

REPORTING & EDITING TECHNIQUES

PRINCIPLES OF REPORTING

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the significance of reporting
- To discuss the news values and the basics of news writing
- To know the different types of leads
- To understand the techniques of re-writing
- To know the meaning of news agency copy

INTRODUCTION

The main components of news reporting are the body and the lead. A news story is mostly written in inverted pyramid style in which the most important facts come first followed by other facts in order of significance. This inverted pyramid style has held significance over the years as it helps the readers who don't have enough time to read the whole story. It also helps the sub-editors who can easily delete as much of the story from the tail without affecting the readability.

NEWS REPORTING

Journalism has as its main activity the reporting of events — **stating who, what, when, where, why and how, and explaining the significance and effect of events or trends**. Journalism exists in a number of media: newspapers, television, radio, magazines and, most recently, the World Wide Web through the Internet.

News reporting is a type of journalism, typically written or broadcast in news style. Most news is investigated and presented by journalists or news Reporters, and can be distributed to various outlets via news agencies. News is often reported by a variety of sources, such as newspapers, television, and radio programs, wire services, and web sites.

Reporter is a type of journalist who researches and presents information in certain types of mass media.

Reporters gather their information in a variety of ways, including tips, press releases, and witnessing events. They perform research through interviews, public records, and other sources. **The information-gathering part of the job is sometimes called "reporting"** as distinct from the production part of the job, such

as writing articles. Reporters generally split their time between working in a newsroom and going out to witness events or interview people.

Most reporters working for major news media outlets are assigned an area to focus on, called a beat or patch. They are encouraged to cultivate sources to improve their information gathering.

News reports are classified into two broad types:

1. Straight news reports
2. Investigative or interpretative reports

Straight news reports present what has happened in a straightforward, factual and clear manner. They draw no conclusions, nor offer any opinions. There is no attempt to probe deeper than the surface happenings, or they provide elaborate background information, or even to examine claims made. The main sources are: Government officials, elite groups, news agencies, eminent people, businessmen and others.

Both these types of news stories merely present the claims, without in any way trying to question or rebut, or ask why. Investigative reports, on the other hand, would make an effort to go behind the claims and see how valid they are. They report happenings in depth, present fairly all sides of the picture in the context of the situation, and generally, put some meaning into the news so that the reader is better able to understand and analyze the event.

Disaster stories e.g. famines and floods get pride of place in the daily press, and these provide many ‘human interest’ stories.

Developments in science, industry and agriculture are increasingly coming to be considered as interesting news, as also the exposure of corruption in high places, the exploitation of the lower classes and workers, and social injustice and inequalities resulting from the social, economic and political structures. Of course, all the news reported is not news of the highest interest to everybody. Politics interest some, sports others, crime still others. However, it is rare that newspapers touch in the information needs and interests of the poorer sections of the society.

‘Dog bites man isn’t news. Man bites dog is’ . So goes an adage probably as old as journalism itself. Like many such sayings, it conceals as much as it reveals. People watch television or read the newspaper because they want to know about the happening and events around them. They want to gather all the news from around the world.

FUNCTIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES

The press is independent of government. Governments are composed of human beings, and human beings can and do commit wrongs. The press and government should not become institutional partners. They are natural adversaries with different functions, and each must respect the role of the other. Sometimes a free press can be a distinct annoyance and an embarrassment to a particular government, but that is one of the prices of liberty. **A free press is responsible to its readers, and to them alone.**

Independence is at the very heart of any statement of ethical principles respecting the conduct of the press. The proprietors of a newspaper may choose to ally it with a particular political party or interest, but an increasing number of newspapers and journals are politically independent as well as independent of government. This means not that they refrain from endorsing a certain political party or a candidate for public office, but rather that they owe no prior allegiance and that they make the endorsement voluntarily, as an exercise of their independence.

From this it follows that an independent press must cherish that role by resisting pressures of all kinds - from local as well as national government, from special interest groups in the community, from powerful individuals, from advertisers. This is a noble standard that is sometimes more difficult to follow in a small community than in a large one. It may be relatively easy for a large, well-financed newspaper to risk the displeasure of a particular interest group or advertiser. But on a small paper, where the support of such an advertiser or interest has a direct bearing on the ability of management to meet the payroll, it takes courage to resist pressure.

From this also flows the point that the newspaper and its staff should exemplify independence in their actions. Not only should they be independent in fact, but also they must be seen to be independent. A newspaper that rewards its friends with unwarranted, flattering stories or fawning editorials will not long be respected. A newspaper whose reporters also are on the payroll of a special interest group or who accept free trips or lavish gifts will find it hard to be convincing in its criticisms of corruption or other unethical practices in government.

Occasionally, newspapers attempt to justify the acceptance of gifts or services. A reliable reporter will hardly be corrupt. Admittedly, in small communities, journalists sometimes may encounter problems in maintaining an independent role.

There are pressures to participate in volunteer services, in clubs and business associations, and even in local government. Conflicts of interest may arise frequently.

Journalists cannot expect to be walled apart from the community in which they live. But neither can they serve two masters with opposing interests. A diligent editor or reporter will at least be aware of the conflicts and keep his or her professional responsibilities foremost in mind.

A newspaper has the right to be captious, or partisan, or untruthful, or bigoted, or whatever else its conscience allows it to be. And although newspapers are answerable to the laws of libel, within a very large compass they continue to set their own responsibilities. The underlying idea is that, from the clash of opinions and ideas presented by a free press, ultimately something resembling truth emerges.

In practice, however, truth does not always emerge unless someone digs it out. And there is no single patented version of what constitutes truth. In a community where only one newspaper exists, a reader may not encounter differing opinions unless the newspaper chooses to present them. Radio and television are not always effective substitutes.

Recognition, of the importance of fair and balanced reporting, in which opinions that differ from those of the writer, or the newspaper, or a government official are nevertheless accurately portrayed. News stories and analysis are presented on the news pages, with their origins and sources identified wherever possible. The newspaper's own opinions are presented on the editorial page, which may also carry signed columns from syndicated writers or staff members of the newspaper itself.

News Reporting needs to guard against undue intrusions on the privacy of persons about whom they are reporting. A photograph of a person jumping off a building or plunging into a fire may be dramatic, but editors ought to debate long and hard over whether they are violating someone's rights or dignity by publishing it. Does the publication serve a defensible purpose, one that will be understood by readers? Or is it using an indignity to pander to curiosity?

Reporters enjoy no special rights beyond those of other citizens. They must be aggressive in pursuing facts. Indeed, one of the most important functions of a free press is to serve as a watchdog. But its staff members have no dispensation to be rude or discourteous. Television has many sins of its own, but one thing it purveys

very quickly to viewers is whether reporters at a news conference are behaving arrogantly or with unnecessary brusqueness.

Apart from eccentric behavior, newspapers also may be affected by a phenomenon that called "prizemanship" - the presentation of stories by a reporter or by a broader devision of newspaper management in a fashion calculated to win one of the prizes now offered to newspapers and to individual journalists. A few years ago, the *Washington Post*, won a Pulitzer Prize for a story about an eight-year-old narcotics addict. Subsequent investigation by others led to an acknowledgment by the reporter that she had made up the story in order to illustrate a situation. She resigned, and the newspaper returned the prize in embarrassment. There is no doubt that there are similar fictional stories not identified.

Prizes are not bad, but the best ones are those that are conferred by outsiders, without the knowledge or the participation of the journalist or newspaper. Conscientious journalists and newspapers must resist the temptation to display or doctor a story in such a way as to advance a purpose not directly related to the news.

WRITING NEWS

'News is anything that makes a reader say "Gee whiz"!' Arthur Mac Ewen

As the word implies, news contain much that is new, informing people about something that has just happened. But this is not happening always as some stories run for decades and others are recycled with a gloss of newness supplied to it.

News is, anything out of the ordinary, it is the current happenings. It is anything that makes the reader surprised and curious. News is anything that will make people talk. News is the issue for discussions and debates. Any event, which affects most of the people, interest most of the audiences and involves most of the people, is news. Thus, news can be called an account of the events written for the people who were unable to witness it.

'News' is the written, audio, or visual construction of an event or happening or an incident. The news is constantly in search of action, movements, new developments, surprises, and sudden reversals, ups and downs of fate and facts and follies of the mankind.

On the surface, defining news is a simple task. News is an account of what is happening around us. It may involve current events, new initiatives or ongoing projects or issues. But a newspaper does not only print news of the day. It also

prints background analysis, opinions, and human-interest stories. Choosing what's news can be harder. The reporter chooses stories from the flood of information and events happening in the world and in their community. Stories are normally selected because of their importance, emotion, impact, timeliness and interest.

Writing News

The structure of a news story (hard & soft news & features) is simple: a lead and the body.

The Lead

One of the most important elements of news writing is the opening paragraph or two of the story. Journalists refer to this as the "lead," and its function is to summarize the story and/or to draw the reader in (depending on whether it is a "hard" or "soft" news story).

Below is the difference between these two genres of news stories.

In a **hard news story**, the lead should be a full summary of what is to follow. It should incorporate as many of the 5 "W's" of journalism (who, what, where, when and why) as possible. (e.g. "Homeless youth marched down Yonge St. in downtown Toronto Wednesday afternoon demanding the municipal government provide emergency shelter during the winter months." - Can you identify the 5 W's in this lead?)

In a **Soft news story**, the lead should present the subject of the story by allusion. This type of opening is somewhat literary. Like a novelist, the role of the writer is to grab the attention of the reader. (e.g. "Until four years ago, Jason W. slept in alleyways... ") Once the reader is drawn in, the 5 "W's" should be incorporated into the body of the story, but not necessarily at the very top.

The Body

The body of the story involves combining the opinions of the people you interview, some factual data, and a narrative, which helps the story flow. A word of caution! In this style of writing, you are not allowed to "editorialize" (state your own opinion) in any way.

The role of a reporter is to find out what people are thinking of an issue and to report the opinions of different stakeholders of an issue. These comments make up

the bulk of the story. The narrative helps to weave the comments into a coherent whole. Thus, stick to one particular theme throughout the story. You can put in different details but they all have to relate to the original idea of the piece. (e.g. If your story is about black youth and their relationship with the police you do not want to go into details about the life of any one particular youth).

As a reporter, you are the eyes and ears for the readers. You should try to provide some visual details to bring the story to life (this is difficult if you have conducted only phone interviews, which is why face-to-face is best). You should also try to get a feel for the story. Having a feel means getting some understanding of the emotional background of the piece and the people involved in it. Try to get a sense of the characters involved and why they feel the way they do.

Tips for news writing

- Keep your eyes and ears open; listen to what your friends are talking about.
- Read everything you can get your hands on; get story ideas from other newspapers and magazines.
- Think of a youth angle to a current news story.
- Research a subject that interests you ask yourself what you would like to know more about.
- Talk to people in a specific field to find out what is important to them.

LEADS

The opening paragraph or the introduction paragraph of the news story is called the '**lead**'. Though in journalistic practice we also use this word for biggest headline on the front page of newspaper, calling it the 'lead story'.

The main purpose of the **intro or the lead** is to make the reader want to read on, motivate them to move further into the news story and state the important facts first.

Lead to a story "grabs the reader, informs the reader, and teaches the reader how to read the rest of the story." One can say that the lead is the "flashlight that shines into a story." A newspaper reader is likely to spend only a few seconds deciding

whether to read a story. If the lead does not grab the reader, the writer's work is in vain.

The lead establishes the direction your writing will take. **A good lead grabs your reader's attention and refuses to let go.** In other words, it hooks the reader. Not every type of lead will work for every writer or for every piece of writing and one has to experiment with them. For writing a good news story, be sure to have at least three sentences in your lead, whatever type it may be.

Writing Leads

Question

Open with an interesting question that relates to the main idea.

Example: *Have you ever wondered how you would survive if you found yourself alone in the wilderness? How would you defend yourself against predators? What would you eat? Where would you find water?*

Riddle

Open with a riddle that the reader can solve by reading further. You may want to give the answer right away or save it for the conclusion.

Example: *What textbook has no pages, is miles wide, and smells like a creek? It's been around for millions of years. That's right-Outdoor School*

Announcement

Open with an announcement about what is to come. However, do not insult the reader by saying something like, "I am going to tell you about..." The reader should be able to figure out what you are writing about. If not, there is something wrong with what you have written, not with the reader.

Example: *The trait of voice is very important in writing. However, it is difficult to teach and even more difficult to learn. It is similar to athletic ability because it is more like a talent than a skill.*

Bold and Challenging Statement

A bold and challenging statement is similar to an announcement, but is meant to cause some people to disagree with what you say. It's like one side of an argument. It can be an opinion, but don't immediately state that it is your opinion.

Example: *Using horses and cattle in the sport of rodeo is animal abuse. What makes it more aggravating is that it is legal. According to the law, there is nothing wrong with chasing an animal down, tightening a rope around its neck, knocking it to the ground, and tying its legs together so it cannot move.*

Definition

Open with a definition of the term you are discussing. It can be your own or come from a dictionary or textbook. If you take it from a dictionary or textbook, be sure to use quotation marks and give credit to the source.

Example: *According to Webster's Dictionary, a government is the authority that serves the people and acts on their behalf. How can the government know what the people want if the people do not vote? If we do not vote, the government may act on its own behalf instead of on the behalf of the people.*

Opinion

Open with your opinion about the topic. This is similar to a bold and challenging statement, but you let the reader know that it is your opinion right away.

Example: *In my opinion, the driving age should be lowered to fourteen. Most teenagers are more responsible than adults give us credit for being. Just because we are teenagers does not mean we are irresponsible and dangerous*

Well Known Quotation or Quotation from a Famous Person

Open with a quotation that is well known or from a famous person. Be sure to put quotations around the quotation and give credit to the person who said it. Of course, the quotation must be directly related to your topic. A good source is a book of quotations. Look in the library or ask your teacher.

Example: *President John F. Kennedy once said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, and ask what you can do for your country." I think today's Americans have forgotten Kennedy's message. We expect our country to take care of us, but we are not taking care of our country.*

Quotation Not from a Famous Person

Open with a quotation from a person that is not famous. It could be a character from the story or someone you know personally. You still must put it in quotation marks and give credit to the person who said it.

Example: *When I was a child, I was given the "mother's curse" by my mom. Oh, it is not anything mean or evil. She just said, "When you have children, they will act just like you." I laughed. Well, now that I have children of my own, I am not laughing anymore. The "mother's curse" really works!*

Personal Experience

Open with something that has happened to you, or a personal experience. It could be a part of the story, or it could be something that is not a part of what you are writing about but still relates to the topic.

Example: *Although I did later in my room, I never cried at my grandfather's funeral. I guess that is why I felt so sad for the little girl standing next to her grandma's coffin. She looked so lost and afraid.*

Figurative Language

Begin with a simile (comparison using like or as), metaphor (comparison saying one thing is another thing), personification (giving something nonhuman human qualities), or hyperbole (exaggeration.) The figurative language must relate directly to your topic.

Example: *The pencil sharpener was always hungry. It ate my pencil every time I went to sharpen it. It never seemed to do this to anyone's pencil but mine. What was so special about my pencils?*

Enumerated General Statement

Begin with a general statement containing three or so ideas about your topic. The information given in the lead is general, not specific. The specific details that support the general statement will appear later in the paper.

Example: *There are many characteristics that a good teacher possesses. However, the three most important characteristics include being a good listener, being knowledgeable about the subject, and having a kind heart. All of the teachers who positively influenced me had all three of those characteristics in common.*

Types of Leads

The lead forms the springboard for the reporter's leap into the story. From a springboard he can make a graceful dive into the story. This lead business makes even the practiced journalist pause. While covering a story he carries in the back of his mind the consciousness that a suitable beginning for the story must somehow evolve within him. He keeps on the watch for the elements that could make a good lead. The best way to gain journalistic facility is to practice the writing of leads.

1.Hard/Direct/Summary Leads: This kind of lead is mostly used in news stories because of the fact that news stories need to be concise, to the point and put the most information into the least amount of words. That's why with summary leads you summarize the entire article in the lead, or in other words, put the most important piece of information into the first sentence and go from there. Here's an example of a summary lead:

President Bush was aiming to rally U.S. forces encountering tougher resistance in Iraq and warn Americans anew of a potentially long conflict when he was to

visit the headquarters of Central Command on Wednesday. The president was getting a pair of briefings from Central Command brass and having lunch with troops. At the Tampa, Fla., facility, he also was to give a speech in which he was reminding military personnel that the United States leads a large coalition in the war to unseat Saddam Hussein, White House spokesman Fleischer said.

