

Behind the Headlines

Reporting news before the internet: Archives and journalism

Teacher Guidance

Thank you for downloading this resource from The GNM Archive and Behind the Headlines. This folder contains everything required for a 45-60 minute lesson as well as suggestions for follow up work.

The PowerPoint in the folder covers the whole lesson and includes comprehensive notes for teaching each of the slides.

Below you will find a lesson plan as well as all the required resources, with the exception of object images which appear separately in the folder to allow for double-sided printing in the correct orientation.

You may wish to follow up on this lesson with different learning outcomes based on the needs of your students. Some possible suggestions are:

- create a newspaper front page featuring articles about the role of an archivist and objects from the archive.
- write a profile about the role of an archivist.
- write a report about the role of an archivist.
- work in groups to give presentations about one of the primary sources found in the archive.
- research and write or present about a different archive that reflects students' own interests (music, fashion, sports, gaming, human rights, science, film, etc).
- role play creating a newspaper in different points in history, using the primary sources as guidance.

We hope you enjoy using this resource. If you have any questions or feedback, please contact behindtheheadlines@theguardianfoundation.org. For further resources, workshops, and teaching events, please visit our website at <https://theguardianfoundation.org/programmes/behind-the-headlines>.

Archives and Journalism: how news was reported before the internet

Lessons for pupils aged 11-14

Teacher Resource Pack

Lesson Plan

Learning objective: To ask questions and learn about the role of archives, archivists and primary sources.

At the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

- Describe the purpose of an archive and role of an archivist
- Understand why archives are important
- Understand some of the technological changes that have impacted news reporting over the past 200 years
- Ask questions about and provide their thoughts on primary source archival material

Key Stage 3 Curriculum Links:

Careers:

- Gatsby Benchmark 4 - linking curriculum learning to careers
- Gatsby Benchmark 5 - provide encounters with employees and employers

History:

- Equip pupils to ask perception questions, think critically, weigh evidence, sift arguments and develop perspective and judgement. Distinguish fact from fiction, make connections, draw contrasts and analyse trends within periods. Create relevant, structured and evidentially supported accounts. Understand how different types of historical sources are used to make historical claims and discern how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed.
- Pupils should understand how different types of historical sources are used rigorously to make historical claims and discern how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed.

English:

- Learning new vocabulary, relating it explicitly to known vocabulary and understanding it with the help of context and dictionaries.
- Summarising and organising material, and supporting ideas and arguments with any necessary factual detail.
- Drawing on new vocabulary and grammatical constructions from their reading and listening, and using these consciously in their writing and speech to achieve particular effects.

Lesson Outline (45 mins)

*Denotes the slides on the accompanying powerpoint.

1. Introduction to the Guardian and the changes that have taken place in journalism over the past 200 years. (5 minutes) *1-5
2. Introduction to archives and the role of an archivist (5 minutes) *6-8
3. Video of a Guardian archivist talking about their role (10 minutes) *9
4. Exploration of Guardian archive items by students - requires printing of "All Object Images" document in Lesson 1 folder - (10 minutes) *10
5. Discussion and feedback about archive items (8 minutes) *11-18
6. Video of Guardian archivist explaining objects (7 minutes) *19

Resources for this lesson

1. **Brief notes on objects** - can be used to help support students who may be struggling to engage with the objects, or to differentiate in assigning objects to write about.
2. **Vocabulary Sheet** - to support any students with the specific vocabulary of the lesson.
3. **Images of Objects** - seven pages featuring images of the objects for the students to explore with question prompts. Though these images are part of the powerpoint, printing them or making them available on a hand-held device allows students to explore the objects in more detail and direct conversations around them. **These can be found as a separate PDF file within the downloaded folder.** You may need to ensure your printer is set to landscape to print them.

Resources for possible follow-up work

4. **In-depth object information** - can be used to research and write in more details about the archive objects.
5. **Archivist written interview** - can be used to support students in writing more about the role of an archivist.

Object Descriptions

Below are brief descriptions of the items of which students will receive images. While we want to encourage students to explore the objects on their own, this information may help you to guide students that are finding that difficult.

