

# Editor's Note

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Extra, Extra, read all about it!

*xtra, Extra, read all about it!* Back in the days before television and the Internet, when people got all their news from newspapers, this phrase was shouted in the streets by newsboys selling “extra” editions of newspapers that were printed when major events occurred. Over time, the phrase has come to be used more generally as a way to get peoples’ attention or generate excitement about a topic or product. Entering *Extra, Extra, read all about it!* into the Google search engine yields about 311 million results. So the phrase is still very much in use today.

While this phrase has endured, newspaper production has changed significantly over the years. In the early 1970s, when I was the editor of a small-town weekly newspaper, I typed all my news stories and editorials on a typewriter and gave the pages of text to typesetters who keyed the text into typesetting machines that spewed out long strips of copy. I cut apart the strips, article by article. Then I brushed the backs of the articles with rubber cement and arranged, aligned, and pasted them to boards to create the layout for each page. It was time-consuming, and often frustrating, getting everything to fit right.

Today computers have streamlined everything from the reporter’s writing (often done on laptop computers at the scene of the event the reporters are covering) to the layout (created with graphic design software), and even the distribution of news—many news stories bypass print editions and go directly to online editions of newspapers. Because it takes less time to report the news, everyone hears about news much faster than in the past. We now have the concept of *breaking news*—news that is reported (on TV or the Internet) as the story unfolds. In the early days of newspapers, even with “extra” editions, there were limits to how quickly news could get out

The early days of newspapers are chronicled in the feature article, which also tells you about some famous American journalists and newspapers. Newspapers of all kinds provide excellent material for language teaching. A single edition of a newspaper, with its variety of articles, photos, and other items, can be a plentiful source of authentic material for the classroom. The lesson plan in this issue outlines ways to use English language newspapers in your classrooms, not only to teach reading skills but also to help students develop their listening, speaking, and writing skills as well.

I hope you enjoy reading “all about it.”

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