2. Suspended interest Leads: this type of lead will serve as a stimulator of interest. It gives the reader enough information to whet his appetite and no more. After the lead, the story usually runs along in chronological form, so that the reader must read to the very end to get to the climax. Reporters use this lead chiefly for short bits, on the theory that if used on longer articles, readers would not bother to wade through paragraph after paragraph. Example:

The quick action of Ravi, a driver, probably saved the city of a major mis happening today. At 5.00 p.m. he noticed smoke and fire in the nearby factory. Just five minutes had passed by and the fire was spreading quickly to the direction of the nearby houses. He immediately alarmed the fire control department and also raised an alarm for the civilian to immediately empty their homes to avoid any mis happening.

3. Blind Leads: This is a lead where you start off the article by summarizing but leaving out one essential detail; this is done to catch the interest of the reader. As journalists you want people to read and be interested in your work, and in feature writing especially confusing the reader in the beginning is sometimes a very good way to catch their interest. Right after a blind lead you have to clarify the missing piece of info though. Here's an example:

It was like the scene from the movie "Fast Times at Ridgemont High," only for a wireless generation. Elena Brooks was incredulous when a pizza deliveryman arrived at Bethel High School one day last spring with an order for a student who was in class.

Finding the culprit was simple enough. "Go into the room, tell everyone to turn their cellphones on and find out which phone has the number stored for the pizza place," said Ms. Brooks, the principal of Bethel High, in Hampton. When identified, the student said he had ordered the pizza because he had missed lunch. "He didn't see anything wrong with it at all, which was amazing," she said.

4. Narrative Leads: These leads are another feature type that actually takes you into the mind of the main person in an article. Narrative leads tell a story from a

person's specific perspective; it's the most classic and in some instances most effective way to start out a feature. Pick a person and start your article out with their story and tie it into the main point. Here's an example:

Joe Darnaby had his heart set on going to college out East next year. But since Sept. 11, his parents have laid down a new rule: no school more than five hours' drive from home in Deerfield, Ill.

"Part of me says that he has to follow his dreams," says his mother, Maureen, who wants her son to be able to get home in an emergency. "But there must be another place closer to home where he can do that."

5. **Quote Leads:** This is a lead where you start off the article with a quote that expresses the idea you want to get across well. In some newsrooms quote leads are banned because finding the perfect quote for an article is a very challenging task that most newspapers don't have the time for. Articles are written fast and frequently, and finding a good lead is essential and needs to sometimes be done very quickly. But if you have the time quote leads are very effective if done right.
6. **Question Leads:** These are leads use the first sentence of an article to answer one of the "w" questions in journalism, who, what, when, where and why. Another question is how, and question leads can use this too. Basically you use the lead to answer one question to make the reader wonder the answers to the rest.
7. **Direct Appeal Lead:** This type of lead addresses the reader directly or by implication as 'you'. It has the effect of making the reader, a collaborator, and partner, in what follows.
8. **Circumstantial Lead:** Here the beginning stresses on the circumstance of the news. It crops up usefully when the story has a human interest slant: for example the following news story lead is about a fatal car crash in which two of the five people were killed, the emphasis in the lead is placed on the circumstances which lead up to the accident- the heart attack of the driver. Without this-emphasis on circumstances under which the story happened, it would have been another 'run-of-the-mill' account of a car accident.

A heart attack suffered by Mrs. Kumar 50 of 5 West 26th floor, Verley, Mumbai, was believed by the police today to have caused her to lose control of her car previous evening with resultant death for herself and two of the five other people

who were with her in the car. The three remaining persons have suffered from serious injuries.

9. Tabulated Lead: occasionally we see a news story in which no one fact is prominent. Each facet of interest has about the same value. In such cases, a practice has grown up of tabulating each item in the lead- one, two, three, and so on.

TECHNIQUES OF REWRITING

You've spent hours gathering material and writing your story. Now it is time for the process of—**rewriting**. Read your news story aloud. Reading aloud is a great way to test for clarity and grace. Are your sentences too long? Is a paragraph confusing? Is your work conversational or stilted?

- Check to make sure your sentences are not too long. Sentence length should vary, but the average should be below 25 words. Reader comprehension decreases as sentence length increases.
- Check your writing for clutter. Is your work full of twisted phrases, jargon, redundancies, long words where short ones will do, unnecessary qualifiers and modifiers?
- Make sure that you have used the subject-verb-object construction in most of your sentences. Avoid backing into sentences with long dependent clauses, especially introductory ones.
- The careful writer is precise. As Mark Twain said, "The difference between the right word and the nearly right word is the same as that between lightning and the lightning bug." A writer must be just as selective with his/her words. Ask yourself these questions to make sure you have been precise: Are my sentences simple and strong? Write simple sentences, where the subject is close to the verb. Rely on strong nouns and verbs, not adjectives and adverbs.
- Have I been concise? Prefer the short word to the long, the familiar to the fancy, the specific to the abstract. Be brief; for it is with words as with sunbeams—the more they are condensed, the deeper they burn. Is my writing correct? Your work must conform to the basic conventions of

grammar, spelling and punctuation. These are the grease that lubricates the wheels of communication. Without them, communication becomes difficult, if not impossible.

- Do my sentence lengths vary? If you want to convey a sense of action, tension or movement, use short sentences. A series of long sentences slows down the reader and conveys a more relaxed mood. A good writer uses a variety of sentences—long ones, short ones and those in between.
- Lead the reader from one section to the next with transitions. They are your bridges. They assure the reader that you have a plan. Repeat key words or phrases. Use words like: now, but, and, however, since. These are the links that tie a story together.
- Appeal to as many senses as possible: sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. Let your reader see what you saw and heard what you heard. Compare and contrast your subject to something familiar. Do this with a simile or its first cousin, the metaphor.

Have I provided examples and dialogue? Tell the story through the words and actions of your characters. This allows your reader to be an eyewitness. Realistic dialogue involves the reader and defines character more completely than any other single device.

NEWS AGENCY COPY

A **news agency** is an organization of journalists established to supply news reports to organizations in the news trade: newspapers, magazines, and radio and television broadcasters. They are also known as **wire services** or **news services**.

News agencies can be corporations that sell news (e.g. Reuters and All Headline News (AHN)), cooperatives composed of newspapers that share their articles with each other (e.g. AP), commercial newswire services which charge organizations to distribute their news (e.g. Market Wire, Business Wire and PR Newswire). Governments may also control "news agencies," particularly in authoritarian states, like China and the former Soviet Union or non-profit organizations operated by both professionals and volunteers.

News agencies generally prepare hard news stories and feature articles that can be used by other news organizations with little or no modification, and then sell them

to other news organizations. They provide these articles in bulk electronically through wire services

The bulk of copy, which comes to the news desk, is from wire agencies. The teleprinter keeps on creeping information almost all the time during peak news hours of the afternoon and evening. This copy comes in takes-the unit of news agency transmission or unit of news writing.

Foreign news items have their own serial numbers, FG, FS, FES, FTF, PAS and POOL. Whereas FG, FS and FES files carry news items received from Reuters, AFP and UPI and are credited to those agencies, the PTF file is made up of reports received from PTI's own correspondents and stringers abroad. The POOL file is devoted to agencies participating with PTI in the Press Agencies Pool of Non-Aligned countries.

Every news agency copy news story must carry at the top a suitable slug. Generally the slug is one word, which is often the key word in the story. Thus a story about rain would have a key word, which is often the key word for reporting about rain. Slugs are nouns and not adjectives and a master slug should be used with sub-slugs for individual story.

In the news agency copy, the agency is not supposed to give headlines but now to lighten the burden of newspaper sub-editor the news agencies have started to put up headlines. If the sub-editor at the newspaper desk likes it he can indicate the type size for the headline.

SUMMARY

News reporting is a type of journalism, typically written or broadcast in news style. Most news is investigated and presented by journalists or news Reporters, and can be distributed to various outlets via news agencies. News is often reported by a variety of sources, such as newspapers, television, and radio programs, wire services, and web sites.

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EXERCISES AND QUESTIONS

- Q1. Discuss the elements of a news story.
- Q2. Write a note of the importance of revision and re-writing the news story copy?
- Q3. Explain the various types of leads?
- Q4. What are the various responsibilities of a news reporter in a newspaper organization?

FURTHER READING

- 1. Reporting Methods S.Kundra (Anmol Publications Pvt.Ltd)
- 2. Outline of Editing M.K.Joseph
- 3. Editing Techniques S.Kundra
- 4. News Reporting and Editing (Jan.R.Hakemulder, Fay AC de Jonge, P.P. Singh)

REPORTING TECHNIQUES

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the various elements involved in news writing
- To discuss the types and functions of news
- To know the various news sources which can be used by the reporter
- To trace the pitfalls and problems in Reporting
- To enlist the various qualities of a reporter

INTRODUCTION

The news reports aim is to meet the requirements of everyday life as lived by everyday readers. So it largely depends on elements like directness, pace, variety and information. It aims to state the facts quickly and clearly.

NEWS ELEMENTS

Elements of news are what determine a story's "newsworthiness". There are many elements of news; however, a story only needs to have a few of these elements.

- **Oddity**-Strange incidents are news. News stories with an element of surprise will create curiosity and will be in news. This is where the 'man bites dog' stories come in along with other surprising, shocking or unusual events.
- **Emotion**-How do people feel about it? These news stories will be both bad news and good news. Death, tragedy, is example of bad news. Positive news stories are far more prevalent than is suggested by the cynical claim that only good news is bad news.
- **Consequence** -What is the effect on the reader? News stories about issues, groups and nations are perceived to be of relevance to the audience.
- **Proximity**- Where is the story from? What happens in and around your city interests you more than what happened in a far-flung region. Therefore, newspapers allocate greater space for local news coverage because of the proximity factor.
- **Drama**-Dramatic Events of any kind would be an ideal subject for an interesting news story.

- **Human Interest**-People doing interesting things or incidents having an emotional element. These kinds of stories covers all the feelings that human beings have including sympathy, happiness, sadness, anger, ambition, love, hate, etc. News stories concerning entertainment, showbiz, drama, humorous treatment, witty headlines, entertaining photographs will be of interest to most of the people.
- **Prominence**-Famous people make news! Virtually every action of famous people is considered to be newsworthy. Stories concerning the elite, powerful individuals, organizations or institutions are enough to create a news story. Celebrities are always a subject for news and their every action is under the observation of the media.
- **Progress**-Technological advance and new discoveries will always be the subject for discussion and a readable news story.
- **Conflicts**-Man vs. man, man vs. nature, man vs. machine, man vs. himself. Conflict has an element of drama that gets attention and hence serves as a criterion for news selection.
- **Timeliness**-Its new so will be in news! Timeliness is the essence of news and is understandably a criterion for news selection. An event that has just happened makes a good news story, while events happened a few days ago are history.
- **Personalization**: Events which can be portrayed as the actions of individuals will be more attractive than one in which there is no such "human interest."
- **Meaningfulness**: This relates to the sense of identification the audience has with the topic. "Cultural proximity" is a factor here - stories concerned with people who speak the same language, look the same, and share the preoccupations as the audience receive more coverage than those concerned with people who speak different languages, look different and have different preoccupations.
- **Reference to elite nations**: Stories concerned with global powers receive more attention than those concerned with less influential nations.
- **Reference to elite persons**: Stories concerned with the rich, powerful, famous and infamous get more coverage.
- **Consonance**: Stories which fit with the media's expectations receive more coverage than those which defy them (and for which they are thus unprepared). Note this appears to conflict with unexpectedness above. However, consonance really refers to the *media's readiness* to report an item. The story may still violate the *audience's expectations*, although today's media savvy audiences are not easily impressed by prepared cliches.

- **Continuity:** A story which is already in the news gathers a kind of inertia. This is partly because the media organizations are already in place to report the story, and partly because previous reportage may have made the story more accessible to the public (making it less ambiguous).
- **Composition:** Stories must compete with one another for space in the media. For instance, editors may seek to provide a balance of different types of coverage, so that if there is an excess of foreign news for instance, the least important foreign story may have to make way for an item concerned with the domestic news. In this way the prominence given to a story depends not only on its own news values but also on those of competing stories.

News values determine how much prominence a news story is given by a media outlet. In practice such decisions are made informally by editors on the basis of their experience and intuition, and analysis shows that several factors are consistently applied across a range of news organizations Boyd 1994 states that: "News journalism has a broadly agreed set of values, often referred to as 'newsworthiness': events suitable for news which tend to be proximity, relevance, immediacy, and drama."

Your lead should emphasize the most " **newsworthy**" information in the story you are trying to tell. But how do you figure out what information is most newsworthy? The information you consider most newsworthy depends in part on your own values, experiences and knowledge. But some general guidelines exist. Below are several characteristics that can make information newsworthy. The more of these characteristics a piece of information has, the more newsworthy the information is.

TYPES OF NEWS

Hard news: This is how journalists refer to news of the day. It is a chronicle of current events/incidents and is the most common news style on the front page of your typical newspaper.

It starts with a summary lead. What happened? Where? When? To/by whom? Why? (The journalist's 5 W's). It must be kept brief and simple, because the purpose of the rest of the story will be to elaborate on this lead.

Keep the writing clean and uncluttered. Most important, give the readers the information they need. If the federal government announced a new major youth initiative yesterday, that's today's hard news.

Hard news stories make up the bulk of news reporting. Hard news consists of basic facts. It is news of important public events, international happenings, social conditions, economy, crime, etc. thus, most of the material found in daily papers, especially from page items or news casts, deal in the hard news category. The main aim of the hard news is to inform.

Soft news: This is a term for all the news that isn't time-sensitive. Soft news includes profiles of people, programs or organizations. Most of news content is soft news.

Soft news, if cleverly written and carefully targeted can offer an alternative. Soft news can cover business or social trends. Typically, **soft stories have a human interest, entertainment focus or a statistical and survey approach.** This gives a journalist a chance to be creative and have fun with the news. One major advantage of softer news is that many of the stories have a longer shelf life. They can be used at any time the practitioner or reporter deems appropriate.

Feature: A news feature takes one step back from the headlines. It explores an issue. News features are less time-sensitive than hard news but no less newsworthy. They can be an effective way to write about complex issues too large for the terse style of a hard news item. Street kids are a perfect example. The stories of their individual lives are full of complexities, which can be reflected, in a longer piece.

Features are journalism's shopping center. They're full of interesting people, ideas, color, lights, action and energy. Storytelling at its height! A good feature is about the people in your community and their struggles, victories and defeats. A feature takes a certain angle (i.e. Black youth returning to church) and explores it by interviewing the people involved and drawing conclusions from that information. The writer takes an important issue of the day and explains it to the reader through comments from people involved in the story.

While writing a feature, remember to "balance" your story. Present the opinions of people on both sides of an issue and let the readers make their own decision on whom to believe. No personal opinions are allowed. The quotes from the people you interview make up the story. You are the narrator.

Editorial: The editorial expresses an opinion. The editorial page of the newspaper lets the writer comment on issues in the news. All editorials are personal but the topics must still be relevant to the reader. Editorials try to persuade the readers. Its goal is to move the readers to some specific action, to get them to agree with the

writer, to support or denounce a cause, etc. It is considered to be the most difficult writing among all the newspaper types of writing. Editorials are also important as they interpret and analyze issues for the readers.

Types (based on structure)

Every news story has to have a focus, which could be a person or an event. The story emerges sharper when the focus is clear and blurred when the focus is unclear. A news story is built on a central idea (theme), sometimes on two or three central ideas. So it is called as single element story or two-element story or three-element story depending on the number of themes it has.

Journalists use many different kinds of frameworks for organizing stories. Journalists may tell some stories chronologically. Other stories may read like a good suspense novel that culminates with the revelation of some dramatic piece of information at the end. Still other stories will start in the present, then flashback to the past to fill in details important to a fuller understanding of the story. All are good approaches under particular circumstances.

Inverted pyramid: By far the simplest and most common story structure is one called the "inverted pyramid." To understand what the "inverted pyramid" name means, picture an upside-down triangle -- one with the narrow tip pointing downward and the broad base pointing upward. The broad base represents the most newsworthy information in the news story, and the narrow tip represents the least newsworthy information in the news story. When you write a story in inverted pyramid format, you put the most newsworthy information at the beginning of the story and the least newsworthy information at the end.

Before computers, newspaper copy was cut with scissors to fit a space on the news page. Editors cut the copy from the bottom up, chopping off the least important information that reporters put on the ends of their stories. These days, with so much competition from TV, radio, and the Internet, reporters tend to cover their pyramids with cake frosting. They want to hook even the most distracted readers. So they write a lead, statement, before the main news story. A good lead gives readers the feeling that they have a front seat for the action and provides a reason to keep reading.

Story telling style: this approach to news writing is used mostly in magazines. It is a style that is very familiar to all of us. News stories are told in the order in which they happened, *i.e.*, what happened first, what happened second, *etc.* This is known as telling a story in **chronological order**. This style is used to hold the

reader's interest and stimulate some imagination to see, feel, and understand the news. This is also called narrative approach.