For their newspapers students can choose their own objects to focus on, or objects can be assigned. If you want to use this as an opportunity for differentiation, **the difficulty level of each object is marked, with three stars being the most challenging:**

1. *****Papillon de Metz** (1870) – very thin pieces of paper containing messages and news sent via balloon from the French town of Metz during the war between France and Prussia (modern day Germany) in 1870.
2. ****Walter Doughty glass plates, prints and negative cases** (1920s) – a glass plate photographic negative, the photographic prints of the image, and the cases used to transport the glass plates. The images were taken during the Irish War of Independence between 1919-1921 by Guardian photographer Walter Doughty. At this time, photographers had to capture images on negatives made of glass.
3. ****Centenary album and prints** (1921) – In May 1921 the Guardian celebrated its 100th birthday and had this photo album made. It documents all the staff working for the newspaper at the time.
4. *****Working report** (c1949) – from 1947-1989 the Manchester Guardian and Evening News produced annual reports on the status and activities of the organisation. These took the form of booklets and were distributed amongst the staff to keep them informed about the company.
5. *****Les Gibbard's Heath/Wilson cartoon** (1970) – A cartoon drawn by the Guardian political cartoonist Les Gibbard that shows the 1970 General Election winner Ted Heath popping out of a ballot box, in the style of a Jack-in-a-Box. Because this was an unexpected win, there is evidence of the cartoon being changed last-minute.
6. ***Stereoplate** (1980) – This stereoplate is a lead alloy printing plate that was used to create the front page of the Guardian on 3rd July 1980.
7. ***Tandy laptop** (1983) – A TRS (Tandy Radio Shack) - 80 Model 100 personal computer first used by Guardian journalists in 1983. This early laptop would display five lines of text on the screen, and when a reporter wanted to send a story they would connect it to a phone line and it would send a series of beeps that would then be automatically translated into text.

Archive Vocabulary

Archive

A collection of historical records and/or objects. An archive is usually about a subject (such as computing or clothing design) or about an organisation (such as a university or hospital). The word 'archive' can also be used to refer to the building that the collections are stored in.

Archivist

A person whose job is to look after an archive and the items in it.

Collections

The objects held in an archive. They are evidence of the activity of a person, company, or group, and can be anything from clothing to audio recordings to pieces of paper.

Catalogue

A way of documenting a collection to show how various records relate to one another. Catalogues are like databases, in that they contain searchable information about the archive collections.

Database

Data stored on a computer in a way that is easy for people to access. An example is the Internet Movie Database (IMDb) where you can type in the name of a film and it will tell you what actors were in it, or the name of an actor and see all the films they are in.

The Guardian

A newspaper that was started in Manchester in 1821 and now runs out of London. It also makes videos, podcasts, and other digital material.



Object Handling

When archivists touch the objects in their collection in order to move them or show them to people. They may need to do this very carefully, sometimes making sure objects aren't exposed to light or that they wear gloves.

The Observer

A newspaper founded in 1791 that is now owned by the Guardian. It is only printed on Sundays.

Preservation

Work done to keep objects in good condition and make sure they are not damaged

Primary Source

Immediate, first hand records of an event or activity such as a diary of a soldier from World War II.





The Papillon de Metz War Correspondence 1870

What is it?

- The Papillon de Metz are very thin pieces of paper containing messages and news sent via balloon from the French town of Metz during the war between France and Prussia (modern day Germany) in 1870.

What is interesting about it?

- Before mobile phones and email, it could be very difficult for reporters to get information back to their newspapers, especially if they were caught up in difficult situations like wars.
- The town of Metz was cut off from the outside world at this time, with nobody able to get in or out past the Prussian forces. It was very difficult to get news from the town to the rest of the country and beyond. By attaching these letters to gas filled balloons that would be launched into the air, it was hoped that the messages would get

far enough away from the enemy to be retrieved by someone friendly who would send them on.

- As the pieces of paper were so light, each balloon could hold thousands of messages.
- In this message the reporter writes that the city of Metz is 'holding strong' and asks that the newspaper let his wife know he is safe.

Why is this part of the Guardian archive?

- It was a Guardian reporter called GT Robinson who sent this message via balloon from Metz. This was the only way he could get news of the siege to the paper.
- This papillon was meant for Guardian business manager Peter Allen. It was later sent to the Guardian by Peter Allen's grandson in 1959, though there is no record of whether Peter Allen himself received it directly.



Walter Doughty's glass plate, photographic print and negative cases, 1920

What is it?

- A photograph taken using a glass plate, the photographic print of the image and the case used to transport it.
- This image was taken during the Irish War of Independence in 1920 by Guardian photographer Walter Doughty. At this time, photographers had to capture images on negatives made of glass (later, plastic film was introduced to replace glass plate negatives).

What's interesting about it?

