

WHAT DO YOU REALLY KNOW ABOUT INTERNATIONAL NEWS?

Do you watch the nightly news? Do you feel you're well informed of what's happening around the world? True, there's usually a segment devoted to international news, but don't be fooled just because a single event of significant importance is reported. The fact is that there are many events you never hear about, but which you should make an effort to search out. In order to be responsible citizens, we all owe it to ourselves to look beyond the obvious blips on the radar. If you'd like to get an idea of what you don't know of the scope of international news, try a new approach. Spending a single hour on the subject can be a real eye-opener. Let's see how.

One enormous resource for international news events is found online. Events considered important often depend on where you live.

Here in the U.S., a drought in Italy doesn't make headlines. A quick visit to an Italian news site sheds a new perspective on the issue. You'll see how this affects the Italian farmer whose family has made a living for generations in this river valley, now slowly drying up. This drought is really a global warming issue and just a tiny fact, of interest to few. However, if you begin to search for drought-related international news items around the world, it's easy to see there are millions upon millions of people whose livelihoods are seriously impacted by drought today. This is happening all over the world, including here in the U.S. What does this mean for our children?

World leaders make statements of import in international news venues every day. When reported, the meaning of such statements is often skewed in the presentation. While one country's news source may report the complete statement in context, another may report only a portion, out of context and with a slant that reflects that country's perspective. The result? Two different conclusions, perhaps both incomplete. If you find a statement you consider suspect or incomplete, check other reports from a variety of sources to see if you can discern the truth of the matter under discussion. Opinions formed from half of the facts are never reliable. Being well informed means seeking out all the facts we can before reaching a firm conclusion.

Try this exercise to see an example of differing perspectives in international news: Choose three respected news services from three countries or regions and read what they have to say on a current world news event. Do the facts match up? Does opinion cast a different perspective on the overall story? Do the stories play up - or down - different facts? You may be surprised to find this is usually the case.

When you discuss international news events with friends, being well informed can

make the conversation lively and educational. You may be the one to open someone else's eyes to the importance of a well-rounded view of our world events!