Personalized approach: This style is rarely used in the newspaper stories. This is the first person approach and the reporter gives a personal account of the incident, which took place on the spot where he/she was present personally. The reporter on the television and radio will mostly use this approach to news reporting and not the newspaper news reports.

Chronological news writing: In this type of writing, the information is given in a chronological order instead of information given in descending order of importance as in inverted pyramid.

Functions of News

News contains much that is new. 'News is anything out of the ordinary.' 'News is anything published in a newspaper which interests a large number of people'. The main functions of news are:

1. News **informs** people about anything unusual that take place in the society. Mysteries, small or big, interest people and so mysteries are news. Events that affect people's lives are news, the more people affected the bigger the news.
2. People **learn** something new everyday through news they get from newspaper or television. They read about things they have heard about and also would like to read about.
3. News affects people and is capable of stirring widespread **awareness**. News touches the deepest emotion of the people and appeals somehow to everyone. Thus news affects the government as well as the common people.
4. Important **messages** and decisions of the government are **conveyed** to the people through the medium of news. News broadcast carry important statements by persons in authority to the people.
5. Conflicts between man to man and also between man and environment are carried out as news. These affect us in one-way or other. Natural phenomena like violence, calamities and disasters make us aware of the present situations and **keep a check** on growing violence in our society.
6. New trends, events and ideas are the focus of soft news and thus grasp the imagination of people in the society. This further brings about change and **progress** for the country.

7. News focus on the economic, political and cultural aspects of a nation and people throughout the world learn about other nation through news only. News **forms an image** of a nation to the outside world.
8. Journalist may predict that something will happen thus forming a mental image of an event and thus increase the **curiosity** of the audience making the news more and more relevant.
9. Reference to persons in news makes them more **popular** and **famous**. Elite personalities crave to remain in news to keep up with their image though negative publicity too these days is seen as a medium of becoming famous.
10. Stories and pictures with the capacity to entertain or amuse an audience is always the main function of news. **Entertainment** through news is done by carrying stories relating to showbiz, drama, sex, and humorous treatment by use of photographs or witty headlines.

NEWS SOURCES

In its infancy, news gathering was primitive by today's standards. Printed news had to be phoned in to a newsroom or brought there by a reporter where it was typed and either transmitted over wire services or edited and manually set in type along with other news stories for a specific edition. Today, the term "Breaking News" has become trite as broadcast and cable news services use live satellite technology to bring current events into consumers' homes live as it happens. Events that used to take hours or days to become common knowledge in towns or in nations are fed instantaneously to consumers via radio, television, cell phones, and the Internet.

Most large cities had morning and afternoon newspapers. As the media evolved and news outlets increased to the point of near oversaturation, afternoon newspapers were shut down except for relatively few. Morning newspapers have been gradually losing circulation, according to reports advanced by the papers themselves.

Commonly, news content should contain the who, what, when, where, why, and how of an event. There should be no questions remaining. Newspapers normally write hard news stories, such as those pertaining to murders, fires, wars, etc. in inverted pyramid style so the most important information is at the beginning. Busy readers can read as little or as much as they desire. Local stations and networks with a set format must take news stories and break them down into the most important aspects due to time constraints. Cable news channels such as Fox News Channel, MSNBC, and CNN, are able to take advantage of a story, sacrificing

other, decidedly less important stories, and giving as much detail about breaking news as possible.

‘One study after another comes up with essentially the same observation....the story of journalism, on a day-to-day basis, is the story of the interaction of reporters and officials.’- Michael Schudson

‘Sources of news are everywhere’. A journalist is surrounded by sources of potential news stories or features. A conversation with a friend, a poster on a wall, an unexpected juxtaposition-all might result in a story if you keep your eyes, ears and mind open. Some sources will be routine points of contact for journalists while others may be one-offs, some will be proactive, approaching journalists because they want news access for their views or events, while other sources may not even be aware that they are sources. A journalist should maintain a contact book having list of people categorized and carrying vital information. Sources of news can be limitless, some sources are:

1. **Academic journals-** Research by academics, published in journals is a frequent source of news stories. Here the journalist job is to spot a potential story among qualifications and to render the story intelligibly to the readers.
2. **Armed forces-** in peacetime the armed forces can generate stories through mysterious deaths or cases of bullying that comes to light. During times of conflict military briefings become events in their own right.
3. **Art groups-** apart from providing information about forthcoming events, art groups can generate rows about funding or controversial subject matter.
4. **Campaigns-** campaigners who want to influence public opinion on subjects ranging from animal rights to environment are likely to come up with opinions or events that might generate news stories.
5. **Commerce & Trade-** business organizations can be useful source of news stories or comments about anything from interest rates, shares to shopping. Also, consumer stories are a valuable source of information for evaluating the image of an organization.
6. **Council press offices-** local authorities employ teams of press officers. They react to journalists’ queries, coming up with information, quotes and contacts while acting as buffer between decision makers and journalists. Council press officers with an eye for a good story should be able to get daily page leads in local evening newspaper because they know what turns on the common people.

7. **Court hearings-** court reporters dip in and out of several courtrooms looking for cases that fit the news values. Hence, the importance of good contacts with court staff, police, solicitors and others should be realized. Some reporters will also go after background material like quotes from victims and their relatives.
8. **Entertainment industry-** it is an increasingly important source for today's media and celebrities gain immensely because of popularity through media coverage. Films, serials and various other programmes gain only if media has been highlighting them.
9. **Government News Network-** the government news network produces vast numbers of news release on behalf of the government departments and agencies on a regional and national basis. It also handles ministerial and royal visits.
10. **Health authorities & hospitals-** outbreak of serious disease, funding crisis, hospital closures and health promotion are all examples of news stories that arise from health authorities. Hospitals are source of good news stories carrying news about cures, new treatments and general triumph-over-tragedy.
11. **Libraries-** though it is hard to believe but the truth is that not everything is available on the Internet. Libraries retain a useful role in providing access to reference books, company reports, local history achieves, indexes of local societies, community notice boards and so on.
12. **News Agencies-** they are the foot soldiers of journalism at a national and international level, allowing media organizations to cover stories in areas where they have few or no staff. Agencies keep a check on offices and local bodies and look out for news stories here. Newspapers, radio, television, big news media houses, depend largely on the news agencies for general news coverage. Some famous news agencies are AP (Associated press of America print), Reuters (UK), PTI (Press Trust of India), etc.
13. **News Releases-** news or press releases are point of reference for the journalists while covering an event. Badly written press releases can be waste of time both for the journalist as well as for the organization.
14. **Notice boards-** Notices in shops, offices, libraries, colleges and elsewhere may also become a source of news.
15. **Other media-** newspaper monitor other papers plus TV, radio, news sites on the web. And, in turn, each medium monitors other media.
16. **People-** potential stories can be suggested by people you meet while at work, rest and play. This can range from somebody mentioning that they have just seen a police car parked in their street to other substantial information provided by the common people.

- 17.**Political parties**- contacts within parties can be a fruitful source of stories about rows and splits, while party spokespeople will be more keen to let you know about the selection of candidates or launch of policy initiatives.
- 18.**PR companies**- this industry provides the journalists and us a peek into the media world everyday. So it is a major source for the journalists.
- 19.**Press conferences**- press conferences are likely to be held to announce the results of official inquiries or to unveil new appointments. Fewer press conferences take place these days, as most journalists are too busy to go and collect information that could be faxed or emailed.
- 20.**Universities**- universities are a source of a huge range of stories, whether it is ground breaking research, an unusual degree scheme or an ethical argument. They are also where you will find experts in everything from aeronautics to the zodiac.

PITFALLS & PROBLEMS IN REPORTING

Embargo

In international commerce and politics, an **embargo** is the prohibition of commerce and trade with a certain country, in order to isolate it and to put its government into a difficult internal situation, given that the effects of the embargo are often able to make its economy suffer from the initiative.

The embargo is usually used as a political punishment for some previous disagreed policies or acts, but its economic nature frequently raises doubts about the real interests that the prohibition serves. Although the law of the United States does not prohibit participation in an embargo, it does prohibit participation in a secondary embargo. This occurs when one country pressures a business to stop doing business with a third country over issues with which the business is not directly involved.

In journalism and public relations, an **embargo** (sometimes called a **press embargo**) is an agreement or request that a news organization refrain from reporting certain information until a specified date and/or time, in exchange for advance access to the information. For example, if a government official is preparing to make a short speech announcing a policy initiative at 1:00 pm, the official's staff might transmit expanded details of the initiative to news organizations several hours ahead of the scheduled announcement, with a notice indicating that the contents are *embargoed* until 1:00. This gives the news organizations time to research and prepare complete stories that are ready to be

disseminated when the embargo is lifted. In theory, press embargoes reduce inaccuracy in the reporting of breaking stories by reducing the incentive for journalists to cut corners in hopes of "scooping" the competition.

Embargoes are typically used by government or corporate representatives working in publicity or public relations, and are often arranged in advance as part of a formal or informal agreement. Sometimes publishers will release advance copies of a book to reviewers with the agreement that reviews of it will not appear before the official release date of the publication. Complex scientific news might also require advance notice with an embargo. Governments also have legitimate reasons for imposing embargoes, often so as to prevent news reports being an unfair or undue influence over votes in legislative bodies. Artists' names and locations of performances are sometimes embargoed pending the official announcement of the scheduled performance tour. Sometimes publicists will send embargoed press releases to newsrooms unsolicited in hopes that they will respect the embargo date without having first agreed to do so.

News organizations sometimes break embargoes and report information before the embargo expires, either accidentally (due to miscommunication in the newsroom) or intentionally (to get the jump on their competitors).

Breaking an embargo is typically considered a serious breach of trust and can result in the source barring the offending news outlet from receiving advance information in the future.

Sources

Most sources are not confidential. At least in the United States, most news organizations have policies governing the use of anonymous sources. Critics sometimes cite instances of news organizations breaking these policies. Research indicates that anonymous sourcing undermines credibility; however, in some instances, journalists may have no other recourse.

Whether anonymous sources are used may depend on:

- Whether the information is available any other way.
- If getting the information out serves a greater good.
- Whether competing news outlets might do so.

Many news organizations require use of anonymous sources to be approved by someone senior to the reporter. Some also require the reporter to tell a senior person the identity. When a source requests anonymity, they are referred to as a "confidential source". They may appear in articles:

- With information about why they must be confidential: "One worker, who requested anonymity out of fear of retaliation..."
- Cited with authority: "sources close to the investigation", or "a senior administration official"
- As a mass noun: "Critics say..."
- As a pronoun: "Some charge that..."
- As a passive voice construct: "It is suspected that...", "CNN has learned that..."

Sometimes, though rarely, sources are impersonal or unknown. A reporter may sometimes, received the complete text on his doorstep, left there by an unknown individual. Sources may also engage in disguise and/or voice alteration, nicknames, aliases, or simply not mention their identity, as attempts to ensure their anonymity. In some cases, this may be due in part to lack of trust between sources and reporters or their news organizations. In reality, few journalists will accept information from an anonymous source, though they may pretend to have done so in order to protect the source's identity, or to protect themselves in case a court later orders them to name the source.

Journalists can usually count on the support of their editors and publishers when refusing to identify a confidential source. In many countries, courts uphold the sanctity of the informal privacy agreement between a journalist and his/her sources on the basis of a right known as the protection of sources, in the belief that the confidential nature of the journalist-source relationship underpins the existence of a free press.

In some cases, courts will break the notion of reporter-source privilege, and demand a reporter reveal their source under pain of contempt of court. Often, reporters will resist such demands. In the 2005 Plame affair, *New York Times* reporter Judith Miller was jailed for 85 days for refusing to identify vice presidential aide Lewis Libby as her source until he gave her a personal release of confidentiality.

Confidentiality

Communications between a source and a journalist can be governed by a number of terms of use, which have developed over time between journalists and their sources, often government or other high-profile sources, as informal agreements regarding how the information will be used, and whether the identity of the source will be protected. These terms may apply to an entire conversation, or only part. Some of the terms are not clearly defined, so experienced journalists use them with

caution.

Press pool

Press pool refers to a group of news gathering organizations pooling their resources in the collection of news. A **pool feed** is then distributed to members of the broadcast pool who are free to edit it or use it as they see fit. In the case of print reporters, a written **pool report** is distributed to all members.

Pool coverage is sometimes required because of the nature of the news event being covered. For example, judges will often allow only one broadcast camera in the courtroom during a trial. As a result, interested broadcasters will select one of their own to provide the "pool camera" for the day, with that organization agreeing to share the footage with all other broadcasters in the pool.

Similarly, a daily rotating pool is set up at the White House for organizations that cover the president. They are allowed special access to certain events with the understanding that the information and footage will then be shared with the rest of the White House press corps. For instance, when the president meets with a foreign dignitary, the two will sometimes make a statement together in the Office. Since it is not possible to accommodate all interested journalists in that room, pool coverage is the only practical way to handle the event.

At other times, pool coverage takes place as a more cost-effective way of covering events that only occasionally "make news." For example, the major networks usually rely on a pool feed of the daily briefing at the State Department for their live coverage, since the press conference is usually only of national interest when there is a significant breaking story relating to international diplomacy. Since "coverage" of such an event consists merely of pointing a camera at a person standing behind, a pool feed is a practical means of ensuring the event will be available as needed without all five major news outlets paying for their own individual live crews.

Pool situations are also often set up because of the physical enormity of covering certain events. One prominent example of this was the international broadcast of the state funeral of John F. Kennedy, which involved four major venues and a lengthy procession. Likewise, presidential inaugurations and political conventions tend to involve pool coverage.

While there are not necessarily formal rules, there tends to be a set of informal expectations for pool members. Primarily, all pool members are expected to "share the load" equally. For example, in the case of ongoing events, a different station might provide a pool reporter and/or camera every day. For one-time events, each

organization may have its own responsibility (such as providing all cameras or mobile trucks). If there are different venues, each location can be covered by a different member of the pool. If there is not a practical way to divide the responsibilities, organizations in the pool will split the cost.

In addition, it is paramount that no pool members use their special access in order to garner an "exclusive" for themselves. In the case of television, a pool photographer is expected to turn over all of the material that was taped rather than keeping certain select shots for his or her own employer. Print pool reporters are prohibited from including any detail in their own stories that was not included in the pool report, even it is only a matter of local color.

Attribution in News Writing

There is no easy answer as to when and how often you give attribution in your stories. You report attribution in print and broadcast news just as you do in normal speech. The placement of attribution at the end of the sentence is fine for print, where your eyes have a chance to review the facts in the sentence after you are informed of the attribution. The broadcast audience does not have the luxury of reviewing your new story from the electronic media.

Placing the attribution first in broadcast news stories makes a direct sentence and allows the audience a chance to judge source credibility as the facts are heard, rather than waiting for a delayed attribution. In newspaper stories, attribution should be placed after the text needing attribution. In broadcast stories, attribution goes first.

We have already answered one of the important questions surrounding attribution-where should it be placed? Attribution goes after the text in print stories and it goes first in broadcast scripts.

The second question is-when should attribution be used?

The easiest rule to remember when deciding if attribution is necessary is crime. Crime reports always require attribution. Attribution demonstrates that you are relying on official sources for information in your story. It is irresponsible not to use attribution when describing a crime to which a person's name is linked.

You should also include attribution if the story:

- Implies blame
- Is controversial
- Had doubtful validity
- Might be disputed

- Might be questionable
- When opinions are offered
- Direct and indirect quotations

Often things are not so black and white so either/or and that is where you will probably start wondering about whether or not you should include attribution. You will just have to use your own judgment in most cases. **Keep in mind that attribution increases your story's credibility and makes the story stronger.** By naming your sources of information, you enable your readers, viewers or listeners to judge the value of your facts. Attribution allows the readers or audience decide about credibility. If you have doubts about the quality of the information in your story, attribution can be used to alert the audience to this potential problem.

Anonymous telephone information inserted in a story should be identified as such. (Plus, you have to question "why" someone is willing to call you with a story, but is too scared to leave his or her name. This is usually a case of someone wanting you- the reporter- to grind an ax for him or her.) Exclusive stories from other media should credit those organizations, unless you can cross- check the information.

Broadcast news writers can often get away with a shorthand style attribution. Because time is the limiting factor in broadcast news, it is often necessary to condense the source of your information or to eliminate it altogether. In broadcast news, you quite often shorten long government titles to "officials" or "authorities," especially when that information is of routine value or little importance. Print reporters should be more specific when using attribution. You might exclude the reference altogether, as in the case of sources that mean little to the outcome of the story.

