

# The Times

(1 February 2022)

THE TIMES

Tuesday February 1 2022 | thetimes.co.uk | No 73695

£2.20 £1.45 to subscribers (Based on 7 Day Print Pack)

**How to be fit?**  
Do the bare minimum

**Anna Murphy**  
I was bitten by a pandemic puppy

INSIDE TIMES2



“There was too little thought given to what was happening across the country... There were failures of leadership and judgment by different parts of No 10...”

Sue Gray

Boris Johnson heads to the Commons to give a statement on Sue Gray's update into lockdown parties at No 10. He promised change and rejected repeated calls to quit

## Passengers face years of masks on flights

Ben Clatworthy  
Transport Correspondent

Masks on flights will be one of the last coronavirus restrictions to be dropped globally and could remain policy for years, experts have said.

Different rules around the world will make it “nigh-on impossible” for airlines to move individually in allowing passengers to travel without coverings.

The Times understands that UK carriers are seeking “international consistency” before changing the policy and will “act as one” when easing measures. A senior aviation source said: “Until there is a harmonised lifting of mask mandates on flights by governments worldwide it is simpler for airlines to keep the rules in place.”

Neil Sorahan, Ryanair's chief financial officer, said that there were no plans to change the rules. He said: “Masks will be something that will be with us for a while longer to come. If that is the price we have to pay for the next few months, into summer — it's a small price to pay.”

Sorahan said that masks would linger in a similar way as rules on passengers removing liquids from hand luggage at security. The emergency measures were introduced in 2006 when police foiled a plot to blow up airliners using liquid explosives. They remain in force. Most British airlines are following guidelines from bodies including the European Union Aviation Safety Agency and the International Civil Aviation Organisation, which say that masks should be worn for the duration of flights, except when eating and drinking.

When international travel resumed after the first lockdowns airlines initially feared they were going to have to fly with vacant middle seats. It was decided that masks offered enough protection.

An airline source said: “A bit like supermarkets, we'll almost certainly keep the same policy until it is safe to move. For example, the rules in the US are very clear on masks. It would be ridiculous of us to ask passengers to put them on when we enter their airspace.”

Another source said that although there were “hopes that one day we will have a world with no masks... they are going to be with us for a long time”.

Coronavirus reports, pages 16-17

# Police investigate PM's four lockdown parties

● Detectives examining hundreds of photos ● Gray criticises leadership and drinking culture

Steven Swinford Political Editor  
Oliver Wright Policy Editor

Boris Johnson is facing a police investigation over at least four lockdown parties he was directly involved in as detectives examine more than 300 photographs connected to the events. Sue Gray, a senior civil servant, accused Downing Street yesterday of serious failures of “leadership and judgment” over some of the events, at which “excessive quantities” of alcohol were drunk.

She said that staff in No 10 had not met the “high standards expected of the

entire British population” as she disclosed that she had investigated 16 alleged parties, 12 of which are being looked at by the police. Four of them involve the prime minister directly.

Her report disclosed almost no details of the parties, the content having been pared down after the Metropolitan Police told her last week to make “minimal reference” to them. Gray made clear to Johnson in a call on Sunday that she expected her findings to be published in full once the police had completed their inquiries.

Johnson initially declined to do so even after senior aides in No 10 said it

**The Times' verdict**  
Full analysis and comment inside

News, pages 6-9  
William Hague, Comment, page 25  
Leading article, page 29

would look like a cover-up. He conceded yesterday evening after interventions by Conservative MPs.

Jacob Rees-Mogg, leader of the Commons, said last night that the whole report, including all the photographs,

should be published. “I think the more people see, the more understanding there will be about precisely what went wrong,” he said.

Angela Richardson, a government aide, announced that she had resigned, citing her “deep disappointment” in Johnson. She said that “failings at No 10 let us all down”.

