



Why is it news?

Each day, newspaper editors around the world must make decisions about which stories they will publish. Stories make it into newspapers for many different reasons. Invite students to look at the stories that have made the front page of a local newspaper during the last few days and to talk about why each of those stories made headlines. Among the reasons students might come up with are these:

- **Timeliness** -- News that is happening right now, news of interest to readers right now.
- **Relevance** -- The story happened nearby or is about a concern of local interest.
- **Magnitude** -- The story is great in size or number; for example, a tornado that destroys a couple houses might not make the news but a story about a tornado that devastates a community would be very newsworthy.
- **Unexpectedness** -- Something unusual, or something that occurs without warning.
- **Impact** -- News that will affect a large number of readers.
- **Reference to someone famous or important** -- News about a prominent person or personality.
- **Oddity** -- A unique or unusual situation.
- **Conflict** -- A major struggle in the news.
- **Reference to something negative** -- Bad news often "sells" better than good news.
- **Continuity** -- A follow-up or continuation to a story that has been in the news or is familiar.
- **Emotions** -- Emotions (such as fear, jealousy, love, or hate) increase interest in a story.
- **Progress** -- News of new hope, new achievement, new improvements.

In the days ahead, study each front-page story and talk about why editors decided to put the story on page one. Which reason(s) on the students' list would explain the newsworthiness of the story?

Explore geography. Ask each student to search the newspaper for stories that illustrate each of the five themes of geography -- location, place, human interaction and the environment, movement and communication, and regions.