

NEWSROOMS

Reporting the Noughts & Crosses Mall Bombing

This is a lesson plan designed around the book *Noughts and Crosses*, in which class groups role-play as newsrooms reporting on the mall bombing by the Liberation Army. The outcome of the exercise is three newspaper front pages featuring articles about the bombing, from the viewpoints of newsrooms sympathetic to the Liberation Militia, the Cross Government, and one 'impartial' newsroom, trying to tell the story of the bombing as honestly as possible. The lesson is intended to provoke students to think about how language can be used persuasively in a variety of different texts, and whether anything like an 'objective' report of a major event can exist.

STARTING THE LESSON

The lesson begins with a general discussion of the mall bombing event in *Noughts and Crosses*, to refresh details of what exactly happened. Questions may include:

- Who set the bomb in the mall, and why?
- Who was affected by the bombing, and in what way? This can include not only the main characters in the story, but other groups more generally - e.g. civilians, the police, etc.

The discussion then moves to guide the class towards thinking about the politics of an event like the mall bombing for each of the two groups in the world of the book.

- How will the bombing be seen by crosses in the country? Is this view correct, and in what ways is it justified/not justified? Will most crosses view the event the same way?
- How will the bombing be seen by noughts in the country? Is this view correct, and in what ways is it justified/not justified? Will most noughts view the event the same way?
- Is there a neutral 'truth' between how the two groups see the bombing? If so, what might that look like? *Students may disagree on this point, and it can be productive to develop the points of view of groups in the class who disagree, as a way of generating further interest in this conflict.*
- Is violence like this ever acceptable?

NEWSROOMS

Divide the class into three groups, one for the pro-Cross *Cross Times*, one for the pro-Nought *Liberation Telegraph*, and one for the neutral *Pangea Digest*.

If clear splits develop in the class in response to the questions above, these factions can form the basis for pro-cross and pro-nought newsrooms. If not, then the class can be evenly distributed between the three groups.

Each group will receive a briefing sheet (on the next pages), which will give them a basic overview of their publication's audience, and some items that they will need to include on the front page of the special edition that they are producing in the aftermath of the Liberation Militia's mall bombing. The groups will need to think about the kind of language they will need to use to best appeal to their different audiences, as well as what kinds of images they might want to include in their special edition. Each group will also need to interview one person from the pro-Nought and pro-Cross group for a response to the crisis, which they will then need to write up in a way that will work for their particular readers.

Also included are template layouts for each publication's front page that can be printed A3 size and used by groups to fill in their stories. Groups are, of course, free to design their own alternative front pages.

FOLLOW UP

The resulting front pages can be hung on the class walls for other groups to read, or printed and circulated in the class, as the basis for a discussion on how language can be used to represent very different perspectives on the same event. Students from the different newsrooms can read through each others papers and highlight or underline words and phrases that they feel are good examples of how the feelings and motivations of different actors in the bombing are (mis)represented to support the publication's politics.

THE CROSS TIMES

The Cross Times is a premium publication for wealthy crosses, covering all of the important political developments of the day, as well as interviews with leading personalities in the cross community. Many of your readers have reacted in horror, anger and fear at the terrorist attack on innocent citizens at the mall, and you are busy producing a front page for a special edition of the newspaper in the wake of the bombing. Your editor has asked you to create compelling headlines and articles for the following items:

An overview of the terrorist attack

Your headline article must let crosses know what happened in the attack, who the terrorists behind it were, and what is being done to bring those responsible to justice. You should also either find a compelling image to use on your front page, or describe the kind of image that you think would be ideal for accompanying the lead article.

