



Young Reporters
for the Environment

Youth led environmental journalism



cadwch keep
gymru'n wales
daclus tidy

Welcome to your guide to Young Reporters for the Environment in Wales, a youth led environmental journalism international competition for young people aged 11 – 25.

How we use the world's resources is one of the biggest challenges facing humanity and anyone researching and reporting on green issues can potentially have a huge influence. Young reporters investigate and raise awareness of environmental issues within their communities and propose solutions through investigative reporting, film making or photography.

Be a part of Young Reporters for the Environment

- 🌐 Develop lifelong skills in communication, research, problem solving and critical analysis
- 🌐 Advance your journey in becoming a socially responsible, ethically informed, global citizen
- 🌐 Understand how our local issues connect to global issues
- 🌐 Be a part of the YRE network - Share ideas and learn from young people around the world
- 🌐 Raise awareness of the local environmental issues in Wales that matter to you

Who can take part

Anyone can take part as long as you are aged between 11 and 25. You can enter as an individual or as part of a school or youth group. Join up here.

YRE supports learning and development through school eco committees, geography, science, English language lessons and the Welsh Baccalaureate global citizenship project.

In 2018, the Welsh and International winning entry to the Litter Less competition helped members of the 1st Johnston Scout Group in Pembrokeshire earn their Environmental Conservation Activity badge.

YRE Methodolgy

All Young Reporters should use the YRE Methodology to guide you through the process. It is extremely important that you

1. Research and investigate your topic thoroughly for all format entries, article, film and photograph
2. Suggest achievable, practical solutions to your issue
3. Report your story through writing, film or photography
4. Disseminate your entry through at least three different media



Sustainable Development Goals

All YRE entries must be linked to one of the 17 United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. A story about a town becoming plastic free could be linked to number 11 or 12. Choose the goal that reflects your story best.

[See all SD Goals here](#)





Young Reporters for the Environment operates in 38 countries around the world. It is coordinated internationally by the Foundation for Environmental Education and provided in Wales by Keep Wales Tidy.



Wales takes part in the Young Reporters for the Environment Litter Less competition which is funded by Wrigley.



National competition winners in Wales will be entered into the international competition.

Choosing and researching your story

Whether you're a working journalist, a local blogger or entering a competition like the Young Reporters for the Environment, the rules for finding, researching and writing stories are the same. Here are some tips to get you started...

Find something that's happening now

1

Journalism is about things that are 'new' or at least new to your readers and viewers. Identify something that is happening as the starting point for your feature. It could be a campaign to protect hedgehogs in your area, businesses trying to stop using plastic, a new initiative to get people cycling to school or a wave of complaints about litter in your local park. The fact it is new will give your readers and viewers a reason to read this story now.

Identify the question that you think needs to be asked

2

A campaign to clean up air quality might make a good news story, but a longer feature needs to ask a question about that issue. Many readers of a local paper will have children who might suffer from asthma, and they might well want to know whether this campaign would work, or they might want to know what local politicians need to do to make air less dangerous.



Write your standfirst

3

Identify something that is changing and the question you want to ask about that change. Put these two components together and you have your standfirst (the line that sells the story to the readers). It might read..
"A new campaign is trying to clean up air quality in Newport, so what can local politicians do to make the city's air safer?"

Research your topic

4

Before you start interviewing people, you need to really understand what the problem is and what some of the key issues and causes are. What is the impact of polluted air in cities? What do different politicians and campaigners say about it? What do they think needs to be done? When you have some understanding of the problems you are ready to think about who you need to interview and the questions you need to ask them.



Talk to people who matter

Whether you are reporting about air pollution, hedgehogs, litter or plastic, you need to talk to people who want to make changes (campaigners) and people who have the power to make those changes (such as local politicians or business people). Ideally, you'll find people who have very different ideas about what is important. Politicians will be able to tell you what they have already done, what they plan to do and what they think of other ideas to solve the problem. But you also need to talk to people affected by the issues to really understand what the problem is. Find someone with asthma who has to walk to school on polluted streets or someone who is so fed up of litter in their local park they've decided to start cleaning up themselves.

- **Decide who you need to speak to.** Are they relevant to your story?
- **Do some prep.** Make sure you know the basics of who you are interviewing, what they do, how they are relevant and what information you want to get out of them. Prepare some questions beforehand.
- **Speak to people.** When you speak to people you will create a conversation rather than having prepared answers to questions via email.
- **Break the ice but make it relevant.** Use some of the research you've done, 'I saw you commented on in a recent news story...', 'I believe you went to my school...'
- **Ask open questions** as you gain much more information through asking open questions, for example, how, why, tell me about.
- **Listen and don't interrupt,** keep quiet and your interviewee will speak.
- **Be curious** and interested in everything, use your body language to demonstrate interest – smile, nod your head, use encouraging facial expressions.





Written articles, maximum of 1,000 words and up to three pictures

Writing a news article and creating a report that grabs the attention of your reader is a skill. Everyone has their own unique writing style however these guidelines will help you to create a news report that will draw in your reader.

