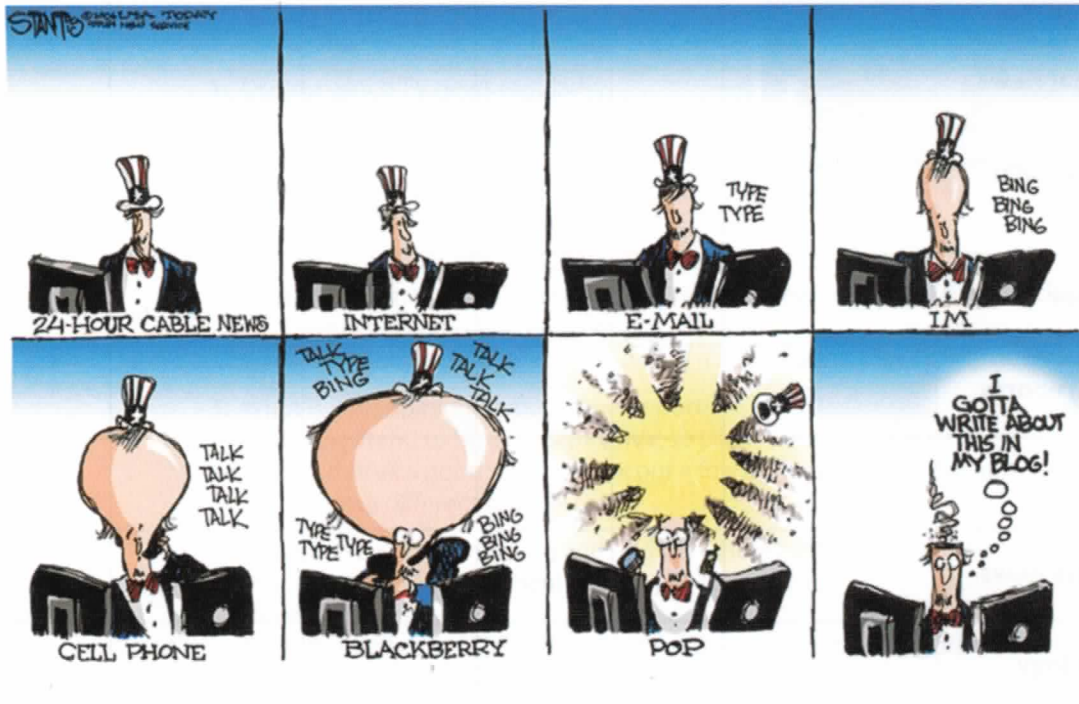


Information Overload



1 FOCUS ON THE TOPIC

A PREDICT

Look at the cartoon and the title of the unit. Then discuss the questions with a partner or small group.


1. In what ways is this person affected by modern means of communication?
2. What is the message of the cartoon? Do you agree or disagree with it?

