



PBS NEWSHOUR

STUDENT REPORTING LABS

Worksheet 2.1: Finding Story Ideas

Instructions: Many good news stories come from the reality of daily life. Look around. Listen. Find a news story that comes from real life by following these 5 steps.

STEP 1. Generate Ideas. Think about news story ideas by using some of your own life experiences and those of your family, neighbors and friends. Brainstorm 5 potential ideas by thinking about what makes these stories interesting and important. Write these down to share with your teacher or a small group of peers. After getting their feedback, select the best idea.

STEP 2. Gather Background Information. What background information could be used to make this story relevant to a wider audience? How does this story connect to larger social and political issues? Gather information from sources that can help expand the appeal and relevance of this story. Add five facts, opinions or other interesting information by gathering information from a variety of sources.

STEP 3. Consider News Values. What aspects of your story are local? Timely? Relevant? Is there a human interest angle? Is there conflict or controversy? The more genuine news values there are in your story, the more your editor will like it.

STEP 4. Identify Potential Sources. Make a list of possible sources that could be used might use to add depth and vividness to your story. Sources may include parents, other family members or eyewitnesses. You may want to find the names of experts who could offer an important perspective to your story.

STEP 5. Develop a News Story Pitch. Prepare a short 2-minute speech designed to persuade a television news editor that their story is newsworthy. In the presentation:

- Use a hook to get people's attention using humor, suspense or ambiguity
- Tell the story with attention to the who, what, where, when and why
- Offer solid information, including ideas for people to interview
- Show how emotional connections will be activated to get the audience involved
- Explain why viewers would find this story relevant, interesting or important
- Deliver your message persuasively with good vocal energy

Display confidence that your editor will find this a compelling newsworthy story.