

BECOMING A JOURNALIST

WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT JOURNALISM? LOTS OF THINGS!

Journalism, at its core, is about curiosity. Being interested in what's going on around you—and wanting to let others know about things that are happening.

Curiosity is key, but other traits of a good journalist include excellent communication skills and an interest in lots of different people, organizations and events.

If this sounds like you, maybe journalism would be a good career for you. It's exciting and fast-paced and just about every day on the job is different.

Why become a journalist?

Journalists get to find out things that many people never get the chance to explore. Going "behind the scenes" at events and in organizations is one way journalists gather facts.

Reporters get to speak with (interview) lots of different kinds of people. Depending

on what kind of reporting you want to do, you may get to interview celebrities, world leaders, artists and heads of companies as well as lots of fascinating people from all walks of life. Getting to speak with a diverse range of people who have unique points of view is one of the most interesting things about being a journalist.

Every day is different

For most journalists, each day brings something exciting and new. One day you may be writing a story about cars or sports and the next day

covering the opening of a local bakery. Or a protest. Or an election. Or a factory. Or a court case. Journalists do research to learn about the event they're sent out to cover and then they interview experts to find out what's going on and get the facts.

Meeting interesting people

Enjoying meeting and talking to lots of different kinds of people is definitely helpful for life as a

kinds of different restaurants and eat different kinds of food—for a living!

Some journalists work within a specific area of interest (sometimes known as a "beat,") such as: education, money, politics, human rights, entertainment, arts, science, technology or crime. These days most journalists, especially at smaller news organizations, need to be able to report on a wide variety of things and

post at least some of that information on social media. Still, it can be helpful to have a specific area of interest you come to know well, so you can report on that community and what's happening in it.

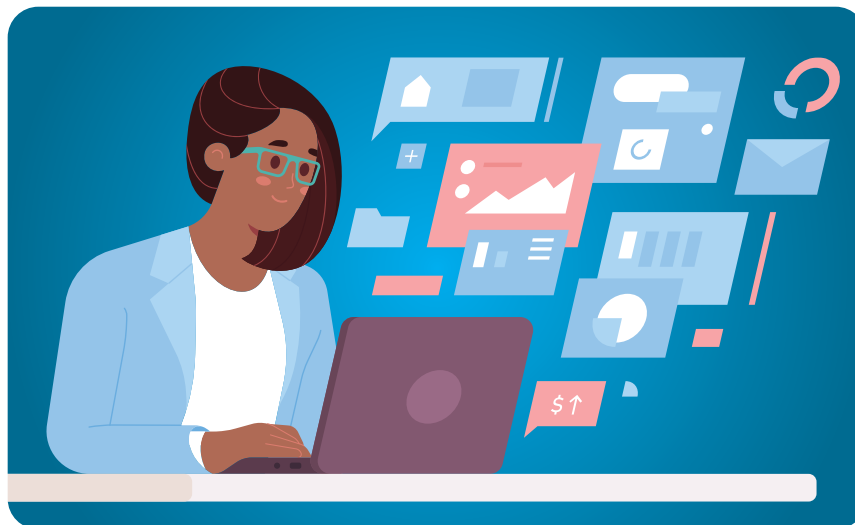
Journalism is important

Journalism is key for a healthy democracy. Without information, people cannot make sound decisions about who they want to lead their country or city. People depend on journalists to give

them the news they need to live their lives, vote in elections and understand the world around them.

How to get started as a journalist

Perhaps the best thing about journalism is that you don't have to wait until you're an adult to become a reporter. You can start right now! This previous edition of *For the Record*, "[How to become a Journalist](#)" looks at starting your own newsletter or school news blog—today.



journalist. Reporters do interviews to gather facts for articles. They may use those facts to find out more facts. Or they may use what was said in the interview quotes – statements spoken by the expert, that help to shed light for the reader.

Whatever interests you

Many journalists become experts in specific subjects. For instance, if a reporter is interested in cooking and food, they may want to become a restaurant reviewer. Imagine getting to go to all

ACTIVITY

WHAT KIND OF JOURNALIST ARE YOU?

For each section, choose one of the lettered descriptions, depending on what appeals to you most. Then, check out the descriptions to see what kinds of journalists do that job.

WHAT YOU LIKE: *Travelling to foreign countries*



A You like to go on exotic holidays around the world.

B You like helping people.

A You could be a travel journalist. They fly around the world, staying in hotels, eating local foods and finding fun things to do. Then, they write articles to let people know what kinds of things they might enjoy in those countries.

B Foreign correspondents travel to, or live in, other countries and report on things happening there. It might be wars, celebrations, politics, natural disasters or other issues that are important not only to that country but to the journalist's home country.

WHAT YOU LIKE: *Celebrities*



C You love to write.

D You think it's fun to be in front of a camera or on the radio.

C Entertainment journalist. You could write articles about the lives of well-known actors, singers, musicians and other famous people for a magazine or website.

D Talk show host. You could interview famous people, like actors or musicians, for a talk show. Some talk show hosts interview people. Others host podcasts or social media channels that feature celebrity interviews.



ACTIVITY

WHAT YOU LIKE: *Sports*



- E** You love sports and enjoy to writing or being in front of a camera or on the radio.
- F** You love sports and taking photos and videos.

E You might want to be a sports journalist. Many sports journalists specialize mainly in one sport, like hockey or baseball. But most cover various sports, including the Olympics and big sporting events.

F Sports photographers capture exciting images during sporting events. Great sports photography can tell the viewer what's happening and what everyone is feeling, in one image.

WHAT YOU LIKE: *Technology*



G You like computers and social media.

G There are lots and lots of jobs in journalism for people who are good with computers and technology. You could be a tech reporter, writing articles about new software and hardware. Or you could be a blogger, writing articles for your own website. Or, you might want to be the person who posts on social media about the things written by other reporters (or yourself). Those are known as social media or digital specialists. In any case, most reporters in all areas of journalism post at least sometimes on social media in order to get as many people as possible to read their articles or watch their videos.



ACTIVITY

WHAT YOU LIKE: *Being curious*



- H** You enjoy your local community.
- I** You like to be the first to find things out when they're happening, and you want to share that information with everyone.

H There are lots of small newspapers, radio stations and websites across Canada that cover specific cities and towns. Community reporters get to know the businesses, politicians and people in those cities. Their readers want news that is specific to their local community.

I General news reporter. It can be exciting to be the first to find out about what's going on. General reporters have to know a bit about many things, so they can cover lots of different kinds of events. Some general news reporters work for news "agencies" or "wire services" like Canadian Press or Associated Press or Reuters. Their articles are sent to media all over the world.

WHAT YOU LIKE: *Having strong opinions*



- J** You love books, food, movies, TV shows, music or art.
- K** You like to talk about current events.

J A reviewer. Reviewers tell people whether or not they think a book or a movie (or a restaurant or a new song) is good, and what it's about. Readers rely on their recommendations to find their next exciting movie or book. Reviewers have to be able to pick out the good and bad things about whatever they're reviewing. They also need to be able to describe it to the reader so they have a good idea of what to expect.

K A columnist. Columnists share their opinions about things that are happening in the news, in politics or in business. They help the reader to make sense of current events by offering them a point of view. Columnists need to be experts at whatever subject they're covering and do a lot of research to support their opinions.