

Language and Literacy Activities

After you watch the news update with your class, try some of these activity ideas.

1. Respond to the news update

Ask students what they thought about the stories in the news update.

- What questions do you have after watching?
- How could you answer these questions?

2. Make a KLEW chart

Choose one story from the news update. Work as a class to fill out a KLEW chart: What do students think they know, what have they learned, what evidence do they have for their learning and what do they still wonder?

You can use the KLEW chart as a basis for class discussion.

Know	Learned	Evidence	Wonder

Extension: Challenge students to find out one more piece of information, or come up with one more question, about the news story or a related topic.

3. Summarise the news update

Ask students to summarise what they learnt from the news update, using one of these strategies:

- **Class discussion**
 - Write key points on the board to facilitate discussion.
- **Turn and Talk, or Stronger and Clearer Each Time language routine**
 - Ask students to summarise the news update to a partner using a turn and talk or a successive pair-share.
 - **Language routine instructions:** Partner 1 listens to the summary and asks questions to help the student strengthen and clarify their summary. The student then retells their strengthened and clarified summary to Partner 2. If time allows, students work with a third partner.
- **Independent writing**
 - Ask students to independently write summaries, either in note or paragraph form, with optional drawings.

4. Summarise the **news update** (for younger students)

Ask students to summarise what they learnt from the news update as if they were explaining it to younger students (e.g., a group of nursery students). Ask them to think about how they could communicate the information in a simpler way.

- What details could you leave out?
- Could you use different, simpler words (i.e., synonyms), or would you provide extra explanation for certain words?

5. Identify **key words** and **phrases**

Distribute copies of the news update transcript. Watch the news update a second time and have students underline key words or phrases in the transcript. Ask students which words or phrases they chose, and why.

6. Focus on comprehension – **context clues**

Explain that using context clues is one way that students can determine the meaning of unknown words while reading. Context clues are the words and sentences around the unknown word.

Share some of the different context clues that authors provide in their writing.

- **Word part clues:** Prefixes, suffixes, and so on.
- **Definition/restatement:** Definition of the word is given right after it, often in parentheses or followed by *is* or *means*
- **Synonym:** Word with a similar meaning is given, often using *or*, *that is*, or *which is*
- **Antonym:** Word is contrasted with something that means the opposite
- **Examples:** Lists of related things are given and the word is often followed by *such as*, *include*, *these*, or *for example*
- **General clues**

Display the news update transcript. Choose a word that may be unfamiliar to students.

- Based on context clues, what do you think this word means?
- What kinds of context clues support your understanding?

Ask students to try using the word in a sentence of their own.

7. Creative writing

Have students pick one of the Spark a Discussion questions (or choose one for them). Ask them to write a response, or think about their response and discuss it with a partner (using either the Turn and Talk or Stronger and Clearer Each Time language routine).

Example activities:

- Imagine you're going on a journey to Mars/the desert/the ocean floor. Plan your trip. What would you need to take with you? Write a list of what you'd need and why you'd need it.
- Imagine you're a polar bear living on an ice sheet that's shrinking due to climate change. What challenges do you face? How do you have to change your behaviour to survive?

8. Focus on **text feature**

If the news update included a graphic text feature (e.g., a map, diagram, or illustrations with captions), display it. Preview the text feature with students.

- Read the title of the text feature.
- Read any labels or captions.
- Prompt students to share what they learned from the text feature.

Have students turn and talk with a partner to share what they learnt. Then, discuss as a class.

- Why did the filmmakers include this text feature?
- What facts did the text feature add to the news update?
- When and where could you use this text feature in your work?

To help students understand different text features, have them add one to an upcoming writing assignment. They might find a map to paste into their writing, create a simple bar chart, or draw a diagram. When students have to find or create a text feature before deciding where it should go in their own writing and why, they can more easily interpret it in other texts.

9. Evaluate the **credibility of sources** (for older students)

Remind students that sometimes, scientists rely on information provided by others. However, when they read scientific articles or media reports – especially from the internet – they need to assess the credibility, accuracy and possible bias of each source.

Ask students to share how they might evaluate the credibility and accuracy of a science article or media report. Use the news update as an example, then discuss a variety of other sources.

- **Check sources**
 - Who wrote or created the source?
 - What is their background?
- **Check the evidence**
 - For example, do the results of the experiment support the article's claims?
- **Ask subject-matter experts**
 - What do they think of the source?
 - How can you find out what they think?
- **Cross-reference**
 - Do the facts presented align with the information in other credible sources?

10. Set a **viewing purpose**

Set a viewing purpose before playing the news update. Explain that students are going to watch the news update again, but this time ask them to focus on one thing in particular, e.g., the use of describing words (adjectives), action words (verbs) or naming words (nouns).

11. Genre **reformulation** strategies

Ask students to pick one of the news update stories (or a related topic) and write a poem or song about it.

For younger students: Give your students a word, or choice of words, related to the news update (e.g., *bird, robot, Arctic, swim*). Ask them to write an acrostic poem based on the word.

Prompt students to turn the news update into, e.g., an informational brochure, poster or persuasive essay. Invite them to share their work with their peers, or present the work in a gallery walk.

12. Read across texts

Distribute the news update transcript and ask students to pick one story from it. Provide students with an additional text on the same topic (e.g., a webpage, book or magazine article). If time allows, you can ask students to find the additional text themselves.

Ask students to compare the additional text with the story in the news update.

- How are the texts similar and different?
- What information does one give you that the other does not?

Ask students to compare the two texts by completing the following paragraph frame.

_____ and _____ are different sources on the same topic.

The author of _____ included details such as _____.

This helped make the topic more meaningful to me because _____.

The author of _____ included details such as _____.

This helped make the topic more meaningful to me because _____.

I think the most useful text on the topic was _____ because _____.