Welcome to the World Press Photo 14 exhibition. During this lesson you will learn what press photography is. Why so many bad-news stories are published in the newspapers for example? You will also find out what freedom of the press means, and the rules that press photographers have to keep to.

This is the 57th time that World Press Photo has organised an exhibition which includes the best press photos taken in the past year. All the winners have been chosen by an independent jury from all over the world. They have selected one photo to be World Press Photo of the Year: the best photo of all. The exhibition will not just be shown here, but also at some hundred other locations around the world. For example, it will be held in London and Tokyo, and Rio de Janeiro and Moscow.

OK, so let’s get on with the assignments! The lesson contains two kinds of questions: standard questions and detailed questions. Ask your teacher if you also have to answer the detailed questions. You can work in a group or on your own. Write your answers on the dotted lines under the question. Your teacher may want to see them after your visit to the World Press Photo exhibition.

Have fun!
What do you see in the photo series that tells you that something terrible has just happened, or is perhaps even still going on?

...................................................................
...................................................................
...................................................................
...................................................................
...................................................................
...................................................................
...................................................................
...................................................................

Find the series that this photo is part of:

It's only when something out of the ordinary happens that it becomes news. If you've been friends with someone in your class for three years, then that's normal. You don't tell your parents every day that you're friends. But if you have an argument with your friend, that's something special. That's something you'll want to talk about. Because it's different from what normally happens in your life. And also because it makes you angry or sad. Most things that happen in the world go well. People live in peace with each other. Nature behaves as it should.

And because that's how it has always been, it's not news. Everyone knows it already. But if someone is murdered, that's out of the ordinary. Just like a war, a flood or an earthquake. These things are news, because they are different to what normally happens. Thank goodness.

And there are some more typical characteristics that determine whether an event qualifies as news:

1. Little or nothing is known about it yet
2. It's important for a large group of readers or viewers
3. To the reader or viewer, it feels as though it happened somewhere close by
4. It's about a contemporary theme
5. It has a big impact
6. It evokes emotions and excitement in the reader or viewer
7. It concerns well-known people

Why is this series about daily life in a small Russian town considered to be news?

...................................................................
...................................................................
...................................................................
...................................................................
...................................................................
...................................................................
...................................................................
...................................................................

Find this photo:

By evoking people's emotions, a photographer can grab the viewer's attention. And that's how the photographer gets the chance to tell a story. Maybe that's why so many photographs from disaster areas have children in them. Because people feel sorry for children more easily than they do for adults.
Study the World Press Photo of the Year for a few minutes, **but don’t read the caption yet.**

- **What do you think the people are doing?**
- **What is the bigger story this photo series is telling us?**
- **Why do you think the photographer considers it important to tell us this story?**
- **Do you think the photographer was standing close by or at a distance?**
- **Was he in danger of being hit by the rocks?**

Press photographers tell stories that not very many people have heard about, and that they consider to be important enough to show to other people. Press photographers therefore teach us something about the world. Sometimes this is about extraordinary things, like the photo series about nudists by the Black Sea. But often it will be about something unpleasant. This is because press photographers consider it important to record such things, so the world will know those cruel things happen and can do something about it.

Find the series that includes this photo:

This is a photo you can only understand properly when you are aware of what you’re looking at. Now read the caption.

- **What is the bigger story this photo series is telling us?**
- **Why do you think the photographer considers it important to tell us this story?**
- **Do you think the photographer was standing close by or at a distance?**
- **Was he in danger of being hit by the rocks?**

A good press photo can tell us more than just what we see in the photo. A good photo can become a symbol for a bigger story. The people in the previous photo, who died while embracing each other, symbolize all the people who died in the factory. And the photo tells us something else: about the atrocious circumstances that people who make our clothes have to work in.
Last year 76 journalists died on the job, in countries including Syria. The organisation called Reporters without Borders monitors the number of journalists that are killed. Some are killed because someone wants to stop certain stories from being told. Others are killed as a result of the violence they are trying to portray, or because they happen to be in a war zone when something goes wrong.

So the work of a photojournalist can be extremely dangerous. But still, press photographers and other journalists continue to risk their lives, because they believe it’s important that other people in the world can see what is happening.

► What’s your opinion on press photographers risking their lives to show us the injustices taking place in the world?

Find this photo:

A photo is just a snapshot of a particular moment. Someone who usually looks cheerful may now and again look in a hostile way. If you take a photo at such a moment, the viewer will see a hostile person. Photographers have endless ways of determining how you view the subject they portray in their photos.

Study the photo and read the caption.

Although press photographers have to present their subjects as neutral as possible, it is impossible to be 100% objective. In each photo you will catch a glimpse of the photographer’s opinion or his view of the world. We call this personal perspective subjectivity.

► What is your impression of the men who will shortly be executed? Are they dangerous criminals or young men you feel sorry for?

► Why do you think that an image editor selected this particular photo to be published in the newspaper?

► What do you think of the death penalty?

► How can you tell?

Assignment 6: FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

Take a good look at this series about polluted landscapes in Poland and read the caption.

► Detailed question

If photographers get into risky situations, who is responsible for their safety and the costs involved? The photographers themselves or their bosses and the media who want to publish the photos? Why?
If the photographer had decided to photograph the pollution from the ground, the photos would have turned out totally differently – you might not even have been able to see how the toxic sludge had affected the landscape.

► Can you think of another reason why the photographer may not have taken the pictures of the pollution from the ground?

Freedom of the press means that journalists and press photographers are free to write and show what they want. It means that everyone in the world can get information, and that nobody can hide or misrepresent that information. Not even a president who wants to stop people from knowing that he has ordered people to be shot dead.

But companies also have a right to privacy, they are not required to share everything. If however the company information is of vital importance for citizens to know, journalists are allowed to publish these secrets. Occasionally, companies are taken to court about certain issues.

► Who might be against the idea of having these photos about pollution being published? And why?

In the same way, photographers are always trying to get the best angle, the perspective. A press photographer is not allowed to manipulate. But he can choose to take a close-up, or a total shot. Or to shoot in black and white or in colour. All these decisions determine how the event looks in the photo. So the photographer decides how you look at the event he has captured.

Now read the captions to the photos.

This photographer has certainly chosen an exceptional perspective. The clothing has been arranged specially for the photos. Because normally the clothing is stored in boxes in a government bureau. Maybe at some point a mother or a friend of the person who used to wear these clothes will drop by, and then they will discover that their missing loved one was murdered and then buried.

► Why do you think the photographer chose this perspective?

► When you take a selfie, you take all kinds of things into account – for example, which side of your face you photograph, the way you smile. What other things do you pay attention to?

► There is a chance that the bombs this man is making will soon kill people. Do you think the photographer should have taken action and stopped this bomb maker?

► What would you have done?
The pieces of clothing have been specially arranged for the photo; so the photos have been staged. We have just learned that when it comes to news photography, this is not allowed.

Why do you think the photographer was allowed to do this in the case of this topic?

What do you think of the approach the photographer decided to take?

Choose one of the three following photos/series and write a journalistic (factual) story about it of around 500 words. Read the caption and find out extra information – the bigger story accompanying the photo – on internet. Make sure you don’t express your own opinions. Keep your text objective.