News Roundup (C2)

Five Stories for October 12, 2026 | Level C2 | EnglishBridges.com

Before You Read

Discuss these questions with a partner.

1. When did you last follow a breaking news story? What did you notice about how the facts changed?
2. Have you ever shared a story and later found out that part of it was wrong?
3. How might trust in news sources differ by country, age, or profession?

Reading: News Roundup (C2)

This news roundup covers five stories from the week of October 12, 2026. The Nobel Peace Prize went to Navi Pillay, an 85-year-old South African lawyer and judge. The Nobel Committee said that judges and institutions of international law are under political attack. Its choice reads as a defense of **accountability** at a moment when many governments resist it.

In France, a student **mobilization** that began in the suburbs of Paris has spread across the country. Many protesters describe schools that are **overstretched** and short of teachers. The government's **concession** was 3,000 substitute teachers, but the unions were not satisfied.

On October 10, a missile struck the airport in Riyadh. The figures are **provisional**: Saudi officials reported at least 12 dead, and later reports raised the toll to 13. The Houthis, an Iran-backed group in Yemen, claimed responsibility. Saudi officials have signaled that **retaliation** will follow. The obvious danger is **escalation**. Fighting centered on Yemen has **spilled over** into the Saudi capital.

In Russia, a 28-year-old technician at a laboratory in Siberia died of pneumonia of unknown origin. The official account has been **opaque**, and **speculation** has flourished. Claims of a plague leak are **unfounded** because no published evidence supports them. Independent experts cannot **corroborate** either version without the test data. Official **reassurances** carry little weight without data.

In the Netherlands, a ban on consumer fireworks will apply for the first time at New Year. The law allows **exemptions**, such as sparklers. Because more than 150 municipalities say they will not permit shows, the result is a **patchwork** of local rules. The lesson of all five stories is to separate a claim from the evidence for it. A careful reader treats the first version of a fast-moving story as a draft and returns to it after the facts have settled. That habit needs no expertise, only a pause before believing or sharing what a headline seems to say.

Vocabulary: Fill in the Blank

Complete each sentence with a word or phrase from the box. Use each one once.

corroborate	**patchwork**	**opaque**	**accountability**	**spilled over**	**retaliation**	**speculation**
concession	**escalation**	**mobilization**	**reassurances**	**overstretched**	**provisional**	**unfounded**

1. The minister faced demands for _____ after the audit showed that money was missing.
2. The _____ of volunteers after the flood was remarkably fast.
3. The nurses were _____ during the winter, with three people covering a ward built for ten.
4. Each side made a _____ before the two companies signed the deal.
5. The first count of the damage is only _____ and may change tomorrow.
6. The company feared _____ from its rivals after it cut its prices.
7. Calm words from both leaders prevented an _____ of the quarrel.
8. The argument at lunch _____ into the afternoon meeting.
9. The bank's rules were _____, so customers could not tell how fees were set.
10. There was wild _____ about who would win the election.
11. Her fears about the new job turned out to be _____: everyone was friendly.
12. Two witnesses were able to _____ her account of the accident.
13. Despite the airline's _____, many passengers stayed at home.
14. The country has a _____ of regional health rules that confuses travelers.

Word Partners: Collocations and Word Families

Part A. Collocations

Match the two halves to make common phrases. Write the letter on the line.

1. a growing student	_____	**a.** process
2. make a	_____	**b.** escalation
3. wild	_____	**c.** local rules
4. prevent a military	_____	**d.** exemption
5. an opaque	_____	**e.** concession
6. a patchwork of	_____	**f.** speculation
7. apply for an	_____	**g.** reassurance
8. offer	_____	**h.** mobilization

Now choose three of the phrases and write your own sentences.

Part B. Word families

Complete each sentence with the correct form of the word in brackets.

1. Leaders must be held _____ for the decisions they make. (*accountability*)
2. The union plans to _____ thousands of members for the march. (*mobilization*)
3. The conflict could _____ if neither side backs down. (*escalation*)
4. Experts began to _____ about the cause of the outbreak. (*speculation*)
5. Small firms are _____ from the new tax. (*exemptions*)
6. We need independent _____ before we believe the claim. (*corroborate*)

Comprehension Questions

Answer in full sentences.

