

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

READING HARD NEWS WITH A SOFT TOUCH

- Explain that news articles can be classified as “hard news” or as feature stories, also known as “soft news.” Hard news refers to articles that cover breaking news and usually begin with a first paragraph filled with the most important information about a current event. Features or soft news refers to articles that are not necessarily tied to breaking news and are written with more of a human interest focus.
- Give a brief example of how hard news stories can often inspire journalists to write feature articles. For example, a hard news article might focus on a battle during a particular conflict, while news of this event could inspire a journalist to write a feature about how those fleeing the conflict are struggling to live in refugee camps.
- Have students read a hard news article from today’s New York Times and then list particular facts and related feature ideas on the “Reading Hard News With a Soft Touch” sheet.
- Alternatively, students could select and clip a hard news article from today’s New York Times and tape it to the center of a larger blank page of paper. Then, in the blank area around the article itself, students could write ideas for possible feature stories based on this article.

