

“Go for it.. think outside the box, realise what you and the students can do...”
Graham Goldup – Geographer [Cardinal Newman Catholic School, Brighton]

■ BBC NEWS SCHOOL REPORT ■

Make the news
in your school



The **BBC News School Report Project** is in its third year and looking to expand the number of schools taking part. Working with the BBC, the **Geographical Association** has been supporting a pilot group of geography departments who had signed up to the 2009 project. We are now looking to expand this to at least 100 geography departments for **2010**. **Are you interested?**

Although the project was originally aimed at English, ICT and Citizenship teachers, this is natural territory for Geographers – the success of our current mantra of ‘real, relevant and topical geography’, of ‘living geography’ and so on, depends on our having total synergy with local, national and global news events. The pupils in our geography classes are always dealing with news stories and events and regularly use a variety of media to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding. This project is an opportunity to showcase the excellent work that goes on in geography departments to local and national audiences via local BBC radio and television and via the link to the BBC website. It is also a vital opportunity to raise the profile of geography in schools across the country.

Who is it aimed at?

11 – 14 year old pupils in all UK schools.

What has to be produced?

Pupils choose the topics and write their own news stories which can be published as **website articles** (text and photos), as **podcasts** (audio) or as **video clips** (video). The stories can be about local, national or global issues.



What do I need to get started?

The minimum that you need is a **school website** that you can publish your news stories on - the BBC will then link to this website. If you intend to produce audio, you just need a microphone and the free **Audacity** software to record and edit. If you aim to produce video clips, then you will need a video camera and microphone plus video editing software. Access to laptops or an ICT room is needed to research and write stories.

What support is there?

The BBC News School Report website has an enormous amount of resources which provide both lesson plans and teaching resources, hints, tips and ideas. The BBC will provide a professional mentor for each school that registers with the project. They can provide practical advice and also often have good local contacts. The GA and the pilot schools from 2009 can also offer you support.

When does it happen?

Schools are required to **register** for the March 2010 News Day by the end of the autumn term. There are practice days and then in March, all participating schools have to produce their stories live on the school website by the 4.00pm deadline. Note: you may wish to start organising in the summer term! **Register at:** http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/school_report/contact_us/default.stm#register

How do I choose the pupils?

Some schools start with a relatively small group – perhaps as an activity for a G & T group. This can then be extended in subsequent years according to interest and capacity. You can do the project in lessons, in a lunchtime or as an after school club, etc.

Can I work with other departments in my school?

It may be helpful in terms of expertise and support, to work with other teachers but we are aiming to have **Geography as the lead department** in as many schools as possible in order to gain the twin benefits of showcasing good geography and of raising the profile of geography in schools.

BBC News School Report website: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/school_report/default.stm
BBC News School Report Geography Ning: <http://geoschoolreport.ning.com>

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What did the geography departments who took part in 2009 say about their experience?

Cardinal Newman Catholic School, Brighton

“Raised the confidence, team building and motivation of the students. We worked in teams of three/four students across Years 7-9. Students gained new friends and often the younger students were encouraged to take the lead.”

“Lead Teachers feel a strong sense of achievement and have seen an exciting project through to completion.”

“The reaction has been wholly positive from everyone. At a Y10 Parent Consultation Evening three sets of parents with younger children in KS3 commented on the enthusiasm that their children had shown and how it had developed a thirst for them to watch and listen to the news.”



Tendring Technology College

“The main benefits were working as group, challenging pupils to work to a deadline (a skill needed not just for GCSE but in life), enthusiasm for producing their own stories - what matters to them, awareness of the news process – students have reported that they take more notice of the news since the project.”

“hey Mrs Burley I just want to say how grateful I am to have been chosen to represent the school in this years BBC School Report. I really enjoyed it and would love to take part again next year thank you I enjoyed it and it has really made me want to become a famous presenter in the future thanks for everything from Charley (Y7)”

Our Lady's Convent High School

“We had a very successful day of reporting. About 12 of our Y7 and Y8 geographers reported on various issues they had been researching on and it was broadcast live throughout the day on BBC's 94.9 FM. Four of our students also went to City Hall and interviewed Mayor Boris Johnson. Part of that interview was on the 6.30pm London TV news on Thurs 26th March. The morning was very exciting for everyone in School with the BBC radio car in the middle of the School playground. It did indeed once again raise the profile of the Geography Department. A direct result of this and other Geography Department projects is that for next year we have about 60+ students taking Geography at GCSE.... the highest in a long, long time. Thank you for informing us about the BBC News School Report.”

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If you have further questions that you would like answering, please get in touch. If you are already keen to take part, I would be grateful if you could **e-mail** me with your details prior to registering on the BBC website so that we can keep a record of the geography departments which are participating in 2009-2010.

David Rayner
GA Consultant BBC News School Report Project
Contact: david.rayner@blueyonder.co.uk