An interview with a terrorist

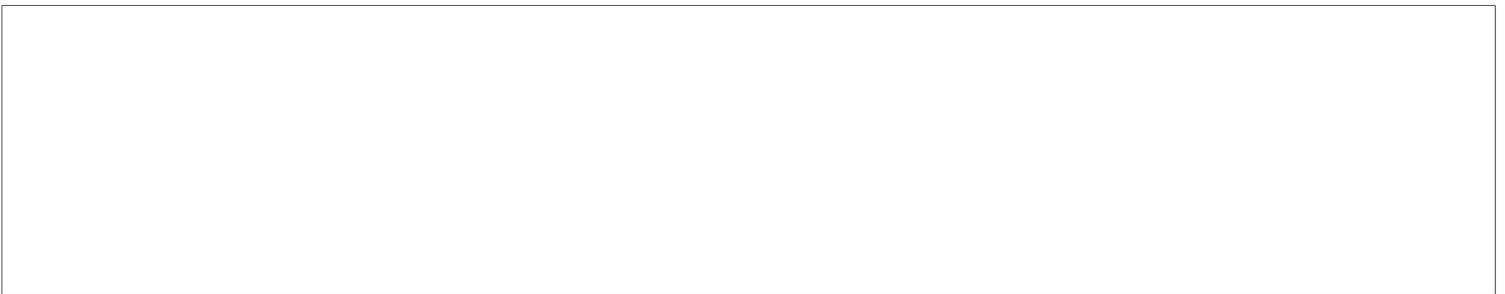
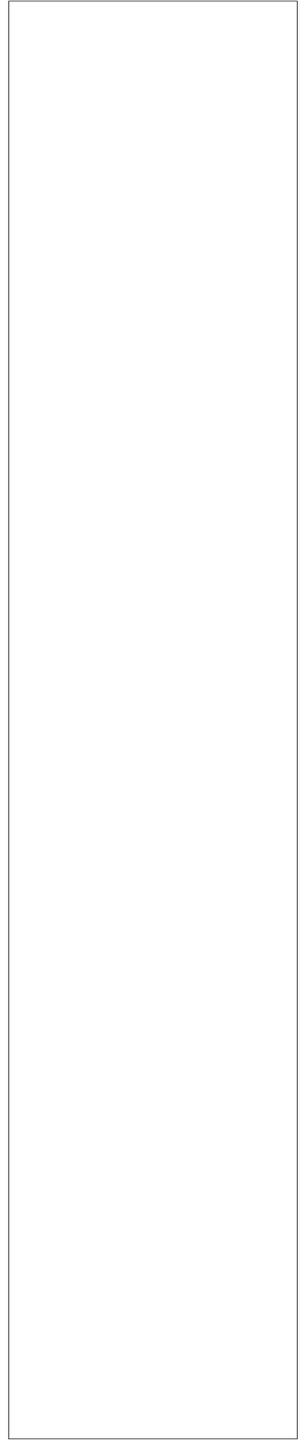
One of your reporters has managed to get special access to interview a member of the liberation militia (pick someone from the Liberation Telegraph to interview). Report back on what drives these terrorists, and their future plans for terrorising the nation.

Kamal Hadley writes in

You have received a letter from Kamal Hadley, outlining the government's view of the incident (and his own opinions), and have decided to add it to the front page coverage.

[If you would like, you can add any additional short articles, profiles of people related to the attack, or other information that you think might be useful to your readers]

THE CROSS TIMES



THE LIBERATION TELEGRAPH



The Liberation Telegraph is the voice of the Nought revolution. Celebrating the successes of nought warriors in the fight against cross oppression, you are the first to break the news of major victories against those who support the racist state. Many of your readers are liberation militia members, families of LM members, or admirers of the soldiers in the LM. Having just learned of the attack on the mall, your newsroom is busy producing a front page issue to mark a major milestone in the war against the cross state. Your editor has asked you to create compelling headlines and articles for the following items:

An overview of the attack

Your headline article must let noughts know what happened in the attack, who was behind it, why they chose to respond as they did, and how successful they have been in evading capture so far (Ryan McGregor has not yet been apprehended). You should also either find a compelling image to use on your front page, or describe the kind of image that you think would be ideal for accompanying the lead article.

