

READING AND USE OF ENGLISH

You are going to read an article about being a newspaper reporter. For questions 1-10, choose from the people (A-D). The people may be chosen more than once.

Which person says

- They had a particular advantage when applying for one job? 1
- Time for research is often limited? 2
- Their present job is good training for their future career? 3
- They find it difficult when they are not permitted to finish 4

something?

- It is important to take advantage of subject areas you know 5
a lot about?

- A wide range of general knowledge is important? 6

- It is important not to make mistakes? 7

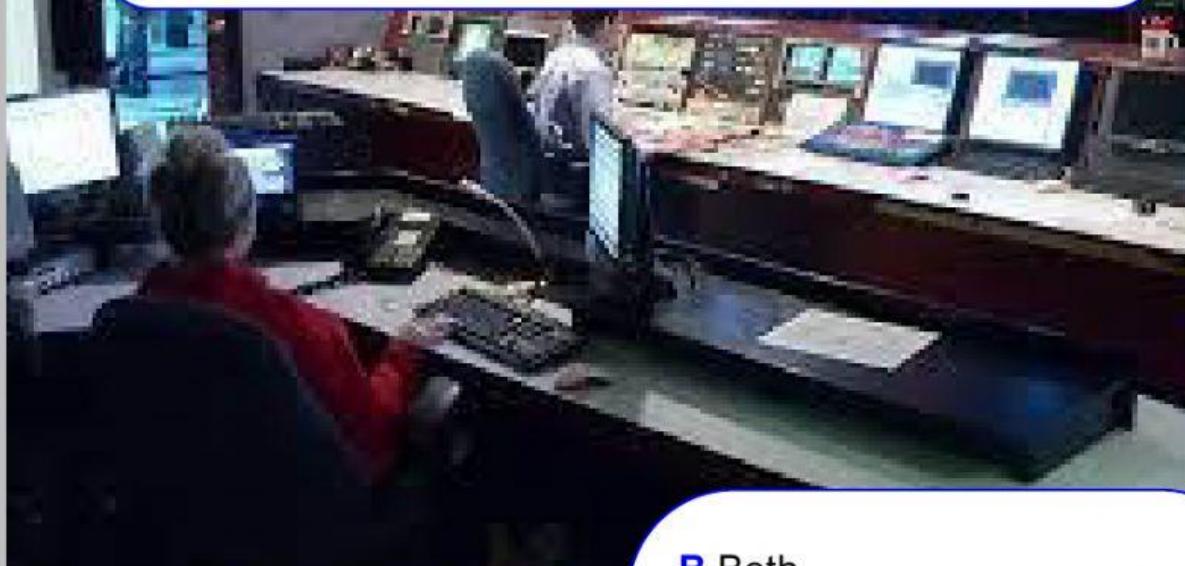
- They have not advanced steadily in their career? 8

- It is important for them to build links with the community? 9

- That journalists should not let their own point of view influence 10
what they write?

Working in the news

Newspaper journalists or reporters source, research and write stories for publication in local, regional and national press. Four young reporters tell us what it's like for them and offer tips for those who are hoping to become journalists.



A Craig

As a reporter, you really have to be ready for anything. A story could come up on a subject you know nothing about and you may have just half an hour to read a report or past stories before you interview someone. I spend most of my time in the office, unfortunately. My advice for potential journalists is that you need to be able to speak to anyone in all walks of life. A story could come up where the subject is close to your heart but you have to be unbiased and open to other people's opinions, even if you do not agree with them. Every subject is useful – you need to know a little bit about everything.

B Beth

I would say about 60% of my time is spent inside the office. It is always better to visit someone in their house as it makes for a much better story, but due to time constraints unfortunately this is not always possible. The experience I'm gaining at a local newspaper will set me up for a job on a bigger newspaper. Local newspapers are a great source of news for national newspapers. The general agreement at my newspaper is that the story can be passed on as long as it has appeared in our paper or on our website first. To be a journalist you must be outgoing and professional, and you also have to ensure accuracy in all stories. You will often find yourself in a situation where you have to generate a conversation with a complete stranger who may not want to speak to you!

C Andrew

My first job was with a regional paper. I think the editor was impressed by the fact that I come from the area and know about local issues. I now work from home on a freelance basis, writing features for the Sunday newspapers. You have to be very self-motivated and able to generate ideas for new stories all the time. In a good week I'll sell two or three features to magazines. Some weeks I'll sell nothing. Journalism isn't a profession where you progress upwards from one position to the next. I've made several moves already but it's not clear whether they were upwards, downwards or sideways! You need to be prepared to work hard to get work experience, get a qualification and demonstrate your commitment. If you're a specialist in anything (sport, music, computer games), write about it.

D Deborah

I had no career plan at all when I graduated – I found work with a very small family-owned paper where I found myself doing all sorts of jobs. While there I decided to train as a journalist. I must be the only person in the universe to 'fall into' journalism! A crucial part of my job is building contacts locally. I attend a lot of council meetings to try to find out what is going on with the 15,000 employees and attend numerous other meetings. Why do I do it? It's certainly not for the money, which is very poor. I really enjoy seeing my words change things. The frustrations include leaving a story I'm enjoying working on because the editor wants something else.