>Cover local issues in some depth. May look at national and international politics or issues in some depth. Pride themselves on taking independent and sometimes unpopular stands on issues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Imagine for a moment that a terrible car accident occurs involving underage teenage drivers. Two of the passengers are killed but the unlicensed driver survives. This event might get reported in the paper by a journalist in a news article.

However, this event might spark debate in the community about the circumstances surrounding it. These discussions might be considered issues in the community. For instance, the media and the public may raise the following questions:

- What punishment should the driver receive?
- Do we need tougher laws for unlicensed drivers?
- Should schools have better driver awareness programs?
- Are our roads safe?
- Should the parents be held responsible for their underage children who drive?
- Are teenagers becoming more reckless?
- Should the police have more rights to stop illegal drivers through car chases?

All these questions and the issues behind them may be discussed in the media over the weeks that follow. The issues may be aired on talk-back radio, callers voicing their opinions and debating with the host. There may be blogs and online forums on the issue, or television programs in which experts, affected families and the legal community give their perspectives.

People present their views in the newspapers as either opinion pieces or letters to the editor.

**Opinion pieces**

Opinion pieces are sometimes called ‘columns’. Journalists or other writers are often employed to present their individual opinions in the newspaper. They may be members of the newspaper staff or experts in their field. Sometimes celebrities or high-profile people such as politicians or athletes are invited to write a column about an issue.

Since these columns are not intended to be explicitly factual, but rather the writer’s personal view, they are persuasive in their approach. It is important that you read these articles critically so that you don’t get tricked into accepting someone else’s point of view.

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**IT’S A GREAT STATE OF PLAY**

By Ron Reed

Once dismissed as a gimmick, T20 cricket is introducing a whole new generation to the game and they are flocking to see it in great numbers. Friday night footy it isn’t—not quite.

But the Melbourne Cricket Club is expecting 30,000 sports fans at the MCG on Friday to watch the Victorian Bushrangers play the Tasmanian Devils in a must-win game of Twenty20 cricket—and that constitutes serious box-office business.

It would break the record for the KFC Big Bash, as the domestic short-form game is known. That benchmark is less than 48 hours old, with 29,743 turning up at Sydney’s ANZ Stadium on Wednesday night to watch Queensland thrash New South Wales in a match shortened by rain to just nine overs a side.

That brings the total attendances for the twelve matches played over the past fortnight to 191,886, a 60 per cent increase on the same stage last season, Cricket Australia reported.
It has also exceeded the 176,693 that saw the entire competition, including two finals, last year. And about 30 per cent more are watching it on Fox Sports.

From any marketing perspective, these are numbers to die for—and they prove conclusively that the new boy on the cricket block has morphed into one of Australian sport's biggest success stories of the twenty-first century.

As the Herald Sun reported in a recent review of world cricket in the decade just gone, the arrival of T20 was the most important single development—well ahead of anything that happened in traditional Test cricket.

Indeed, it has prompted speculation that its popularity will steamroll the now 40-year-old and increasingly weary 50-over format into the grave and—much more importantly for the purists—whittle away the relevance of Test cricket, which is where the soul of the sport resides.

Yes, the one-day internationals—this summer's batch of ten start in Brisbane next Friday—are facing a struggle to hold people's interest, but Test cricket in this country has nothing to fear at this stage.

Next summer's Ashes series will be a blockbuster and in any case the success of T20 is introducing cricket to a new generation of young fans and families who might not have shown any interest in the longer games. Hopefully that will produce a flow-on effect.

Also, Cricket Australia is keen to limit the presence of T20 at international level, believing the domestic game is where the value really is.

That's why only three T20 internationals have been scheduled this summer, the first against Pakistan at the MCG on Friday, February 5.

The astounding speed with which the turnstiles are clicking for the state games has created an expectation that the Big Bash may soon be able to pay the bills for the Sheffield Shield and the 50-over Ford Ranger Cup.

These competitions have always run at a significant loss, which Cricket Australia has been happy to absorb because they are so crucial to player development and the overall structure. Not surprisingly, then, CA is searching eagerly for a way to expand the Big Bash, the most likely outcome being an eight-team competition involving cities rather than states.

Geelong, the Gold Coast and Western Sydney are candidates, with a calendar window created so that the Australian international players can participate alongside heavy-hitter guests from other countries.

CA believes T20 has the potential to increase the pool of elite players, especially as huge money is now available—
both for individuals who can procure contracts in the Indian Premier League and state teams that make it to the Champions League by reaching the Big Bash final.

Cricket has long been frustrated by its inability to hang on to talented young athletes who see more rewarding opportunities in other sports, especially the AFL.