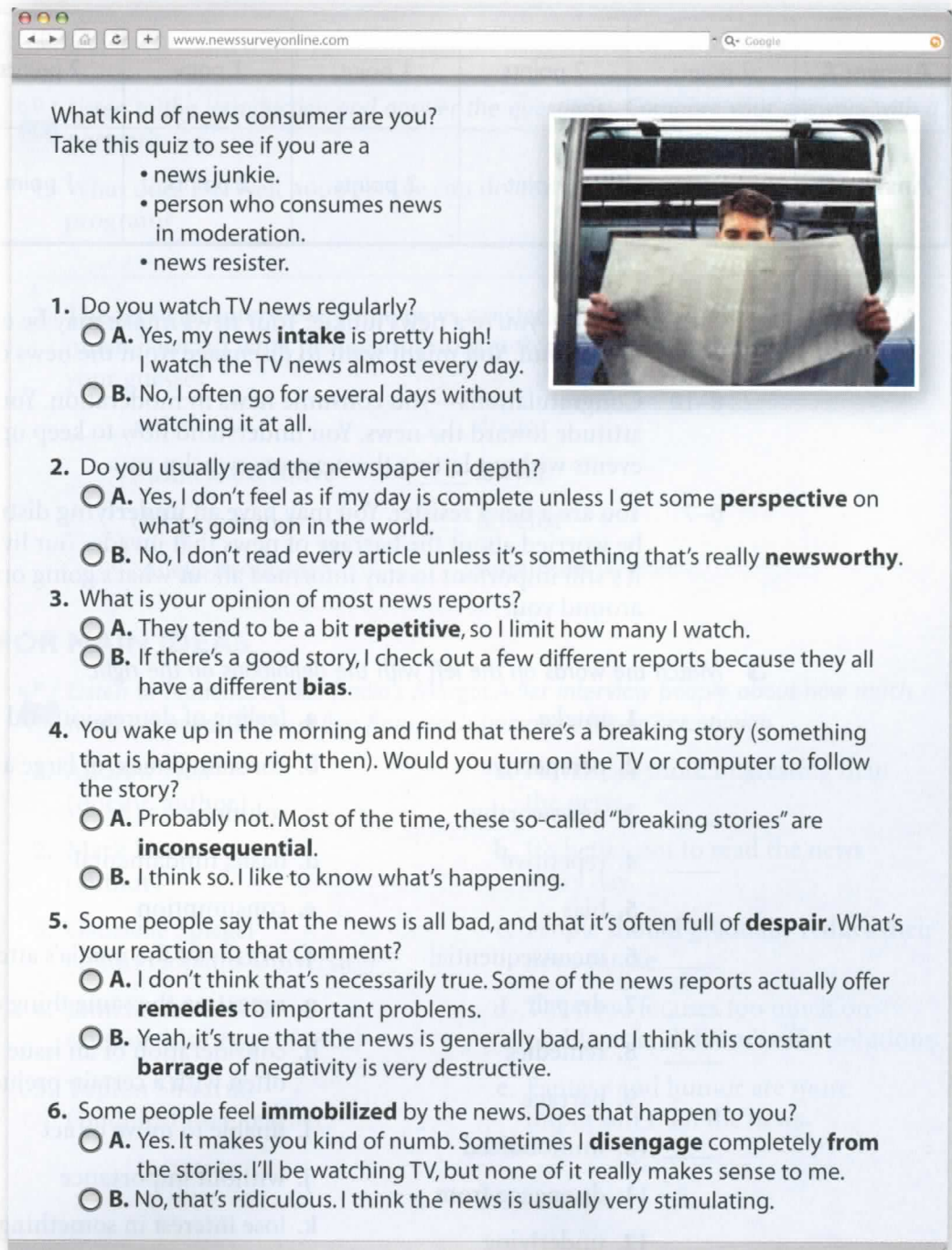
B SHARE INFORMATION

Where do you look for news and information? On the chart, check (✓) the news media you use most frequently. Then compare your answers with a small group. Discuss the reasons for your choices.

TYPES OF INFORMATION	NEWS MEDIA					
	Newspapers	TV	Radio	Internet	Magazines	Other people
Local news						
National news						
International news						
Weather						
Traffic reports						
Sports						
Business news						
Technology news						
Entertainment (art, movies, music)						

C BACKGROUND AND VOCABULARY


- 1  Read and listen to the survey and check (✓) the response that is most similar to your own. Then analyze your results on page 4.



www.newssurveyonline.com

What kind of news consumer are you?
Take this quiz to see if you are a

- news junkie.
- person who consumes news in moderation.
- news resister.



1. Do you watch TV news regularly?
 A. Yes, my news **intake** is pretty high!
I watch the TV news almost every day.
 B. No, I often go for several days without watching it at all.

2. Do you usually read the newspaper in depth?
 A. Yes, I don't feel as if my day is complete unless I get some **perspective** on what's going on in the world.
 B. No, I don't read every article unless it's something that's really **newsworthy**.