- **Plan your article** – look at all the information you have gathered and choose what you want to include.
- **Write for your audience** – identify your audience and write appropriately for them.
- **Who, What, Where, When, Why, How?** The answers to these vital questions should be included in the body of your report.
- **Make it global** – Young Reporters for the Environment is all about connecting local issues with others around the world. All reports should cover the global implications of the issue.
- **Report don't opionate.** Tell a story which is factual, unbiased and has conflicting views.
- **Write a good lead.** Use your standfirst and make it short and concise, this should include the most important aspect of the report.
- **Include quotes and interviews** – it is critical to include relevant quotes and interviews with appropriate people in your report. You could interview teachers, colleagues, students, community leaders, experts, local councillors or campaigners which would add a variety of views and opinions.
- **Headlines** should be short and direct, don't be boring!
- **Photos and captions** are a great way of enhancing your report, but they need to be relevant and of a good quality.
- **Use infographics** – if you have conducted a survey or questionnaire then perhaps use an infographic instead of writing the results up. This can be eye catching and counts as a picture rather than word count.
- **Edit your report.** Use a spellcheck, check your grammar, sentence construction and tenses, fact check – make sure all your facts are correct, come from a reputable source and that the views are balanced.

Write like you talk

How would you tell this story to a friend? That's close to how you should write. Don't try to 'sound like a journalist' just be yourself. Explain to the reader what the problem is and then use quotes and information from your research to explain different ways that people are trying to tackle that problem. Don't tell the reader what you think, instead introduce them to people who matter in the story and aim to give the reader enough information to decide for themselves.



Photography, with title of up to 140 characters and a caption of max 100 words

Entries can be in the form of reportage or campaign photography:

Reportage is also known as documentary photography and is a photographic style that captures a moment or event in narrative fashion, i.e. images that tell a story.

Campaign photography is a type of staged photo which is set up to tell a story or get your point across.

The primary purpose for photographs used in news stories is to catch the eye and encourage the viewer to read the news story. This can be done in many ways, but all 'front page' pictures are able to tell a story, and usually do so with an originality where the viewer feels like they have never seen a photo quite like it before. What's the story behind your photo?

- **Always plan ahead** – think about the story you are trying to tell and think about the best place to capture a photo that highlights the issue
- **Take several pictures** but take the time to look at your images and **pick only the best for submission** – try using different angles and perspectives.
- **Your subject needs to be clear** to the viewer. Every good image in the world has a subject which can be a person, object, or something else. Once you have your subject, you can build the rest of the image around that.
- Get **as close as possible** to the subject and avoid zooming to maintain quality.
- Ensure the **image is sharp** and not over-exposed. No matter how good the subject matter, if it is either of these two things, it will be disregarded.
- **Practice using your equipment.** If you are using a camera rather than a smart phone then get to know it and start practicing with your camera in manual mode. Once you have mastered this, you will know the capabilities and limitations of your equipment and be able to adjust your settings accordingly. Good photographers will be able to use manual mode and adjust their settings without even bringing the camera down from their face. It can mean the difference between getting the shot and missing it.
- **Avoid editing your photos** heavily and don't alter reality. You can only make minor changes, such as cropping and minor levels adjustments. Understanding White Balance will help you to set some kind of mood 'in camera' without applying filters.
- **Pay attention to the background** – it is as important as the rest of image and can be used to help with both composition and communication.
- Your **title and caption** should give the viewer some basic context which enhances it and explains what is happening, the photo should tell the story



Film, three minutes max

Films can be an exciting way to get your message across and are a great way to involve a team of different people with different strengths. Some of us are amazing interviewers or script writers while some of us are better at operating the camera or organising the project. Take note of the following tips and you are on your way to making a great film.

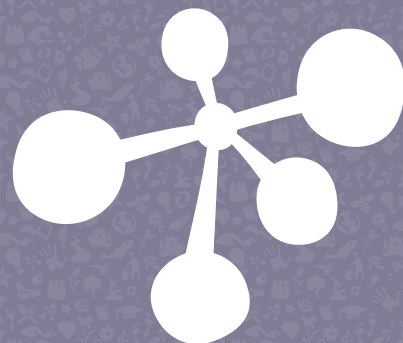
- **Choose your film style** – films can be in a reportage or campaign style so think about whether you need a documentary type news report or an advert type film. Which would tell your story best?
- **Plan your story** – Create a storyboard outlining your structure and timeline for your film and include who/ what you would like to include in the film.
- **Create a shot list** with detail of images and scenes that you need to shoot
- **Write a script**, keep it short, local and simple. Show don't tell.
- **Allocate your roles** – who is the director, interviewer, camera and lights, microphone and sound.
- **Equipment check** – Make sure you have all the equipment you need, you may want to use a tripod to reduce shakiness. Do you understand how to use the equipment and it is working properly and charged up?
- **Sound** is important and unwanted background noise is distracting – choose a quiet place to conduct interviews for example.
- **Do your interviews first** and follow the interviewing tips.
- **Choose your footage carefully** – shoot moving pictures and use a variety of angles, close ups and wide shots to create interest.
- **The Final Script** may need editing to following interviews and footage.
- **Edit your work carefully** and choose the most interesting bits of interviews and scene shots.
- **Add music** – If you choose to add music then choose carefully and appropriately and beware of copyright.



Stay Safe

As a young reporter, you may wish to visit different locations and carry out interviews. Make sure you stay safe

- Make sure you have permission from a parent/guardian to carry out the activity
- Make sure someone knows where you are going, who you are meeting, how you are getting there and when you will be back.
- Never meet someone you don't know on your own in their home, meet in a public place
- Always take your mobile phone
- Stay safe online by never sharing personal information



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