

11.4 Speaking and writing

GOALS ■ Retell a (news) story ■ Write an opinion essay in a formal style

Speaking retelling a (news) story



- 1 Look at the photos. What do you think the stories are about? What might the numbers refer to?
- 2 **11.6**))) Listen to two people each telling a news story to a friend and check your answers to exercise 1.
- 3a Complete the sentences with words from the box.

about according apparently around is(x2) other
something supposedly thing what's

- 1 ... she's the oldest person who has ever lived,
_____ ...
 - 2 ... _____ to the article, she claims she was born in 1887 ...
 - 3 ... she's got _____ like seventy-three great-grandchildren ...
 - 4 The sad _____ that several of them have already died before her.
 - 5 This suit was incredibly heavy, _____ fifty-nine kilos or something.
 - 6 It took him six days, _____.
 - 7 His name's Lloyd something or _____.
 - 8 _____ amazing _____ him is that he was diagnosed with leukaemia several years ago.
- b **11.6**))) Listen again and check. Then practise saying the sentences.
- 4a Match the sentences in exercise 3a to their functions, a-c.
- a quoting from another source (e.g. person/news article)
 - b giving your own view
 - c being vague or inexact
- b Check your answers in the Language for speaking box.

- 5 Add the following phrases to the correct category a-c in the Language for speaking box.

1 ... or so they say.	3 They reckon ...
2 Somewhere in the region of...	4 Personally, I find it ...
	5 ..., something like that

LANGUAGE FOR SPEAKING retelling a (news) story

a Quoting from other sources

Apparently, ...

..., supposedly.

According to (the newspaper/magazine/article I read, etc.), ...

From what I understand/read, ...

b Giving your own view

The sad/strange thing about it is/was ...

What's sad/weird/impressive about it is/was that ...

c Being vague

Something like ... (fifty people)

I can't remember exactly/precisely ...

Around (thirty) ...

(Ivan) something or other

- 6 **TASK** Think of a recent news story or use a news story at the back of the book. Student A, turn to page 131. Student B, turn to page 135. Make notes about which phrases in the Language for speaking box you can use to tell the story.
- 7 Work with a partner. Take it in turns to retell your story. Remember to comment on your own story and to use vague language.

Writing an opinion essay in a formal style

- 8 Read the essay. Then, with a partner, answer the questions.
- Does the writer agree or disagree with the statement?
 - Do you agree with this point of view?
 - What is the function of each of the five paragraphs?
 - Find three things that tell you this essay is written in a formal style.

The internet has improved the quality of journalism. Discuss.

There is no question that the internet has **transformed** the news industry in recent decades, and that its impact has been both positive and negative.

Online news is frequently criticized for being unreliable and based on very little evidence. In addition, commercial pressures in this increasingly competitive market encourage journalists to concentrate on **what is popular** and what will attract interest on social media, rather than on what is important.

However, it is also true that the internet has brought several benefits to news consumers. **We have a more varied choice of news sources than ever before; we are no longer limited** to the newspapers and radio and television news services in our particular part of the world. Americans can watch Al Jazeera online, while Australians can read *The New York Times*.

Furthermore, the internet has made it possible for new media companies to join the industry. For example, *The Huffington Post*, now one of the popular and respected news sources worldwide, wouldn't exist without the internet. **An additional benefit of online news reporting** is that smartphones now enable journalists (both professional and 'citizen journalists') to publish text, photos or video wherever they are, **which means that** the chances of something important being captured by somebody at the scene are much higher.

On balance, I would argue that the benefits of internet news outweigh the downsides. **It should also be remembered that** the internet does not replace traditional journalism, whether delivered via the internet or print media: it adds to it.

- 9 Work with a partner. Decide which of the following are typical features of formal writing. Write *F* or *I* next to each feature.
- passive sentences ____
 - contractions (*it's*) ____
 - colloquial language (*OK*) ____
 - simple linking words (*so, plus, but*) ____
 - longer linkers (*however, in addition*) ____
 - complex sentences (participles clauses and relative clauses) ____
 - abbreviations (*etc., e.g, i.e.*) ____
 - impersonal sentences (*it is argued*) ____
 - semi-colons (;) ____
 - dashes (–, –) ____
- 10 Match the highlighted examples in the essay in exercise 8 to points a–f in the Language for writing box.

LANGUAGE FOR WRITING achieving a formal style

Academic essays should be written in a formal style. Features of a formal style include:

- full forms, not contractions. _____
- formal vocabulary. NB Latin-based words are often more formal than non-Latin-based synonyms, e.g. *the majority of people* is more formal than *most people*, *improve* is more formal than *get better*, *extremely* is more formal than *very*. _____
- formal, rather than informal linking words (e.g. *moreover*). _____
- complex sentences, including relative clauses and participles clauses. _____
- passive verbs to report thoughts and speech: *It is thought that, It is believed that ...* _____
- certain punctuation, e.g. semi-colons (;) rather than dashes (–). _____

- 11 Make these sentences more formal.
- The papers are really pricey these days.
 - Lots of people reckon newspapers won't be around for much longer.
 - You can't trust lots of the stuff you read on the internet.
- 12 You are going to write an essay about one of the following topics.
- Printed newspapers have no future.
 - The press has a right to publish photos and information about celebrities' private lives.
- 13a **TASK** Work with a partner and choose a title from exercise 12. Brainstorm some ideas and organize them into paragraphs. Use the model in exercise 8 to help you.
- b Write your essay in about 250 words. Include as many of the features from the Language for writing box as you can.