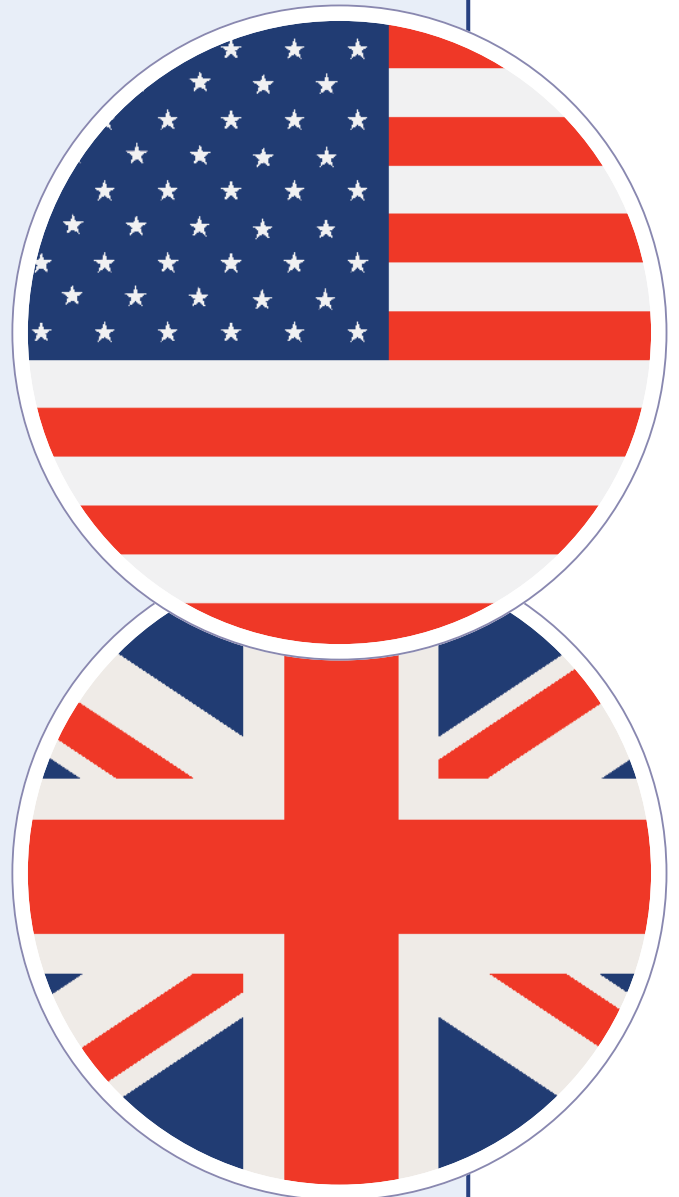


Englisch betrifft uns

# EBU on the Web 2020/4

Topical texts in  
English lessons

- *Comprehension*
- *Analysis*
- *Creative writing*
- *Background information*



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### The Topic

#### *The corona crisis in Britain – the front pages of two national newspapers*

The corona crisis and in particular the government's response to the outbreak dominate the British newspapers. Having a closer look at the front pages of national papers one can recognize considerable differences between the way in which the quality and the popular press cover this topic. The website of *Sky News* presents the front pages of almost all the important UK newspapers (<https://news.sky.com/story/mon-days-national-newspaper-front-pages-11969052>). We have selected two front pages, one of a quality newspaper, the other of a popular paper from the same day, i. e. Monday 6 April 2020. They both cover, of course in different ways, the speech Queen Elizabeth gave the day before. The message was only the fifth time that the Queen had addressed the country on television other than at Christmas. In a very personal and emotional tone she pointed out that the outbreak was "an increasingly challenging time" and that it had "brought grief to some, financial difficulties to many, and enormous challenges to the lives of us all." But she also asked the people to take comfort in the fact that "we will meet again."

### Ties to obligatory topics

Media issues; British newspapers; analyzing the layout of newspaper front pages; analyzing the language of headlines

### Background information – further links

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gC7bjNld0xE>

The British press explained in 30 seconds in a very humorous way, taken from the TV series "Yes, Prime Minister"/"Yes, Minister", a political satire British sitcom transmitted on BBC2 in the 1980s.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/coronavirus-uk-lockdown-newspapers-press-front-pages-boris-johnson-a9420336.html>

A newspaper article from the *Independent*: "A matter of life and death: How newspapers reacted to the UK's coronavirus lockdown – Newspapers have reacted with a mixture of relief, doom and inevitable wartime comparisons after Boris Johnson urged the nation it 'must stay at home' to stop the spread of coronavirus." (24 March 2020)

### The Text

The front pages of *The Sun* and *The Guardian* on Monday, April 6, 2020.

### The Link (URL)

*The Sun* Front page Monday, April 6, 2020

[https://storify.com/services/proxy/2/-NL1kn\\_WYRNTbObxGDdqjg/https/media.fyre.co/gHW4sOII-QievMvT7eBvU\\_snpp0604m001-01\\_1586121414\\_001%20%281%29.png](https://storify.com/services/proxy/2/-NL1kn_WYRNTbObxGDdqjg/https/media.fyre.co/gHW4sOII-QievMvT7eBvU_snpp0604m001-01_1586121414_001%20%281%29.png)

*The Guardian* Front page Monday, April 6, 2020

[https://storify.com/services/proxy/2/rahQv3N3rTfy44pBNLS-yg/https/media.fyre.co/Tg8DBrLQV0jEi-gy3Rgyg\\_06apr1front01\\_1586121316\\_001.png](https://storify.com/services/proxy/2/rahQv3N3rTfy44pBNLS-yg/https/media.fyre.co/Tg8DBrLQV0jEi-gy3Rgyg_06apr1front01_1586121316_001.png)