- Photographs can be a great way to report the news and help readers understand what's going on. Before camera phones or even digital cameras, taking news photographs was a more difficult process, especially in the early days of photography at the Guardian.
- Glass negatives, and the cameras they were used with, were heavy and fragile and you would

have needed to carry around enough negatives for every image you wanted to take on that trip.

- It must have been difficult during a war to carry around all the equipment needed to take photographs and to keep it all safe.
- You had to be careful not to expose the negative to any light before or after you put it into the camera, which is one reason why the glass plate holders were important. You would then wait until you reached a darkroom to take the negatives out again and develop the photographs.

Why is it in the Guardian Archive?

- Walter Doughty was the Guardian's first staff photographer. He started working for the newspaper in 1908. This glass plate negative was found in the early 2000s at the Guardian's offices by another photographer, Don McPhee.



Centenary photograph album, 1921

What is it?

● In May 1921 the Guardian celebrated its 100th birthday and had this photo album made to mark the occasion. The album documents all the staff working for the newspaper at the time.

What is interesting about it?

● The album provides a wonderful insight into the people who worked for the newspaper at the time and the varied roles they had, from reporters to the cleaners.

● The photographs show that before mobile phones, computers and the internet, newspapers needed large teams of printers, drivers, wire room staff, messengers and stable staff to get the news to their readers. It still takes a lot of people to produce the Guardian, but some of the jobs they are doing have changed.

● For example, around 40 men were employed to look after the horse and carts which delivered the paper to newsagents around Manchester, and to the railway station where the 'newspaper trains' delivered the papers to London and other

cities and towns. The Guardian stopped using horse and cart in 1952.

● The album also features the only female member of the editorial staff at the time, Madeline Linford. Linford joined the paper in 1913 as an advertising assistant and went on to become the first editor of the women's pages in 1922.

● The photographs are thought to have been taken by staff photographer Walter Doughty who is featured in the album with the other 3 members of staff at the picture desk. The Guardian now employs a much larger team to manage the hundreds of images that come into the paper digitally each day.

Why is it in the Guardian archive?

● The album was created by the company to document its staff and celebrate a key moment in its history. For us today, it is a unique object that shows us what the company was like 100 years ago. We are also planning to recreate the album this year, with teams taking photos via online meetings while they work from home.



Working Reports, 1947-1989

What is it?

- From 1947-1989 the Manchester Guardian and Evening News produced annual reports on the status and activities of the organisation. These took the form of booklets and were distributed amongst the staff to keep them informed about the company.

What is interesting about it?

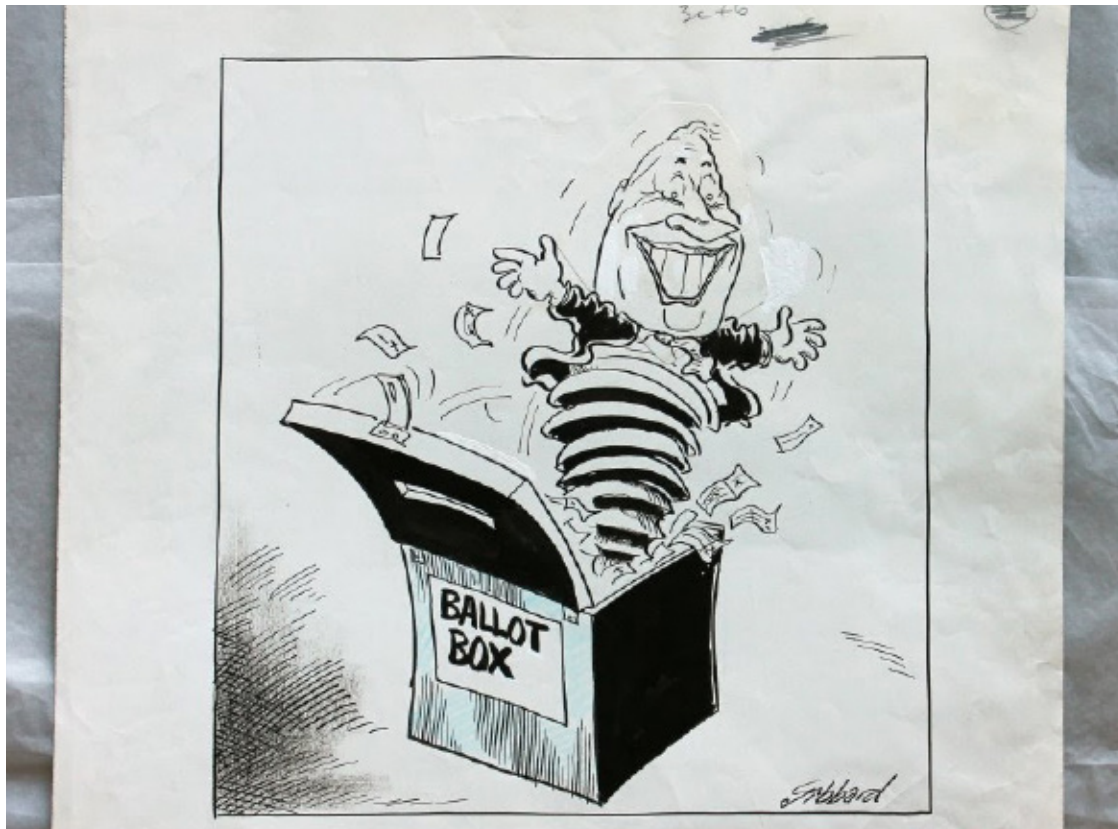
- The reports were first produced as an experiment by the managing director John Russell Scott who felt it was important for employees to know as much as possible about the organisation they worked for.
- These reports contain a lot of information about how the newspaper was operating, including information about circulation figures (the number of newspapers sold or given away), production techniques, expenditure and profit and resources the organisation was using and investing in.
- For example, the Working Report for 1948-49 includes a chart showing the circulation of the Manchester Guardian was at its highest point for 5 years, with 137,000 papers being distributed over a 6 month period.