But officials have been extremely pleased to see the recent emergence of former Australian vice-captain Geoff Marsh's teenage son Mitchell, who has opted to play for Western Australia instead of accepting offers to play footy.

He is already a T20 star—as is his brother Shaun—after just a handful of appearances, and the hope is that he will start a trend.

From the perspective of players and spectators alike, there is no doubt the new game has achieved much more respect than it had in its first years.

It was initially dismissed as nothing more than a gimmicky slogfest that could probably be played just as effectively by club cricketers with a good eye and bulging biceps.

But when England sent a team of experienced T20 players at county level to a tournament a few years ago, they were flogged by international players who had hardly played it. The best cricketers prevailed, in other words.

That shouldn't have come as any surprise—hitting Test-class fast bowlers for six on a regular basis is obviously going to require an exceptional level of skill.

That realisation has validated T20 as a genuine sport in its own right, even if it does remain heavily influenced by showbiz.

Australia has been one of the forces behind a push to try to get it into the Olympics, and hasn't given up on it, despite other countries putting the campaign onto the backburner.

Meanwhile, the MCG will be buzzing tonight in a way that state cricketers could once only have dreamed of.

Normally the Bushrangers train in complete anonymity but yesterday they turned it into a public function, with West Indies guest player Dwayne Bravo signing autographs and fans being offered prizes.

If the Victorians beat the Apple Islanders they will make the preliminary final and be in line to pursue an enormous payday in India.

There is plenty at stake and it's going to be a lot of fun to watch, which is why they'll be turning up in their tens of thousands—again.

Source: The Herald Sun, 15 January 2010
Editorial

The editorial is the editor’s or the editorial board’s opinion on an issue. It can be considered the official statement from the paper about the issue. Generally, formal language is used to show that the editor or board has considered all the viewpoints and, after weighing up these views, has taken a clear and firm stand on the issue.

The role of a newspaper editor depends on the size of the newspaper. A large newspaper often has editors assigned to different sections, such as sport, the arts and business, each with their own team of reporters, writers and editors. A large newspaper also has an editor-in-chief who leads the whole team. The editor-in-chief makes important decisions about what the newspaper will investigate and print, and makes sure that what is published is newsworthy.

THE MELBOURNE ATTACKS REQUIRE AN URGENT RESPONSE

The Weekend Australian has been reluctant to join those claiming that racism lies behind the violence against Indians in Melbourne. But the fire at a Sikh temple this week has added to the urgent questions of how to respond to a situation where—as Victorian Deputy Police Commissioner Ken Jones says—Indians are bearing the brunt of attacks. Whether racist or random, these attacks demand a strong response from police and politicians, both in rhetoric and in action. There can be no tolerance for such behaviour, and no resiling from the need to assure the safety and security of all citizens.

Our politicians and law-enforcement officers alike must be unequivocal in their rejection of racism and their commitment to protecting the Indian students who come here to study and work. These young people must feel safe to catch a train, walk across a park and go to work.

The use of the newspaper’s name indicates that the editor is speaking directly to his readers.

The tone is strong and authoritative. Identifies issues and events clearly and logically.

The formal language shows that this is a considered piece.

The solution is suggested and authority figures are strongly urged to take up the newspaper’s ideas as the most sensible way of dealing with the problem.
at Hungry Jacks—as Nitin Garg attempted to do before he was so brutally knifed in Yarraville a fortnight ago. To tolerate anything less is to threaten not just the personal safety of individuals but to place in jeopardy the excellent relationship Australia enjoys with India. This robust and open society must remain central to Australia’s thinking on foreign policy and trade.

India’s press has been relentless in criticising Australia’s response to the attacks: the Delhi-based *Mail Today*’s cartoon of a Victorian police officer dressed as a member of the Ku Klux Klan pulled no punches. But however offensive, the press freedom to publish such material is one of the reasons why Australia must continue to nurture close ties with India. There can be few better friends for us in Asia than this democratic nation. For this reason, it is heartening to see Sir Ken addressing the issue of racism more directly than has his boss, Chief Commissioner Simon Overland, in recent days. At times the police chief’s rhetoric has lacked urgency and has sent confusing signals to Australians appalled by the attacks and concerned that their real context—however unpalatable—should be openly discussed. Australians are proud of a society built on immigration from many countries. But they are not naïve about the pockets of ignorance and enmity that exist, nor of the disaffected and dysfunctional people who at times engage in antisocial or criminal behaviour against others, based on nothing more than their ethnicity. To underplay these realities is as potentially harmful as summarily applying the racist tag. A sense of perspective is important, but so too is a clear rejection of racism and an unequivocal statement that it will not be tolerated. Australia has shaken off the institutionalised racism of the White Australia policy which dogged its past. But there should be no room for complacency or for political correctness that inhibits us from calling a spade a spade. The history of the twentieth century shows the dangers of racially based attitudes and the need to be eternally vigilant in shining a light into such dark corners. Politicians and police leaders alike must make it clear racism is deplored by all Australians and that any allegations of race-based crime will be vigorously pursued. Clearly, police must take care in ascribing racial motivations to individual crimes, but they must be unequivocal in applying a zero-tolerance approach to violence.

