

UNDERSTANDING NEWS: STORIES. AND HOW THEY WORK

INTRODUCTION

What is “news”?

News is **information about new events** in the world, in your country, or in your city.

We can get news from:

- TV and radio.
- Newspapers and magazines.
- Websites and apps.
- Social media.
- Our friends and family.

A news story usually answers these questions:

- **Who?** (What people are involved?)
- **What?** (What happened?)
- **When?** (When did it happen?)
- **Where?** (Where did it happen?)
- **Why?** (Why is it important?)

In this lesson, you will:

- Read simple news stories in English.
- Find the most important information.
- Learn common words and expressions from news.
- Write your own short news story.

Every day, millions of people read, watch or listen to news.

Some people check the news in the morning before work or school.
Other people read the news at night or during the day on their phones.

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People read news for many reasons:

- To know what is happening in their city or country.
- To learn about international events.
- To get information about weather, health, or economy.
- To follow sports results or entertainment news.

News can be:

- **Serious**, for example, political news or health news.
- Or more **relaxed**, for example, news about celebrities, music or movies.

A Simple News Story

Headline:

New Sports Center Opens in Sabinas.

Lead (first sentence):

Last Saturday, a new sports center **opened** in the town of Sabinas.

Body (more details):

The sports center is in the north of the town, near a large park.

It has a gym, a swimming pool and two basketball courts.

According to the mayor, the center is important for **young people** in the community.

“We want students and families to have a safe place to do sports,” she said.

The sports center was **built** in one year, and many local workers **were hired** for the project.

The center is open every day from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Many residents say they are happy about this new place.

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Basic Structure

- **Headline** - very short title → *"New Sports Center Opens in Sabinas"*.
- **Lead** - first sentence, main information (Who, What, When, Where)
→ *"Last Saturday, a new sports center opened in the town of Sabinas."*
- **Body** - more details and quotes.
→ place, services, opinions, quotes, passive sentences (*was built, were hired*).

VOCABULARY

1 Types of news

Word / phrase	Example
local news	Local news talks about events in our city.
national news	National news is about the whole country.
international news	I like international news about other countries.
breaking news	Breaking news: there was an earthquake.
weather report	The weather report says it will rain tomorrow.
sports news	He always reads sports news.
entertainment news	Entertainment news is about movies and celebrities.
technology news	Technology news talks about new devices.
health news	Health news was very important during the pandemic.
crime news	Crime news can be scary.

2 Parts of a news article

Word / phrase	Example
headline	The headline is short and strong.
article	I read an article about education.
reporter	The reporter talked to people at the event.
journalist	Journalists write news stories.
lead	The lead gives the most important information.
quote	The article includes quotes from students.
source	It is important to check the source of the news.
paragraph	The article has four paragraphs.
photo / image	There is a photo with the news story.
headline, date, author	The headline, date and author are at the top.

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3 Commonly used words

Word / phrase	Example
according to...	According to the article, the event was a success.
report (v.)	The news reports a big accident.
true / false	Is this story true or false?
real / fake	Some news on social media is fake.
reliable	This website is reliable.
important	This is important news for students.
interesting	The story is very interesting.
boring	I think this news is boring.
surprising	The result of the match was surprising.
dangerous	The news is about a dangerous situation.

GRAMMAR

We will work on three main points:

1. **Present Simple en titulares (headlines).**
2. **Past Simple in the Body of the News (what happened).**
3. **Basic Passive Voice: was/were + past participle (very common in news articles).**

1 Headlines - Present Simple

English headlines often use the Present Simple, even for recent events. They are short and simple, and sometimes they do not use articles or auxiliary verbs.

Structure:

Noun + verb (present simple) + complement

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Examples:

- *Students win national competition.*
 - *New library opens in city center.*
 - *Storm hits east coast.*
 - *Local team reaches final.*
 - *University launches new English program.*
- *Headline: Students win national competition.*
→ Full sentence: *Students **won** a national competition last week.*

2 Past Simple - Telling what happened

In news articles, the Past Simple is used to report what happened.

Structure:

Subject + past simple + complement

Use of time expressions: yesterday, last week, on Monday, in 2025...

Examples:

- *Students **won** a national competition last week.*
- *A new library **opened** in the city center yesterday.*
- *A strong storm **hit** the east coast on Monday.*
- *The local team **reached** the final after a difficult match.*
- *The university **launched** a new English program in 2024.*

3 Basic Passive Voice - was / were + past participle

In news, the passive voice is very common to emphasize actions and results, rather than who did them.

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Structure:

Subject + was/were + past participle

To show results: *was found, was arrested, were injured...*

Examples:

- *A new sports center **was opened** in our city last month.*
- *Three people **were injured** in the accident.*
- *The prize **was given** to a group of students.*
- *The project **was created** by engineering students.*
- *The old building **was destroyed** by the fire.*

CONVERSATION - *TALKING ABOUT A NEWS STORY*

Nora: Did you read the news about the new library?

Alex: Yes, I did. The headline was “New Library Opens in City Center”.

Nora: When did it open?

Alex: It opened last week. According to the article, it was opened by the mayor.

Nora: That’s great. Was there anything interesting in the article?

Alex: Yes, it says the library has computers, study rooms and a café. It also says many books were donated by local people.

Nora: Wow, that sounds very useful for students.

Alex: I think this news is important because it helps our community and supports education.

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