

## Would you be a good journalist?

Previous compulsory steps / Prior students' knowledge	None
Learning objectives	Understand how media shapes peoples' beliefs and try to remain objective while developing empathy for the people affected by the articles you publish.
Subjects	Social Science, Politics, Journalism
Recommended Age	All
Material needed	Laptop
Sequence duration	120 minutes (2 hours)
Individual or group activity	Individual
Expected production	Develop an interview questionnaire
Skills developed	Critical thinking, empathy, reading skills, problem-solving
Price range of the game	>20€
Similar games to use with the approach of the sequence	Fact Finders

## Step by step: how to implement the sequence

In this pedagogical sequence, students will have the opportunity to become journalists and decide which articles will make it to the daily news. Media has the power to provide people with knowledge, decide what issue people should be concerned with, and eventually shape peoples' beliefs (Krings, 2018).

Students will play the game "NoviNews" to develop their critical thinking and learn how the media shapes public opinion. The players can play as headliner journalists, choosing which articles will be published and which opinions will prevail in the media. For example, would it be supporting the government amidst high tension with neighbouring countries? Would it be supporting nationalised healthcare? Every choice matters, but every choice is also a political statement. So, will the player be a journalist that supports the rights of the people, or will they choose to support the government instead?

This video game is on steam and it costs 11.59€. You can use this link:

[https://store.steampowered.com/app/918820/Headliner\\_NoviNews/](https://store.steampowered.com/app/918820/Headliner_NoviNews/).

- **Step 1: Introduction to the video game (15 minutes)**

"NoviNews" is a video game about the press and how news media organisations shape public opinion. Players take up the role of a Headliner journalist responsible for approving or rejecting the publication of new articles (Steam, 2018).

Every article that is published will shape peoples' views, and as the players leave their office and walk home, they will be able to observe how the news alters peoples' views.



Will empathising with people affect your job as a journalist? Would you choose to support the government even if you know its decisions are wrong?

In “NoviNews” players have the power to control the truth and shape public opinion. Players can save a government or bring them down; they can defend peoples’ needs and lead to riots. What the players will do is up to them to decide.

The question is: What would a good journalist do?

- **Step 2: Playing session (1 hour)**

The students will play “NoviNews” for one hour. You can monitor the playing session, but you should refrain from helping students decide. Choosing which articles get approval for publication should be the decision of the students, as this will change how the game will evolve.

- **Step 3: Develop an interview questionnaire (30 minutes)**

Following the playing session, students will develop a good understanding of how the press can shape public opinion. Ask your students to imagine they are real journalists writing an article on a topic of their choice. They get a rare opportunity to interview the Presidents or Prime Minister of their country.

What questions are they going to ask to maintain objectivity? Will they go for the tough questions that will challenge the current political leadership or will they play it safe? Now, it’s time for students to become journalists and create their very own interview questionnaires.

Suggestions for topics:

- The advantages and disadvantages of a nationalised healthcare system
- Tensions between the US and Russia are once again rising, what stance should our government maintain and why?
- Brexit and the future of the European Union

You can change the topics and make them relevant to recent political developments in your country or choose entirely different questions.

- **Step 4: Group discussion (15 minutes)**

The class will come together and students can share their interview questionnaires. In this step, students should discuss the media and how it shapes public opinion. They may also refer to what they think a good journalist should do. Is there a balance between maintaining objectivity and supporting human rights? When asked about a political stance, do you support the current government or do you support the opposition? What are the facts that will make you decide? You could also ask your students to step if they can identify some specific media organizations (newspapers, online, etc.) in their countries with different political points of view, and ask them to consider which give more balanced coverage. This will help the students to enhance their critical thinking skills and the interpretation of bias in reporting in a practical, everyday context.



## References

Krings Mike. (2018). "Study shows how media's influence on public opinion varies by country". <https://news.ku.edu/2018/09/13/study-shows-how-media-influence-public-individual-opinions-varies-country-factors>.

Steam. (2018). "Headliner NoviNews".  
[https://store.steampowered.com/app/918820/Headliner\\_NoviNews/](https://store.steampowered.com/app/918820/Headliner_NoviNews/).