- The reports also illustrate the resources needed to run the company and produce the newspaper. These show a steady increase in the use of some materials, including newsprint (the paper the news was printed on) and a decline in others; for example, horses were a key part of newspaper distribution but they do not feature in the 1950-51 report as they were replaced by motor vehicles.

- The Guardian still produces reports like this every year, although now they exist online. The 2020 report states that the Guardian had a record 1.5 billion unique browsers and 16.4 billion page views to its digital platforms (like its website) during 2019-20, while 119,000 people paid to get a printed copy of the Guardian, the Observer and/or the Guardian Weekly delivered regularly.

Why is it in the Guardian Archive?

- These reports were created by the company and contain important information about how the newspaper used to be produced. They are important historical documents that show the growth of the paper over time. From them we can see how newspaper production has changed over the last century.



Political Cartoon by Les Gibbard, 1970

What is it?

- A cartoon drawn by the Guardian political cartoonist Les Gibbard in 1970.
- The cartoon shows the 1970 General Election winner Ted Heath popping out of a ballot box, in the style of a Jack-in-a-Box.

What is interesting about it?

- For a long time, cartoons have been used by newspapers to comment on the news.
- Cartoonists often work very quickly and late in the day so they can respond to the most up to date news and events.
- For the 1970 general election, Gibbard drew a cartoon showing Labour politician Harold Wilson as it was thought that he was going to win and become the next Prime Minister. As the election results started to come in and it became clear that Conservative Ted Heath was going to win instead, Gibbard had to come back to the Guardian offices late at night, draw Heath's face

and paste it over Wilson's before the cartoon was published in the next day's paper. The original drawing is in the archive, and if you hold it up to the light you can see Wilson's face peering through from underneath Heath's.

- Today, some cartoonists use digital editing, or a mixture of hand techniques and digital techniques, to create, colour and make changes to their cartoons. If Les Gibbard could have done that, his experience in 1970 might have been a lot easier!

Why is it in the Guardian archive?

- Les Gibbard worked for the Guardian from 1969 until the 1990s.
- Gibbard was a popular cartoonist. His collection of cartoons and sketchbooks are an important addition to the Guardian Archive as they show how he created his work for the paper. The collection is a fantastic example of political cartoons during the later part of the 20th Century.



Printing Stereoplate, 1980

What is it?

- This stereoplate is a lead alloy (metal) printing plate that was used for the front page of the Guardian on 3rd July 1980.

What is interesting about it?

- Until 1987, the Guardian was printed using the 'hot metal' method.
- This method was very labour intensive, noisy and dangerous. It involved groups of employees carrying out a series of processes including:
 - making a solid metal stamp, with raised letters in mirror writing, for each line of text
 - arranging these metal lines (called 'slugs') to make up each page of the paper
 - pressing a plastic or paper mache sheet down onto the raised text to make an imprint (called a 'flong'), and then bending this round and placing it into a mould

-pouring molten lead into this mould to create a curved solid metal printing plate, called a stereoplate, which was then fixed to the printed presses to print out the paper.

