

# www.**Breaking News English**.com

Ready-to-use ESL/EFL Lessons by Sean Banville

**"1,000 IDEAS & ACTIVITIES FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS"**

**The Breaking News English.com Resource Book**

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/book.html>

## **Breaking News English to be upgraded**

**31st October, 2012**

[http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1210/121031-english\\_news\\_lessons.html](http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1210/121031-english_news_lessons.html)

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# THE ARTICLE

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1210/121031-english\\_news\\_lessons.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1210/121031-english_news_lessons.html)

Rumours are spreading in classrooms around the world that the current affairs lesson plan website Breaking News English is about to undergo an upgrade. The site has been producing materials based on the latest news stories since 2004. It is widely believed that the revamped site will be uploaded on the 1st of November, to coincide with its eight-year anniversary. Speculation is rife as to what the new look might be. Many teachers have requested images to accompany the news articles, while others have asked for videos. The biggest debate has been over the inclusion of a North American accent. Jan Lee, an online teacher from New York, said: "I've been listening to that guy's voice for years, and it's time for a change."

Breaking News English was created after its materials maker, Sean Banville, had spent several years producing lessons based on the news for the school he worked at. He was surprised at how much his students preferred news-based lessons than those from textbooks. One day in the spring of 2004, while returning home on his scooter through the countryside, the idea of creating a website for his lessons popped into his head. He has subsequently uploaded another seven sites and over 3,500 lessons – all free. Sean said his sites have become a "positive addiction" and that "more are in the pipeline". He is hoping students and teachers will like the revised, beefed up site, and that they will provide him with feedback on it.

# WARM-UPS

**1. LESSONS ABOUT NEWS:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about news lessons. Change partners often. Share your findings with your first partner.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

*rumour / classroom / current affairs / upgrade / uploaded / images / time for a change / materials / news lessons / textbooks / countryside / positive addiction / feedback*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

**3. STUDYING:** How can you improve your English using news stories? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners often and share what you wrote.

	Three (or more) ideas on how to improve my English using the news
Vocabulary	
Role plays	
Grammar	
Speaking	
Writing	
The Internet	

**4. MATERIALS:** Students A **strongly** believe lessons on news are better than lessons found in textbooks; Students B **strongly** believe the opposite. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**5. NEWS:** What do you like reading about most? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put your favourites at the top. Change partners often.

- world news
- fashion news
- sports news
- celebrity gossip
- the business pages
- local news
- news about the environment
- news about happy things

**6. LESSONS:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'lessons'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1210/121031-english\\_news\\_lessons.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1210/121031-english_news_lessons.html)

## 1. TRUE / FALSE:

Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- a. There are confirmed reports a materials website will get an upgrade. T / F
- b. The site, Breaking News English, has been in business since 2008. T / F
- c. The site's upgrade is set to coincide with the date it was founded. T / F
- d. A teacher wants someone new to read the news on the website. T / F
- e. The website creator had no previous experience making news lessons. T / F
- f. The idea for the site came while the creator was riding a scooter. T / F
- g. The guy behind the site has put over 3,500 lessons online. T / F
- h. The guy said he doesn't need any feedback on his lessons. T / F

## 2. SYNONYM MATCH:

Match the following synonyms from the article.

- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. rumours (rumors - USA)                 | a. widespread               |
| 2. current affairs (current events - USA) | b. a number of              |
| 3. upgrade                                | c. news                     |
| 4. rife                                   | d. afterward                |
| 5. inclusion                              | e. favoured (favored - USA) |
| 6. several                                | f. stories                  |
| 7. preferred                              | g. comments                 |
| 8. subsequently                           | h. addition                 |
| 9. in the pipeline                        | i. improvement              |
| 10. feedback                              | j. coming                   |

## 3. PHRASE MATCH:

(Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- |                           |                       |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. rumours are            | a. is rife            |
| 2. about to undergo       | b. pipeline           |
| 3. speculation            | c. for a change       |
| 4. a North American       | d. on the news        |
| 5. it's time              | e. an upgrade         |
| 6. lessons based          | f. feedback on it     |
| 7. his students preferred | g. accent             |
| 8. popped into            | h. news-based lessons |
| 9. more are in the        | i. spreading          |
| 10. provide him with      | j. his head           |

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1210/121031-english\\_news\\_lessons.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1210/121031-english_news_lessons.html)

**GAP FILL:** Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Rumours are (1) \_\_\_\_\_ in classrooms around the world that the current affairs lesson plan website Breaking News English is about to (2) \_\_\_\_\_ an upgrade. The site has been producing materials based on the latest news stories since 2004. It is (3) \_\_\_\_\_ believed that the revamped site will be uploaded on the 1st of November, to (4) \_\_\_\_\_ with its eight-year anniversary. Speculation is rife as to what the new look might be. Many teachers have requested images to (5) \_\_\_\_\_ the news articles, while others have asked for videos. The biggest (6) \_\_\_\_\_ has been over the (7) \_\_\_\_\_ of a North American accent. Jan Lee, an online teacher from New York, said: "I've been listening to that guy's voice for years, and it's time for a (8) \_\_\_\_\_."

