

How we help IB schools fulfil their  
educational missions

# NEWS DECODER

A global educational news service  
for young people



A PROGRAMME FOR IB SCHOOLS

# INTRODUCTION

Schools that offer the International Baccalaureate ("IB") Diploma Programme are united in a common mission: to educate their students to be knowledgeable, inquisitive, compassionate, open-minded individuals with empathy for diverse perspectives and intercultural differences.

News Decoder partners with premier schools around the world to teach these hard and soft skills. We offer innovative educational services that help young people become competent, conscientious global citizens.

News Decoder's services complement the IB programme. We are used in classrooms and extracurriculars, and can help students fulfill the Creativity, Activity, Service requirement.

## CREATIVITY, ACTIVITY, SERVICE

Creativity, Activity, Service ("CAS") is one of the three essential elements of the IB Diploma Programme. CAS ensures IB students develop critical life competencies by requiring them to demonstrate creative output, physical exertion and community service.

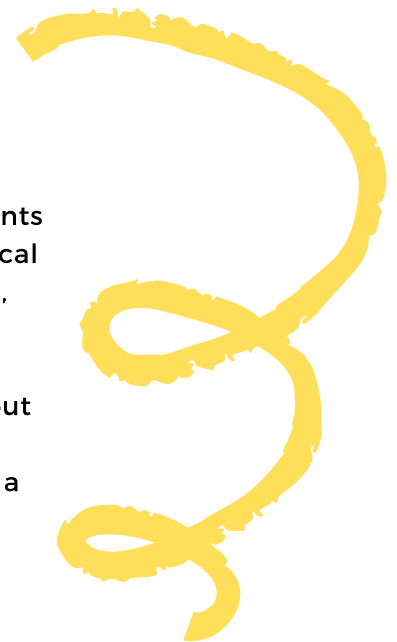
Students engage in CAS activities, including a CAS project, throughout the programme, passing through five stages – investigation, preparation, action, reflection and demonstration – and completing a portfolio that reflects their achievement of seven CAS learning outcomes.

## A PERFECT PLATFORM FOR CAS

By partnering with us, IB schools offer students an avenue for meaningful CAS activities.

Working with News Decoder, students explore issues of local, national or global importance through independent research and reporting; conversations with experts, peers and members of their communities; and collaboration with a team of professional editors. Students articulate their findings in reported stories, personal essays or other multimedia content that we publish on our international news site.

News Decoder's services revolve around a journalistic process – Pitch, Report, Draft, Revise ("PRDR") – that helps students develop global citizenship competencies including knowledge of international issues, critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, communication skills, empathy for diverse perspectives and intercultural understanding. By following PRDR, students pursue the CAS stages of investigation, preparation, action, reflection and demonstration. Read on to see how.



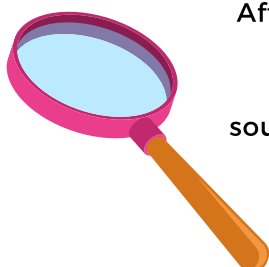
# PITCH

Students pitch a story idea through our online portal. A pitch captures a student's strategy for tackling a topic – how they will report and research the issue, the expert sources they will tap, the media they will use and their proposed deadline. A News Decoder editor responds to student pitches within 24 hours.



The pitching process requires students to **identify** their interests, skills and talents; **investigate** an idea's merits before getting to work on it; and **prepare** a research and reporting plan.

# REPORT



After receiving the editor's feedback, students **take action** by conducting research and reporting. Research requires finding authoritative data in reports and studies. Reporting involves interviewing multiple, diverse sources – an exercise that coaxes students outside of their comfort zones.

News Decoder offers students a range of resources to help them with research and reporting, including exclusive access to our E-Learning Course Library, personalized guidance from a professional editor, assistance arranging interviews and access to our reporting guidebooks.

# DRAFT

After students have gathered materials from their research and reporting, they **reflect on** and **demonstrate** what they've learned by producing a first draft of original multimedia content. We publish content in a range of forms (reported stories, personal reflection essays, creative work such as rap lyrics or poetry) and formats (articles, podcasts, video reports, documentaries and photo reports). Students can work on multimedia content independently or in teams.



# REVISE



After filing a first draft by the agreed deadline, students work with News Decoder's editorial team to shape their content into publishable form. Working with News Decoder's editors, students learn to appreciate life-long professional behaviours – the ability to accept constructive criticism gracefully, to work in a team and to set and meet deadlines. Outstanding content is published on our global website – an exceptional addition to a student's CAS portfolio.

Students work with News Decoder in a variety of ways. Faculty can embed our activities into their classrooms and students can engage independently with News Decoder to complete their CAS activities. See how two students recently engaged with us:

---

## MAROUANE EL BAHRAOUI

Marouane El Bahraoui, a Moroccan student at the African Leadership Academy, worked with two News Decoder editors to produce an article on war-torn Libya that drew the admiring attention of the U.S. ambassador to the North African country.

