

The Daily Forest Gazette: Newspaper Writing Challenge

Learning objective: To identify and use the features of a newspaper report, including headlines, the '5 Ws' (who, what, when, where, why), and formal reporting language.

Read the following news report written by Kit the fox. Pay close attention to how the information is organised. Once you have read it, answer the questions below to show your understanding of journalistic style.

Headline: Mystery of the Missing Acorns Solved by Local Hero

Byline: By Kit the Fox, Investigative Reporter

Oakwood Forest — On Tuesday afternoon, a frantic squirrel discovered that her entire winter supply of acorns had vanished from her hollow tree. The local community was in a state of shock as the theft was reported to the Forest Council.

Kit the Fox arrived on the scene to conduct an investigation. After examining the forest floor for clues, he noticed a trail of muddy paw prints leading toward the riverbank. Following the trail, he discovered a forgetful badger who had mistakenly moved the acorns, believing they were his own collection.

'I am terribly sorry for the confusion,' the badger remarked, looking rather embarrassed. 'I shall return them to their rightful owner immediately.' The squirrel was delighted to have her stash returned, and the forest returned to its peaceful state by sunset.

Word bank: headline · byline · orientation · quotation · formal · investigation · eyewitness

1. Identify the '5 Ws' in the report: Who, What, When, Where, and Why. List them clearly. (5 marks)

2. Explain why Kit the Fox used direct speech (quotation marks) in his report. How does this add credibility to the story? (2 marks)

3. Compare and contrast the tone of this newspaper report with a personal diary entry about the same event. Which features make this piece sound like a formal report? (3 marks)

4. Justify why a newspaper reporter must be careful to distinguish between facts and their own opinions. What might happen if a reporter included their own feelings instead of facts? (3 marks)

5. If the badger had refused to return the acorns, how might the headline have changed? Suggest a new headline. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a dramatic front-page illustration for the 'Daily Forest Gazette' showing Kit the Fox investigating the scene with a magnifying glass while the badger looks on sheepishly.



Extension challenge: Imagine a new event has occurred in the forest, such as a mysterious glowing stone found by Nova the owl or a surprise poetry recital held by Leo the lion. Write your own front-page news article (150–200 words) using a catchy headline, a formal byline, and a concluding paragraph that summarises the final outcome. Ensure you use at least two pieces of direct speech from your characters.