In the Commons, Johnson faced cross-party criticism. Andrew Mitchell, the former international development secretary, called on him to quit. “I have to tell him he no longer enjoys my support,” the MP said. Theresa May Continued on page 2, col 3

### IN THE NEWS

**Putin call cancelled**

Boris Johnson was forced to cancel a planned call with President Putin yesterday to discuss the Ukraine crisis as he responded to the release of the Gray report. Page 10

**VAT cut 'is too risky'**

Cutting taxes when finances are so vulnerable would be a huge risk, the chief secretary to the Treasury said, pouring cold water on the idea of reducing VAT on fuel. Page 4

**Migrant crossings up**

Six times as many migrants crossed the Channel in small boats in January as in the same month last year. A total of 1,341 people made the journey in 46 vessels. Page 2

**Biden offer to Taliban**

President Biden appeared to offer the Taliban a path towards legitimacy if they freed the last American hostage, a US navy veteran, in Afghanistan. Page 30

**Rate rise predicted**

Financial markets are betting that the Bank of England will implement back-to-back interest rate rises for the first time since 2004, in response to soaring prices. Page 35

**New start for Dele**

Frank Lampard, the new Everton manager, has won his club's backing to give the Spurs midfielder Dele Alli the chance to resurrect his career in a 2½-year deal. Page 72

## A Level Component 1: Media products, industries and audiences

### Focus areas:

- **Media language**
- **Representation**
- **Media industries**
- **Audiences**
- **Media contexts**

### THE PRODUCT

- *The Times* newspaper is a British national ‘**quality**’ newspaper, first published in 1785. These newspapers can also be referred to as ‘broadsheets’, derived from their original larger size. *The Times* has been published by Times Newspapers since 1981, a subsidiary of News UK which is wholly owned by News Corp, Rupert Murdoch’s company. The company also publishes the *Sunday Times*, the *Sun*, the *Sun on Sunday* and until recently, the *News of The World*.
- Politically, *The Times* adopts a more neutral position compared to the explicit political allegiance of the tabloid press. However, it does have a right-wing allegiance and supports the Conservative party at key times, such as when there is a general election. *The Times* is famous for having a range of journalists with varied political viewpoints which allows the newspaper to offer a more neutral and balanced political stance on some issues.
- The newspaper describes itself as the following: ‘A faithful recorder of the times for more than 200 years. It is authoritative, credible, responsible, trusted and a part of the nation’s cultural heritage. A premium British brand, recognised the world over.’(www.news.co.uk)
- The set edition was published on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 and focuses on the report into the investigation into parties held at Downing Street while the country was under lockdown restrictions.

## COMPONENT 1: SECTION A

### Starting points: Media language, representation and contexts

#### Political context

- This edition of the newspaper deals with the scandal surrounding allegations regarding parties and social gatherings held by the Conservative Party at a time when its leaders had enforced strict restrictions on the people of England that prohibited such gatherings.
- The story was first reported in November 2021 and alleged that during the lockdown Christmas of 2020, parties had been held at Downing Street, some of which had been attended by the Prime Minister Boris Johnson. This led to an inquiry being undertaken by senior civil servant Sue Gray, the results of which were published in January 2022.
- On the date this edition was published, Boris Johnson was due to give a statement to the Commons about what had happened. It was reported in the newspaper that Sue Gray had revealed that the Metropolitan Police were investigating several possible breaches of lockdown by No 10 and Boris Johnson had refused calls for his resignation.

#### Social and cultural contexts

- All newspapers, including *The Times*, reflect the social and cultural contexts of the time in which they were produced. *The Times* largely targets a ABC1 demographic with cultural capital and an interest in news and analysis in detail. This demographic is targeted through the news values of the paper, the selection of stories and how particular social groups and issues are represented.
- The choice to focus on this particular story also reinforces a common theme for this newspaper – to accurately present the news and its effect on society. Whilst it is not explicitly critical of the government on this front page, this story cut across political divides with many members of the Conservative party as well as Labour shocked by the revelations.

- The newspaper's **plug** also reflects a cultural context with a lifestyle focus intended to broaden the appeal of the newspaper.

### Front page:

Consider the different ways in which the paradigmatic choices of media language including visual codes, written language and mode of address communicate meanings on this front page:

