



How to...

INSTANT INFORMATION

About 93% of adults get at least some of their news from online sources.



A short history of newspapers

Newspapers have helped people learn about the world for centuries. Check out these important historical dates.

1440: The first printing press

The invention of the printing press in Europe allowed for the news to be printed faster and easier, and therefore distributed to more people, than ever before.



1690: The first US newspaper

The first US newspaper was published in 1690, when America was under British rule.



But it included controversial topics and was forced to close after one issue. Soon after that, other newspaper companies launched and became successful.

1846: The first news association

The Associated Press, which is a top news source today, was formed in 1846. It began when a few large newspapers across the country decided to share information.



1896: The first comic strip

As more US newspapers were founded, they had to compete for readers. Some started to include more entertainment features, including comic strips.



Be a wise reader

Evaluating the news for accuracy is a valuable life skill.

Reading about people, events, and happenings in the news is a great way to learn about the world around you. As you read, it's important to evaluate the content for accuracy. This is known as practicing news literacy, which is the ability to "think critically about the news so you can understand what information is fact and what is not," Erin Olson of the News Literacy Project told *The Week Junior*. In honor of National News Literacy Week, taking place from January 23 to 27 this year, here are some steps to follow when deciphering information.

Identify what you're reading

First, aim to identify what type of information you're reading. A news article should present both sides of a story, with sources or quotes from people that back those statements up. This type of story differs from an opinion article, which is typically when one person gives their point of view on a topic. Opinion stories can be great to read, but it's important to know that they may present only one side of a story.



The facts matter.

Analyze an article's purpose

The purpose of a news article is to give readers the facts of an occurrence. It is not trying to convince a reader to believe something. This makes the story credible. If both sides of an occurrence are shared, you know the writer is not trying to keep information from you or change your

opinion. Other articles may try to get you to believe something, such as why you should support a cause. That doesn't mean you shouldn't read those stories. They can be interesting. What's important is that you realize stories can have different purposes. Knowing a story's purpose can help you interpret it.

Compare articles

If you're reading a news story but are wondering if it's presenting all the facts accurately, you can try doing some "lateral reading." This is when you read about the same topic from a different news source. Are those stories similar with the same facts presented? Or does one story leave out some facts or tell only one side? You'll have to read closely, since each news source may cover a subject in a slightly different way and still be accurate. By reading a few different articles you should get a fair idea of what happened.

Do a quick search

To verify that a news company is reputable, learn more about it. A media outlet that aims to present unbiased news will most likely have a mission statement in the "About" section of its website, which should include the organization's purpose and guidelines about fairness and accuracy. You can learn more about news literacy at newsliit.org.