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|  | Australian Curriculum Year 10 English sample assessment ׀ Student booklet  Spreading the news |

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| Create a media release publicising a newsworthy event, product or service in your school or wider community. The release should be ready to be pitched to nominated media outlets. |
| You will:   * investigate and research a newsworthy event, product or service in your school or wider community of interest to a media outlet * plan, draft and edit a media release about this event, product or service for publication by a media outlet * where possible, submit the media release for publication. |

## Section 1 Planning a media release

1. Based on notes from your research and classroom discussion and debate, contribute to a whole class definition of a media release.

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| CLASS DEFINITION OF MEDIA RELEASE  Consider: the purpose of the text, the subject matter, the role of the writer and how the message will be conveyed | |
| **Your notes for the discussion** |  |
| **Whole class definition** |  |

1. Complete your media strategy table (Appendix 1) to ensure the best chance of promotion of the newsworthy event/product/service you have chosen. For an example of a media strategy table, see *Assessment resource: Sample media strategy — fail to plan and plan to fail*.
2. Your teacher will chair an interview of a guest speaker by the class during which you will have the opportunity to collect background information and quotes to include in your media release. Effective note-taking will be important here. You might decide to conduct your own interview.
3. Use the following table as a checklist to enable you to maximise the effectiveness of your interview.

In being well organised you are demonstrating both:

* your own professionalism in your approach to your work
* respect for the person who is giving you their time.

Remember that much of your information will have been collected via your own research prior to the interview. In speaking to someone with insider knowledge of the event/product/ service you are seeking to draw to the media’s attention, you are gaining a perspective that can add authenticity and weight to your media release.

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| **The interview: Focus** | **The interview: Plan of attack** |
| **Research**   * Know your subject and the angle you’re pursuing. * Put yourself in the place of a member of your reader wanting to know something about the event/product/ service. | Have you:   * researched (library / the internet / key personnel)? 🞎 * made comprehensive notes on your topic / angle? 🞎 |
| **Agenda**   * You will have gathered a good deal of information before your interview. * Think about how your subject might contribute to answering key questions (Who? What? Why? When? Where? and How?)?   http://www.bloggingprweb.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/inverted-pyramid.jpg**http://www.bloggingprweb.com/effective-press-release-format-inverted-pyramid** | Have you:   * made yourself you thoroughly familiar with your subject? 🞎   This will enable you to relax, let the conversation flow, yet still stick to your agenda and elicit the information you’re after.   * used the inverted pyramid to formulate and organise your questions? 🞎 |
| **Note-taking**   * Ideally, if the interview is being recorded then notes should be largely unnecessary. * If you feel the need to take some notes, make them brief. * Quotes must be absolutely accurate. | Have you:   * organised to record your interview where possible? 🞎 * practised asking your questions using different tones and inflections? 🞎 * developed some note-taking techniques such as omitting vowels in words and developing your own abbreviations? 🞎 |
| **Gesture**   * Keep your body language friendly and inclusive so that your subject feels at ease. | Have you role played, practising:   * using open gestures to encourage your subject to speak freely? 🞎 * avoiding distracting/negative mannerisms such as folding your arms, touching your hair or fiddling with your pen or pencil)? 🞎 |
| Timing   * Watch the time. | Have you:   * planned to complete the interview in about 15 minutes? ❒ |

## Section 2 Drafting a media release

1. Use the following table to plan and draft your media release. While there are some variations in formatting, the basic requirements across organisations are very similar. Inputting ‘media release’ into a search engine and choosing ‘images’ will demonstrate this visually.