- The page is split between political stories and a plug promoting *Times2*, the lifestyle supplement of the paper which in this instance features an article on fitness and a personal story about being bitten by a puppy.
- The layout and design of the front page is conventional of this style of broadsheet, quality newspaper, which is generally text led rather than image led. *The Times* usually has an image, which may be a **standalone**, a main story, a secondary story (usually in a right-hand column) and a plug. There is also often an 'In the News' section at the bottom of the page with **jump lines** linked to the main inside stories.
- The **masthead** is bold and recognisable and effectively signifies the ideology of the paper, suggesting that it reports and reflects upon the issues of the time. The typography chosen is strong and commands the front page and is placed either side of the crest and logo. The lion and the unicorn are symbols appearing on heraldic crests, and the slogan *Dieu et Mon Droit* – God and My Right – dates to King Richard 1<sup>st</sup>. The fact that this has remained unchanged by the newspaper suggests that they intend to reinforce their longevity and traditional values.
- The **headline** 'Police investigate PM's four lockdown parties' is informative rather than dramatic and enigmatic. The same is true of the sub-heading 'Gray criticises leadership and drinking culture'. However, there is subtle, implicit criticism through the selection and use of language, for example including the number 'four' and choosing the specific aspect of the report that comments on a 'drinking culture'.
- Similarly, the **pull quotes** that accompany the central image are direct quotations from Sue Gray's report, denoted by the large quotation mark to emphasise their importance. Positioning them in white on the black background gives them prominence and means that they function as an anchor for the image of the Prime Minister.
- The central image is a **close-up** photograph of Boris Johnson with an indirect mode of address. His code of expression shows some trepidation of what is to come as he goes to the Commons. The newspaper has selected this photograph to suggest that he does have questions to answer, whilst not explicitly criticising him.
- The caption is long and gives information based on facts, placing the photograph in a context rather than taking an active stance. This is a typical convention of this style of newspaper.
- The 'In the News' section at the bottom of the page offers a brief summary of other content in the newspaper including a global aspect. The mode of address is serious and formal.
- The **language and mode of address** used for the stories on the front page are formal. The text is compact and detailed; subheadings are not generally used to split up the stories into sections, suggesting that the readers are comfortable with detailed information and analysis. There is a sub-heading 'The Times Verdict' with jump lines to the analysis of the story on the inner pages, establishing the newspaper as an opinion leader.
- The **plug** is constructed differently, using a bright colour palette to differentiate between the serious and lighter elements of the newspaper's content.

### Theoretical perspectives: structuralism – Levi-Strauss

- Newspapers, like other media products, create meaning through the way in which they are structured. Their use of typical codes and conventions fulfil audience expectations and appeal to loyal readers. However, the way in which the conventions are employed across newspapers will communicate different meanings; for example, the use of headlines, language and mode of address differs between popular and quality newspapers.

- Meaning is dependent on pairs of oppositions; the way these oppositions are used and resolved reflects the ideology of the newspaper.
- *The Times* demonstrates less explicit political allegiance compared to a tabloid publication and therefore may offer more than one viewpoint on an issue. The resolution of oppositions may only be evident and more explicit in something such as an editorial or an opinion piece, where the political allegiance of the paper may be more obvious.
- Similarly, the construction and choice of language in the headlines and subheadings represent the event and the PM in a negative way – ‘PM’s four lockdown parties’ implies Boris Johnson’s involvement and the use of ‘four’ points out the seriousness of the event. The use of the phrase ‘drinking culture’ also constructs a negative representation of the event.
- This construction of the representation of the event does not reflect the newspaper’s usual political allegiance, which would be to support the government. It may be that the newspaper feels responsible as an **opinion leader** to reflect the reactions of many people with differing political views to the transgresses of the government.

## Starting points: representation

### Consider how representations are constructed through a process of selection and combination.

Newspapers have access to the same stories daily but will choose how to represent events and issues in a way that reflects the values, attitudes and beliefs of the paper and their readers. The way in which the event / issue / social group is represented will affect the audience response. Newspapers are opinion leaders and will influence how audiences may respond to the issue/event. Consider how issues, events and social groups are represented in the newspaper front page:

#### Front page:

- The construction of the representation of the event and the key player on the front page is dominated by the central image of Boris Johnson, anchored by a headline, sub-headings and pull quotes.
- The choice of the image of Boris Johnson focuses on his code of expression of trepidation on his way to the Commons, **anchored** by the caption and the large quote from Sue Gray’s report. Unlike a tabloid newspaper, the representation of the event and Boris Johnson’s role in it is more implicit. However, the **selection and combination** of images and language constructs a subtly negative representation. The choice of pull quotes from the report, placed next to the image of the PM, implicitly directs blame at his behaviour: ‘There were failures of leadership and judgment by different parts of number 10 ...’. The inclusion of the ellipsis creates an enigma suggesting that there is more to be seen in the report.