There are generally four types of attribution recognized by reporters:

1. **On the record.** All statements are directly quotable and attributable by name and title to the person who is making the statement.
2. **On background.** All statements are directly quotable, but they cannot be attributed by name or specific title to the person commenting. The type of attribution to be used should be spelled out in advance "A White House official" . . . "an Administration spokesperson."
3. **On deep background.** Anything that is said in the interview is usable but not in direct quotation and not for attribution. The reporter writes it on his or her own.

4. **Off the record.** Information given "off the record" is for the reporter's knowledge only and is not to be aired or made public in any way. The information also is not to be taken to another source in hopes of getting official confirmation.
5. **Guidance.** Information given as guidance is to help reporters with the status or timing of an event. The information is considered to be similar to "on background" statements.

When the source of information for a story says nothing about being quoted, the reporter can presume that the information is on the record. After all, the subject is talking to a reporter about a developing news story. Sometimes, a source asks to go off the record, and it is up to the reporter to decide whether to accept the information on this basis. (Some reporters will tell the newsmaker that as a reporter, any information could find its way into a story. Because of that, I will not listen to anything told me "off the record.") Once the reporter allows the person being interviewed to go "off the record," he or she may not use the material.

Some reporters refuse to accept material with the condition that it may not be used in any form. They may bargain with the source, asking if they can go to another source to obtain confirmation. Or they may ask if the material can be used without using the source's name.

A source may ask to go on background, usually so that the source can provide the reporter with information that will clarify an event or situation. The source cannot be named but may be described as a "city hall official," "a state legislator," or some other general term. To some sources, background means no direct quotes; others permit direct quotes. The reporter must be clear about the terms of the agreement with the source. You need to be aware that different stations may have varying policies towards attribution. Many editors and news directors refuse to accept copy that contains charges or accusations with no named source. They will not accept attribution to "an official in city hall" or a "company spokesperson." You need to be aware of the policy of each newspaper or station you work for.

Problems with Attribution

The reporter who accepts material with the promise of anonymity for the source or absolute off-the-record status for the information must realize that he or she is trading the public's need to know for his or her access to information. It is a calculated risk.

Background and off-the-record information pose problems for the conscientious reporter because he or she knows that backgrounders can be used to float "trial

balloons." These are stories that are designed by the source to test public reaction without subjecting the source to responsibility for the statement. Reporters, eager to obtain news of importance and sometimes motivated by the desire for exclusives, may become misleading or self-serving information.

All a reporter does when attributing information is to place responsibility for it with the source named in the story. Attribution says only: **It is true that the source said this.**

FOLLOW UPS IN News

Business news stories can be described as *hard news*, *follow-ups* or *backgrounders*. An example of a hard news story would be the announcement by Apple Computer that it is taking a second quarter loss of about \$700 million. These events often result from company announcements, but enterprising reporters also can unearth breaking news. In the case of the Apple announcement, journalists had known and anticipated a significant loss but they didn't know its size and composition until Apple made the announcement.

Another form of hard news story is the quarterly earnings report, which is often treated perfunctorily. Earnings reports, however, can often be the starting point for solid follow-up or analysis pieces. **Follow-up stories add detail to stories that have already been reported.** In the Apple example, reporters might have had enough information to write a hard news story for one day but might have needed to follow-up with other details the next day.

Both hard news and follow-up stories lend themselves to a treatment that some editors call the **"forward spin."** This approach is especially favored by weekly business journals that can find it difficult to compete with the daily sections on breaking news.

In the forward spin, the writer looks at a story as having three elements: *action*, *impact* and *countermoves*. The *action* component means that some event happened. The *impact* component means that the reporter tries to find all of the parties affected by the action. And in the *countermove*, the reporter tries to anticipate how the affected parties will respond. This model clearly is an attempt to answer any question a reader might have about what an action or event might mean to her or to a broader audience.

The elements of follow-up stories may include:

History — The writer should ask questions like: Does the main theme

developed have roots in the past? What are they? Are there historic details that can be used to lend points of authenticity and interest to the story?

Scope — How widespread, intense and various is the development the reporter is writing about?

- Reasons — All contemporary causes to explain why something is happening now. Causes might be economic, social, political/legal or psychological.
- Impacts — What are the consequences of a development?
- Countermoves — How might the affected parties be responding?
- Futures — What might the future hold?

A **backgrounder** often explores the "how" or "why" an event occurred. It might spin off a news event or it might appear after the reporter has collected enough information on a topic.

Profiles have the profiles of people or companies. Before writing the story, the reporter should develop a main theme statement that provides guidance by developing a "well shaped idea." The main theme statement is brief (two or three sentences); emphasizes action, impacts or countermoves; is written to stress the most important element or elements; and is very simple, omitting all details.

QUALITIES OF A REPORTER

Role of a Journalist

The main duty of a journalist is to act as an interpreter of the world around. The journalist observes the events, transmits facts about the event and acts as an interpreter of these events and happenings. A journalist should therefore stick to four ideals:

1. He should imbibe a never-ending search for the truth
2. He should be able to meet needs of the changing times, instead of waiting to be overtaken by them
3. He should be able to perform services of some consequence and significance to mankind
4. He should maintain a steadfast independence

A journalist is an important unit of the democratic system in our country. He is supposed to gather facts, organize them and disseminate them to the masses. He also explains the significance of the facts and offers opinions on contemporary issues. He is expected to comment on matters of public interest in a fair, accurate, unbiased, sober, decent and responsible manner.

A journalist must be cool, detached, and even skeptical as he approaches his material. The right 'attitude' is an important trait in a successful journalist. He should have a high degree of skill in organizing material and in using the language. He should not be lacking in confidence but should not be over-confident or over enthusiastic. He should avoid distortion in the news story in an effort to attain striking effect.

'Attribution' or the 'name of the source' is another thing, which should not be overlooked. The best attribution is the name of the precise source. The next best is the name of the organization, office or group, represented by the source as a spokesman. The least satisfactory, but sometimes the most necessary, is some variation of the phrase, 'informed source', if the origin of the news must be held in confidence.

'**Write like you talk**' is a phrase gaining much currency in modern journalism. The stiff, formidable phrasing of the thirties is no longer considered a good form. Instead, easy-flowing, lively and palatable language is becoming popular.

A great deal of importance is also attached to the 'vitality' factor in journalists. Every journalist has to religiously observe the newspaper edition deadlines.

Qualities of a reporter

There is no prescribed qualification for a reporter but not everyone can be a good journalist. A good journalist is sometimes born but more often he is fashioned out of the hard school of a rigorous test and training.

1. A good reporter makes regular contact with his or her sources. She goes to the well when she's thirsty, but she also goes to the well when she's not thirsty. There is no substitute for actually being there, for personal contact. See your sources; speak to them when you need something from them, but more importantly, when you don't need anything.

2. One of the most important qualities that a reporter must have is an ease around strangers. Always be alert to the common ground that you share with the people you deal with. Mention these topics in your conversations with them. Familiarity doesn't breed contempt. It lowers barriers.

3. A reporter has to answer the question, "What's up?" with More than, "Not much." Put sources on the receiving end of information. A reporter is an information broker. Share information when you can.

4. There has to be a certain distance between a reporter and the source, not a wall or a fence but an air space. You serve the reader, not the source. After months on a beat, working with the same sources, you will begin to think like them and talk like them. You will be sympathetic to their point of view. Be wary of this and of their efforts to use you. It is likely and legitimate that they will try to persuade you of the merit of their views, to sell you on their programs. You will have little contact with your readers, but it is them you represent.

5. The language of your source is probably not the language of your readers. Bureaucrats, scientists, educators and lawyers have their own jargon. Learn this jargon but translate it into Standard English for your readers.

6. If you have obtained information from a source on the understanding that it is off the record, then it is. Remember, a source is a source for life. You may change beats, newspapers, even cities, yet your reputation will follow you. The only way to be a successful reporter over the long haul is to operate honestly. If you don't, you will be without that most valuable of all commodities, good sources.

7. Make one more call. Ask your source, "Who else can help me?" "Who holds an opposite view?" Work down the organization chart. If possible, talk to the policeman who made the arrest, not the supervisor; the teacher rather than the principal.

8. Be polite but persistent with your sources. Insist on a responsive answer to your question. Follow slow-developing stories by checking periodically with your sources. If the event or issue is still on their agenda, it probably should be on yours as well.

9. The best reporters we know are bright, persistent, honest, personable, curious and courageous. A good reporter is a generalist, able to deal with a number of topics and talk with a variety of people. He or she can see the unusual, the ironic, in the everyday. She can think through all the possibilities and organize a large amount of information to find the important parts.

10. A good reporter is quick. Once he is assigned a story, he goes after it. He makes the calls and keeps trying if he doesn't make contact. He remembers the sign that once hung in the *Los Angeles Times* newsroom: GOYA/KOD. Get off your ass/knock on doors.

11. A good reporter is curious. He or she takes pleasure in the new, and in the old, in the history or precedent that got us where

we are. He enjoys reading and appreciates the details.

12. A good reporter is pleasant. She adopts a friendly nature with those she meets. She is a grateful guest, with a belief in the basic goodness of people. She conveys to those she meets that she is tolerant of them and their ideas, even though she does not like them or what they stand for. She subordinates her ego and is a good listener.

13. A good reporter is honest. He seeks the truth and acts independently. He does what he says he's going to do, and doesn't do something he promised to avoid. He returns his calls, and he's willing to say no. He's obsessed with accuracy and double checks his facts with callbacks. He sees both sides to every issue. He doesn't treat people as a means to an end.

14. The good reporter is courageous. She approaches strangers. She takes pleasure in being good, in being first. She develops a skin to deflect the inevitable criticism. She is willing to make a mistake and willing to write something that may hurt someone. She has a capacity for tempered outrage.

15. As Jon Franklin, reporter, author and teacher, said: "Back when I first started, I thought intelligence was the most important attribute a reporter could have. I have since changed my mind. You do have to be intelligent, but the big thing is courage. Courage to open your mind and let the whole damned confusing world in. Courage to always be the ignorant one, on somebody else's turf. Courage to stand corrected. Courage to take criticism. Courage to grow with your experiences. Courage to accept what you don't understand. Most of all, courage to see what is there and not what you want to think is there."

Good Reporter should have following elements in his news story:

Accuracy

Every statement, quotation, name, date, age and address must be verifiable. In addition, accuracy of general impression is also important. This involves the way the details are put together and the emphasis given those details. A reporter must judge what is important or unimportant, what will be played up or played down. The overall article must give an accurate portrayal of an event or situation, and poor selection of details or improper emphasis of details can distort the truth.

In general, accuracy is difficult because reporters are dealing with many facts; they must gather information and write quickly, and many people are involved, from source to reporter to editor. To ensure accuracy, check and double check

every detail and question sources carefully. You can't always rely on sources to give complete, accurate information any more than you can rely on them to just "tell" everything needed for an article. Indeed, some sources may intentionally misinform, so reporters often need to check with more than one source.

Balance

Balance, closely related to accuracy, is the selection of significant details as a result of informed judgment on the part of the reporter. Balance involves giving facts proper emphasis and placing them in proper relation to other facts. A balanced story is also a complete story, where the reporter presents both sides of an issue, particularly if it is controversial.

For example, if you write a sports story for your high school paper, every statement could be correct, but if only the action of the home team is reported, the reporter is guilty of writing an incomplete and unbalanced story.

If you are covering a convention and write about a minor speech in great detail while giving little detail about a major speech, you produce an unbalanced article.

Objectivity

News is a factual report of an event, not a report as seen by a biased person, or seen as a reporter might wish it to be seen. The reporter should be as impartial and honest as possible. In fact, if a reporter does have a bias, sometimes he or she declines to do the story, or, more often, bends over backwards to make sure both sides are covered equally. Is total objectivity humanly possible? We all have backgrounds, biases, and emotions that help make up who we are as people, and turning them off completely is pretty impossible. Sometimes biased reporting can happen inadvertently because the reporter tries to be clever or make a story more interesting.

Concise & Clear

The inverted pyramid structure of writing, with the most important information first, beginning with the lead paragraph that tells the whole story in miniature, helps the reporter to present information in an easy-to-understand manner. Think in terms of writing simply so that the average reader can understand, even if they have no background or previous knowledge of the subject.

Whenever you begin to write an article, think of this story, and remember that you

must explain in such a way that not one member of your audience would misunderstand. You must somehow make readers "see," regardless of their frame of reference or how complex the topic is.

Also think in terms of eliminating any unnecessary words, any words not absolutely essential to the meaning. Students sometimes complain that if they write too concisely, they take away creativity and interest. It will be boring, they protest. On the contrary, concise writing is more crisp, immediate and interesting. Think about your textbooks. Nothing is worse than reading textbooks, say students. Why? Because, they're usually long and overwritten.

Recent

Timeliness is of the utmost importance in news coverage in general and news writing in particular. Other factors being equal, an editor will choose one story over another because of its timeliness. On occasion, however, timeliness may not necessarily mean events are current. With the assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan in 1981, came comparisons and stories about the assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963.

SUMMARY

News values determine how much prominence a news story is given by a media outlet. In practice such decisions are made informally by editors on the basis of their experience and intuition, and analysis shows that several factors are consistently applied across a range of news organizations Boyd 1994 states that: "News journalism has a broadly agreed set of values, often referred to as 'newsworthiness': events suitable for news which tend to be proximity, relevance, immediacy, and drama."

Hard news stories make up the bulk of news reporting. Hard news consists of basic facts. It is news of important public events, international happenings, social conditions, economy, crime, etc. thus, most of the material found in daily papers, especially from page items or news casts, deal in the hard news category. The main aim of the hard news is to inform.

Soft stories have a human interest, entertainment focus or a statistical and survey approach. This gives a journalist a chance to be creative and have fun with the news. One major advantage of softer news is that many of the stories have a longer shelf life. They can be used at any time the practitioner or reporter deems appropriate.

'Sources of news are everywhere'. A journalist is surrounded by sources of potential news stories or features. A conversation with a friend, a poster on a wall, an unexpected juxtaposition-all might result in a story if you keep your eyes, ears and mind open. Some sources will be routine points of contact for journalists while

others may be one-offs, some will be proactive, approaching journalists because they want news access for their views or events, while other sources may not even be aware that they are sources.

EXERCISES AND QUESTIONS

Q1. Discuss the qualities of a reporter.

Q2. Write a note on 'Pool Reporting'.

Q3. Explain the various problems and pitfalls a reporter may encounter while reporting a news story.

Q4. What are the various news sources for contributing for writing a news story?

FURTHER READING

1. Reporting Methods S.Kundra (Anmol Publications Pvt.Ltd)
2. Outline of Editing M.K.Joseph
3. Editing Techniques S.Kundra
4. News Reporting and Editing (Jan.R.Hakemulder, Fay AC de Jonge, P.P. Singh)

TYPES OF REPORTING

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the meaning 'Beat Reporting'
- To discuss the different types or beats of reporting

INTRODUCTION

Beat reporting is the craft of reporting on an issue or particular sector, organization or institution over time. Beat reporters build up a base of knowledge on and gain familiarity with the sector, allowing them to provide insight and commentary in addition to reporting straight facts. This distinguishes them from other journalists who might cover similar stories from time to time

A news beat is an institutional or issue area that generates enough news and reader interest to make it worthwhile for a newspaper to assign a reporter to cover it on a regular basis. Traditional beats are government agencies, such as the police department, courts, schools, and city hall. Certain issue areas such as health, business, and environment are also regular beats on most newspapers. Beats could also be imagined quite differently. For example, if they chose to do it, newspapers could assign reporters to explore and write regularly about, say, childhood, work, ethics, psychology, or any other area or field that might help readers understand the world they live in.

What makes a beat a good beat for both writer and reader is variation in levels of analysis. That is, a good beat has stories that can be told with lots of concrete detail but also with broad themes that speak to abstract issues and ideas. Beats are places (literally or figuratively) where ideas flourish as well as where events happen. A good beat reporter always operates at both the micro level and the macro level of analysis. To paraphrase the old 1960s slogan, you have to think globally, report locally.

TYPES OF REPORTING

Crime reporting

There are tremendous public interests in crime stories and no newspaper can afford to ignore them without damage to circulation and credibility. Crime is a part of life

and it is newspaper's duty to inform the readers of what crimes are going on in their city, state or country. However, crime reporting should not aim at satisfying morbid curiosity or sensation mongering.

Although crime reporting is usually assigned to one of the junior reporters in a newspaper, it is a highly responsible and specialized job. The reporter should not only have the ability to sift the grain from the chaff, and the truth from lies, he should also have good contacts in the police and other departments of the administration as well as working knowledge of the penal codes and law on libel and other relevant matters.

Besides, he must observe a code of honour. He should be as objective and as humanly as possible so as to avoid resorting to sensationalism or cheap gimmicks to catch the attention of the readers or the viewers. He should not suppress news of public interest. Nor should he seek to settle personal scores with police officers or lawyers or judges. And he must be careful that in the course of his work, he does not unnecessarily invade a citizen's privacy.