### Assignments

1. Analyse the layout of the front page of *The Sun* presented in the link below. Consider the following aspects: picture(s), headline, use of colour, use of typeface, proportion of body copy.  
[https://storify.com/services/proxy/2/-NL1kn\\_WYRNTbObxGDdqjg/https/media.fyre.co/gHW4sOIIQievMvT7eBvU\\_snpp0604m001-01\\_1586121414\\_001%20%281%29.png](https://storify.com/services/proxy/2/-NL1kn_WYRNTbObxGDdqjg/https/media.fyre.co/gHW4sOIIQievMvT7eBvU_snpp0604m001-01_1586121414_001%20%281%29.png)
2. Explain the function of the individual elements on the front page of *The Sun*.
3. Taking your findings from assignments 1 and 2 into account, draw conclusions on the general impression of this front page and on the readership that is most probably addressed.
4. Analyse the layout of the front page of *The Guardian* presented in the link below. Consider the following aspects: picture, headlines, use of colour, use of typeface, proportion of body copy.  
[https://storify.com/services/proxy/2/rahQv3N3rTfy44pBNLS-yg/https/media.fyre.co/Tg8DBrLQV0jEi-gy3Rgyg\\_06apr1front01\\_1586121316\\_001.png](https://storify.com/services/proxy/2/rahQv3N3rTfy44pBNLS-yg/https/media.fyre.co/Tg8DBrLQV0jEi-gy3Rgyg_06apr1front01_1586121316_001.png)
5. Explain the function of the individual elements on the front page of *The Guardian*.
6. Taking your findings from assignments 4 and 5 into account, draw conclusions on the general impression of this front page and on the readership that is most probably addressed.

## Suggested Solutions

### The Sun

1. This front page is characterized by a variety of typeface and colours. It is largely taken up by a picture of the Queen sitting with her hands folded on her lap and looking extremely serious. In the background we can see a wall filled with framed pictures. This picture is overlaid by a number of different features: an extremely large headline consisting of one complete sentence which is underlined; the word 'will' is printed in large capital letters, the remainder in large lower-case letters; a text insert can be seen in the top left-hand corner of the picture; on the right two yellow circles above and below a small picture. Above the picture of the Queen there is a three-line statement printed in blue capitals. At the top of the page on the right we can see a brief note concerning the Prime Minister accompanied by a picture of him. The prominent headline in white letters against the dark background strikes the reader's eye immediately.

Due to the large picture of the Queen, the yellow circles on the right, the use of blue for the statement at the top and the white headline the page is colourful. Almost every element on this page is short, there is no body copy.

2. The text in the top left-hand corner of the picture offers brief background information on the picture and the headline. The headline obviously refers to a wartime song with the words 'We'll meet again', emphasized in this case by the full form of the word 'will' and the fact that it is printed in large capitals. This expresses a feeling of determination and solidarity similar to that in wartime situations – and a promise for the future. The further titbits of information to the right of the Queen serve as teasers to encourage the reader to

turn to the inner pages of the paper. Under the headline we can also see an invitation to find further information on two inner pages.

A look at the wording of the individual features shows a mixture of drama and promise. On the one hand we read the disturbing news of Prime Minister Boris Johnson being sent to hospital with coronavirus (the word 'dash' suggests an emergency move which has to take place quickly), the fact that a midwife (one of the many who are doing their duty during this crisis) has died of the virus and the information that exercise could soon be banned (only a conjecture but maybe very worrying for those who find some relief and variety in outdoor exercise).

3. The large picture and the variety of typeface mean that this page promises to be easy reading. The reader can take in the situation and the information with very little effort, the main features maybe at only one glance. The fact that the Queen takes up such a large proportion of the page appeals to the royalists and patriots in the British public. It is eye-catching and suggests that something important has taken place (It is in fact the Queen's speech to the nation which was held on the evening of 5 April 2020 in connection with the coronavirus pandemic). The Queen gives a perspective for the future, a rallying cry to persevere with a view to reunions with friends and family in the future.

This newspaper is most probably aiming at a readership that is interested in small snippets of information that can be identified with little time or effort. No background information is needed for an understanding of the news presented here. Emotional aspects appeal to the readers and encourage them to look at the inner pages.

### The Guardian

4. This front page is divided into two clear halves, on the left there is a lengthy article with a four-line headline in lower-case letters, on the right a picture of the Queen taking up roughly 25 % of the page, accompanied by a smaller article, again with a headline in lower-case letters. There is a relatively large amount of body copy on this page, presented in five columns.
5. On the left we have the announcement that the testing kits available at the moment may prove to be unreliable. This is explained in a relatively lengthy two-column text. The word 'unreliable' is presented in quotation marks, obviously a quotation from a statement made by a number of scientists. As the picture of the Queen is identical to the picture presented on the front pages of other British dailies

on this date, one may assume that it is the official picture released by Buckingham Palace, a shot from the recording of her speech. This picture is accompanied by a headline in lower-case letters and a three-column article.

6. Similar to the front page of *The Sun* a division into two can be observed here, a worrying aspect and a call for perseverance. The cause for concern is the fact that the testing equipment so praised by Boris Johnson may be faulty and unreliable. This statement has obviously been made by scientists, which creates the impression that it can be trusted. The call for perseverance coming from the Queen conveys hope to the reader. The word 'warning' is on the left, the word 'hope' on the right of the page.

On the whole an impression of calm and factual news reporting is created. There is a large amount of information on the front page and references to more information on the inner pages.

This newspaper is most probably aiming at a readership that is prepared to take time to gain information and is interested in a detailed presentation of the news. There is nothing dramatic in the presentation of this page suggesting that it is not necessary to actively attract the readers' attention, the readers themselves are interested in being informed.