

# Reading Between the Lines

## Order of facts - further development

As we now know, there are various ways of “reading between the lines”. In this lesson we are going to explore another example of how the truth can be manipulated depending on the way the writer chooses to order the facts.

### Lesson Outcomes

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- comment on the effect created by the order in which facts are presented

### Curriculum Links

#### LO 2: Reading and Viewing

- explain the meaning of a wide range of written, visual, audio and audio-visual texts
- recognise the writer’s and/or the character’s viewpoint and give supporting evidence from the text
- recognise how selections and omissions in texts can affect meaning (linked to task)

### Lesson notes

So far we have looked at how a writer can place facts in different positions in an article to draw or deflect attention from them.

Sometimes, a journalist might place facts that seem important in the heading and opening lines, but as we read on in the article, we see that the story is largely made up of trivia (unimportant details) that are not particularly newsworthy.

Example:

#### **Osama’s Niece wants to be a Star**

*The al-Qaeda leader may not approve, but Osama bin Laden’s niece Waffa, 27, has her heart set on becoming a pop star.*

*The “Madonna wannabe” is working with Madonna’s producer and is referred to as the new “Natalie Imbruglia”, according to reports in London this week.*

*An attractive brunette, Waffa bin Laden is the daughter of Yeslam bin Laden, one of 24 brothers including Osama. He lives in Geneva. He is no supporter of his brother.*

Certain facts have been foregrounded at the start of this article to make the niece’s attempts to become a pop star seem important:

- Waffa is the niece of Osama bin Laden
- She is using Madonna’s producer
- She may be the new Natalie Imbruglia

When we read the backgrounded information, however, we realise that this article is not of much importance.

- Osama bin Laden has many brothers (and possibly many nieces too!)
- Waffa’s father lives in Geneva - far from his daughter and his famous brother
- Waffa’s father does not support Osama

When we consider how tenuous the link is between Waffa and her famous uncle, the article seems a lot less newsworthy. She could be one of thousands of starlets who would love to be a pop star. If this information had been included at the start of the article, in the foregrounded position, chances are most people would not read the article.

#### Tip!

Look out for articles that are used just to fill up space in the newspaper. They often put important sounding information in the beginning, so read the last paragraph to determine if the original statement has been exaggerated or distorted.

### TASK

Imagine that you are a reporter for your school newspaper and you have to write an article of 100 words to fill up a column.

- Write an article about litter.
- Include eye-catching information at the start of your article to make it seem as if litter is a very interesting and news-worthy topic.
- The balance of your article can then be made up of less interesting information.