3. What is your opinion of most news reports?
 A. They tend to be a bit **repetitive**, so I limit how many I watch.
 B. If there's a good story, I check out a few different reports because they all have a different **bias**.

4. You wake up in the morning and find that there's a breaking story (something that is happening right then). Would you turn on the TV or computer to follow the story?
 A. Probably not. Most of the time, these so-called "breaking stories" are **inconsequential**.
 B. I think so. I like to know what's happening.

5. Some people say that the news is all bad, and that it's often full of **despair**. What's your reaction to that comment?
 A. I don't think that's necessarily true. Some of the news reports actually offer **remedies** to important problems.
 B. Yeah, it's true that the news is generally bad, and I think this constant **barrage** of negativity is very destructive.

6. Some people feel **immobilized** by the news. Does that happen to you?
 A. Yes. It makes you kind of numb. Sometimes I **disengage** completely **from** the stories. I'll be watching TV, but none of it really makes sense to me.
 B. No, that's ridiculous. I think the news is usually very stimulating.

- 2 Work with a partner. Use the key to score your partner's news habits. Then discuss the results. Do you each agree with the evaluation? Why or why not?

	QUESTION 1	QUESTION 2	QUESTION 3	QUESTION 4	QUESTION 5	QUESTION 6
Answer A	2 points	2 points	1 point	1 point	2 points	1 point
Answer B	1 point	1 point	2 points	2 points	1 point	2 points

- 11–12 Uh-oh—you're a news junkie! Your news intake may be excessive and could be stressful. You might want to disengage from the news occasionally.
- 8–10 Congratulations—you consume news in moderation. You have a healthy attitude toward the news. You understand how to keep up with current events without letting the news overwhelm you.
- 6–7 You are a news resister. You may have an **underlying** distrust of the media or be worried about the barrage of news that invades our lives 24/7.* However, it's still important to stay informed about what's going on in the world around you.

- 3 Match the words on the left with the definitions on the right.

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| ___ 1. intake | a. feeling of depression and sadness |
| ___ 2. perspective | b. constant attack, in large amounts |
| ___ 3. newsworthy | c. solutions |
| ___ 4. repetitive | d. basic; fundamental |
| ___ 5. bias | e. consumption |
| ___ 6. inconsequential | f. worthy of the media's attention |
| ___ 7. despair | g. repeating the same thing over and over |
| ___ 8. remedies | h. consideration of an issue from only one side, often with a certain prejudice |
| ___ 9. barrage | i. unable to move or act |
| ___ 10. immobilized | j. without importance |
| ___ 11. disengage from | k. lose interest in something |
| ___ 12. underlying | l. sensible point of view |

*24/7: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Said of something that is constant or is available all the time.

C INTEGRATE LISTENINGS ONE AND TWO

STEP 1: Organize

In *Listening One*, you heard why some people dislike daily news. *Listening Two* discussed more general consequences of media overload. Complete the chart with the information you heard.

	NEWS RESISTERS	IS MEDIA OVERWHELMING?
Problems with the way news is presented now	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can't focus on all of the interesting stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a media overload
Effects on individuals' behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People become addicted to the news 	
Effects on individuals' feelings		
Effects on children		
Effects on society as a whole		

STEP 2: Synthesize

Work with a partner. Role play a discussion between a news reporter and a commentator. The reporter asks the commentator about problems with how news is presented these days. Use the information in the chart in your questions and answers. Take turns being the reporter and the commentator.

Example

REPORTER: Good afternoon. I'd like to ask you about how news is presented today. Do you think there are any problems?

COMMENTATOR: Well, yes, I do. For one thing, I think there's a media overload. There's just too much news every day! And because the news is presented daily, it's hard to focus on a lot of the interesting stories out there. For example, . . .

