

Task: In The News (Y8)

Approach: One to one
Focus: Thinking critically about news items; asking questions
Resources: Video on laptop computer

Year: 8

Questions / instructions:

This activity uses the computer.

In this activity you will be watching an item from the television news. As you watch, think about why it was shown on the news.

Click the *In The News* button.

[Television news item; various scenes during and after the event.]

VOICE-OVER:

Army Rescue Officer: None of these people thought when they woke up in the morning that they were going to die that day.

Firefighter: This is a disaster that nobody has every experienced in Australia ever before.

News Reader: The Devil's breath was too big and too fast to fight. It raced through the state at up to 100 kilometres an hour, fueled by high temperatures, high winds and tinder dry vegetation. At its peak, the flames were the height of an eight story building and, at its core, heat a thousand degrees celcius. People in their homes didn't stand a chance. The fires left the landscape monochrome - black from the flames and white from the ash. The statistics from Black Saturday are shocking: nearly 2000 houses destroyed, 7000 people left homeless and half a million hectares charred.



- Why do you think this was shown on the news?
 lots of people and animals were killed
 event was dramatic and scary
 happened in Australia which is close to New Zealand
 (and lots of New Zealanders live there)
- If you were a reporter, who would you want to interview to get different views about what happened?
 victims
 relatives/friends of people affected
 emergency services people who tried to control fire and/or clean up afterwards
 government or local officials
 fire expert
- What questions would you ask?
Questions would invite responses that would tell about:
 what happened
 immediate effects on people
 longer term consequences
- If you were still a reporter in a year's time, what questions might you ask in a follow up story on the Australian bushfires?
Questions would invite responses that would tell about:
 re-establishing in same place
 choosing other places to live
 replacing possessions other than homes
 issues of physical/mental health and happiness
 issues of policy and strategy for dealing with fires like this

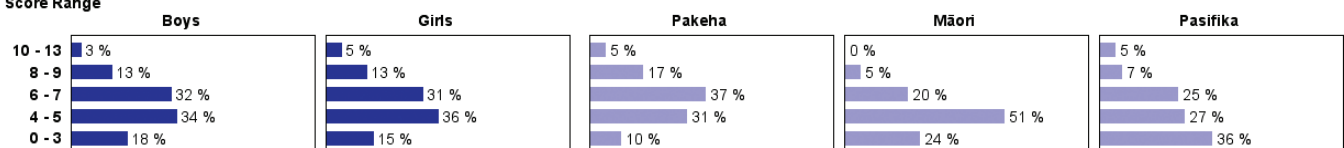
Total Score: 10-13
 8-9
 6-7
 4-5
 0-3

% responses
y8
30
73
23
88
31
56
10
4
62
56
18
32
8
6
43
15
4
13
32
35
16

Subgroup Analyses:

Year 8

Score Range



Commentary:

Year 8 students performed fairly well on this task. This is in strong contrast to the companion task given to year 4 students (p35). Here we see students being much more successful at coming up with ideas as to why the story was shown on television and at generating good questions to ask. Few Māori students scored well, while the performance of Pasifika students varied markedly.