CHARACTER TRAITS
Skills: Investigating characteristics that are passed from parents to children
Find an article that features one person. Then choose three inherited character traits for this individual. Which three character traits is a result of the environment? Which traits are probably a result of both the environment and heredity? Now select three character traits for each category that fit you.

GRAPHS
Skills: Exploring data
Graphs are pictures that give information. Find a graph in today’s paper. Study the graph that you can write an explanation of the information given in the graph. Read your explanation to your class. Which is easier and faster to understand, the written or the graphic information?

DETAILS, DETAILS
Skills: Identifying supporting
Read through an article on the front page of the newspaper and underline some of the details. Write down the details in order of importance. Make a graphic organizer – an inverted triangle – to show the information.

PREDICTING
Skills: Predicting
Comic strips are really short stories. Challenge yourself to use the comics to test our prediction skills. Read the first panel of the strip and keep the others covered. Make some predictions as to what will happen next in each strip before you uncover the next panel. Finally, draw your own panel showing what happened after the last panel.

READ AND WRITE FOR MEANING
Skills: Meaning-making
Remove the headlines from a number of news stories. Display these stories on a classroom bulletin board. Provide students with the headlines, and ask them to match each to one of the stories. As students replace missing headlines, ask them to point out the words in the headlines that helped them find the correct story. Then distribute headlines from less prominent stories and ask students to choose one and write a news story to go with it. When the stories have been completed, provide each student with the story that originally accompanied the headline. Ask: How close was your story to the original? How effectively did the headline convey the meaning of the story? You might follow up this activity by asking students to write a headline for their favorite fairy tale.

READ A MAP
Skills: Map reading
Arrange students into groups, and assign each group one international story in the news. Have students explore Maps in the News and choose a map related to their assigned story. Ask students to use the map to answer some or all of these questions –
1. In what city did the story take place?
2. What country is that city in?
3. What is the capital of that country?
4. What language is spoken there?
5. What continent is the country part of?
6. What countries or bodies of water border the country on the north, south, east, and west?
7. What physical characteristics of the country might have contributed to the events in the story?
8. What effect might the event or series of events have on the physical characteristics of the country?
UNDERSTAND THE MEDIA
Skills: Determining propaganda
Distribute advertisements cut from newspapers and ask students to list the products in order, according to the appeal of the ads. Create a chart showing how students rated each product. Then distribute a list of the propaganda techniques:

- Bandwagon – the implication that “everybody else is doing it”
- Plain folks – the implication that “users of this product are just like you”
- Card stacking – distorting or omitting facts
- Name-calling – stereotyping people or ideas
- Glittering generalities – using “good” labels, such as patriotic, beautiful, exciting that are unsupported by facts
- Testimonial – an endorsement by a famous person
- Snob appeal – the implication that only the richest smartest, or most important people are doing it
- Transference – the association of a respected person with a product or idea

Discuss each ad and determine the propaganda technique(s) used. Ask: Which techniques were most effective? Which were least effective? What factors, such as gender, geographic location, or age might have influenced the effectiveness of each technique? As a follow-up to the activity, you might ask students to design their own ads using one of the propaganda techniques studied.

ARRANGE IN SEQUENCE
Skills: Sequencing
Cut up some popular comic strips, provide each student with one complete strip and ask students to put the comics back in the correct order. Or arrange students into groups, provide each group with several cut-up strips from the same comic, and ask them to separate the panels into strips and arrange the strips in the correct order. Introduce advanced students to a series of stories about an ongoing news event and ask them to arrange the stories in the order in which they appeared. Encourage them to use the stories to create a news timeline.

EXPAND YOUR VOCABULARY
Skills: vocabulary building
Assign each student a letter of the alphabet. Ask students to browse through the newspaper, find five unfamiliar words beginning with the assigned letter and look up the definition of each. Then have each student create and illustrate a dictionary page containing the five words and their meaning. Combine the pages into a classroom dictionary. In a variation of this activity, you might ask students to look in the newspaper for any of the following: words with prefix or suffix, words with particular vowel sound or consonant blend, compound words, past, present, future tense verbs, possessives, or plurals.

EXPLORE GEOGRAPHY
Skills:
Ask each student to search the newspaper for stories that illustrate each of the five themes of geography – location, place, human interaction and environment, movement and communication, and regions. Display the stories on a classroom bulletin board labeled with the five geography themes.

HUNT FOR CLASSIFIED MATH
Skills: math
Ask students to use classified pages of the newspaper to do the following:
- Calculate the average price of a 1985 Cadillac
- Find what fraction of the newspaper is composed of classified ads
• Figure out the cost of running a 30-word ad for one week
• Estimate the total number of classified ads based on ads per column and columns per page
• Compare bank interest rates and determine the most and least interest $100 would earn in one year in your area
• Find what percentage of job openings are for teachers, mechanics, etc.

SORT AND CLASSIFY
Skills: sorting, adjectives
Label each of seven shoeboxes with one of the following newspaper categories: news, editorials, features, humor, advertising, sports, and entertainment. Ask students to cut out the newspaper stories they read each day and put each one in the appropriately labeled shoebox. At the end of the week, have students skim as many of the stories as possible and write an adjective describing each on index cards attached to each box. Discuss and compare the adjectives. What conclusions can students reach about each category based on these words?

DESCRIPTIVE WORDS
Skills: descriptive word and parts of speech
Choose a newspaper photograph with more than one person pictured. List all the works that come to mind when trying to describe what is happening in the photo. Categorize these words into nouns, verbs and adjectives.

VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT
Skills: context clues
Ask students to skim a short newspaper article and underline five words they do not know and write several on the board. Using context clues, have students guess the meanings of the words. Make a list of the guesses and then look in the dictionary for the real meaning.