



GET WRITING!

Write your own WW1 newspaper article

Your task is to write your own article about a WW1 animal hero. First, revise how a newspaper article is put together...

A. Have a read of this animal newspaper article and answer the questions.

The **headline** sums up the story. Sometimes it uses alliteration e.g. Heroic Horse to grab your attention! Sometimes there's a play on words or a pun. How does this **headline** use a pun?

The **photo** helps to tell the story.

The **lead** summarises the story in a sentence and answers the main facts (5 Ws: Who? What? Why? Where? When?) of the story. Which of the 5 Ws are in this **lead**?

Earning their wings



20 October 1917

CAUGHT up in the Battle of Passchendaele last week, British troops needed to get an urgent signal back to their headquarters from the front line.

A messenger was sent but, shortly after setting off, he came under fire.

Even though his leg was broken by a bullet, the messenger carried on and delivered the message. Sadly, he died the next day.

This heroic mission wasn't carried out by a soldier but by a **brave** pigeon, known only as 2709, one of thousands trained to fly back to base from the front line.

The birds are helping to save the lives of thousands of soldiers, with more than 95% getting their messages through. They are also shaping many key decisions in the war.

The king, George V, is even sending his own pigeons from the royal loft at Sandringham so that he can be updated on the progress of the war.

Anyone interfering with a homing pigeon during the war faces a £100 fine or six months in jail.

The main **body** of the article is made up of paragraphs. Each new paragraph gives you new details about the story. What information do you learn in each of the six paragraphs that make up the **main body** of this article?

An **adjective** is a word which describes a noun and gives the story more information e.g. **Brave** pigeon. Underline the interesting adjectives in these phrases:

- An urgent signal
- This heroic mission
- They are shaping... key decisions.

The journalist varies the words used to start sentences in order to make the text not repetitive and more interesting to read. **Find** 4 words the writer uses to vary the **sentence openers**.



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B. How well do you know some key features of a newspaper article?

Answer the questions on 'Circus animals to the rescue' and 'The soldier dog'.

Circus animals to the rescue

24 February 1916

AN elephant called Lizzie has become a regular sight on the streets of Sheffield.

With the war raging, the military has bought most of England's horses and sent them to the Western Front. So farmers and other workers are having to find other animals to help them.

Lizzie's job is to cart equipment, machines and scrap metal around Sheffield, a job that used to be done by three horses taken off to war.



A horse is landed from a British military transport ship at Boulogne, France

Before the war began, Lizzie used to perform tricks as part of a travelling circus. She is said to be quite a character, with a story going round about her putting her trunk into somebody's window and stealing their dinner.

Elephants from another circus are also filling in for missing horses by ploughing fields and transporting hay in Surrey.

Hundreds of thousands of horses and mules are being used by Britain in the war. Most of our heavy horses have already gone to the front, with many being killed or injured. The Blue Cross charity is raising funds for their treatment.

Pic from Alan Reid, from the Horley History Society



Elephants from Sangar's Circus are being used to plough fields in Horley, Surrey

The soldier dog

3 August 1918

A STRAY dog has become a soldier and looks set to be remembered as one of the heroes of the war when it is over.

The bull terrier cross wandered through an American army training session at Yale Field in Connecticut. One soldier, Corporal Robert Conroy, took a shine to the dog and named him Stubby, because of his short and stubby tail.

Conroy smuggled the dog onto his ship bound for France. Stubby was allowed to stay, even though animals are forbidden, because he learned a kind of dog salute, putting his right paw on his right eyebrow.

On 5 February 1918, Stubby reached the front line as part of the 102nd Infantry. He was an official mascot because he helped to keep up the spirits of the troops.

Stubby has already survived a number of injuries from shrapnel and gas attacks. He has become so well-known and admired that he has been treated in Red Cross hospitals alongside human soldiers.

Having survived gas attacks, Stubby has become very



sensitive to the smell of gas and, with his sensitive dog nose, is able to detect gas much earlier than his human comrades and can alert them to danger in time. His sensitive hearing also means he is often the first to hear the advancing enemy and can alert his comrades.

A report has reached First News that, two nights ago, Stubby heard a German spy who tried to sneak into Conroy's camp during the dead of night. Stubby grabbed the intruder's leg and held him until Conroy and other troops came to capture the German.

Stubby has also been useful as a 'mercy' dog, scanning the battlefields for injured soldiers and bringing doctors to the wounded.

When Stubby returns home at the end of the war, he will probably get more medals than any other soldier dog and may even outrank his owner!





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1. Highlight, draw a circle around, or write down the **lead** of 'Circus animals to the rescue'.

2. How many of the **5 Ws** (facts) can you find in 'The soldier dog' lead?

Who?

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What?

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Where?

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When?

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Why?

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3. 'Regular' is the adjective which gives us more information in the **lead** of 'Circus animals to the rescue'. It helps us understand that Lizzie the elephant was often seen in Sheffield. Can you add at least one more interesting and informative adjective to this sentence? (Use arrows and write your adjectives above or below the sentence.)

An elephant called Lizzie has become a regular sight on the streets of Sheffield.

4. List 3 different **sentence openers** from each article:

'Circus animals to the rescue'

'The soldier dog'

e.g. An

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●

5. Can you rewrite the **headline** for either 'Circus animals to the rescue' or 'The soldier dog'? If you can, try to use alliteration or a pun?

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C. Now it's your turn! Write an article about Cher ami - the WW1 animal hero pigeon!

NEWS JOURNALIST CHALLENGE:

Pigeon, Cher ami, helped to save the lives of 194 soldiers during the Battle of Argonne.

How would this heroic feat be told in a newspaper to tell the story to the public?

You are the journalist and this is your challenge!

JOURNALIST NOTES FOR REPORT:

Here's some background information on pigeon, Cher ami's, role in the Battle of Argonne in WW1 to help you write your article:



Source: Cher_Ami



- Her name means 'dear friend' in French.
- 3rd October 1918, during the Battle of the Argonne in France
- Major Charles Whittlesey and more than 500 men of the US Army 77th Infantry Division were behind German enemy lines and surrounded.
- No food or ammunition (bullets).
- They were being shot at by Allied troops who did not know their location.
- By day two, fewer than half the 500 men were still alive.
- Major Whittlesey sent messages to be rescued by pigeon. The first two pigeons were killed.
- Sent Cher Ami with the message: 'We are along the road parallel to 276.4. Our own artillery is dropping a barrage directly on us. For heaven's sake, stop it.'
- As Cher Ami flew back, she was shot down by the Germans but set off again.
- She arrived back at her loft to deliver the message and helped to save the lives of the 194 survivors.
- She was shot through the breast, blinded in one eye, covered in blood and had one leg hanging only by a tendon. The Army doctors saved her life and made her a wooden leg because they could not save her injured leg.





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Handwriting practice area with 15 sets of dotted lines on a light brown background with a decorative border.



Source: Cher_Ami