There has been much criticism of press reporting of crime and not all of it is baseless. Some reporters have been found guilty of unethical standards, thus causing much pain and sorrow to their victims or their families and friends.

Crime Reporters try to glorify the activities of criminals or sometimes make heroes of them. This practice should be discouraged as much as a resort to sensationalism. The crime reporter must never violate standards of decency and good news taste.

There are several types of crime news-murders, fires, accidents, robberies, burglaries, fraud, blackmail, kidnapping, rape, etc.

Fires

The reporter must get his facts correct about the essential elements of a fire story the number of persons killed or injured, the extent of damage to property, the loss of valuables, etc. he must also find out if the fire brigade responded in time or was guilty of delaying the fire-operations through sheer lethargy or incompetence or lack of water supply. He should question eyewitnesses about any acts of bravery or cowardice. All these are essential ingredients of a fire story.

The lead in a fire story would normally suggest itself. If, for instance, lives have been lost, it needs highlighting in the lead. If possible, the reporter must list the names of the dead and the injured.

Homicides

In cases of a major murder, the reporter should rush to the scene as soon as possible after receiving a tip and gather all the relevant facts. In nine cases out of ten, crime reporters, say, in Delhi depend on police information about murders and there is a time lapse before they can begin their investigations.

This often hampers their search for the truth. The reporter must, in any case, exercise great care in how he handles the story. Otherwise, he runs the risk of causing offence.

In reporting dowry deaths or alleged dowry deaths, the reporter must refrain from leveling uncorroborated statements by one party or the other. He must therefore get his facts correct by talking to the investigation police officer, the girl's in laws and her parents, and, if possible, with the neighbors.

Accidents

Most accidents are reported on the basis of police bulletins or information supplied 'by police spokesmen'. However, wherever possible the crime reporter must rush to the scene of a major accident to give authenticity to his story.

Arrests

It is a serious matter to report that a person has been placed under arrest. When such a report is made, the exact charge against the arrested person could be given and it should be documented by either a record or attribution to a responsible official. If such documentation cannot be obtained, the reporter has better to check the facts. The person in question may not have been under arrest at all. In many states an arrest is not formally accomplished until a prisoner is booked. The news, in any case, must be handled with care.

Accusations

It is commonly written that someone is being sought for robbery, suspected of arson or tried for murder. This is journalistic shorthand, which has gained acceptance through usage, but it is neither precise nor correct.

Persons are sought in connection with a robbery, unless a charge has actually been made, in which case they are charged with robbery. Persons under suspicion are not necessarily going to be charged with a crime and it is generally not privileged matter to indicate that suspicion is attached to any individual by name. Where the police suspect someone, but lack proof, that person may be held as material witness- that is far different from being accused of as a criminal. Therefore, cases of suspicion are not usually given too extensive and detailed news treatment if no

privileged material is available for use. The practice of reporting that a defendant is being 'tried for murder', while widely used, is obviously prejudicial and could be more accurately, if less drama stated, as 'being tried as a charge of murder'.

Confessions

The use of the word 'confession' to describe statements made by a person to the police or the prosecuting authorities is dangerous when it is not a matter of public record. The fact that a police chief or a prosecutor has claimed to have a confession, except in open court, may be used only at the risk of the news organization. Most press-bar voluntary agreements forbid the use of confessions until they are admitted in open court. The records are full of supposed confessions that backfired later for a variety of reasons and of persons who admitted crimes they could not possibly have committed. Unless and until it is established in fact that a person has confessed, approved procedure for reporters is to use such terms as 'statement', 'admission', 'description' or 'explanation'. They convey the shade of meaning that is warranted by circumstances and do not subject the news organization to unnecessary risks.

There are a few fundamental precautions which a crime reporter must take account of:

- The first is that the police and prosecutors rarely will give them information on a silver platter. That means, a tremendous amount of interviewing and research must be done in a very short time so that a coherent story may be written
- There is no guarantee of police accuracy; and therefore police versions of names, addresses and other facts must be checked
- Police and journalistic terminology are not identical. The legal term for a slaying is a homicide, but many news organizations loosely and incorrectly refer to such crimes automatically as murder.

Court reporting

Even the big newspapers of India do not have the resources to cover all the courts of their main circulation area. The reason being that there are too many courts. Newspapers neither have the time nor the space to cover everything that happens in the courts. Paper covers only those stories in which their readers are interested.

A country governed by laws needs many courts, each with a different jurisdiction. The emphasis of the news media is on criminal courts, High courts, and the Supreme Court. The media are less interested in covering Civil Courts.

One of the reason for this lack of interest may be that the Civil Courts are jammed with cases, the suits remain pending there for several years and it is assumed that in the mean time, members of the public would lose whatever interest they may have showed initially.

If we go through the old files of a newspaper, we will find that the volume of court reporting has increased in recent years. One of the reasons for the increase may be the courts are now getting more active in the field of social justice. Public interest litigations are also increasing. As the number of petitions increase, one notices a corresponding increase in the coverage of courts and the judgments they deliver.

There are only a few big newspapers in India who have full time correspondents or reporters exclusively for their court beat. These reporters generally have adequate legal background. Other newspapers mostly hire stringers to cover court stories. (In journalism, a **stringer** is a freelance journalist, who is paid for each piece of published or broadcast work, rather than receiving a regular salary. They are heavily relied upon by most television news organizations)

Many of the stringers are professional advocates. Many part-timers also cover stories in their respective areas and come from teaching, law and other professions. A newspaper, which does not have a full time law reporter, may send its regular staff correspondent to cover an important court story.

The first time that one covers the court beat as a court reporter; one usually feels amidst the technicalities and complex language. A trainee reporter aiming to be a future court reporter must at first acquire some understanding of the court jurisdictions, its procedures and its hierarchy. At the apex we have the Supreme Court of India. Then there are the High Courts, Session Courts, Magistrate Courts, etc.

If the reporter is acquainted with the jurisdiction of different courts, then one can easily locate the specific court for a particular matter. Similarly, if one is familiar with the hierarchy in the courts; one can easily guess where the appeal would be filed.

Much of a reporter's success in the coverage of the courts depends on one's contact and sources, and one's ability to gain access quickly to records. For a reporter, the key person in a court is the clerk of the court. A court clerk prepares and keeps the records. He can make available copies of transcript for a fee. Court reporting involves diligent checking of records. The judge who presides a trial is seldom one's source. But a reporter should, as soon as possible, introduce oneself in person to the judge. A court reporter should also have good contacts with the lawyers working on a case and if possible with the respective parties. Where a

case attracts much public attention, reporters may be under pressure from rival lawyers for a more favorable description of their individual positions. The reporter must then ensure impartial reportage in all fairness to the proceedings in court.

Court reporters must understand the judicial process from beginning to end. They should know what happens when a suspect is arrested, charged, arraigned, tried, and sentenced or released. Experienced reporters say the best way to learn the process is to spend time at the courthouse. As stated before, begin with the court clerks, who keep track — the list of cases — and the calendar. Find out how to get copies of the court record, filings, and testimony. Read the case files — including motions and pleadings before the trial — and keep track of what's reported about the case if you can't be in court every day, which frequently happens.

Defense attorneys are some of the best sources of information on the justice beat. They often are more willing than prosecutors to talk with reporters about cases on which they are working. Do your best to understand legal jargon, but avoid using it in your stories. If you don't know what something means, ask the person you're interviewing to explain it.

Health reporting

Health reporter usually informs the public about major epidemics, diseases and their cures, new medical discoveries, medical irregularities, etc. they are either specialized in their field of medical or take the assistance of doctors, medical practitioner, etc. the common man cannot understand most of the medical terms so it is the duty of the health reporter to explain these terms and present the report which is easily understood by the common man.

Every change of season witness some major breakouts of epidemics and thus the people must be informed about these diseases and the necessary measures to be taken to avoid the occurrence of these diseases. The health reporter in no way should frighten the common man but present remedies and cures for the diseases. Crosschecking is extremely necessary if the reporter is not specialized in the medical field. Therefore, most of the newspaper relies of medical practitioner, doctors, scientist, and others to present the articles or features for the newspaper. The health reporter is supposed to cover researches, developments in the field of medicine and pharmaceuticals and new experiments in medicine and medical surgery. He collects this information from different departments of medical fraternity.

Many well-known health and medical science reporters writing in a few major newspapers have become the primary source for secondary pick-ups by many radio, newspaper, and television reporters. Thus, a small handful of powerful,

skilled writers wield an enormous amount of influence in this field. These days, most of the health reporting also covers fitness tips given out by experts in the field of yoga, acupuncture, meditation, and others.

The public is poorly served by the coverage of medical science in the general press. Scientists and physicians blame the press, claiming that journalists are careless in their reporting, subject to competitive pressures, and ignorant of the scientific process. Journalists accuse the medical community of limiting access to information and erecting barriers to the public dissemination of medical research. In many areas of health news reporting, the underlying problem is an interactive dynamic that involves scientists and journalists. Both parties share the responsibility for accurate communication to the public.

Health Reporters usually deliver medical news as if they are reporting on a hostage crisis. Information is delivered rapidly, but little time is taken to provide a context for the story. Instead, the reporting is sensationalized: The journalist overstates a scientific finding and, as a result, the public is misled about the implications of that finding. This sort of reporting has its roots in newsroom pressures to dramatize stories by sounding alarms.

To avoid inaccurate stories, health reporters need to examine the credibility and biases of scientific sources. Such examination is often not done, however, possibly because reporters are misled when the public relations efforts of scientists, institutions. The major sources for a health reporter are the doctors or medical officers.

A journalist's audience should be told explicitly whether the journalist's source of information could benefit financially from the media attention or whether the source is funded or employed by an institution that will benefit. However, such conflicts of interest are often not apparent to reporters or their audiences.

The public is generally unaware of the scientific process and is therefore likely to give more importance to awareness and full details of diseases and remedies by a renowned medical practitioner. This follow-up should be done, because journalists themselves may not completely know the complete medical process works. Certain medical terms are likely to be misinterpreted and thus it is the duty of the health reporter to clarify such doubts. The health science community should promote contact with the media when confirmatory or no confirmatory studies emerge in an area that has already received attention from the press. General assignment reporters typically wrote medical news stories and Reporters who specifically cover medicines are now commonly found at many major news organizations. Thus, Those who understand the complexities of newsworthy issues in medicine

and public health should. Examining the media's coverage of medicine seems to show that medical news reporting is less than ideal. Medical scientists and journalists share the responsibility for this problem. Thus, the medical science community can encourage accurate medical reporting and reporters will also have to take active measures to improve the situation.

Health Reporters should be able to assume that press releases are accurate, findings are not overstated, and conflicts of interest are acknowledged. The health reporter should deal with failures to be accurate, to identify vested interests, to follow up on stories, and to cover important health issues as the patients are the ones who stand to suffer the most. The health reporter must remember that it is the public that ultimately benefits from medical scientists' contributions to improved media coverage.

Civic Reporting

Newspapers have traditionally been the most community oriented of mass media. Newspapers have been given a good deal of credit for building the democratic community life cities and towns. These days, however, the media and their audiences have been so thoroughly fragmented that the newspaper seems on the verge of becoming just another specialized commercial product for a niche market.

Together, the people and the journalists work on efforts to fight attempts to weaken the civil justice system, to protect the rights of all to the right to trial by jury, and to force government and businesses to make human health and safety the top priority.

Public Citizen is very interested to report the news reporters for information in a variety of cases: products liability, medical malpractice, cases involving children, cases involving drugs or medical devices for women, cases where punitive damages were awarded, cases where defendants withheld documents or engaged in other types of abuse or misconduct, and cases where discovery documents or testimony revealed a company decision to risk foreseeable injuries or deaths in order to save money or increase profits.

Reporters around the country are increasingly turning to civic journalism to find better stories and report them in ways that re-establish a bond with readers, viewers and listeners. They do so to:

- Tackle tough issues.
- Discover new local stories.
- Interact with readers and viewers in new ways.
- Use the web to improve reporting.

Mostly two or three junior reporters, supervised by a senior one is appointed to cover local news, administration problems and important judgments of the district courts. A senior reporter assigns the coverage among the junior reporters who actually go into the field and bring news of local interest. There may be a fire or theft or important crime to report like a murder or dacoity. Then there may be court proceedings of a sensational nature wherein important crime cases are heard and adjudged upon. These reporters are called district reporters. Each reporter has an area assigned to him, which may include one or more large towns with the addition of smaller towns and larger villages. In some cases, a district office is established in prominent towns to enable the reporters to cover the ground with a senior reporter in charge. The senior man also acts as the manager of the office, who keeps the accounts and is responsible for the advertisement and other revenue, which is received.

The Civic reporters have considerable responsibility as an important link in the chain of news collection of interest to the newspaper. The senior as well as the junior reporters keep their respective diary of engagements and see that nothing is missed which may give the lead to other newspapers. If the locality or the town is large and a populous one, the reporter may find himself, with a full diary of routine engagements every day.

The civic reporter needs to be active men who have the opportunity of making a wide circle of friends. They develop influence in the local administration and can dig their news ahead of other contemporaries representing other newspapers. One important qualification of a local or civic reporter is knowledge of law so that he does not commit any errors leading to libel. He must be above board and not have extreme likes and dislikes of individuals, businessmen or influential personalities in the area.

The telephone is a very important means of receiving and collecting information about any event-taking place in the area. A civic reporter has his link with police officers and corporation administrators who inform him of anything important taking place around. However, it is not advisable to simply depend on one or the other individual source for making the story.

Immediately on receiving the hint of an important event, the civic reporter is supposed to either rush himself or send his juniors, depending on the importance of the news, to cover it. If necessary, a photographer may also be taken along although many newspapers prefer junior reporters to know as to how to handle the camera and have working knowledge of photography. In the case of important news, even movie cameras are sometimes maintained by newspapers to obtain TV films for supply to the TV Organizations on specific charges.

Political reporting

Political reporters in a democracy have one central mission: to provide citizens with the information they need to make an informed choice between the candidates for elective office. To do that, journalists need to examine the candidates' backgrounds and qualifications, their positions on the key issues, and what the candidates are saying in campaign appearances and advertising. Reporters who cover politics look at the candidates' supporters, too, since their interests can often shed light on what a politician will do if elected.

A political reporter should have intelligence, instinctive perception of ground realities, good judgment of people and a strong historic sense. Since politics is the main focus of newspapers, too many new entrances would like to be political reporters hoping that it would be a ladder to the coveted office of the editor.

But the fact remains that there is a dearth of good political reporting in India who have the skills to report insight, and do reporting that captures in flesh and blood of the players in the political field. A skilled political reporter is able to expose the naked ambitions of political leaders and the hypocrisy of political parties.

Politics is the game for power, a game for supremacy and ironically this game is played in the name of the people for evoking national greatness. The majority of politicians in India have acquired office because they were misfits everywhere else and are driven by a desire to make up for their past failures and frustrations.

Thus, the sad thing about Indian democracy is that it is these politicians who guide the destiny of some 900 million people. Bereft of ideas, intelligence and character, they exploit caste, religion and language to stay in power and the country slip from crisis to crisis.

Therefore, it is the duty of the political reporter to never glorify a minister or a politician but truthfully present their achievements and failures. Programmes of political parties should be critically evaluated and the flaws commented upon, so that the people are not carried away by their patriotic portrayal. The performance of government needs constant review and herein is the wisdom and maturity of the political reporter set on a national spectacle.

A lot of things are happening behind the scene in politics. Diplomacy, lobbying, image- building and hatching conspiracies are only few of them. Nothing much is visible to the outside world but the tip of an iceberg. The real challenge of political reporting is in unmasking these happenings in the political world. Connections and inside sources are the strengths of a politics reporter.

Party conferences, campaigns and rallies and press conferences are normal reporting events. But to add news value to these the reporter should have 'inside'

information or exclusive stories. The best selling newspapers in any country are those with a strong political bureau satisfying the political curiosity of the readers. Inadequate political coverage usually judged by the quality of reporting, brings down the circulation of a newspaper. The honest and well-meaning politician deserves the support of the reporter and the people's support. One of the basic duties of political reporting is to bring to national focus such deserving leaders and to warn the nation against criminals in political garment.

The political reporter must have a sound knowledge of history and the ability to see the chain of events before it happened and the wisdom to translate the thoughts into memorable words.

Culture reporting

The term "The Culture Beat" refers to the way a newspaper will assign reporters to cover various sites where news originates-city hall, the police reports, sports, entertainment, local, etc.

Culture reporting is characterized by its punchy style, rough language, and ostensible disregard for conventional journalistic writing forms and customs. The reporter attempts to present a multi-disciplinary perspective on a particular story, drawing from popular culture, sports, political, philosophical and literary sources. It is styled eclectic or untraditional. Culture reporting remains a feature of popular magazines. It has a good deal of entertainment value.