PRODUCTION: A News Broadcast

In this activity, you will work in pairs to **present news stories for a TV or radio broadcast**. One person will be the reporter, who gives the stories. The other person will be a commentator, who will explain the significance of the stories and why people should care about them, and agree or disagree with opinions from the stories. Try to use the vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and language for stating an opinion that you learned in the unit.*

Step 1: Choose two or three current news stories from categories such as:

- International news
- National news
- Local news
- Sports
- Features (health, lifestyle, fashion)

Step 2: Work together to write your news stories and the commentator's opinions, or make notes that you could speak from. Practice giving and commenting on the news stories. Then present your broadcast to the class.

Example

REPORTER: This week in sports, a team of women mountain climbers set a new record on Mt. Everest in Nepal. However, two of the team members were severely injured. The Nepali government flew both women off the mountain in a helicopter.

COMMENTATOR: This story raises an interesting question: Who should be responsible for the safety of international climbers in Nepal? As I see it, the team itself should be responsible.

Step 3: Listen to your classmates present their news reports and grade them according to the categories below.

	Superior	Good	OK	Needs Help
Presentation:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interest:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creativity:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suggestions for improvement:	_____			

Step 4: As a class, decide which news reports were the most interesting, the most creative, and the most newsworthy.

*For Alternative Speaking Topics, see page 20.

