

Worksheet 2

Breaking news: 'The Imperial'

Photocopy this sheet (one for each group) and cut it into strips. Once students are working on their news stories stop them and tell them that you have some breaking news and that they need to stop working on the old story and start on this one. You will give them updates as you get them. Hand out each strip in turn, leaving a few minutes (vary the lengths of time a bit) in between each bit of information to keep them on their toes. As you give each news update students will need to incorporate it into their story. At the end give them five minutes to put the whole news story together. They should try to emulate a real TV news report.

1. Reports are coming in of a large ocean liner in difficulties in the Atlantic Ocean. One report says that there was a massive explosion and that the liner has started to take on water. There are no details of any casualties as yet; the cause of the blast is unknown.

2. Coastguards confirm that the ocean liner 'The Imperial' owned by the Empire Atlantic Line is in trouble in the Atlantic Ocean one day into its Atlantic crossing to New York. There are 1400 passengers on board and 1010 crew. The liner was due to take on a further 500 passengers in New York.

3. Coastguards picked up a radio mayday signal 15 minutes ago and report that there was an explosion and part of the ship is on fire. As yet there are no details of any casualties and the cause of the explosion is not known. Several vessels in the area are heading towards the stricken ship.

4. The Imperial, the largest vessel and the pride of the Empire Atlantic Line is on fire in the Atlantic Ocean, taking on water and starting to sink. Coastguards have lost radio contact with the ship, the last contact stated, 'There has been an explosion, we are on fire, repeat, we are on fire and the ship is starting to sink.'

5. A spokesman for the Imperial Line, David McCarthy has said that the Company has no more news at the moment but they are setting up a telephone line for relatives of people who may be on the ship. The number is: 0181-7046259.

6. The Imperial is 280 metres long, weighs 68,000 tons and can carry 2,910 people, including crew. On board it has: five restaurants, three pools, a cinema, casino, shopping promenade, beauty salon, health club and gym, a library and a hospital. It also has enough lifeboats and life rafts for all passengers and crew.

7. We can confirm that the Imperial, the largest ocean liner of the Empire Atlantic line, is on fire and is sinking in the Atlantic Ocean. A Royal Navy helicopter flying from the aircraft carrier Majestic, which is in the area, has arrived at the scene and has reported smoke and flames pouring from the sinking ship. Some lifeboats have been launched, others are being launched and some people are in the water. The scene is apparently chaotic. The helicopter is attempting to rescue those that are in the sea and it is understood that a further eight helicopters from the Majestic are on their way to help with the rescue mission.

8. First Lieutenant, Thomas Talbot, helicopter pilot in the Royal Navy has rescued six people out of the Atlantic Ocean. He reports that the entire fore section of the ocean liner, the Imperial, is on fire and the liner is sinking, tipping forwards into the water. He could see about ten lifeboats in the water full of passengers and even as the ship is sinking, further lifeboats are being launched. Lieutenant Talbot also reports that there are now other Royal Navy helicopters on the scene helping with the rescue mission. We can confirm there are six other vessels heading to the scene, mostly British and Icelandic fishing vessels.

9. The Home Office has announced that an unnamed member of the Royal Family is on board the ocean liner, the Imperial, and other well-known figures in the passenger list include: a Hollywood actor and his wife; the Italian fashion designer, Ricardo Cesarini and British pop sensation Soozan. As yet the Home Office does not know the cause of the disaster but terrorism cannot be ruled out.

10. Eleanor Noble, a passenger on the Imperial, and rescued by Royal Navy helicopter described how she was in the library when, 'I heard an enormous explosion and the whole ship shuddered. The alarm started to sound and I could hear people screaming. I ran on deck and could see smoke pouring from the front of the ship and the ship seemed to list forward. Everyone on deck was panicking and running around. In the confusion I was pushed overboard and into the sea. I don't know where my husband is, I don't know if he is alive or dead.'

11. Royal Navy helicopter pilots are saying that fourteen out of twenty lifeboats have been seen in the water, a lifeboat can hold 112, and they could see none of the 56 life rafts known to be on board. Helicopters cannot land on the helipad of the Imperial as the ship is listing too much. Pilots are rescuing who they can from the water and the ship using winches.

12. The Imperial is on fire and sinking rapidly, 14 lifeboats have been launched, nine Royal Navy helicopters and six of the vessels are now at the scene rescuing who they can.