*accompany*

*inclusion*

*widely*

*change*

*spreading*

*coincide*

*undergo*

*debate*

Breaking News English was created after its (9) \_\_\_\_\_ maker, Sean Banville, had spent (10) \_\_\_\_\_ years producing lessons based on the news for the school he worked at. He was surprised at how much his students (11) \_\_\_\_\_ news-based lessons than those from textbooks. One day in the spring of 2004, while returning home on his scooter through the countryside, the idea of creating a website for his lessons (12) \_\_\_\_\_ into his head. He has (13) \_\_\_\_\_ uploaded another seven sites and over 3,500 lessons – all free. Sean said his sites have become a "positive (14) \_\_\_\_\_" and that "more are in the (15) \_\_\_\_\_". He is hoping students and teachers will like the revised, beefed up site, and that they will provide him with (16) \_\_\_\_\_ on it.

*subsequently*

*pipeline*

*several*

*popped*

*materials*

*feedback*

*addiction*

*preferred*

## LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1210/121031-english\\_news\\_lessons.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1210/121031-english_news_lessons.html)

(1) \_\_\_\_\_ in classrooms around the world that the current affairs lesson plan website Breaking News English is about to (2) \_\_\_\_\_. The site has been producing materials based on the latest news stories since 2004. It is widely believed that the revamped site will be uploaded on the 1st of November, (3) \_\_\_\_\_ its eight-year anniversary. (4) \_\_\_\_\_ as to what the new look might be. Many teachers have requested images to accompany the news articles, while others have asked for videos. The biggest debate has been (5) \_\_\_\_\_ a North American accent. Jan Lee, an online teacher from New York, said: "(6) \_\_\_\_\_ guy's voice for years, and it's time for a change."

Breaking News English was created after its materials maker, Sean Banville, had spent (7) \_\_\_\_\_ lessons based on the news for the school he worked at. He was surprised at how much his students (8) \_\_\_\_\_ than those from textbooks. One day in the spring of 2004, while returning home on his scooter through the countryside, the idea of creating a website for (9) \_\_\_\_\_ his head. He (10) \_\_\_\_\_ another seven sites and over 3,500 lessons – all free. Sean said his sites have become a "positive addiction" and that "(11) \_\_\_\_\_". He is hoping students and teachers will like the (12) \_\_\_\_\_, and that they will provide him with feedback on it.

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1210/121031-english\\_news\\_lessons.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1210/121031-english_news_lessons.html)

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'news' and 'lesson'.

<b>news</b>	<b>lesson</b>
-------------	---------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• spreading</li><li>• undergo</li><li>• 2004</li><li>• eight</li><li>• images</li><li>• voice</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• several</li><li>• preferred</li><li>• scooter</li><li>• 3,500</li><li>• positive</li><li>• feedback</li></ul>
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# LESSONS ABOUT NEWS SURVEY

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1210/121031-english\\_news\\_lessons.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1210/121031-english_news_lessons.html)

Write five GOOD questions about lessons about news in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper. When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.



# LESSONS ABOUT NEWS DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the term 'news lesson'?
- c) What do you think about studying English using the latest news?
- d) What are the advantages and disadvantages of using news to study?
- e) Do you prefer news lessons or lessons from textbooks?
- f) What do you think of the lessons from Breaking News English.com?
- g) Do you think pictures are important to accompany a news article?
- h) Is it important to you what kind of accent you listen to?
- i) What is the best way to use news stories in the classroom?
- j) In 1795, America's *Portland Eastern Herald* newspaper complained that newspapers were not read in schools. Do you think they should be part of school lessons? From what age?

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# LESSONS ABOUT NEWS DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Why do people like reading, watching or listening to news?
- c) What is your favourite way of getting up to date with the news?
- d) How important is news to you?
- e) What kind of English lessons and sites do you look for online?
- f) What do you think of the phrase "positive addiction"?
- g) What new English study websites would you like to see created?
- h) How often does your teacher use news lessons with you?
- i) What feedback would you give Sean Banville on his sites / lessons?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Sean Banville?

# LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

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Rumours are spreading in classrooms around the world that the current affairs lesson plan website Breaking News English is about to (1) \_\_\_\_ an upgrade. The site has been producing materials (2) \_\_\_\_ on the latest news stories since 2004. It is (3) \_\_\_\_ believed that the revamped site will be uploaded on the 1st of November, to (4) \_\_\_\_ with its eight-year anniversary. Speculation is rife as to what the new look might be. Many teachers have requested images to (5) \_\_\_\_ the news articles, while others have asked for videos. The biggest debate has been over the inclusion of a North American (2) \_\_\_\_\_. Jan Lee, an online teacher from New York, said: "I've been listening to that guy's voice for years, and it's time for a change."