Letters to the editor

Readers also contribute to the newspapers, usually as a letter to the editor. Often letters to the editor are a response to articles that have appeared in the paper. Sometimes they are generated by broader ongoing debate on a particular issue. Occasionally, a reader may choose to write to the paper in order to highlight their concerns about an issue that they feel deserves more media attention.

Anyone can write a letter to the editor. Some letters to the editor may be published in full; others may be shortened to the essential comments only.

Generally, letters to the editor tend to be emotive. This is because people who make the effort to write them usually do so because they feel strongly about an issue.

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**Perfect Parking a Myth**

Where were the parking inspectors last Thursday? (‘Parks, parking and performance’, 12 January)?

I can tell you where they were. They were nabbing locals down at the beach.

Many parents of young children were unaware of the recent changes to parking laws. Rather than give a first warning the parking inspectors saw fit to fine and clamp many family drivers.

Is there no compassion left in our society for families who just want a cheap day out at the beach?

So yes, these revenue raising ratbags were around. Just not in the city booking those who can afford to flout the laws.

Michelle Dunn, Warren’s Ridge

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**Understanding tone**

Letters to the editor vary in their tone and approach. It is important, therefore, that we are able to critically evaluate the wide array of opinions that readers express in letters to the editor.

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**Let the Games Begin**

Remember the glory days of 1956 when Melbourne was the centre of the sporting world? Remember the thrill of Sydney and the way we were united on the night Cathy Freeman won the 400 metres?

The benefits that an Olympic Games brings to the host country far outweigh the financial cost of hosting. The immeasurable benefits cannot be bought with money.

Isn’t it time that a new generation of Australians had the opportunity to show our great nation to the world? Isn’t it time that this great sporting country stood up once more? We can be the best. We have run the best games. We have produced the best athletes. And we will provide a world class event. We must support our new bid to bring the Olympics to Australia.

Elizabeth May, Williamstown
IT’S NOT A RACE

Our hospitals are overcrowded. Our schools are falling down on our kids’ heads. The public transport system grinds to a halt every time the temperature gets too hot or too cold. In any civilised, thinking society these infrastructure problems would be a priority. Surely these essential things we use daily should be fixed first?

But no! Our leaders have decided that we can be distracted from these real problems by holding an Olympic Games. Just like the emperors of Rome they will amuse the people rather than face reality.

The money that is being spent on the bid, let alone the actual games themselves, would solve at least one of these critical problems.

Wake up Australia. Don’t fall for the trick. We need action in the streets not on the track.

Carl Sims, Arrowood

Breakaway tasks

Remembering
1. What are the main differences between an opinion piece, an editorial and a letter to the editor?

Understanding
2. In pairs, examine the annotated opinion piece, the annotated editorial and the annotated letter to the editor and explain for each:
   a. the issue involved
   b. the event that sparked the media response.

Analysing
3. How do you think that the editor of a newspaper determines what gets printed and on what page it appears?
4. Analyse the use of persuasive language in the letters to the editor about an Olympic Games bid. Explain the use of persuasive language and compare the two letters.

Evaluating
5. Write your own letter to the editor on the issue of another bid for Australia to host the Olympic Games. Plan your letter carefully and make sure you have a clear argument and logical evidence to support your contention.
6. Identify the phrases that assume that the reader shares the author’s point of view, thereby encouraging the reader to share these views.

Extra tasks
1. Imagine you are an expert in the music industry. You have been asked by a leading newspaper to write an opinion piece on the issue of illegally downloading music. Write the piece, considering your involvement in the music industry and how this may be reflected in your writing.
2. Choose a current editorial from a leading newspaper and research the issue. Prepare a two-minute speech for the class on the issue, the events surrounding it, the editor’s opinion as stated and your own point of view. Make sure you plan and rehearse it.
3. Choose a current issue and follow it as it develops on news sites. Keep a record of the key arguments that are made. What values or principles are involved in the issue? What are the strengths and/or weaknesses of the arguments presented?