- The construction of the representation of the event **positions** the audience to consider the facts about the event, which are presented in an informative way, and to make their decision about it. Within the readership of *The Times*, although it is a right-wing publication, there will be those who are shocked by the revelations of the breaking of lockdown restrictions by those in positions of power and then there will be those who remain supportive of the government. The sub-heading ‘The Times verdict. Full analysis and comment inside’ suggests that these binary oppositions may be resolved by the newspaper’s opinion contained in these inner pages.

### Theoretical perspectives: representation – Stuart Hall

- The front page of *The Times* produces meaning through the language used, by using recognisable signs that will be interpreted by the audience, for example, headlines, image choices, language, and mode of address.
- These choices contribute to the construction of the event and encode meanings that are to be decoded by the audience.

## COMPONENT 1 SECTION B: Media industries and audiences

**For this section you will be using the issue of *The Times* that you have studied in class. This will be different from the set pages studied for Section A.**

### Starting points: Media industry

#### Industry context

##### The significance of patterns of ownership and control

*The Times* was first published in 1785 and is part of *The Times* newspaper group which is a subsidiary of News UK. News UK is a British-based, American-owned newspaper publisher, and a subsidiary of the American **mass media conglomerate** News Corp. News Corp is a newly formed company that concentrates on newspapers and publishing. The company was formed following a split from News Corporation, a powerful conglomerate with interests in film and broadcasting in addition to newspapers and publishing. The company also produces *The Sun* newspaper and previously the *News of the World*, which ceased production following the **phone hacking scandal** of 2011. The company has demonstrated a predominantly **right-wing** political allegiance with *The Sun* newspaper, backing the Conservative government in recent elections. However, *The Times* has maintained a more **neutral** stance, particularly in its coverage of the Brexit debate as its readers are comprised of ‘Remainers’ and ‘Leavers’.

##### The interrelationship between media technologies and patterns of consumption and response

Consider how the website for *The Times* ([www.thetimes.co.uk](http://www.thetimes.co.uk)) has addressed the changes in technology and audience consumption of news. The group was one of the first companies in the UK to introduce an **online** newspaper but also introduced **paywalls** requiring readers to pay a subscription to use the site. This was introduced in response to the fall in print sales within the group.

In 2016, *The Times* and *Sunday Times* launched a combined website and made the decision to move from a rolling news to an **edition-based digital format**, updated three times a day to

match the reading patterns of their audience more effectively. In 2020, News UK launched *Times Radio* in an attempt to increase the take-up of digital subscriptions for the newspaper. However, *The Times* continues to have a higher reach in print sales than online

*The Times* is part of a **regulatory framework** known as the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) – an independent body which is not backed by the government and is fully funded by the industry itself. This is a regulatory body that maintains press standards but is anti-Leveson in its approach.

##### Theoretical approaches: Power and media industries – Curran and Seaton

The newspaper industry is dominated by a small number of powerful companies. *The Times* is part of a **horizontally and vertically integrated** company and subsequently a large conglomerate. Being part of a huge press organisation could limit or inhibit creativity and journalists’ freedom. Rupert Murdoch is often accused of controlling his newspaper content and editorial teams which would support this point. However, it could also be suggested that by having a more diverse pattern of ownership, a more pluralistic approach could create conditions for more varied and adventurous media productions.

##### Regulation – Sonia Livingstone and Peter Lunt (A Level)

*The Times* Newspaper Group and News Corp are facing increased pressure alongside the rest of the UK press industry to adhere to strict rules and regulations on industry practice. This has arisen after the phone hacking scandal and subsequent Leveson enquiry into the industry. There is an underlying issue of protecting citizens from harmful, or more recently, ‘fake’ material while maintaining choice and the freedom of the press to expose wrongdoing and injustice through responsible journalism. The increasing power of companies like News Corp and their expansion into digital media has also placed traditional approaches to regulation at risk.

##### Cultural industries – David Hesmondhalgh (A Level)

*The Times* Newspaper group is part of a vertically and horizontally integrated company with a wide range of titles on offer in order to maximise

audiences and minimise risks. The reach of News Corps spans a range of different cultural industries enhancing their global power. By association, *The Times* benefits from access to other cultural industries and is therefore financially protected. Rather than seeing digital media as a threat, the company has embraced its digital expansion and introduced paywalls to allow for online content to be viewed while still generating income. As part of News Corp, the company is part of a wide organisation responsible for different cultural industries. This can benefit the newspaper greatly in terms of production and promotion.