An interview with a source in the government

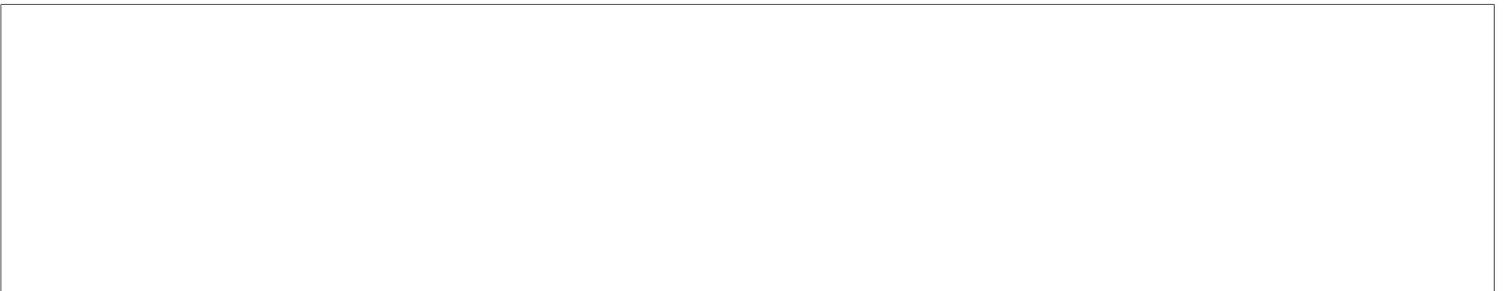
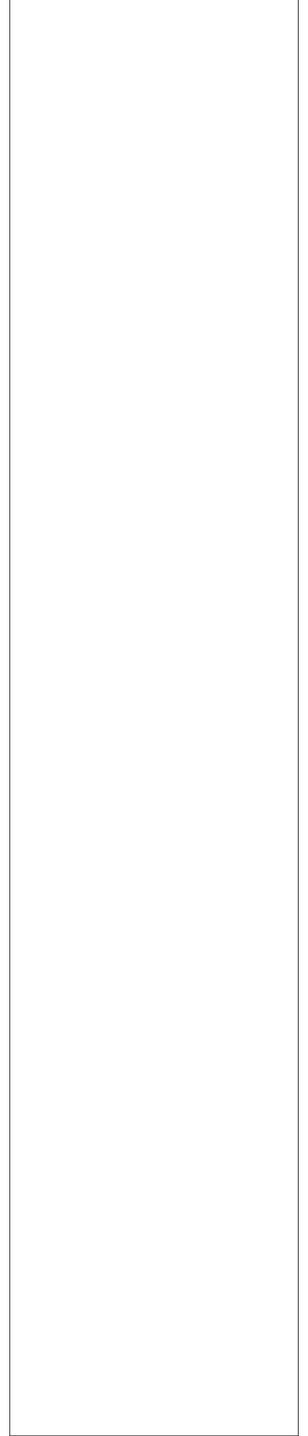
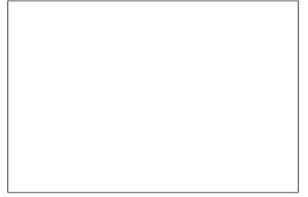
One of your reporters has managed to get special access to interview a member of the government (pick someone from the Cross Times to interview). Report back on how the bombing has humiliated the government, and why they have so far been unable to defeat the Liberation Militia.

A hero writes in

You have received a letter from one of the mall bombers, outlining their story of how the bombing happened, and have decided to add it to the front page coverage.

[If you would like, you can add any additional short articles, profiles of people related to the attack, or other information that you think might be useful to your readers]

**THE
LIBERATION
TELEGRAPH**





PANGEA DIGEST

The Pangea Digest was established to provide true and balanced reporting for moderate noughts and crosses, trying to be an alternative to the polarising voices of many of the other publications in the country. Having just learned of the attack on the mall, your newsroom is busy producing a front page issue to try and understand what happened, and what the effects of the bombing are likely to be. Your editor has asked you to create compelling headlines and articles for the following items:

An overview of the attack

Your headline article must let your readers know what happened in the attack, who was behind it, why it happened, and what it might mean for the future of politics in the country. You should also either find a compelling image to use on your front page, or describe the kind of image that you think would be ideal for accompanying the lead article.

Voices of the leaders

Your reporters have managed to get special access to interview a member of the government (pick someone from the Cross Times to interview) and an high-ranking member of the Liberation Militia (pick someone from the Liberation Telegraph to interview). Provide a balanced account of their views on the attack

[If you would like, you can add any additional short articles, profiles of people related to the attack, or other information that you think might be useful to your readers]



PANGEA DIGEST

