



Media and Communication

Note-taking: school news websites | Cambridge IGCSE ESL 0510/0511

1. Lead-in discussion

Talk with a partner before you read.

1. How does your school usually share news?
2. What stories would students want to read online?
3. Why is fact-checking important before publishing?
4. Should students be allowed to edit a school website?

Exercise 3 at a glance

In this activity, you will read one factual text and complete notes using information from the text. In the exam, this task is usually worth 7 marks. This practice version includes extra notes to help you build confidence. Use short words or phrases from the text, not your own ideas.

2. Read for overall understanding

Read the text. How can a school news website help students?

Running a School News Website

A school news website can give students a real audience for their writing. Instead of producing articles only for a teacher, students report on clubs, competitions, charity events and changes around the school. Teachers say the website can help students practise reporting, editing and responsible online communication. It also gives quieter students a way to share ideas without speaking in assembly. A strong school news team usually has clear roles. One student may collect information, another may write the first draft, while another checks layout or chooses suitable images. Rotating these roles helps students understand the whole publishing process.

The first stage is choosing a story. Editors ask whether the news is useful, accurate and interesting for students or parents. A report about a sports result may need names and scores, while a story about a timetable change must include dates, rooms and who is affected. Students learn that a catchy headline is not enough if the key information is missing. Students also learn to think about audience. A story for younger students may need simpler language, while a report for parents may need dates, contact details and practical instructions. This stops articles sounding like private messages between friends.

Fact-checking happens before publication. Writers check spellings of names, confirm times with teachers and compare information with official notices. If a story includes student photographs, the team checks permission rules. Articles about sensitive issues are read by a teacher before they go online. This prevents rumours or unfair comments from spreading. Responsible publishing includes knowing what not to include. Students avoid personal phone numbers, private medical details and comments that could embarrass someone. If a story involves a disagreement, writers are taught to include facts rather than rumours.

Editing is also important. Student editors shorten long introductions, remove repeated points and make paragraphs easier to scan on a phone screen. They may add captions, links or a short summary at the top of the page. After publishing, the team records which stories are read most often. This helps them plan future articles, but they are reminded not to choose only popular topics if important information needs to be shared. Over time, the website can become an archive of school life. Future students can look back at past events, former clubs and projects that changed the school. This gives the news team a sense that their work has lasting value.

3. Strategy focus

Track stages of publishing

Information may be organised by stages: choosing a story, checking facts, editing and publishing. Match each note to the correct stage.

4. Practice note-taking task

Complete the notes using information from the text. Use short words or phrases from the text. Do not add your own ideas.

Notes	Write short answers
Stories students may report on	- - -
Questions editors ask	- - -
Fact-checking before publication	- - -
Editing articles for online readers	- - -

5. Vocabulary notebook

Underline five useful words or phrases from the text. Check their meaning, then record them in your vocabulary notebook.

6. Follow-up tasks

1. Discussion: What story should a school news website publish first?
2. Strategy: Choose three answers and label them as story choice, fact-checking or editing.
3. Writing: Write a short headline and summary for a school news story.
4. Vocabulary: Circle words and phrases connected to news, websites and accuracy.

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2. Read for overall understanding

Suggested answer: it can help students practise reporting, editing and responsible online communication.

4. Practice note-taking task

Stories students may report on

- clubs
- competitions
- charity events

Questions editors ask

- useful
- accurate
- interesting for students or parents

Fact-checking before publication

- check spellings of names
- confirm times with teachers
- check permission rules

Editing articles for online readers

- shorten long introductions
- remove repeated points
- make paragraphs easier to scan

Notes for checking

This is an extended practice version of the IGCSE ESL note-taking task. The live exam normally has fewer marks, but this version includes extra notes to build confidence and selection skills.

Accept short phrases that keep the same meaning.

Learners should avoid copying a whole sentence if a shorter note answers the heading.

Some answers need more than one or two words, especially when the key detail is a phrase.