

Sherwood Anderson's *Death in the Woods*

Day 10 (*Time required: 45-55 mins.*)

What Makes It Newsworthy?

This activity gives students the experience of writing from a journalist's point of view. It also gives students the opportunity to read newspaper articles from the daily paper, either the printed or online version. Ask students to rewrite one of the stories from this lesson as a newspaper article. They can choose from "Death in the Woods," Jamie's story, Grandpa's story, the story that they wrote or told, or a story that a classmate wrote or told. Give the students these directions:

1. Find the most newsworthy part of the story—the thing that would interest the general public. For instance, Grandpa's story would be newsworthy if it was his and Grandma's fiftieth wedding anniversary, if one or both of them were famous, or if there had been a fire at the high school shortly after the dance ended. Ask students to look at local newspapers (online or in the library) to find out what types of information are considered newsworthy.
2. Determine the headline for the story. This is a short title that summarizes the newsworthy aspects of the article. For example, two possible headlines for "Death in the Woods" might be "Unknown Woman Found Dead" or "Grimes Men Sought for Questioning."
3. Use a journalist's point of view—third-person narration that relies on facts, not opinions. Keep in mind that making inferences can be dangerous because our observations are not always correct. Remember the inference that the smiling, humming man was having a good day? Perhaps he was acting that way because he thought he was on camera, or maybe what sounded like humming was actually his moaning in pain because someone had just stepped on his foot, and the smile was actually a scowl.
4. Present the most important information first, using the "Six W's": Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How.