Culture reporting also focuses on the personal lives of people, primarily celebrities, including movie and stage actors, musical artists, models and photographers, other notable people in the entertainment industry, as well as people who seek attention, such as politicians, and people thrust into the attention of the public, such as people who do something newsworthy.

Culture reporting today is the province of newspaper gossip columnists and gossip magazines and has become the focus of national tabloid newspapers like the *National Enquirer*, magazines like *People* and *Us Weekly*, syndicated television shows like *Entertainment Tonight*, *Inside Edition*, *The Insider*, *Access Hollywood*, and *Extra*, cable networks like E!, and numerous other television productions.

It differs from feature writing in that it focuses on people who are either already famous or are especially attractive, and in that it often covers celebrities obsessively, to the point of these journalists behaving unethically in order to provide coverage. Paparazzi, photographers who would follow celebrities incessantly to obtain potentially embarrassing photographs, have come to

characterize celebrity journalism.

It is the most common kind of reporting where reporters are placed at the most strategic news-breaking points like hospitals, courtrooms, police headquarters, airports, railway stations, universities, government and corporate offices and health and recreation centers. Unlike editorial writing, the culture reporting is impersonal.

A culture reporter is should essentially be an honest storyteller, who should rise above his prejudices and subjectivity. He should be fair and impartial and present in all aspects of the story. Complete objectivity may be required as the primary job of a reporter in any beat is to tell the truth.

Civil administration reporting

The government establishes the civil administration and the area concerned are the local, municipal, social and national levels of the society. Civil administration reporting will thus carry news stories relating to all these sections of a country. Civil administration of a country exercise certain authority normally in the function of the local government; or hostile territory. It exercises executive, legislative, and judicial authority.

Civil administration reporters thus have to work with civil authorities and civilian populations in the area of operations.

Civil administration reporters are the specialists who can quickly and systematically identify critical requirements needed by local citizens in bad situations. They can also locate civil resources to support help operations, help support national assistance activities. The reporters report on the plan to establish and maintain liaison or dialogue with civilians and private organizations.

The civil administration reporters provide a prime source of nation-building skills. Their prime focus of reporting is in the fields of public administration, public safety, public health, legal systems, labor management, public welfare, public finance, public education, civil defense, public works and utilities, public communications, public transportation, logistics, food and agricultural services, economics, property control, cultural affairs, civil information, and managing dislocated persons.

One of the main components of civil administration is the police who are appointed with the duties to keep a check on the society. Reporting police news is difficult and potentially dangerous. But if reporters and editors are properly prepared and sufficiently cautious, mistakes will be held to a minimum. Police news tells us about ourselves, and how we handle police news tells us something about our

journalistic ability. Ideally, police news is used to inform the public, not to aid directly in conviction. Keeping this perspective is important in handling police news effectively.

Police reporters need to know exactly how crimes are defined in the community they cover. In the United States, for example, a "burglary" and a "robbery" are not the same thing. Burglary involves breaking into a building to commit a crime. Robbery is stealing money or property by force. Developing a glossary of essential terms can prevent embarrassing mistakes. A police press release may provide the basic facts about a crime, but good reporters dig deeper. They go to the scene to look for details and to talk with neighbors or eyewitnesses, whenever possible.

The coverage of civil disorder imposed major responsibilities on the reporters. On the one hand, they must expose themselves to danger if necessary to determine the magnitude of any street incident. But whatever they do, they must always be conscious that careless reporting or the provocative appearance of still or television cameras can cause untold harm in a tense situation, particularly in the crowded inner cores of many cities and towns.

Education reporting

As Education, is the organized teaching and training of students, the reporter's job will revolve around these areas. Education is a body of theoretical and applied research relating to teaching and learning. Thus, the reporter has to focus on these both areas of education. The education reporter works in different areas or disciplines such as psychology, philosophy, computer science, linguistics, neuroscience, sociology and anthropology

The education reporter focus on the education systems as these can be used to promote doctrines or ideals as well as knowledge, and this can lead to abuse of the system. These days, the education reporters focus on adult education as they have become widespread in many countries. However, education is still seen by many as something aimed at children, and adult education is often branded as *adult learning* or *lifelong learning*.

Adult education takes on many forms, from formal class-based learning to self-directed learning. Lending libraries provide inexpensive informal access to books and other self-instructional materials. Many adults have also taken advantage of the rise in computer ownership and internet access to further their informal education.

The reporter has to report about the Education reforms. **Educational reforms** are plans, programs, or movements which attempts to bring about a systematic change

in educational theory or practice across a community or society. As the public attention focuses on standards based education reform in response to the high expense and poor outcomes of education, it is the duty of the reporter to bring forth such information.

The teaching method must be teachable! Many educators now believe that anything that more precisely meets the needs of the child will work better.

Programs that test individual learning, and teach to mastery of a subject have been proven to be far more effective than group instruction with compromise schedules.

Philosophers identify independent, logical reasoning as a precondition to most western science, engineering, economic and political theory. Therefore, every educational program that desires to improve students' outcomes in political, health and economic behavior should include a Socratic ally-taught set of classes to teach logic and critical thinking. Substantial resources and time can be saved by permitting students to test out of classes. This also increases motivation, directs individual study, and reduces boredom and disciplinary problems.

To support inexpensive continuing education a community needs a free public library. It can start modestly as shelves in an attended shop or government building, with donated books. New programs based on modern learning theories should be quantitatively investigated for effectiveness.

The education reporter has to report education plans, durations, costs, and scholarships of various educational programs started by national and international universities. Thus much research with educationists, institutions and expertise is required to prepare the report. As always, crosschecking of facts is important. Also, the education reporter has to present counseling help to the students as they often get confused because today we have so many options available in the education and vocational fields.

Thus, the education reporter must be aware with different departments of education, have good contacts with colleges and universities and get an insight into the psyche of the students' about their preferences and choices. These reporters have to regularly attend functions like convocations, academic events of colleges and universities to know the progress and the launch of new educational programs.

SUMMARY

A news beat is an institutional or issue area that generates enough news and reader interest to make it worthwhile for a newspaper to assign a reporter to cover it on a regular basis. Beats could also be imagined quite differently. For example, if they

chose to do it, newspapers could assign reporters to explore and write regularly about, say, childhood, work, ethics, psychology, or any other area or field that might help readers understand the world they live in.

There are tremendous public interests in crime stories and no newspaper can afford to ignore them without damage to circulation and credibility. Crime is a part of life and it is newspaper's duty to inform the readers of what crimes are going on in their city, state or country. However, crime reporting should not aim at satisfying morbid curiosity or sensation mongering.

Together, the people and the journalists work on efforts to fight attempts to weaken the civil justice system, to protect the rights of all to the right to trial by jury, and to force government and businesses to make human health and safety the top priority.

EXERCISES AND QUESTIONS

Q1. Discuss the meaning and significance of 'Beat Reporting'?

Q2. Write short notes on: Crime, courts, health, civil administration, civic, culture, politics and education beats in Reporting.

FURTHER READING

1. Reporting Methods S.Kundra (Anmol Publications Pvt.Ltd)
2. Outline of Editing M.K.Joseph
3. Editing Techniques S.Kundra
4. News Reporting and Editing (Jan.R.Hakemulder, Fay AC de Jonge, P.P. Singh)

EDITING

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the nature and need of Editing
- To discuss the principles of Editing
- To study the use of Editing symbols
- To know the meaning of style sheet

INTRODUCTION

Editing is a responsibility shared by many people on a newspaper. It begins when a reporter polishes a story before turning it in. It ends when final errors are corrected just before the edition goes to press. Between these events the sub-editors practice their art of editing.

NATURE & NEED FOR EDITING

Editing is the process of preparing language, images, or sound for presentation through correction, condensation, organization, and other modifications. A person who edits, especially professionally or as a hobby, is called an **editor**.

There are various levels of editorial positions in publishing. Typically one finds junior editorial assistants reporting to the senior level editorial managers and directors, who themselves report to senior executive editors responsible for project development to final releases. Human editors in the print publishing industry include people who are responsible for:

- Newspapers and wire services; see below.
- Organizing anthologies and other compilations.
- Organizing and publishing a magazine. The top editor may be called *editor-in-chief*. Those who get the magazine into the hands of readers and subscribers, even, have editorial titles and are called *circulation editors*. Frequent and esteemed contributors to a magazine may acquire the title *editor at-large*.
- Producing a definitive edition of a classic author's works—a *scholarly editor*.

- Organizing and managing contributions to a multi-author book — *symposium editor* or *volume editor*.
- Finding marketable ideas and presenting them to appropriate authors — a *sponsoring editor*.
- Obtaining copy or recruiting authors — such as the *acquisitions editor* or *commissioning editor* for a publishing house.
- Improving an author's writing so that they indeed say what they want to say, in an effective manner — a *substantive editor*. Depending on the writer's skill, this editing can sometimes turn into ghost writing. Substantive editing is seldom a title. Many types of editors do this type of work, either in-house at a publisher or on an independent basis.
- Correcting spelling, grammar, and matters of house style—a *copyeditor*. But copy editors at newspapers usually also have greater and higher responsibilities, which may include the design of pages and the selection of news stories for inclusion. At UK newspapers, the term is "sub-editor."
- Choosing the layout of the publication and communicating with the printer — a *production editor*. This and similar jobs are also called "layout editor," "design editor," "news designer," or—more so in the past—"makeup editor."

The smaller the publication, the more these roles run together. In particular, the substantive editor and copy editor often overlap: Fact-checking and rewriting can be the responsibility of either.

PRINCIPLES OF EDITING

The main consideration in editing is to tell the story in the **fewest words possible**. Condensation is essential because there is more material than can be used. The second consideration is **clarity**, which is obtained by avoiding intricate sentence structure and by using familiar words. The third consideration is **forceful expression**. The sub-editor must constantly seek the most effective way to express the ideas of the story. The fourth consideration is respect for **accuracy**. It means looking out for small factual errors, which disfigure an otherwise good story.

Editing involves more than making sure words are spelled correctly, language is used properly, punctuation is in the right places and spelling is accurate. These, however, are important details that separate a polished publication from a sloppy one. As gatekeepers of a publication, editors must have a clear idea about what the mission is. So part of editing involves being missionaries and Part also involves being ambassadors of ideas.

It is with experience that the best ideas most often come from the bottom up, not

from the top down. So editors should be encouraging writers to pursue their own story ideas. This is done with prompting, nudging, cajoling, pushing--whatever works.

Editing requires good listening. The writer should be heard first, then the editor responds. The conversation process enriches stories, because two heads are better than one. Conversation should be taking place when the idea is first being formulated; it should take place during and after the reporting phase; it should take place before the story is written and it should take place after the editor has fully processed the story. At each stage the editor should bear in mind that it is the reporter's story on the one hand, but it also is the reader's story. It is not the editor's story.

Story ideas are similar to loaves of bread. All of the elements need to be brought together and kneaded. Then the dough is popped into the oven until it rises and is ready to eat. The punctuation has an important function in a story. Its function is to help guide the reader through the sentence or paragraph in a way that will make the wording more understandable.

Revision

Editorial changes, normally made in ink for the printer, are better made clearly in pencil on the typescript if the writer is going to see the changes. A reasonably legible photocopy can then be sent to the author for checking and revision process. The editor can draw attention to doubtful points with a marginal note.

Structural Reorganization

Reorganizing a whole write up, argument or section ought to be the writer's responsibility, but the editor must have good reasons for asking for major reorganization, and they should suggest how it should be done.

Expansion

If a step in the argument is missing, or if further experimental evidence is needed, only the writer can supply the missing material.

Shortening

Shortening an article to a given length may be done by the author but is often better done in the editorial office. If the writer is asked to do the work the editor must indicate how it might be done, which sections, paragraphs, tables or illustrations could be deleted, which part could be condensed, and which

marginally relevant theme might be cut out.

The Title

A title that conveys the main subject or the message in a few words as possible is easy retrieval. Since editors know more about the use of titles in information retrieval than most writers, editors should have a major say in re-titling stories where necessary.

Spellings

The difference between American and British spelling produce problems in these days of international journals largely in English. If the editor, publisher or printer cannot accept inconsistency between articles, the editor or copy-editor should change the spelling, where necessary, to whichever version is more common in the country of publication.

Guidelines for rewriting, revising and some basic principles of editing:

1. Give the main points of the news in the first paragraph
2. Tell the story in headline and use a verb to give it vigor
3. Check names, titles, facts, figures, dates, and address where ever slightest doubt exists. The sub-editor know the reference book which will clear the doubt
4. Both sides of the story in a dispute must be given
5. Use short sentences and short paragraphs
6. Repeat names in court cases rather than refer to them as accused, witness, etc
7. Indicate correctness of doubtful spelling by saying 'correct' within brackets
8. Beware of foreign names
9. Define long, unfamiliar words, especially scientific and medical terms
10. Do not begin sentences with words like 'despite' or 'because'
11. Do not use vague phrases like a 'serous charge' or a 'certain offence'
12. Reporters to give a rather artificial flow to the story 'meanwhile' often use the word. Cut it out
13. Use concrete words, words that make the reader see, hear, smell or taste. Test the story for concrete images and visual word pictures
14. Be careful about pronouns. The misuse of the relative pronoun and punctuation are the most common grammatical errors in the news stories.
15. Editorializing any trace of personal opinion or a value judgment should be eliminated from the copy unless it is a feature or news analysis

STYLE SHEET

A **Style sheet** is a form of separation of presentation and content in desktop publishing programs that store and apply formatting to text. Style sheets are a common feature in most popular desktop publishing and word processing programs, including Adobe InDesign, PageMaker, QuarkXPress and Microsoft Word, though they may be referred to using slightly different terminology.

To apply a style to a portion of text, most programs allow users to select the text with their mouse and then click on the desired style in the style sheet window. The program then applies the stored formatting instantly.

Style sheets help publications maintain consistency, so common elements such as story text, headlines and bylines always appear the same. Style sheets also help save time allowing a design to click once rather than having to apply each element one at a time and risking using an incorrect value.

Finally, style sheets are also useful if a publication decides to make changes to a design - say, make the story text slightly smaller. A user with proper administrative access can make the change to the master style sheet and then "send" the revised style sheets to all users and the change is automatically reflected.

Each newspaper has its set of rules that generally are strictly enforced. These are contained in something called a **stylebook**. At some smaller newspapers, this may be no more than a sheet of paper. At larger newspapers, the stylebook may consist of up to two hundred pages and resemble a dictionary. The chief keepers of the stylebook rules are the newspaper's copy editors.

EDITING & PROOF READING SYMBOLS

The following marks are standard proofreading and editing marks. A professional proofreader puts a mark (usually a line or caret) in the line and writes the correction in the margin. An editor makes corrections within the line rather than in the margin (in part because an editor's changes are typically more extensive), which is why editors prefer to work with double-spaced copy.

