**ACTIVITY: The Pontchartrain Picayune:**
Producing Your Own Newspaper

One interesting way to educate others about factors affecting the Lake Pontchartrain Basin is to produce a student newspaper. This can be a big job, but it can also be a lot of fun for your class if everyone works hard.

At a newspaper, the work is divided by department, so you and your classmates will work in teams representing each different division. Here are the major departments in any newspaper. Feel free to add any others that you might need.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper Department</th>
<th>Responsibilities and Duties</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Publisher</td>
<td>Head of the newspaper staff; assign newspaper jobs to various teams and individuals</td>
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<tr>
<td>News Department</td>
<td>Led by the Editor-in-Chief; write and illustrate all articles and features; take photos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business/Advertising Department</td>
<td>Raise money to publish the newspaper; sell newspapers; sell advertising space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Department</td>
<td>Put stories, art and photos into proper form for printing; print the paper</td>
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Ready?
Check the diagram below and start thinking about which part of the newspaper is right for you.
Let’s think about those jobs and generate ideas for *The Pontchartrain Picayune*. Refer to other activities you’ve done in this unit and write about the people and events that are important in the Lake Pontchartrain Basin.

**SUGGESTED NEWS DEPARTMENT ASSIGNMENTS:**

**NEWS:** Write articles on wetland loss, endangered species, pollution, or natural resources in the Basin. Keep abreast of the news for current events occurring in the Basin that you can feature in your paper.

**FEATURES:** Write an article on “The Big One,” telling what would happen if a Category 5 hurricane hit New Orleans. Interview an older relative or friend about erosion problems they’ve seen in the Basin. Write a story on Julia Sims, the nature and wildlife photographer from Ponchatoula, along with a photo essay on wetland plants and animals. Give recipes for your favorite seafood dishes. Write an article on a field trip to your favorite place in the Basin.

**EDITORIAL:** Write your opinion about the importance of hurricane preparedness, recycling used motor oil, or carpooling. Draw an editorial cartoon about pollution or erosion in the Basin. Solicit letters to the editor on various topics of interest in the Basin.

**SPORTS:** Cover the first annual “Cliff Glockner Fishing Rodeo,” honoring the legendary fisherman from Bayou Lacombe. Write an article about deer management in the Basin. Write an article about the history of trapping nutria, mink, and muskrat. Cover a sportsmans’ show and report on the latest in fishing lures. Give dates and times for the Hunter Education Workshops sponsored by LA Wildlife & Fisheries.

**ENTERTAINMENT:** Draw a comic strip featuring “Snapley,” a Lake Pontchartrain crab. Design a maze based on a map of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin. Develop a crossword puzzle or a word search puzzle with the vocabulary words for this unit. Write a review for the fictional movie, “Hurricane!” (Did you see “Twister!”?)

**WEATHER:** Design a weather report for the Basin. Include a map, high and low temperatures, rainfall, three-day forecast, ozone index, tide chart, and any other information we might need to know.

**HEADLINES:** A good headline will draw readers to your article. It should be short and interesting, meant to catch the reader’s eye.

**PHOTOGRAPHY AND ART:** Take photographs, or clip some from magazines, that will highlight your articles and make them more interesting. Draw clear illustrations, graphs, or charts that can help your readers understand the subject more easily. Remember to include captions for your pictures!
IT TAKES MONEY TO PUBLISH A NEWSPAPER: Suggestions for the Business/Advertising Department

1. Decide on a “price” for each issue of The Pontchartrain Picayune.
2. What is your plan for marketing the newspaper?
3. Who is your intended audience?
4. Who will sell or distribute the newspapers?
5. You can raise money for your newspaper by selling advertising space. Make a decision about the type of ads you want to feature in The Pontchartrain Picayune. Do you want to accept any advertising, or will you accept only advertising for environmentally-friendly products and services?
6. Here are some ideas for ads that you can develop: a store that sells fishing/hunting accessories; a shoe store with a sale on hiking boots; jackets, tennis shoes, and backpacks made of recycled plastic; canoeing lessons; and wetland tours to Bayou LaBranche, Bayou Sauvage, and Turtle Cove.
7. Can you think of others? Look at advertising circulars from a local paper for more ideas. Make your ads interesting. Use lettering (fonts) of different types and sizes. Keep the text simple. Add artwork or photographs for visual interest and to help “sell” the product.

GETTING THE PAPER READY TO PRINT: Suggestions for the Design Department

After the stories, artwork, and advertising are ready, the Design Department has the job of putting The Pontchartrain Picayune together. What does that job entail?

- A computer can be a big help, but it’s not a necessity for assembling a great newspaper. Experiment with different types and sizes of fonts for variety as well as a look you like.
- How large is your newspaper? Will readers have a hard time finding certain features of interest to them? You might want to develop an index to direct readers to the page number of their favorite section.
- Look at several different newspapers for ideas on layout. This is the arrangement you use for fitting all the pieces of The Pontchartrain Picayune on paper. Cut out each headline, story, drawing, photo, and ad. Place them on paper to fit. Empty spaces? What will you do? Draw pictures or ads for those spots.
- How will The Pontchartrain Picayune be printed? Be sure that all your arrangements are in order. You will need access to a copy machine and enough paper to print the necessary number of copies.
Be sure to proofread each article several times before The Pontchartrain Picayune goes to press.

Do a final check on all headlines and photo captions for accuracy.

Check to see that the circulation staff is ready to distribute the paper.