C INTEGRATE LISTENINGS ONE AND TWO

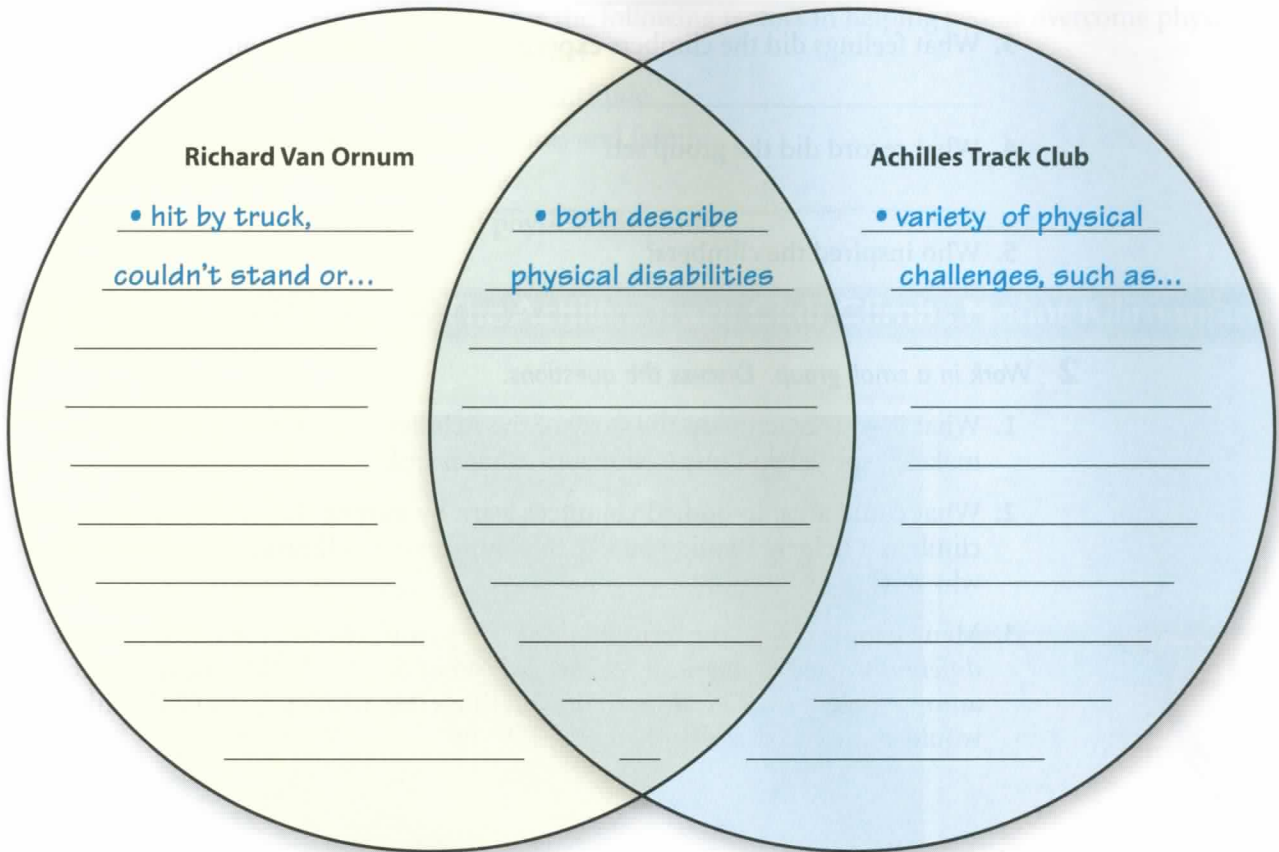
STEP 1: Organize

Complete the Venn diagram with information about Richard Van Ornum and members of the Achilles Track Club. Inside the circles, list:

- challenges
- goals and hopes
- personal qualities

In the green intersection of the circles, list:

- ways the stories overlap



STEP 2: Synthesize

Work in groups of three. Role play a reporter interviewing Richard Van Ornum and a member of the Achilles Track Club. The interviewer asks about each person's challenges, goals, and hopes. The interviewer comments on similarities and differences between the two people's experiences. Use information from the diagram in your questions and answers.

Work with a partner. Think about the difficulties that a person with a physical disability has doing everyday tasks. Complete the chart so that each statement indicates the view of an advocate for the disabled or the view of a government or city official. Use infinitives and gerunds. Add as much information as you can.

Discuss other innovations that might help the disabled. Then discuss whether your town or city has implemented such ideas.

ADVOCATE FOR DISABLED INDIVIDUALS	GOVERNMENT OR CITY OFFICIAL
_____ is very hard.	The city has agreed _____
_____ presents a real challenge.	We need _____
_____ must be extremely difficult.	We are willing _____
Disabled people are forced _____	We are prepared _____
They often can't manage _____	We are ready _____
I'm sure they would be happy _____	We should avoid _____

C SPEAKING

PRONUNCIATION: Thought Groups

- When we speak, we group words together and join the groups into sentences. The groups are called thought groups. They help the listener organize the meaning of the sentence.


 ^{D 7} Listen to the thought groups in the following sentences.

My Achilles heel was shyness.

I hated going to parties by myself.

And I was terrified when I had to speak in class.

- Thought groups are often grammatical phrases or structures, such as prepositional phrases or short clauses.

 ^{D 7} Listen to the thought groups in this sentence.

When I was little, I dreamed I was flying.

percent of people have this problem. Here are some possible symptoms of insomnia:

- You have a (5) **surge** of energy in the middle of the night and can't sleep.
- You lack (6) **alertness** during the day.

Apnea

Apnea is a blocking of normal breathing during sleep. Here are some symptoms of apnea:

- You (7) **snore** very loudly in your sleep and sometimes wake yourself up.
- You are very (8) **cranky** in the morning.

Restless Legs Syndrome

Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS) is an uncomfortable, painful feeling in your legs that makes you kick your legs while asleep. If you suspect you have RLS, make it a (9) **priority** to visit your doctor. Here is some important information about RLS:

- It can lead to (10) **fatigue**. This can be dangerous if you operate machinery or drive.

Sleepwalking

The lights are (11) **dim**. Everything is peaceful. But sleepwalkers have an unusual, (12) **spontaneous** reaction: They get out of bed while they are still asleep and walk around. If you see somebody sleepwalking,

don't panic. This behavior is probably nothing to worry about. Here is some advice:

- Let the person continue to sleep.
- Talk quietly and gently. In a (13) **subtle** way, try to get the person back to bed.
- Later, suggest that the person get a physical/checkup, just to be safe.