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| Before you begin   * Be clear about the angle of your media release (what’s new and interesting about what’s happening) as well as the subject matter (Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How?) * Although you have a public relations (PR) role, think like a journalist and create your media release the way you would like to see it reported | |
| ***Date of release****: either ‘For immediate release’ or ‘Embargoed until…’* |  |
| ***Headline****: Short, interesting, encapsulating key points — you need to catch the journalist’s attention.* |  |
| ***Lead****: A couple of sentences only, answering succinctly the main questions: who, what, when, where, why and how. This is where vital information (e.g. time, location) is included.* |  |
| ***Body****: More of the topic foreshadowed in the lead, using inverted pyramid structure (most important to least important info). Will include a mix of:*   * specific names, places and dates * direct quotes from key personnel, with attribution (name and position) * relevant links (for electronic media) * facts and statistics which support assertions * high resolution photograph/s with caption/s * a call to action (e.g. attend, volunteer, donate, rally) – optional. | **http://www.bloggingprweb.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/inverted-pyramid.jpgPoint 1**  **Topic sentence:**  **Point 2**  **Topic sentence:**  **Point 3**  **Topic sentence:** |
| ***End****: Least important information.* |  |
| ***Contact information****: The name, phone number and email address of the media contact.* |  |
| ***Boiler plate/About us****: A brief statement about your organisation for the journalist. This will probably not be published.* |  |
| ***Notes on language use:*** *Language choices will need to take account of both your public relations role and the more straightforward language of traditional journalism* | |
| * mostly present and future tense (the event is yet to occur) * mainly doing and saying verbs * predominantly third person, depending on the role of the person writing the release * usually active voice * modal words to convey certainty (certainly); inclination (determined, willingly); probability (probably, might); obligation (necessary, will, must); capacity (capable, ability) or frequency (sometimes, usually, frequently, always) | * words and phrases that evaluate positively the media event/product/service * making judgments about people involved and how they behave (courageous cancer survivor; generous philanthropist) * showing appreciation of things such as people’s qualities (a talented footballer turned entrepreneur; award winning writer), events (a unique occasion) and of services (a long-awaited facility). |

## Section 3 Editing, proofreading and publishing a media release

1. Edit and proofread your draft according to your teacher’s instructions. The following checklist developed from the table in Section 2 should help.

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| Checklist for media release | |
| Text structure | |
| Have you selected and sequenced information to add to reader appeal through:   * a date of release? * a headline that is short and catchy and encapsulates the angle/what is new and interesting? * a lead that is brief and succinctly answers the main questions: who, what, when, where, why, how? * a body that clearly develops the topic foreshadowed in the lead, using the inverted pyramid structure (most important to least important information)? * an end that contains the least important information? * contact information that includes the name, phone number and email address of the media contact? * a boiler plate/about us brief statement about your organisation for the journalist? | |
| Ideas and information | |
| Have you produced a media release that promotes a newsworthy event, product or service ready to be pitched to a media outlet through:   * writing a lead paragraph of a couple of sentences only that succinctly identifies the vital information about who, what, when, where, why and how? * elaborating on the topic by including a mix of information, beginning with the most important and ending with the least important? * including specific names, places and dates? * including direct quotes from key personnel, with attribution (name and position)? * including relevant links (for electronic media)? * supporting assertions with facts and statistics? * including photograph/s with caption/s? * including a call to action (e.g. attend, volunteer, donate, rally)? (optional) | |
| Language features | |
| Have you made the intended audience (a media outlet) more likely to publish your media release by: | |
| * using mostly present and future tense? * choosing mainly doing and saying verbs? * using predominantly third person? * using active voice (usually)? * choosing modal words to convey, for example, certainty (certainly); inclination (determined, willingly); probability (probably, might); obligation (necessary, will, must); capacity (capable, ability) or frequency (sometimes, usually, frequently, always)? | * using words and phrases that evaluate positively the media event / product / service e.g. that make judgments about people involved and how they behave; that show appreciation of things such as people’s qualities, events, and of services? * including graphic design elements (e.g. images, colour, line, space, shape) |

1. Exchange your media release with that of a classmate, identifying two aspects that work well and one aspect that could be improved.

### Appendix 1

##### Media strategy: fail to plan and plan to fail

Publicity staff liaise with a variety of media organisations who work to deadlines. In order to take the opportunities that exist to promote your event, product or service, and also to build people’s trust and confidence in you as an organised and ethical person, you need to plan effectively. A media strategy that takes into account all the relevant details necessary to communicate with your media contacts on time and meet publishing deadlines should be helpful. **Note**: This is based on Kellie O’Brien’s free downloadable Media Plan Template (<http://kellieobrien.com.au/>).

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| **Release Date** | **Subject** | **Content** | **Vehicle** | **Contacts** | **Status** | **Deadline** | **Importance** |
|  | Subject | Angle/s | Medium: press release, blog post, newsletter, social media | Media contacts (print, broadcast and online media), along with any other contacts who may be helping execute the strategy | Where things are at | Deadline to get everything complete | High, medium or low |
|  |  |  |  | Media contact #1: |  |  |  |
|  |  | Media contact #2:  Media contact #3: |  |