

Lesson Title: Investigative Journalism and Sources Verification

Investigative journalism plays a crucial role in exposing corruption, human rights violations, and social injustices.

Journalists often rely on confidential sources, documents, and data analysis to uncover hidden truths. However, working with sensitive information requires responsibility and ethical judgment. Verification of facts, cross-checking sources, and protecting whistleblowers are essential practices.

Digital tools, such as databases and online archives, facilitate research, while social media can provide leads but may also be unreliable. Ethical investigative reporting strengthens public trust and holds authorities accountable. For journalism students, mastering these techniques and understanding legal and ethical frameworks is fundamental to becoming competent, credible professionals in both print and digital media.

Comprehension Questions

1. What is the main purpose of investigative journalism?
2. Name two types of sources journalists use for investigations.
3. Why is ethical judgment important when handling sensitive information ?
4. How can digital tools help investigative journalists?
5. How does investigative reporting impact public trust?

Vocabulary Activity

Task: Match the words with their definitions.

Whistleblower to confirm that information is true or accurate

Verify a person who exposes wrong doing within an organization

Confidential Highlight words in bold when printing for clarity.

Archives	a piece of information that guides further investigation
Lead	collections of historical records or documents
Tip	meant to be kept secret

Grammar Focus: Reported Questions and Polite Requests

Use in Journalism: When reporting interviews or statements, journalists often transform direct questions into reported questions, maintaining politeness and neutrality.

Examples:

Direct: "What motivated you to start this investigation?"

Reported: The journalist asked what had motivated her to start the investigation.

Direct request: "Please provide the documents."

Polite reported request: The editor asked the reporter to provide the documents.

Activity 2: Convert these direct questions into reported questions:

1. "Where did you find the documents?"
2. "Did you check the source twice?"
3. "Can you explain the data analysis method?"

Activity 3: Convert these direct requests into reported polite requests:

1. "Send me the verified report."
2. "Answer the email before noon."
3. "Provide the interview transcript."

Activity 4: True/False & Critical Thinking

Instructions: Mark each statement True or False and justify your answer using the text.

1. Investigative journalists rely solely on social media for information.
2. Protecting whistleblowers is part of ethical journalism.
3. Digital tools are always reliable sources of information.
4. Verification of facts increases public trust.
5. Journalism students should avoid learning legal frameworks.

Activity 5: Writing & Analysis

Task: Write a short paragraph (80–100 words) reporting an interview with a fictional whistleblower. Use:

At least two reported questions

At least one reported polite request

Accurate vocabulary from the lesson

Optional Peer Review: Exchange paragraphs with a classmate and check whether the reported questions and requests are correctly structured.

Answer Key

Comprehension Questions

1. To expose corruption, human rights violations, and social injustices.
2. Confidential sources, documents, and data analysis.
3. To handle sensitive information responsibly and protect sources like whistleblowers.
4. Facilitate research using databases, online archives, and leads from social media.
5. Ethical investigative reporting strengthens public trust and holds authorities accountable.

Vocabulary Activity

whistleblower a person who exposes wrongdoing within an organization

verify to confirm that information is true or accurate

confidential meant to be kept secret

archives collections of historical records or documents

lead a piece of information that guides further investigation

Grammar Activity 2:

Reported Questions

1. The journalist asked where she had found the documents.
2. The journalist asked if she had checked the source twice.
3. The journalist asked if she could explain the data analysis method.

Grammar Activity 3: Reported Polite Requests

1. The editor asked the reporter to send the verified report.
2. The editor asked the reporter to answer the email before noon.
3. The editor asked the reporter to provide the interview transcript.

Activity 4: True/False

1. False – Investigative journalists rely on multiple sources, not only social media.
2. True – Protecting whistleblowers is part of ethical journalism.
3. False – Digital tools can be useful but may also be unreliable.
4. True – Verification of facts increases public trust.
5. False – Journalism students should learn legal frameworks to work responsibly.

Activity 5: Example Writing

During the interview, the whistleblower revealed crucial information about the company's illegal practices. The journalist asked what had motivated her to speak out. She also asked if the documents she provided were authentic. The editor asked the journalist to include all verified data in the report. By carefully reporting the answers, the journalist ensured accuracy and maintained ethical standards. The whistleblower emphasized the importance of protecting her identity, which the journalist respected. This approach demonstrates responsible investigative reporting while keeping the public informed.