Build a running order

Introductory journalism or media studies. 55 minutes, including a 30-minute live round. Students work individually or in pairs and submit on paper or through the class platform.

Learning outcomes

- Rank three international stories and justify the order using two news values and a stated audience.
- Identify one material change between successive dispatches on the same story and explain its effect on the running order or copy.
- Write an accurate headline and 35–50-word opening paragraph, attributing a claim that needs attribution.

Set up NewsroomSim

Enable Newswire only and use a 30-minute run. Select around six to eight arcs and check the preview for roughly 12–18 dispatches, including opening copy. Include at least one developing story with a later update that could change its ranking. Keep the audience the same for everyone, such as listeners to a general-interest international bulletin.

Have the student brief ready on paper or in a shared document. If feed access fails, release the opening wires and the later update as two separate handouts.

Run the lesson

Lesson time	What to do
0–8 min	Introduce the audience and the purpose of a running order. Read a sample dispatch together. Identify its source, what is known, and what still needs attribution.
8–20 min	Open the live round. Students read the opening copy, make a provisional shortlist and record their lead story.
20–38 min	Continue the round. Ask students to identify what a later dispatch adds or corrects, then reconsider their ranking.
38–47 min	Close the feed round. Students hand in their final order, headline and opening paragraph.
47–55 min	Compare two plausible leads. Ask which evidence and news values explain the different decisions.

Check the learning

Look for reasons tied to a specific fact, such as the number of people affected or the significance of a new development. Check that the headline and lead reflect the latest dispatch and that the student can explain a change or defend keeping the same order. Give feedback on one ranking decision and one wording decision.

Choose the lead story

You are editing a short international bulletin for a general audience. Your bulletin has room for three stories. Decide what listeners should hear first.

As the wires come in

Make a first choice. Read the opening wires. Note the dispatch time and agency for your provisional lead. Write one sentence explaining what makes it important to your audience.

Read a follow-up. Find a later dispatch on a story you are considering. Identify exactly what changed. Look for a new fact, a correction, an official response or a claim that still needs checking.

Decide what makes the bulletin. Rank your final three stories. Give a reason for each position and record one plausible story you left out.

Running order

Position	Story and dispatch	Why it belongs here
1 Lead	_____	_____
2	_____	_____
3	_____	_____

Write the opening

For your lead story, write a headline and a 35–50-word opening paragraph in your own words. Put the most important verified development first. Name the source of any claim that needs attribution.

Headline _____

Lead _____

_____

_____

Explain your decision

Name the update you read and explain how it affected your order or wording. Then name one story you left out and explain why your third choice deserved the space.

_____

_____

Before you hand it in

Check that your order is clear, your reasons refer to evidence and your lead reflects the latest information available at the deadline.