1. Who won the Nobel Peace Prize, and what did the committee say about international law?

2. How does the reading describe the French student movement, and what did the government offer?
3. What happened at the airport in Riyadh on October 10, and who claimed responsibility?
4. Why does the writer call the casualty numbers provisional?
5. What is known and what is unknown about the death of the technician in Russia?
6. Why does the writer say that reassurances carry little weight without data?
7. How does the Dutch law treat exemptions, and why might the result be a patchwork?
8. What method does the writer recommend for reading breaking news?
9. Do you think a reader can apply the writer's method in the first hours of a story? Give a reason.
10. **True, False, or Not Given:** *"The French unions accepted the government's concession."* Explain your answer using the reading.
11. **Yes, No, or Not Given:** *"The writer believes that claims of a plague leak in Russia have been proved."* Explain your answer using the reading.
12. **Author's purpose:** Why does the writer include the change in the Riyadh toll from 12 to 13? Is it (a) to illustrate why early figures need caution, (b) to criticize the Saudi government, or (c) to show that the Houthi claim was false?

True or False

Circle T (true) or F (false). Be ready to correct the false sentences.

1. Navi Pillay began her career by defending anti-apartheid activists. **T / F**
2. The Nobel Committee said that international law is under no pressure. **T / F**
3. The protests in France began in the suburbs of Paris. **T / F**
4. The unions accepted the 3,000 substitute teachers and ended the protests. **T / F**
5. The missile struck the main gateway to Riyadh. **T / F**
6. The casualty figures from Riyadh did not change after the first report. **T / F**
7. Russian officials denied that a laboratory accident had occurred. **T / F**
8. Published evidence shows that a plague leak caused the death. **T / F**
9. The Dutch ban allows sparklers and some organized shows. **T / F**
10. The Dutch law applies only because of animal welfare. **T / F**

Language Focus: Appositives

An **appositive** is a noun phrase placed next to a noun to rename or describe it. It is usually set off by commas.

Pattern: noun, + *noun phrase*, + rest of the sentence. *The Houthis, an Iran-backed group in Yemen, claimed responsibility.*

Use: it identifies a person, place, or group without starting a new sentence. The appositive can be removed and the sentence still works.

From the reading:

"Navi Pillay, **an 85-year-old South African lawyer and judge**."

"The Houthis, **an Iran-backed group in Yemen**, claimed responsibility."

Tip: use commas on both sides when the appositive is in the middle of the sentence, and only one comma when it is at the end.

Part A. Sentence starters

Finish each sentence with an appositive so that it is true for you.

Appositives after a name or noun

1. My hometown, _____
2. My best friend, _____

3. The book I am reading now, _____

Appositives inside a longer sentence

4. I admire ___, _____
5. Last week I visited ___, _____

Part B. Questions

Answer each question in a full sentence. Try to answer using an appositive. Then ask a partner.

6. Who is your favorite writer, and what is the person known for?
7. What is your hometown, and what is it famous for?
8. Who is a person in the news right now, and who are they?
9. What is the largest city you have visited, and where is it?
10. Who is your favorite teacher, and what do they teach?

Discussion Questions

Discuss with a partner or in a small group. Give reasons and examples.

1. Which of the five stories interests you most, and why?
2. How do you usually check whether a news story is accurate?
3. When did you last change your mind about a news story? What changed it?
4. Which news sources do you trust most? What makes them trustworthy?
5. What responsibility, if any, do online platforms have for slowing the spread of unverified claims?
6. What problems do schools in your country face? Which would you tackle first?
7. Is a stopgap measure ever better than no measure at all?
8. Why might young people join a street movement instead of voting?
9. Should governments always publish the evidence behind a health decision? Where would you draw the line?
10. How should a country balance the right to celebrate with public safety, as in the fireworks debate?
11. Is a patchwork of local rules a strength or a weakness? Give an example.
12. Why do some stories become global news while others stay local?
13. Can international courts hold powerful states to account? What would make them more effective?
14. Is fast news or accurate news more valuable to a reader? Explain your view.

Online Practice

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