Daydreaming

It's the middle of the day. You begin to yawn and (14) **blink** a lot, and your mind wanders. Here's how to tell if you have a tendency to daydream:

- People often tell you you're "in another world."
- You become distracted, and you lose concentration on what is going on around you.

Nightmares

Everyone has bad dreams from time to time. Unless you often have serious nightmares, don't worry if you experience the occasional scare in the middle of the night! Here is some advice:

- It is safe to go back to sleep. You probably won't have the same nightmare again.
- Try to (15) **do without** caffeine in the afternoon and evening. You might sleep more peacefully.

- ___ a. very unhappy
- ___ b. extreme tiredness
- ___ c. believe to be true
- ___ d. always present
- ___ e. adds up
- ___ f. breathe noisily while sleeping
- ___ g. sudden increase
- ___ h. happening without planning

- ___ i. easily irritated or annoyed
- ___ j. low, not bright
- ___ k. indirect
- ___ l. most important thing to do
- ___ m. open and close your eyes quickly
- ___ n. not have
- ___ o. focus and concentration

Here are some expressions that can be used to interrupt a speaker when you do not understand something. Use rising intonation for the questions.

REQUESTS TO CLARIFY INFORMATION

Excuse me? What was that you said?

What? (*informal*)

Sorry?

I'm sorry, I didn't catch that. Could you say that again?

Could you repeat that?

Sorry, I didn't hear you. What was that?

Could you say that another way?

Work with a partner.

Student A: Read each statement aloud. Speak too softly or too quickly, or mispronounce an important word, so that Student B won't understand what you say and will have to ask you a question.

Student B: Listen to your partner. Interrupt to ask a question or to ask your partner to repeat any information you didn't understand. Use one of the expressions in the box above when you interrupt.

Example

A: I read that 17 percent of Americans are insomniacs!

B: Sorry, could you repeat that?

Student A

1. There are about 1,500 sleep-disorder clinics in the United States.
2. Almost 20 percent of Americans are shift workers, meaning that they often have changes in their work schedules.
3. During the winter, there can be 14½ hours of darkness in some parts of the United States. There's no excuse for not sleeping!

Now switch roles.

Student B

4. Even if a person is seriously sleep-deprived, he or she can get back on a regular pattern of sleep after only three weeks.
5. If rats are completely deprived of sleep for 2½ weeks, they die.
6. Sleeping pills first became popular in the United States in the 1970s.

Example

A: I'm reading an article about Jane Goodall.

B: You **mentioned** you **were reading** an article about Jane Goodall, right?

A: That's right.

Student A

1. Jane Goodall is the world authority on chimpanzees.

(B: You said she was the world authority on chimpanzees.)

2. She has studied chimpanzees for over 45 years.

(B: You said she had studied chimpanzees for over 45 years.)

3. She discovered toolmaking among chimps.

(B: You explained she had discovered toolmaking among chimps.)

4. Her work will affect generations of people.

(B: You told me her work would affect generations of people.)

Now switch roles.

Student B

5. I'm reading about a dolphin research center.

(A: You said you were reading about a dolphin research center.)

6. I'm going to visit the center in August.

(A: You indicated you were going to visit the center in August.)

7. I've always wanted to swim with dolphins.

(A: You claimed you'd always wanted to swim with dolphins.)

8. The dolphins at the center are used to interacting with humans.

(A: You reported that the dolphins at the center were used to interacting with humans.)

- 3** *Work with a partner. Role play a conversation between A, who believes that animals are quite intelligent, and B, who does not. A and B each use information and reasons they've heard (see page 76) to support their positions.*

Example

A: My college professor **told me** that a recent study **had shown** that an ape **had learned** to use sign language to communicate.

B: Well, my uncle, who is a zookeeper, claimed that when the chimp he worked with **made** signs, he . . .