Instruction	Editing Marks (in the line only)	Proofreading Marks (in the line and in the margin)	
delete	Boulder er campus events	Boulder er campus events	
delete and close up	Boul der campus events	Boul der campus events	
replace	Boulder campus events	Boulder campus events	Denver
insert	Boulder ^{campus} events	Boulder ^{campus} events	campus
insert and close up	Bould ^{er} campus events	Bould ^{er} campus events	
transpose	Boulder(events)campus)	Boulder(events)campus)	TR
insert space	Boulder campus [#] events	Boulder campus [#] events	#
insert hair space	"Boulder campus 'events' ^{hr#} "	"Boulder campus 'events' ^{hr#} "	hr#
close up extra space	Boulder } campus events or Boulder } campus events	Boulder } campus events or Boulder } campus events	} extra # } extra #
insert line space	[#] > Boulder campus events Denver campus events	> Boulder campus events Denver campus events	l#
delete line space	Boulder campus events Denver campus events	Boulder campus events Denver campus events	l#
equalize spacing	Boulde today	Boulde today	eq #
run on/no new paragraph	<u>She runs.</u> He jogs.	<u>She runs.</u> He jogs.	run in
new paragraph	She runs. ^A He jogs.	She runs. ^A He jogs.	A
line break	She runs] He jogs.	She runs] He jogs.	break

instructions (don't set what's circled)	Boulder campus events <u>(which?)</u>	Boulder campus events _Λ <u>(which?)</u>
let it stand (ignore marked changes)	Boulder campus events	Boulder campus events <u>(stet)</u>
spell out	<u>(12)</u> Boulder campus events	<u>(12)</u> Boulder campus events <u>(sp)</u>
abbreviate or use symbol or numeral	<u>(twelve)</u> Boulder campus events	<u>(twelve)</u> Boulder campus events 12
center	⌋ Boulder campus events ⌋	⌋ Boulder campus events ⌋ S
align	⌋⌋ Boulder campus events ⌋⌋ Denver campus events	⌋⌋ Boulder campus events ⌋⌋ Denver campus events <u>(f1)</u>
move up	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Boulder campus events</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Boulder campus events</div> ⌋
move down	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Boulder campus events</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Boulder campus events</div> ⌋
move left	⌋ Boulder campus events	⌋ Boulder campus events ⌋
move right	Boulder ⌋ campus events	Boulder ⌋ campus events ⌋
make italic	<u>Boulder</u> campus events	<u>Boulder</u> campus events <u>(ital)</u>
make bold	<u>Boulder</u> campus events	<u>Boulder</u> campus events <u>(bf)</u>
make roman	<u>(rom)</u> Boulder <u>(campus)</u> events	Boulder <u>(campus)</u> events <u>(rom)</u>
wrong typeface	Boulder <u>(campus)</u> events	Boulder <u>(campus)</u> events <u>(wf)</u>
capitals	<u>Boulder</u> campus events	<u>Boulder</u> campus events <u>(caps)</u>
small caps	<u>Boulder</u> campus events	<u>Boulder</u> campus events <u>(sc)</u>
lowercase	Boulder <u>CAMPUS</u> events	Boulder <u>CAMPUS</u> events <u>(lc)</u>
caps and lowercase	<u>b</u> <u>OULDER</u> campus events	<u>b</u> <u>OULDER</u> campus events <u>(cap/lc)</u>
superscript	12 ⁶	12 ⁶ <u>(supe)</u>

subscript	X ^Λ	X _Λ	(sub)
period	Boulder campus events [○]	Boulder campus events _Λ	○
comma	Boulder ^Λ Denver	Boulder _Λ Denver	Λ
colon	Boulder events ^Λ	Boulder events _Λ	Λ
semicolon	Boulder ^Λ however	Boulder _Λ however	Λ
quotation marks	✓✓Boulder campus events✓✓	✓Boulder campus events✓	✓✓✓✓
apostrophe	Boulders ^Λ events	Boulders _Λ events	Λ
parentheses	(Boulder campus events)	ΛBoulder campus events _Λ	(/)
virgule (slash, back slash)	(slash) delete the http:Λfrom URLs	delete the http:Λfrom URLs	/ (slash)
hyphen	Boulder ⁼ Denver area	Boulder _Λ Denver area	=
en dash	Boulder ¹ Colorado Springs plan	Boulder _Λ Colorado Springs plan	1 N
em dash	Boulder ¹ when feasible	Boulder _Λ when feasible	1 M
make same change multiple times	UCB ^Λ UCD ^Λ HSC ^Λ and UCCS	UCB _Λ UCD _Λ HSC _Λ and UCCS	Λ ///

COPY-EDITING: PREPARATION OF COPY FOR PRESS

Editing may also involve rewriting. While editing a story, the sub-editor should, as far as possible, look for errors in spelling, grammar and syntax (sentence structure) and correct these and 'pass' the copy. But an instant second look might sometimes compel him/her to rewrite it. The opening paragraph may lack the punch, or the copy may seem confusing, or the news may be hidden below. Hence, rewriting may become necessary for the sake of clarity.

Copy editing is the process by which an editor makes formatting changes and other improvements to text. *Copy*, in this case a noun, refers to material (such as handwritten or typewritten pages) to be set (as in typesetting) for printing. A person who performs the task of copy editing is called a **copy editor**.

The copy editor's job may be summarized in the 5 Cs: to make the copy clear, correct, concise, comprehensible, and consistent. Copy editing typically entails correcting spelling, punctuation, grammatical and semantic errors; ensuring the typescript adheres to the publisher's house style; adding standardized headers, footers, headlines and so on. These elements must be addressed before the typesetter can prepare a final proof copy.

The copy editor is also expected to ensure the text flows well, that it makes sense and is fair and accurate, and that it will cause no legal problems for the publisher. Newspaper copy editors are sometimes responsible for choosing which wire copy the newspaper will use, and for rewriting it according to their house style.

In many cases, a copy editor will be the only person other than the author to read an entire text before publication. Newspaper editors often regard their copy editors as their newspaper's last line of defense.

A copy editor may abridge text, which is also called "cutting" or "trimming." This means reducing the length of a novel or article, either to fit broadcast or publishing limits, or to improve the material. This may involve simply omitting parts of the text, but sometimes it is necessary to rewrite uncut parts to account for missing details or plot. Some abridged texts are only slightly shorter, but others may be reduced dramatically, particularly when a literary classic is abridged. Besides an excellent command of the language, copy editors need a broad general knowledge to spot factual errors, good critical-thinking skills so that they recognize inconsistencies, diplomatic skills to help them deal with writers, and a thick skin

when diplomacy fails. They must also set priorities so they can balance striving for perfection with working deadlines.

Many copy editors have a college degree, often in journalism, English, or communications. Copy editing is often taught as a college journalism course, though the name of the course varies. News design and pagination are often taught in such classes.

The **copyeditor's responsibilities** are numerous and varied. One responsibility is to ensure the mechanical accuracy of spelling, punctuation, and grammar, as well as the stylistic consistency of the writing. Our copyeditors are selected based on the subject areas being edited; however, they do not possess the level of knowledge you do and may inadvertently alter your meaning. It is essential, therefore, that you check the copyediting carefully. In addition, by providing us with your editorial style sheet, the copyeditor can be aware of your preferences and of nomenclature particular to your discipline. The copyeditor will also query you when your meaning seems unclear or when information is missing. He or she will check the illustrations against the legends and text discussion for consistency. The copyeditor will not normally question the factual accuracy of the content, however, unless the error is obvious.

The copyeditor also checks that all required credit lines have been inserted into the correct locations of the text, as required by the copyright holder in their permission release letter. However, this task can be performed only if all permission letters are on hand at the time of copyediting. The copyeditor may query the reporter whether he/she has obtained permission for material that has been taken from another source and for which no permission is on hand.

The copyeditor marks the manuscript for the typesetter by adding typesetting codes at the occurrence of individual text elements such as headings, quotations, and displayed equations. He or she will also call out figures, tables, and footnotes in the margin of the manuscript to indicate their approximate location on the printed page.

SUMMARY

The main consideration in editing is to tell the story in the **fewest words possible**. Condensation is essential because there is more material than can be used. The second consideration is **clarity**, which is obtained by avoiding intricate sentence structure and by using familiar words. The third consideration is **forceful**

expression. The sub-editor must constantly seek the most effective way to express the ideas of the story. The forth consideration is respect for **accuracy.** It means looking out for small factual errors, which disfigure an otherwise good story.

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EXERCISES AND QUESTIONS

Q1. Discuss the principles of Editing.

Q2. Write a note of ‘Style Sheet’.

Q3. Explain the various types of Editing & Proofreading symbols.

Q4. What are the functions and duties of a) Chief-Sub-Editor b) Sub-Editor?

FUNCTIONS IN EDITING

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the duties and functions of Chief-sub-Editor
- To discuss functions of Sub-Editor

INTRODUCTION

Sub-editing was less known in the early days of journalism, and newspaper were a one-man productions. Individuals wrote and published miniature newspapers and there were no huge organizations and structural department as in these days.

FUNCTIONS

Chief Sub-Editor

Chief Sub- Editor is the person who directs and supervises the editorial side of the newspaper. The primary role of the editor is:

- To manage the newspaper.
- Determines whether a submitted manuscript is appropriate for publishing.
- Selects expert reviewers and an area editor to evaluate the submitted manuscript.
- Renders a final editorial decision on each manuscript based on the recommendation, journal priorities, other similar manuscripts in process and related considerations.
- Communicates directly with the author and the review team.
- Schedule accepted manuscripts for publication.
- Balance workloads for the area editors and reviewers.
- Resolve any conflicts.

Chief Sub Editors or Editors review, rewrite, and edit the work of writers. They may also do original writing. An editor's responsibilities vary with the employer and type and level of editorial position held. Editorial duties may include planning the content of books, technical journals, trade magazines, and other general-interest publications. Editors also decide what material will appeal to readers, review and edit drafts of books and articles, offer comments to improve the work, and suggest possible titles. In addition, they may oversee the production of the publications. In

the book-publishing industry, an editor's primary responsibility is to review proposals for books and decide whether to buy the publication rights from the author.

The duties of an editor range from deciding what will be published to ensuring that writing is free of grammar, usage and punctuation errors. Written material for a mass audience, even on the Web, should meet the conventions of standard American English. An editor works with a writer to ensure that the story or article achieves what the writer and publication intend. The story must be accurate, the writing to the point and well organized. The editor ensures that the article fits the style and tone of the publication. An editor tries to maintain a reader's trust or confidence in a publication. A newspaper must be accurate and timely, and a magazine must stay abreast of the trends in a particular field.

Editors must know what is worth publishing, what is timely, what is important to readers. A newspaper editor can sense when a tepid story is going to heat up. Editors on top of their game sent correspondents to those countries when small changes hinted at big changes ahead. The skill is knowing the difference between significant events and minor wrinkles.

Editing for grammar and usage on a copy desk and deciding whether to send two or three correspondents to a foreign country at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars are both within the province of editing. The job is always interesting and, at times, can be exciting

Major newspapers and newsmagazines usually employ several types of editors. The *executive editor* oversees *assistant editors*, who have responsibility for particular subjects, such as local news, international news, feature stories, or sports. Executive editors generally have the final say about what stories are published and how they are covered. The *managing editor* usually is responsible for the daily operation of the news department. *Assignment editors* determine which reporters will cover a given story. *Copy editors* mostly review and edit a reporter's copy for accuracy, content, grammar, and style.

In smaller organizations, such as small daily or weekly newspapers or the membership or publications departments of nonprofit or similar organizations, a single editor may do everything or share responsibility with only a few other people. Executive and managing editors typically hire writers, reporters, and other employees. They also plan budgets and negotiate contracts with freelance writers, sometimes called "stringers" in the news industry. In broadcasting companies, *program directors* have similar responsibilities.

Editors and program directors often have assistants, many of whom hold entry-level jobs. These assistants, such as copy editors and *production assistants*, review copy for errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling and check the copy for readability, style, and agreement with editorial policy. They suggest revisions, such as changing words and rearranging sentences, to improve clarity or accuracy. They also carry out research for writers and verify facts, dates, and statistics. Production assistants arrange page layouts of articles, photographs, and advertising; compose headlines; and prepare copy for printing. *Publication assistants* who work for publishing houses may read and evaluate manuscripts submitted by freelance writers, proofread printers' galleys, and answer letters about published material. Production assistants on small newspapers or in radio stations compile articles available from wire services or the Internet, answer phones, and make photocopies.

Sub-Editor

Press sub-editors are journalists who work for:

- National daily or weekly newspapers;
- Local and regional newspapers;
- Magazines.

They are responsible for ensuring that the tone, style and layout of final copy match the publication's house style and target market.

The role involves processing all the copy before it is published to ensure that it is accurate, makes sense and reads well. They also lay out the story on the page and may also be involved with overall page design.

As with many roles in journalism, sub-editing is a demanding role that requires constant attention to detail within a fast-paced working environment.

Work activities vary and can depend on the extent to which production and layout work falls within a sub-editor's remit. Only senior sub-editors would be expected to have much legal knowledge, but there are common activities that form much of the work of most sub-editors. These include:

- Editing copy to remove spelling mistakes and grammatical errors;
- Rewriting material so that it flows or reads better and adheres to the house style of a particular publication;
- Ensuring that a story fits a particular word count by cutting or expanding material as necessary;

Writing headlines that capture the essence of the story or are clever or amusing;

- Writing stand-firsts (brief introductions which sum up the story);
- Liaising with reporters or journalists to clarify facts and details about a story;
- Editing press releases or reports;
- Compiling routine information, such as tables of sports results or financial data;
- Checking stories to ensure they are accurate, do not break the law or go against the publication's policy;
- Cropping photos and deciding where to use them for best effect;
- Writing the captions for pictures;
- Discussing concerns with editors;
- Proofreading complete pages produced by other sub-editors;
- Working to a page plan to ensure that the right stories appear in the correct place on each page;
- Laying out pages and, depending on the nature of the role, playing a part in page design;
- Adding last minute news stories;
- Keeping up to date with sector issues, e.g. by reading related publications.

Sub-Editor at work

The sub is a versatile man in the newspaper. He knows something of everything and everything of something. He can be depended upon to handle any kind of copy-home, foreign, financial, and commercial, sports, etc. His sound general education and training will help him edit easily and efficiently all kinds of copy full of technical terms and complicated issues.

The sub is saddled with his weapons-pencil, paste, and a pair of scissors. With a set of symbols he marks his copy for the printer. These symbols signify the alterations to be made in the news story. He gives a hurried look at the story and grasps the contents. He checks up whether an adequate lead was given by the reporter, answering the reader's questions, Who? When? What? Why? Where? He also finds out whether the most important feature or talking point has been given the first place in the lead, and the body of the story has been developed fully giving unimportant details at the end.

Copy selection and copy testing

After all news stories have been edited and headlined and finally composed, the process of making-up starts. It is done according to plan. The dummy is the guide. The sub-editor gives directions to finalize the make-up. He tries to display the most important news stories of the day above the fold, and almost all-important stories on the front page. His acquaintance with the art of printing, newspaper make-up and of writing; work in help of both to produce an attractive and readable newspaper.

Indian newspapers usually have a set style of make-up, and as such things go smoothly unless big news of some magnitude breaks at the eleventh hour necessitating hurried conferences among the executive heads and quick decision to alter the plan.

Before the chief sub-editor gives the print order he goes through the 'blanket proofs' quickly. He discovers that a story has been repeated, a headline has been placed on wrong side of story, a dateline has been misplaced, he marks the blemishes with his blue pencil. The printer makes the necessary correction.

SUMMARY

Editors decide what material will appeal to readers, review and edit drafts of books and articles, offer comments to improve the work, and suggest possible titles. In addition, they may oversee the production of the publications.

The sub is a versatile man in the newspaper. He knows something of everything and everything of something. He can be depended upon to handle any kind of copy-home, foreign, financial, and commercial, sports, etc. His sound general education and training will help him edit easily and efficiently all kinds of copy full of technical terms and complicated issues.

EXERCISES AND QUESTIONS

Q1. Discuss the role of the Chief-sub-Editor.

Q2. What are the various duties and responsibilities of the Sub-Editor in a newspaper organization?

NEWSROOM STRUCTURE

OBJECTIVES

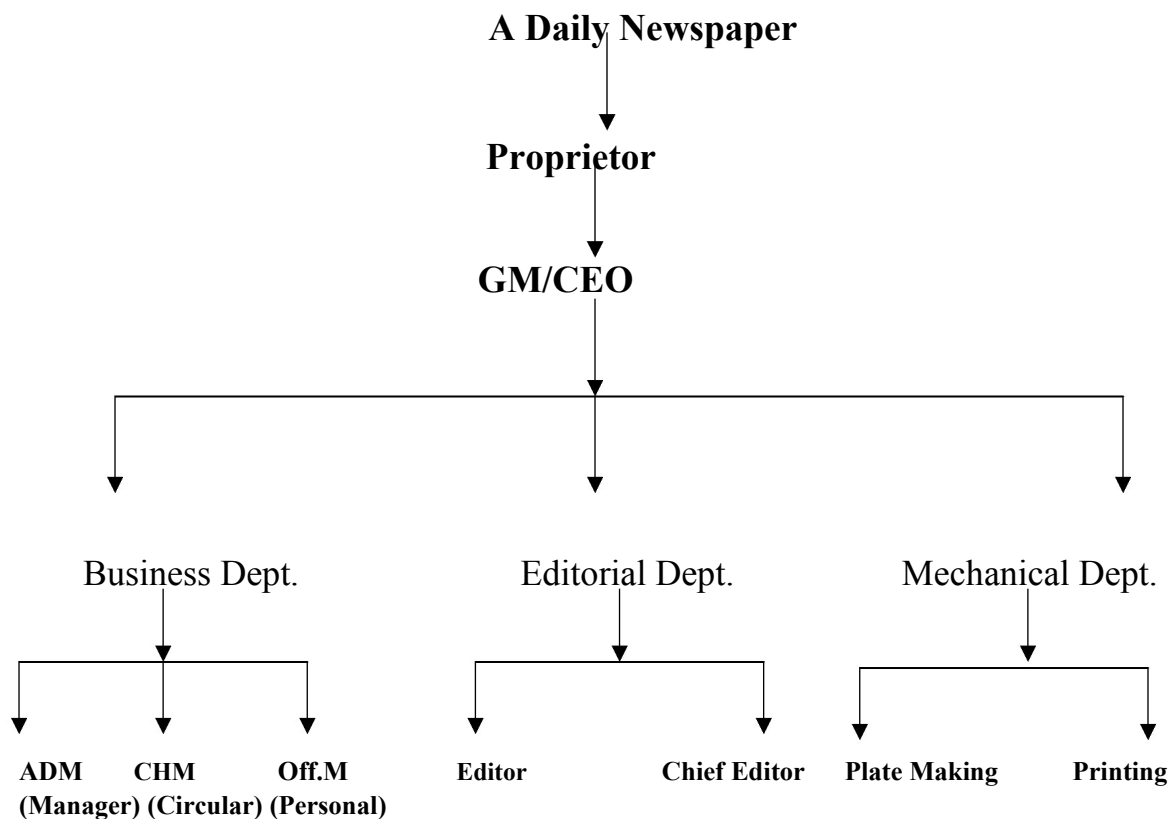
- To understand the structure of a newsroom
- To discuss the role of different people in the newsroom

INTRODUCTION

The newsroom is the hub of the entire activity in a newspaper, news agency or a news channel. Called by different names, the editorial desk, editorial department or copy desk or news desk, it is the nerve center of the newsroom. Here the whole planning is done. However, in a news agency, the news desk edits and transmits stories to the newspapers or news channels, which further tailors these agency news stories.