El Bahraoui spent five months researching and refining the article – “[A political solution is the only option in war-torn Libya](#)”. Working with News Decoder editors, he turned an academic paper into a succinct summary of the web of forces that has made one of Africa’s biggest oil producers into a battleground involving local militia and foreign powers.



His initial pitch reflected his keen interest in the topic but was too wide-ranging for a single article. “Talking about Libya is so vague, and [News Decoder founder] Nelson Graves helped me to focus on one aspect of the whole Libya conflict,” El Bahraoui said. “I focused on the political solution of the conflict only.”

El Bahraoui worked exhaustively on multiple drafts. He interviewed experts and cited international diplomats. After filing a draft, he worked first with Graves, and then later with Tom Heneghan, a former correspondent, bureau chief, regional news editor and global religion editor for Reuters news organization.

“Marouane was absolutely determined to push this article over the goal line,” said Graves. “He showed so many of the qualities that we’re trying to nurture in students – intellectual curiosity, open-mindedness, dogged research, an ability to accept constructive criticism and a willingness to revise, revise and revise.”

When News Decoder published El Bahraoui’s article in August 2020, Dan Norland, a History and Social Science teacher at News Decoder partner school La Jolla Country Day School in California, offered to put his father – Richard Norland, U.S. ambassador to Libya – in touch with the author. An offer that El Bahraoui eagerly took up.

“I didn’t know all the network News Decoder has, with all the partner schools and all the people who could read the articles,” El Bahraoui said. “Who thought that a U.S. ambassador would read my article? I was expecting only young people to read the article.”

Looking ahead, El Bahraoui has his eye set on diplomacy. After studying Political Science, International Relations and African Studies, he hopes to become a political analyst.

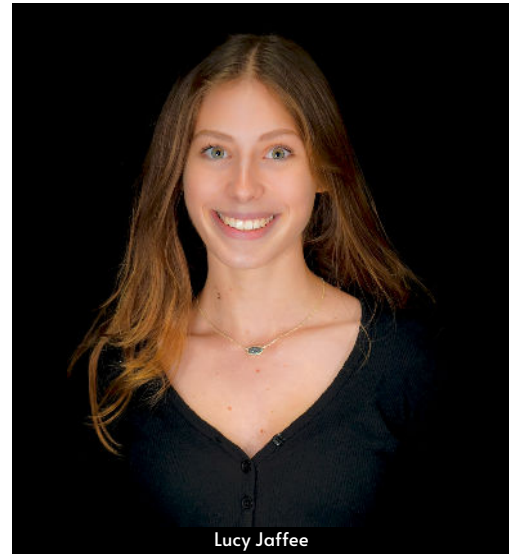
# LUCY JAFFEE

Lucy Jaffee, a student at La Jolla Country Day School in California and editor-in-chief of the school newspaper, was interested in a complicated U.S. court case involving students' right to freedom of speech.

"As the Internet functions more and more like a public forum and social outlet for teenagers, I think it's important to understand where the boundaries between your identity as a citizen and your identity as a student exist," Jaffee said, explaining her interest in the *B.L. v. Mahanoy* case.

"Instead of writing about my assumptions about the significance of the *B.L. v. Mahanoy* case, News Decoder suggested I speak with an expert who could offer a more definitive perspective on the situation," Jaffee said.

Jaffee worked with Graves and Betty Wong, a former journalist for the *Wall Street Journal* and Reuters. Wong "had interviewed Floyd Abrams years ago and suggested I reach out, as he is renowned in the First Amendment field," Jaffee explained. "I emailed him and was lucky enough to score a phone interview with him a few days later."

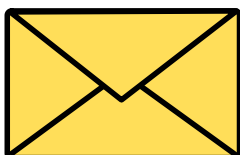


In their phone conversation, Abrams – who argued both the Pentagon Papers and the *Citizens United* cases before the U.S. Supreme Court – offered Jaffee his views on the landmark free-speech case concerning whether schools can punish students for off-campus social media posts.

"News Decoder encouraged me to see different perspectives on the topic, like interviewing and requesting information from multiple sources before drawing conclusions," Jaffee said. "They urged me to focus less on historical background and to instead write a story only I could write with the information I collected, resulting in a forward-thinking and more newsworthy article."

Jaffee's efforts culminated in her article, "[Can a school punish a student for online speech off campus?](#)"

Jaffee, who is interested in civic engagement and government, aspires to be a presidential spokesperson or White House correspondent one day.



## CONTACT US

If you are interested in partnering with News Decoder, or simply want to learn more, we would be delighted to speak with you. Please contact us at [nelson.graves@news-decoder.com](mailto:nelson.graves@news-decoder.com).