

Television Production & Broadcast Journalism

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Second Edition



PowerPoint Presentations for

Television Production & Broadcast Journalism

by Phillip L. Harris



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Tinley Park, Illinois

A graphic of a clapperboard with black and white diagonal stripes on the top bar and a solid black bottom section. The number '10' is written in white on the left side of the black section.

10

Newswriting for
Broadcast

Objectives

- Identify ways to find newsworthy stories.
- Explain how the angle of a story affects how the story is written.
- Summarize the concept of “writing for the ear.”
- Apply the guidelines for good news story writing.

Writing a News Story



Find the Story

A local retail plaza prepares for the first official day of holiday shopping.

Identify the Angle

Hiring temp staff for sales, security, and maintenance with hope of increased holiday spending.

Research

- Seasonal staffing increase statistics.
- Holiday sales history.
- Post-holiday layoff statistics.

Log Video

Comments from:

- Retail plaza manager
 - Retail store manager
 - Temp staff members
- B-roll with nat sound.

Write the Script

Write and record reporter track. Organize shot sequence. Note big As and little As in footage.

Edit the Story

Produce the completed story according to the script, with reporter track, primary video, and B-roll.

Is Story Newsworthy?



- Is there conflict to sustain interest?
- Is it unusual?
- Is it about a well-known person?
- Will members of audience be impacted?
- Is there local angle?
- Is there emotion or human interest?

Reporters



- Have well-rounded general knowledge
- Aware of local environment
- What is story here?

Human Interest Stories



- Everyone has a hobby
- Reporter finds “thing” that is interesting and turns it into story for others to view

Stories in Educational Setting



- Upcoming events
- Competitions
- Artistic displays—theater, music, art
- Athletics
- Orientation for new students
- Video yearbook

Stories in Educational Setting (Cont.)



- Fashion
- Fundraisers
- Charity events
- Local musicians
- Clubs
- Guidance activities/registrations

Stories in Educational Setting (Cont.)



- Library events
- Spotlights on interesting students and teachers

Discussion

Divide class into small groups and assign each group a school beat. The beat list includes police, education, politics, sports, and technology, among others. Each group develop five ideas for kind of story that beat might generate and share with rest of class.

Working a Beat



- Develop relationship with primary individuals in that area
- Learn as much as possible about mission and purpose of that beat
- Check in regularly to keep up-to-date with news

Working a Beat (Cont.)



- Do not ask them to contact you—passive. You need to check with them—active.
- Check how events or news might interact with other beats in school
- Share knowledge with other beat reporters

Researching Stories



- Gather all information necessary to frame story:
 - Responsibly
 - Fairly
 - Accurately
 - Completely

Facts



- Some stories may require great research and others very little
- Every fact needs to be double-checked
- Every aspect of story needs two separate sources to verify information
- Hearsay is unacceptable; story based on hearsay is gossip—not journalism

Deadlines



- Story is worthless if deadline is missed
 - Election is today; reminding us tomorrow to vote has no value
- Deadline should not cause poor fact checking
- Airing incorrect information can be dangerous to both viewers and reporters

Attribution



- Reporters should always assume they may have to prove everything they say or write
- Always credit source of quotes, information, and facts

“KISS”



- Keep It Simple, Silly
- Good stories are both simple and complete
- No irrelevant details
- Complete story leaves viewer with no unanswered questions



- Finding interesting angle to story is critical
- Good angle maintains viewer interest
- “Just the facts, ma’ am” or do an interview?
- Many different sound bites or few?
- Stand-up, VO, or package?
- Tell story through character impacted by story

Discussion

How many different angles can you think of to cover major house fire that leaves uninjured family homeless?

News Writing Fundamentals



- Write for the ear
- Simple direct sentences without long clauses
- Use active voice
- Use present tense as much as possible

Choosing Words



- Do not start stories with words ending in “ing”
- Do not start story with question
- Do not start story with quote read by reporter
- Do not scare audience with your words
- Do not give orders; instead give suggestions repeating messages of officials

Choosing Words (Cont.)



- Try to use action verbs
- Do not offer your opinion
- Do not use person's name at beginning of story unless person is well-known
- Always provide information why person's name is being used in story

Choosing Words (Cont.)



- Do not use long word when short word will do
- Do not use trite or cliché phrases
 - "Once again,"
 - "In the news,"
 - "A new development,"
 - "As expected,"
 - "In a surprise move,"

Choosing Words (Cont.)



- Mention person's age only if it is relevant to newsworthiness of story
- Pictures are worth 1000 words, so do not say
 - "As you can see..."
 - "Here is..."
 - "This is..."

Preparing News Package



- Interview footage is incorporated with researched story
- After interview and B-roll are complete, all footage, audio, and nat sound are logged in
- Audio is transcribed
- Reporter reviews, pastes together story

Preparing News Package (Cont.)



- [Reporter track](#) provides “glue” between sound bites by adding information not in SOTs
- Packages rarely include audio of reporter’s original question
 - Clarify the response in editing so the question asked is apparent

Preparing News Package (Cont.)



- Big A' s are comments interviewee phrased better than reporter could—keep big A' s
- Little a' s are answers that may be long-winded and are suitable for reporter to summarize
- Big A' s become SOTs; Little a' s become reporter track

Preparing News Package (Cont.)



- [Lead](#)
- [Hard lead](#)
- [Soft lead](#)
- [Close](#)
- Once story is written, reporter records track

Preparing News Package (Cont.)



- Finally, written story, reporter track, primary video, and B-roll are sent for editing; or reporter may edit entire video package

Prime Directive



- Report news truthfully and completely
- Allow viewers to form their own opinions based on all facts
- Do not allow viewers to determine how reporter feels about any story

Career Page

- The Student Television Network
- www.studenttelevision.com

Review Question

What does “give attribution” mean?

Cite source of information in story.

Review Question

Name three phrases that should *not* be used while reporting.

“Once again,” “In the news,” “A new development,” “As expected,” “In a surprise move,” “As you can see...,” “Here is...,” “This is...”

Review Question

What is the purpose of the reporter track in a package?

Provides “glue” to hold SOTs together. Also is comprised of little a’s of information not provided in SOTs.

Review Question

What mistake is made by a reporter that results in the spreading of gossip rather than providing journalism?

Not having at least two sources for information and double-checking that information.

Review Question

What does “write for the ear” mean?

Use present tense, active voice, and simple, direct sentences.

Review Question

What questions should you ask yourself to determine if a story is newsworthy?

- Is there something in the story to sustain viewer interest?
- Is the story unusual?
- Is someone well-known involved in the story?
- Is there an audience that will be impacted by the story?
- Can the story be brought “home” to the local audience?
- Are there emotion or human interest aspects?

Review Question

Why is finding a good angle before writing a story important?

It could mean the difference between a story that people are interested in and will watch, and a story that they will ignore. If they can relate to the story, then it's a good angle.

Glossary

- **angle:** The approach or point of view used to tell a story.
- **attribution:** Crediting the source of information used in a story.
- **close:** The conclusion of a story.
- **hard lead:** The first line of a story that begins the story abruptly and immediately presents the most important information.

Glossary

- **lead:** The very first sentence of a story.
- **reporter track:** Everything spoken by the reporter in a package.
- **soft lead:** The first line of a story that communicates the general idea of a story, but does not offer any facts.