

JOURNALISM 101

News Values: News Values are like a checklist that help you decide which stories are important and worth reporting on. If it doesn't fit at least one of the below requirements, it may not be worth covering.

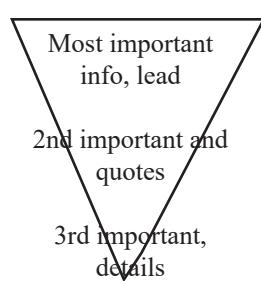
1. Proximity: This means how close a story is to where it happened or how close it is to the audience. People tend to care more about things that happen nearby or affect them directly, so stories with a local angle might be more newsworthy.
2. Timeliness: News is about what's happening now. So, stories that are fresh and recent are usually more important than old news.
3. Impact: Stories that have a big impact on a lot of people are considered more newsworthy. These could be events that cause major changes, affect many lives, or have significant consequences.
4. Prominence: When someone important or famous is involved in a story, it tends to get more attention. People are curious about what influential figures are doing or saying.
5. Conflict: Stories that involve conflicts or disagreements catch people's attention. Whether it's a political dispute, a legal battle, or a social conflict, these kinds of stories can be gripping.
6. Human Interest: This is all about touching people's hearts. Stories that evoke strong emotions, like joy, sorrow, or inspiration, often become popular because they connect with readers' feelings.
7. Novelty: Something unique, unusual or a one-time event can make a story stand out. People like to hear about things they've never encountered before, so stories with an element of rarity tend to be interesting.

5W's and an H: The essential questions you need to get answered in your story. The first four are facts, the last two add depth -

1. Who - Who are the people involved in the story
2. What - What's going on
3. Where - Where are things happening
4. When - When did the event happen
5. Why - Why is this event worth covering
6. How - How did the events unfold

Leads and Nut Graphs: A lead is the first paragraph or first few paragraphs of a story. A nut graph is a sentence or paragraph that summarizes what the story is about. The lead draws a reader into a story, a nut graph tells the reader what the story is about. Every story needs both.

Use Clear and Concise Language: When writing, use clear and concise language that is easy for everyone to understand. Avoid using technical jargon and unnecessary complexity that might confuse your readers. Instead, opt for simple words and straightforward sentences to ensure your message is accessible and straightforward to a broader audience. This approach makes your writing more inclusive and allows your ideas to be easily grasped and appreciated by a wider range of people. Remember, keep it simple and avoid unnecessary complications.



Follow the Inverted Pyramid, if Appropriate for Your Story. Use the Inverted Pyramid technique when telling your story. Start with the most important information right away and then add supporting details as you go. This means putting the crucial parts at the beginning to grab the reader's attention instantly. As you continue, you can include more background information and explanations to give the reader a full understanding of the topic. This style may not apply to all stories, it's a just a starting point.

Tense: Stories are written in past tense, cutlines and headlines are written in present tense.

Attribution of Sources: It's essential to give credit to the sources of information you use in your writing. This means citing them appropriately to show where you got the information from. This practice helps to maintain your credibility as a writer and ensures transparency for your readers. For any story you write, make sure you have at least two sources to support the information. Additionally, it's crucial to double-check all the facts and claims you include in your writing to ensure they are accurate. This way, you can avoid unintentionally spreading misinformation and provide reliable content to your audience. Being diligent about attributing sources and fact-checking contributes to trustworthy journalism.

Balance and Fairness: When writing about a topic, make sure to offer a balanced view by presenting different perspectives. This helps to maintain objectivity and fairness in your reporting. Stay conscious of your own personal biases and work towards presenting information in an impartial manner. Being objective means avoiding favoring one side of the story over the other. Instead, aim to provide a well-rounded account that allows readers to form their own opinions based on the facts and various viewpoints presented. By doing so, you ensure that your work is credible and trustworthy and your audience can rely on you for unbiased information. Remember, transparency and fairness are essential in reliable reporting or visuals.

Databases: Budget stories and such might require working with a database. Candor editors should be able to do the following basic functions in MS Excel or Google Sheets - Open | Filter | Sort | Add or Subtract | Percent Change | Save. The advisor or online videos can help with learning these functions.

Crisis reporting: Breaking news involves providing timely and accurate information during emergencies, disasters and other critical situations. When reporting on crises, journalists play a crucial role in keeping the public informed and aware of the unfolding events. However, crisis reporting comes with unique challenges and responsibilities such as sensitivity to what a subject is going through. Remember, you are a human being first, a journalist second.

Interviews

1. In-Person Interviews:

Advantages: Real-time feedback on subtle non-verbal cues.

Disadvantages: Time and logistics: In-person interviews may require more time and effort to schedule and conduct, especially if the interviewee is located far away.

2. Phone Interviews:

Advantages: Convenience: Phone interviews are easier to schedule and conduct.

Disadvantages: May have to wait a long time for person to get back to you.

3. Email, DM, Text, etc., Interviews:

Advantages: Flexibility: Email interviews offer flexibility in terms of timing, allowing the interviewee to respond at their convenience.

Disadvantages: Unknown source: You have no way of knowing if the email and/or answers are from the person you thought.

If recording someone in person or phone, remember to ask if it's OK to record the discussion - ***it's the law.***

Difference between News, Sports and Feature writing: Sport reporting primarily centers on providing coverage and analysis of sports events, athletes and related stories. News reporting aims to inform the public about significant developments and issues affecting society, offering a broader perspective on immediate events. Feature stories offer a more in-depth and narrative approach, delving into human interest, analysis, or background on a particular topic.

Inverted Pyramid story example

The Johnson family was rescued from their burning home on Saturday evening, thanks to the quick work of Lisle firefighters.

The above lead has who (Johnsons), what (fire), when (Saturday) and kind-of where (Lisle).

The family of five had just returned from a vacation when they noticed smoke coming from the kitchen. Everyone in the house was able to escape without injury, but the home has been declared a total loss.

Important facts from the paragraph above -

1. Everyone is OK.
2. Described what happened

“It was a close call,” said Fire Chief Bill Smith. “The family was very lucky that no one was hurt. We were able to get the fire under control quickly and prevent it from spreading to other homes in the area.”

Quote fits the paragraph above it
(get your first quote up into the first few paragraphs of story)

Firefighters from the local fire department arrived on the scene shortly after 9pm and were able to contain the blaze in less than an hour.

Kind of important but not as much as the above info

“I’m just we made it out alive,” said Sharon Case, homeowner. “What if something would have happened to us, I can’t even think about it.”

Second quote. OK but not as good as the first

The cause of the fire is still under investigation.

Kind of important but not as much as all the above info

CONTENTS OF STORY:

1. Hard news lead - answers Who, What, Where and When.
2. Lead is also nutgraph (sentence that sums up the story).
3. At least two sources used *AND* properly sourced.
4. Good quotes used.
5. Factual details fill out the story.