- Today, the Guardian uses very thin aluminium printing plates, with the text and pictures printed onto them using a special substance that attracts ink. These can easily be bent into the same semicircular shape as the old stereoplates for use on the printing presses, and now that the Guardian is much smaller (in tabloid size) four pages can be fitted onto one plate.

Why is it in the Guardian archive?

- As this stereoplate was used to print an edition of the Guardian it is an important part of the newspaper's history.
- It is a physical example of how the paper used to be printed.



Tandy Personal Computer, 1983

What is it?

- A TRS (Tandy Radio Shack) - 80 Model 100, personal computer first used by Guardian journalists in 1983.

What is interesting about it?

- Before mobile phones and email, it could be very difficult for reporters to get information back to their newspapers, especially if they were reporting on urgent or breaking news, like election results or the results of an important football match.
- Before the Tandy Radio Shack, the reporter had to dictate (read) their story over the phone often from a public phone box.
- Reporters could type their stories directly into it and edit them. The screen showed up to five lines of text.
- To send the story, the reporter would then connect the computer to a phone socket and telephone the newspaper's newsdesk. The Tandy

would then read the story and convert every character typed into a sound beep (similar to Morse code) and the computer at the newspaper would then convert this into text.

- The Tandy Radio Shack meant that a reporter could send a 800-1000 word story in seconds.
- It ran on four AA batteries, which lasted up to 20 hours and was small enough to fit into a satchel size bag - which was considered very small for a personal computer in those days!
- It wasn't until the late 1990s that mobile phones and email were available for reporters to use.

Why is it in the Guardian Archive?

- The Tandy was used by Guardian journalists and is evidence of how the news used to be reported. It shows us how the technology that enables news reporting has changed over the years.

Interview with an archivist

Here are some helpful reminders if you missed anything from the video.

What is an archivist?

An archivist is someone who looks after records and documents, across a range of formats, that are evidence of the activity of a group, company or individual. These records will have been deemed worthy of preserving because they contain important information and may have historical value. As well as making sure these records are safe, archivists also make sure these records are accessible by organising the information onto databases so it can be found, answering questions about them or helping people physically access the records.

When did you decide you wanted to be an archivist and how did you become one?

I was already working in an archive when I decided I wanted to be an archivist. As part of a university degree about museums, I got a chance to work in an archive. Before this, I hadn't considered a career as an archivist and had been working as a manager of a shop but I started volunteering with my local council archives, and was then lucky enough to get an internship helping to catalogue the collection of a famous film director. After working there for a few years I decided I wanted to become a qualified archivist.

In order to become a qualified archivist you need to complete a specific post graduate degree – this means when you finish your first university degree you do a second one. You can do the course as a one year degree or, like I did, complete it whilst working in an archive. But you can work in an archive without this qualification, like I did before I started the course.

Where do archivists work?

In my career I have worked in a stately home, a museum, a theatre, a purpose built archive building and more recently my house! The word 'archive', as well as referring to the collection of material, can also refer to a building or anywhere archival material is held. For example, within a museum the place the archives are held in is called 'the archive'.

What does a typical day or week look like for an archivist?

There are daily and weekly tasks that need to be done like filing emails, answering enquiries, communicating with volunteers and updating the website or Twitter. There is always cataloguing that needs doing – that means making information about a document or an object available on a database. Usually we would be able to access the physical archive directly and work with members of the public in our reading room where we would help with their enquiries and research. We might be asked to talk about our collections to groups of people, or even be filmed for TV.

Why are archivists important?

Archivists are important because we safeguard histories that might otherwise be forgotten. Whilst we do look after records that are traditionally historically important, archivists also look after personal records that make up a story or capture a moment in history. Archivists react quickly to current events too to ensure voices are heard and preserved, for example there are archives that collected objects relating to the Black Lives Matter protests last year, and many archivists have been documenting how COVID has affected us all.

What do you think archives will look like in the future?

When I was younger I thought of archives as dark, stuffy rooms filled with old paper and managed by an unfriendly old man and I think some people still think of them this way. The reality is that archives are run by creative, passionate people. I think that as the amount of digital records increases and people continue to seek access to collections remotely, that archives will become increasingly digital spaces. The jobs required to keep collections safe and accessible will continue to vary and become more diverse too. Physical objects will always need looking after too, and I'd like archive spaces to continue to be welcoming and willing to engage with a range of communities.