## Starting points: Audience

**Consider the following points in relation to the edition of the newspaper you have studied in class.**

**How are audiences grouped and categorised?**

*The Times*' target audience, according to ABC data, is predominantly ABC1, over 35 and has a **liberal/right-wing** political stance. This **well-educated** and **middle-class** audience take an interest in national and global affairs and can understand and engage with detailed political reporting.

**How do newspaper producers target audiences?**

- The front page of the newspaper is important in targeting the audience. The choice and style of the main headline and central image are important in attracting the reader and in communicating the view the newspaper is taking on the particular story featured.
- The newspaper appeals to the audience through its content and the inclusion of hard and soft news items, for example the lifestyle supplement 'times2'.
- The launch of the edition-based digital format addressed both the need to target a broader audience and understanding that readers of *The Times* preferred a digital edition that, whilst having some daily updates, closely resembled the print format. Distributing the publication across digital platforms allows it to be updated, which will appeal to younger audiences, as will the launch of *Times Radio*.

- Whilst the front page of the newspaper may be less explicit in its political allegiance, other pages in the newspaper and on digital platforms reinforce the right-wing ideology of the newspaper, for example the editorial and opinion pieces and political cartoons.
- *The Times* **letters page** is culturally iconic and offers readers an opportunity to air their views and interact with the community of the newspaper. This page and the 'Comment' section of the newspaper reflect the readership and their interests and concerns.
- The **values, attitudes and beliefs** of the newspaper and the way in which they represent particular stories will resonate with like-minded readers who may have chosen this newspaper because of its right-wing stance. Readers will be made to feel part of the newspaper's community and that the stories and articles reflect their views. This audience will accept the **preferred reading** of the newspaper.

**Theoretical approaches: Cultivation theory – Gerbner**

- Audience exposure to **repeated patterns** of representation, such as that of Brexit, the economy, or the government in power, by newspapers may shape and influence their views and opinions of the world around them. Gerbner went on to say that this is not like 'hypodermic model' but rather depends on what the audience already believes. Newspapers function as opinion leaders and **mediate** the news for the readers with their political allegiance in mind. These views will therefore be cultivated and reinforced by the newspaper and its content.

**Reception theory – Stuart Hall**

The producers of newspapers encode ideas in their publications that are to be decoded by their readers. Active audiences who agree with the ideology of the newspaper will accept the viewpoint of the newspaper that is evident in its approach to stories and editorial and opinion pieces. Those readers who have a different political allegiance will have an **oppositional response**, disagreeing with the messages constructed by the newspaper and will not buy nor read a publication that does not reflect their ideas and opinions.

### End of audience – Clay Shirky (A Level)

The concept of audience members as passive consumers is no longer tenable in the age of digital technologies. This is because they have enabled the rise of the **prosumer** who can create their own content submitting stories as a **citizen journalist**, offering an immediate perspective on news stories. Consumers can also actively engage and ‘speak back’ to the news media. *The Times* newspaper and website offers interactive opportunities for readers to comment on stories and features, thus giving them a voice as part of the newspaper’s community.

## CONTEXTS

### Social and cultural

Newspapers reflect the society and culture in which they are produced, but they are not windows into the world. *The Times* is a right-wing publication in a largely right-wing press. Issues and events will be represented differently in different newspapers according to their ideology and the expectations of their audience. *The Times*, although generally neutral in its stance, will tend to implicitly favour the government and its policies. Their content will also reflect the needs of their ABC1 audience demographic.

Consider how this context is evident in the issue of the newspaper you have studied.

### Economic

The newspaper industry has faced economic pressure in recent years as the sale of print copies has steadily fallen. Ownership is hugely significant in relation to the newspaper industry, particularly when print sales are on the decline and advertising revenue is falling. Newspapers such as *The Times*, which are part of larger, powerful conglomerates, are more protected from economic risks. Some newspaper titles including *The Times* have introduced subscriptions to access their digital products and to secure an income.

### Political

The political context of newspapers shapes the product and is reflected in the way in which stories are selected and how issues, events and social groups are represented. As a right-wing publication and a quality broadsheet, *The Times* will select stories and present them in a way that reflects their political ideology and appeals to their right-leaning readership. The news agenda will reflect the needs of the readers for detailed, informative reporting.