



## Activity N°21: Reporting on a non-event

Production  
France

**Key words:** *Event / Sport / Discourse*



### **Target groups:**

- Journalism students
- Professional journalists
- Other media professionals
- Media literacy trainers

**Duration:** 60 minutes

**Context:** Nothing much is happening during a sports event. There are no major surprises, no outstanding moments during the game. But the journalist needs to enthral the audience! What is there to say? How can an event be made exciting? When a reporter needs to inject some dynamism into a sports event, he or she will spontaneously describe it using names, contrasts, clashes, and sometimes stigmatisation. Through a short production exercise, participants are invited to analyse the elements that build up a story and make an event of it.

### **Objectives:**

- **To analyse the building up of a “sports story”**
- **To identify the discursive aspects of media coverage of an event**
- **To raise awareness about the dimension of choice**

**Equipment:** Pens and paper

**Media Resources:** The scenario (audio-visual, written, etc) of a sports event during which there is little action. Possible examples are part of a football match in which no great skill is shown and no goals are scored, a cycle race in which no-one breaks away from the pack, a marathon where the leading runners are bunched together, etc.

## Organisation:

Class configuration	Time in minutes	Sequence of activities
GR	5'	Introduce the activity and set out the situation: <i>"A competitive sports event is in progress (cf. details of the media material) during which not much is happening. However, you have to talk about the event on the radio for three and a half minutes. What can you find to say?"</i>
PRS	15'	Form sub-groups and ask them to prepare a radio commentary.
GR	20'	<i>You're on air!</i> Each sub-group offers its commentary.
GR	20'	Discuss the ways people find to make a sports event exciting (what is at stake, points of interest, etc). Assess whether making a sports event seem more exciting leads journalists to draw on certain prejudices or discriminatory elements.

**Variant:** If organised as a media education activity this exercise would focus more on analysis of commentaries (use of a non-fictional situation), despite perhaps being introduced through the production situation described above. The participants would be invited to identify different types of information (comments, choice of focus, etc) and to grasp the ways used to make the action seem exciting.

### Suggested follow-up activities:

- **Language and words** Unit: Activity n°15. *One, two, tweet!*
- **Sport** Unit: Activity n°18. *Behind the scenes*