Breaking News English was created after its materials maker, Sean Banville, had spent (7) \_\_\_\_ years producing lessons based on the news for the school he worked at. He was surprised at how much his students (8) \_\_\_\_ news-based lessons than those from textbooks. One day in the spring of 2004, while returning home on his scooter through the countryside, the idea of creating a website for his lessons (9) \_\_\_\_ into his head. He has subsequently uploaded another seven sites and over 3,500 lessons – all free. Sean said his sites have become a "(10) \_\_\_\_ addiction" and that "more are in the (11) \_\_\_\_". He is hoping students and teachers will like the revised, (12) \_\_\_\_ up site, and that they will provide him with feedback on it.

## Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- |     |                 |               |                |               |
|-----|-----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1.  | (a) underground | (b) underling | (c) under way  | (d) undergo   |
| 2.  | (a) biased      | (b) boosted   | (c) basted     | (d) based     |
| 3.  | (a) width       | (b) widely    | (c) widen      | (d) widening  |
| 4.  | (a) clash       | (b) incident  | (c) coincide   | (d) happening |
| 5.  | (a) take        | (b) along     | (c) accompany  | (d) companion |
| 6.  | (a) accent      | (b) sounds    | (c) talking    | (d) speech    |
| 7.  | (a) few         | (b) several   | (c) variety    | (d) numeral   |
| 8.  | (a) preferred   | (b) likened   | (c) favour     | (d) treated   |
| 9.  | (a) tossed      | (b) popped    | (c) jumped out | (d) created   |
| 10. | (a) position    | (b) postulate | (c) positive   | (d) posited   |
| 11. | (a) plumbing    | (b) tubes     | (c) pipeline   | (d) tunnel    |
| 12. | (a) fished      | (b) egged     | (c) chickened  | (d) beefed    |

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# WRITING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1210/121031-english\\_news\\_lessons.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1210/121031-english_news_lessons.html)

Write about **lessons about news** for 10 minutes. Correct your partner's paper.

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# HOMework

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find out more about studying using the news. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. LESSONS ABOUT NEWS:** Make a poster about good ways to use the news in the classroom / while studying. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. BREAKING NEWS ENGLISH:** Write a magazine article about the website Breaking News English.com. Include imaginary interviews with its materials writer Sean Banville. Mail the article to him at info [] breakingnewsenglish.com.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

**5. LETTER:** Write a letter to Sean Banville. Ask him three questions about news lessons. Give him three of your opinions on news lessons / his site. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F      b. F      c. T      d. T      e. F      f. T      g. T      h. F

## SYNONYM MATCH:

- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. rumours (rumors - USA)                 | a. stories                  |
| 2. current affairs (current events - USA) | b. news                     |
| 3. upgrade                                | c. improvement              |
| 4. rife                                   | d. widespread               |
| 5. inclusion                              | e. addition                 |
| 6. several                                | f. a number of              |
| 7. preferred                              | g. favoured (favored - USA) |
| 8. subsequently                           | h. afterward                |
| 9. in the pipeline                        | i. coming                   |
| 10. feedback                              | j. comments                 |

## PHRASE MATCH:

- |                           |                       |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. rumours are            | a. spreading          |
| 2. about to undergo       | b. an upgrade         |
| 3. speculation            | c. is rife            |
| 4. a North American       | d. accent             |
| 5. it's time              | e. for a change       |
| 6. lessons based          | f. on the news        |
| 7. his students preferred | g. news-based lessons |
| 8. popped into            | h. his head           |
| 9. more are in the        | i. pipeline           |
| 10. provide him with      | j. feedback on it     |

## GAP FILL:

### Breaking News English to be upgraded

Rumours are (1) **spreading** in classrooms around the world that the current affairs lesson plan website Breaking News English is about to (2) **undergo** an upgrade. The site has been producing materials based on the latest news stories since 2004. It is (3) **widely** believed that the revamped site will be uploaded on the 1st of November, to (4) **coincide** with its eight-year anniversary. Speculation is rife as to what the new look might be. Many teachers have requested images to (5) **accompany** the news articles, while others have asked for videos. The biggest (6) **debate** has been over the (7) **inclusion** of a North American accent. Jan Lee, an online teacher from New York, said: "I've been listening to that guy's voice for years, and it's time for a (8) **change**."

Breaking News English was created after its (9) **materials** maker, Sean Banville, had spent (10) **several** years producing lessons based on the news for the school he worked at. He was surprised at how much his students (11) **preferred** news-based lessons than those from textbooks. One day in the spring of 2004, while returning home on his scooter through the countryside, the idea of creating a website for his lessons (12) **popped** into his head. He has (13) **subsequently** uploaded another seven sites and over 3,500 lessons – all free. Sean said his sites have become a "positive (14) **addiction**" and that "more are in the (15) **pipeline**". He is hoping students and teachers will like the revised, beefed up site, and that they will provide him with (16) **feedback** on it.

## LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - d    2 - d    3 - b    4 - c    5 - c    6 - a    7 - b    8 - a    9 - b    10 - c    11 - c    12 - d

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