

## A Gathering the news

**J**OURNALISTS gather news in a number of different ways. They may get stories from **pressure groups**<sup>1</sup> which want to **air their views**<sup>2</sup> in public. They **seek publicity**<sup>3</sup> for their opinions and may hold **press conferences**<sup>4</sup> or may **issue a statement / press release**<sup>5</sup>. A person who especially wishes to attract news attention will try to include a **sound bite**<sup>6</sup> in what they say. It is particularly hard for journalists to get

material in the **silly season**<sup>7</sup>.

Journalists also get stories by **tapping useful sources**<sup>8</sup> and by **monitoring**<sup>9</sup> international news agencies like Reuters. The more important a story is, the more **column inches**<sup>10</sup> it will be given in the newspaper. Journalists of different political persuasions often **put their own gloss/spin on a story**<sup>11</sup> and some journalists gather stories by **muck-raking**<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> people trying to influence what other people think about a particular issue

<sup>2</sup> express their opinions

<sup>3</sup> want to reach a wider audience

<sup>4</sup> meetings to give information to and answer questions from the press

<sup>5</sup> give a formal announcement to the press

<sup>6</sup> short memorable sentence or phrase that will be repeated in news bulletins and articles

<sup>7</sup> time of year, summer in the UK, when there is not much happening and trivial stories end up on the front page

<sup>8</sup> making use of people or organisations which regularly provide news

<sup>9</sup> regularly checking

<sup>10</sup> space

<sup>11</sup> present a story in a particular way

<sup>12</sup> collecting scandal (informal and disapproving)

## B Delivering the news

**A**rag is an informal word for a newspaper and it suggests that it is not of very high quality. The **gutter press** is a disapproving term used about the kind of newspapers and magazines that are more interested in crime and sex than serious news. A **glossy** is an expensive magazine printed on good quality paper.

Journalists produce **copy**, which has to be ready for a **deadline**. When everything is ready the newspaper **goes to press**. A very important story that comes in after going to press may find its way into a **stop press** column. A very new newspaper or story can be said to be **hot off the press**.

A story that is only to be found in one

newspaper is an **exclusive**. A **scoop** is a story discovered and published by one newspaper before all the others. A major story can be said to **hit the headlines** on the day it is published. At that time the **story breaks** or becomes public knowledge. If it is an important story it will **receive a lot of coverage** or space in the press. A newspaper may be taken to court for **libel** or **defamation of character** if it publishes an untrue story that harms a person's reputation. If you are doing research into a news event, you may want to get hold of some previous issues of newspapers, or **back copies**, and you may wish to make a folder of **cuttings** from the papers about the event. ■

## Exercises

**54.1** Match the two parts of the collocations used in the text in A opposite.

- |            |             |
|------------|-------------|
| 1 air      | groups      |
| 2 issue    | conference  |
| 3 muck     | bite        |
| 4 press    | season      |
| 5 pressure | raking      |
| 6 silly    | sources     |
| 7 sound    | a statement |
| 8 tap      | your views  |

**54.2** Fill the gaps with words from B.

I started my career as a journalist working as a reporter on the local ..... (1) in my home town. The first thing I had to do was to take over the role of agony aunt. This was quite difficult for an eighteen-year-old boy straight out of school! Still, I managed to produce enough ..... (2) and in time for my first ..... (3). When that first column of mine ..... (4) to press, I felt extremely relieved and was so proud that I stayed up all night so that I could get half a dozen copies ..... (5) off the press for all the members of my family! I still have a copy of that first article of mine in a folder where I keep ..... (6) of all the work that I am especially proud of.

**54.3** Answer these questions about the language in the text in B.

- 1 Would you write to a chief editor asking for a job on 'his rag'? Why / Why not?
- 2 What do you think about newspapers if you refer to them as the gutter press?
- 3 What is it very important for journalists not to miss?
- 4 Can you give an example of a famous fashion glossy?
- 5 What two words might describe the kind of story that a journalist dreams of getting?
- 6 What two expressions refer to the moment of publication of a big story?
- 7 Which two crimes are mentioned in the text and what do they consist of?
- 8 What might a film star keep in her scrapbook of press cuttings?

**54.4** Rewrite these sentences so that they mean the same thing, using the word in brackets.

- 1 Every newspaper inevitably gives its own particular view of events. (SPIN)
- 2 I have to find some articles from some previous editions of *The Times*. (BACK)
- 3 Read all about the royal divorce! Only just published. (HOT)
- 4 The floods took up more space in the papers than any other story this week. (COLUMN)
- 5 Politicians are always ready and willing to give their opinions to the press. (AIR)
- 6 The story about the scandal surrounding her uncle broke on her wedding day. (HIT)
- 7 Any newspaper does all it can to prevent being sued for libel. (CHARACTER)
- 8 Muck-raking is a characteristic activity of an inferior kind of newspaper. (PRESS)

**FOLLOW UP**

Here are the websites for two of the main British national quality papers. Use their search facilities to find articles on any subject that is of particular interest to you.

*The Times* [www.thetimes.co.uk](http://www.thetimes.co.uk) *The Guardian* [www.guardianunlimited.co.uk](http://www.guardianunlimited.co.uk)