NEWSROOM STRUCTURE & ROLE

Following diagram will help in understanding the structure of a newsroom:



Desk Management

Atop the editorial hierarchy ranks the editor or an editor-in-chief who plans and directs the day-to-day operations, supported by a team of news editors, chief sub editors, senior sub editors and sub editors. The news desk usually operates in shifts and each shift is headed by a chief sub, also called as 'slot man'. Ideally, in a newspaper, it is the news editor who plans and directs page making while the chief sub helps implement his decisions.

Newsroom organization

The organization of newsrooms has undergone a transformation. To understand the changes, a prospective editor must know what came before. The traditional newsroom structure ensures that four or five editors handle a story before it is printed. The copy desk backstops the desk where the story originates. Copy editors and an important editor called the slot are the last line of defense against errors appearing the paper. The theory is that many fresh pairs of eyes ensure quality.

Today some papers, have switched to a team approach. Under this organization, the copy desk merges with desks or teams where the stories originate. More papers appear ready to adopt teams. The managers behind the team approach talk of "empowerment" (more responsibilities and duties for copy editors). Another buzzword is "multitasking," which means an editor can write a headline. Many wonder if this system should be supported many of the features of the team approach, may lead to quality to suffer.

The traditional newsroom structure is hardly without its faults. Many editors find themselves locked into a routine job that offers little variety and rarely challenges their skills. Many young editors can do a variety of newsroom jobs, including editing, writing headlines, handling the wires and layout. To confine such an editor to one job is to waste his or her skills and to lower morale.

Day-by-day, the newsrooms have encouraged specialization. Previously, an editor who was good at editing foreign news did nothing else. A good headline writer mostly wrote headlines. A writer with a flair for photo captions was stuck on a photo caption desk. A veteran learns to adjust to these management innovations, knowing they will pass. In 20 years, newsrooms, once bastions of stability, have come to thrive on change.

This structure common today, has a managing editor; typically a male with strong reporting experience, perhaps a national reputation, would run the newsroom authoritatively. The city editor and feature, sports and business editors would report to him, as would the news desk. The city editor and section editors had several assistants and many reporters assigned to their desks. The city desk and section editors would come up with story ideas and assign stories. They would get the first crack at reporters' copy. The news desk included the Page One editor and several layout editors. The managing editor and the news desk decided the play of news stories. The Page One editor, of course, laid out Page One and the jump page (the page where stories from Page One continue).

The sports and features desks had their own copy desks, but the rest of the news would flow onto a copy desk headed by an editor called a slot. Around the slot on a horseshoe -shaped desk were five to 10 copy editors who read copy and wrote headlines and photo captions. On many newspapers, copy editors also laid out inside pages and cropped and sized photos. This arrangement is called **a universal desk**. The copy desk is also called a rim. The slot gave the story a final read and decided whether to accept a copy editor's headline. The slot set the tone of the paper, changing headlines and cut lines to suit that tone.

Editors and copy editors may also be assigned to teams. The teams are sorted out along the lines of traditional beats, including police, courts, education, city government, state capital and environmental beats. Each team has a leader, several reporters, a layout editor, graphics artist and copy editor. There are possibilities of rotating these jobs.

The reporters, team leader and other editors sit down and discuss a story idea. A reporter does the story and hands it in to the team leader. The story gets several reads from the team leader and copy editor. The graphics artist comes up with ideas for illustrations, while the layout editor designs the page or part of the page where the story would appear. The copy editor writes headlines, cut lines and other graphic elements just for the team's projects.

Under the team approach, copy gets reads from the team leader and copy editor. If the managing editor takes an interest, the story gets another read, mostly for content. In a traditional newsroom the story is read by the assigning editor, the city editor, a copy editor, the layout editor and the slot.

If you are a reporter, you don't like many editors tinkering with your story; if you are an editor, you want to have another copy editor read it on page proof just to be sure.

To summarize, traditional newsrooms have desk where copy originates, and desks that check the work of reporters and originating editors. The former are called originating (or source) desks, and the latter are called copy desks. Newsrooms with teams have merged the copy desks with the originating desks. The copy editor still backstops the reporter and team leader but joins the process early in the development of a story. The slot, an editor who once wielded considerable power, has disappeared at newspapers using the team approach.

Newsroom players

Newsroom positions, titles and job descriptions vary from paper to paper. The following list is merely a guide to help you understand the information on the introductory pages to this course. Small papers tend to combine editing and layout tasks under one job. For example, the news editor might edit wire and local copy, write photo captions and lay out inside pages and Page One. Larger papers tend to distribute these tasks among dozens of editors. Here are the titles of some editing positions and their functions.

Editor

The editor or editor in chief is responsible for all content in the paper, from news and editorials to features and cartoons. This editor represents the paper to the community. Atop of the organizational ladder, this editor is answerable to the publisher and the community the paper serves.

Editorial page editor

The editorial page editor writes editorials, oversees editorial writers and selects opinion pieces for the op -ed page. Many papers have an editorial board led by the editorial page editor. The editorial board helps decide which positions and candidates the paper should support.

Managing editor

The managing editor supervises daily newsroom operations. This editor runs a news huddle (story budget meeting) and decides which stories will appear on Page One. At larger papers, this editor has several assistants. The managing editor often consults with the city editor and section editors to ensure the paper is covering its community.

City editor

The job of city editor can be the toughest in the newsroom. The city editor oversees a staff of local reporters, including bureau, beat and general assignment

reporters. If the paper misses a local story, the city editor is answerable. Often the city editor has assistants who help edit local copy and ensure coverage of local news. At many papers, a city editor remains in the job for only a few years.

News editor

The news editor works with the managing editor, wire desk chief and city editor to decide where stories will appear in the newspaper. The news editor's chief concern is laying out Page One and the jump page, the page where stories continue from Page One. The news editor, in the absence of the managing editor and city editor, often changes Page One and inside news pages from edition to edition as newsbreaks.

Section editors

The food, entertainment, features and business sections at larger papers have editors who oversee their own reporting and editing staffs. Section pages often are produced in advance of the hard news pages.

Layout editors

Layout editors design news pages, crop and size photos and order headlines and cut lines. At many papers, they select the news stories for their pages. They work with the photo and graphics desks to decide which photos, charts and other art can best illustrate their stories and lead to attractive pages. The layout editor decides how to display stories and determines their length.

Wire editor

Large newspapers usually have a foreign and national wire editor who sorts through the hundreds of stories filed daily by the Associated Press and supplemental news services such as the New York Times, Washington Post and Los Angeles Times. The wire editor selects, trims and edits wire stories before sending them to the copy desk for polishing.

Slot and copy desk chief

The slot is the last person to edit a story before sending it to composing. The slot checks the headlines and photo captions written by copy editors. A copy desk chief acts as a slot during production and oversees the copy desk.

Photo and graphics editors

The photo and graphics editors supervise photographers and graphic artists. These editors work with other major editors to plan photo and graphic possibilities for

news and feature stories. Graphic artists prepare illustrations, charts, maps and other visual materials to help readers understand a story.

Copy editors

Copy editors backstop other editors, editing for style, grammar, accuracy, consistency, content, and organization and -- well, the list goes on. These editors also write cut lines and headlines.

In a newspaper, newsroom plays the part of brain and soul of newspaper. Right from collection of news, to headlining and placing, happens in the newsroom. Newsroom is the pivot around which the newspaper revolves. All the reporters, correspondents, report to news editor, who is considered the head of newsroom would be found in the newsroom of any newspaper or news channel. Today the scene in newsroom is a bit modernized as everything is done through computers instead of the desk. Whatever the shape of the newsroom, it is indispensable in the production of the news stories.

A **weekly newspaper** or **semi-weekly newspaper** is a publication that is published on a non-daily schedule. Such newspapers tend to be smaller than a daily newspaper, such as one that covers a metropolitan area. While weekly newspapers sometimes cover metropolitan areas, many others cover a smaller territory, such as one or more smaller towns or an entire county.

Most weekly newspapers follow a similar format as daily newspapers (i.e., news, sports, family news, obituaries, etc.). Thus, the structure of the newsroom and the functions are also similar to the daily newspaper. However, the primary focus is on news from the publication's coverage area. The publication date of weekly newspapers varies, but usually they come out in the middle of the week.

Some weekly newspapers focus exclusively on **business news** or **sports**. However, this article focuses primarily on traditional weekly newspapers which cover such events as news and sports.

As with larger newspapers, planning for a weekly issue takes much thought and planning to produce a coherent newspaper with clean copy. Like their daily brethren, good weekly newspapers are informative, contain vivid photographs, and provoke a wide range of reader emotions.

Story assignments and/or ideas are often determined by a reporter's beat (which may include such areas as city or county government, schools and education and general news). Sometimes, an editor will use a **ladder** (a listing of what will go on

a specific page) or a "**billboard**" (a master list of what each reporter's assignments are) to track content and staff assignments.

At many newspapers, the editor will also contribute one or more stories, in addition to duties such as obtaining story ideas and laying out the newspaper.

After a story is written, the reporter or editor will turn in his copy to be proofread (either by another editor or a clerk hired specifically to proofread stories and double-check facts). After a story is "cleaned up" (i.e., edited), the copy is placed in a queue for placement on the pages.

A periodical is a "publication with its own distinctive title, containing a mix of articles by more than one contributor, issued at regular stated intervals of less than a year, without prior decision as to when the final issue will appear. This includes magazines and journals.

Magazines and newspapers are commonly viewed as the most typical type of periodical (although technically newspapers are not classified as periodicals in library science). Other periodicals and journals produced by scientific, artistic, academic or special interest publishers are often subscription-only, costly, narrowly limited in circulation, and have little or no advertising.

Thus a periodical is a publications issued in successive parts at regular intervals, including journals, magazines and newspapers. Current periodicals are ones that have arrived recently within the last six months to two years.

In every newsroom be it daily, weekly or periodical, we hear a clamor from all levels for more interaction with the top editors. Reporters and line editors want direction, want to learn, want leadership from the top. Too often, they don't get it as the editors spend their days in meetings with other editors, making decisions whose underlying message - which may fit with some strategic goal of the newspaper.

SUMMARY

The newsroom is the hub of the entire activity in a newspaper, news agency or a news channel. Called by different names, the editorial desk, editorial department or copy desk or news desk, it is the nerve center of the newsroom. Here the whole planning is done. However, in a news agency, the news desk edits and transmits stories to the newspapers or news channels, which further tailors these agency news stories.

Day-by-day, the newsrooms have encouraged specialization. Previously, an editor who was good at editing foreign news did nothing else. A good headline writer mostly wrote headlines. A writer with a flair for photo captions was stuck on a photo caption desk. A veteran learns to adjust to these management innovations, knowing they will pass. In 20 years, newsrooms, once bastions of stability, have come to thrive on change.

EXERCISES AND QUESTIONS

Q1. Discuss the structure of a newsroom and the role played by different people working in it.

FURTHER READING

1. Reporting Methods S.Kundra (Anmol Publications Pvt.Ltd)
2. Outline of Editing M.K.Joseph
3. Editing Techniques S.Kundra
4. News Reporting and Editing (Jan.R.Hakemulder, Fay AC de Jonge, P.P. Singh)

HEADLINING

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the significance of the headlines
- To learn the art of headline and know different types of headlines

INTRODUCTION

The skills necessary for successful headline writing include: 1) accurate perception of the story 2) a vocabulary that is both broad and deep 3) a sharp sense of sentence structure and 4) a keen eye for ambiguity.

The headline must be drawn from information near the top of the story and key words selected that will fit the allotted space. Normally, a noun is followed by a verb and both are placed in the top line if at all possible. Label (non-verb) headlines may set the appropriate tone for some stories, usually features.

HEADLINING

A headline grabs the reader's attention, targets him or her by saying something meaningful, and creates some curiosity in the reader. It can make a promise for some big benefit, it can make an offer, it can challenge the reader in some way, it can introduce some really compelling concept or idea, or it can be something newsworthy.

Newspapers sell news and headlines are a means to attract the readers towards the news items. For a page designer, each headline is a new and unique challenge. The headline of the news items are much more than just a set of words. It is the responsibility of the page-designer to make each headline as distinctive as possible within the given newspaper format.

The sub-editor/ copy editors give headlines generally. The page make-up person cannot change them, but can increase or decrease the display value, readability or importance of the news item by using different techniques such as typeface or size, placement, making it run horizontally across more columns. Most newspapers everyday give, a four or five column bottom- spread on their front page; it is done to give a solid base to the whole page.

A headline is a '**window**' to the news story. Thus, a heading must fit, must tell the story, must confirm to newspaper's standard, must not just be a label, must be safe and must not commit the paper to an opinion. A good headline is one that in less than a dozen words summarizes what a reporter has said.

The earliest newspapers had no headlines on the front page, which was devoted entirely to advertisements, and the headlines inside did no more than announce the subject of the report. Today, every newspaper has its own style of headlining a story. Some newspaper give straight hard headings, while some other prefer to give exciting and sensational headings. It normally depends on the policy of the newspaper.

It has been found that all daily newspapers in standard size, generally prefer to give **straight headlines** and tabloid newspaper throughout the world give **sensational headlines**.

Type of Headline

Banner Headline: A newspaper headline written in large letters across the width of the page. When the heading is given below the nameplate of the newspaper and covers all columns from left to right, it is called **banner headline**. Some may call it streamer, which also covers the entire column but is normally given on the inside page. Sometimes the streamer may leave one column.

Skyline: for very exceptional and exclusive events, the headline of the story is sometimes given over the nameplate of the newspaper. It means that the event is even more important than the authority of the newspaper.

Rectangle: in such headings, all the lines are equal from left to right. Normally, it is of three lines but sometimes it can be of 2 to 4 lines too.

Hanging indentation: (right justification) the heading with more than two or more lines which are justified on the right side and unjustified on the left are called hanging indentation.

Waist: this is of three lines where the first and the third line cover the column but the centerline is smaller and placed centrally.

Full one/one line: the headline is normally single line heading covering all the columns of the story

Crosser/highlighter: crosser are normally one line headline which is given in the

middle of the story. Sometimes in the story, a few important points are highlighted in the middle of the story. They are also included in this category.

Flash: a recent development in the newspaper is to highlight the stories of inside pages on the first page, just below the flag. Flag (The Times of India).

Over line: this is also called the eyebrow or strap line. This is normally given over the main heading.

Oval: in such headlines, middle line is longer than the above and below lines. This is normally of three lines.

Multi deck headings: the descending lines get smaller in size, after the main heading

Sub-heading: these are the small subsidiary headings in the body of the story

Symbolic headline: this headline will show the special effects of the story

Left step: here the lines of the headline are justified on the left and unjustified on the right.

Step line: the headline with two or more lines, displayed so as to give an effect of a stair. (Ladder)

Inverted pyramid: in this heading, there are three or more than three lines which are centrally set from large to small. In some cases, there could be two lines only, set in such a fashion.

The art of the Headline

Although the copyreader works anonymously, when he constructs a good headline, he feels the pleasure of a creative artist. With short words and in short compass, he can tell a whole story. He knows that the headline must fulfill two requirements-it must attract attention to the story; it must announce the story's main facts. He sees to it that each headline he gives, does both.

There is a temptation for copywriters to give in to their own ego and vanity. Too many copywriters want to write a clever headline. A headline that shows what a wonderful, talented copywriter they are.

This is not good. This means you are spending too much time thinking about how to write the headline. Clever words, clever puns, being funny etc.

Four functions of a headline:

- 1.It gets the reader's attention.
- 2.It summarizes or tells about the article.
- 3.It helps organize the news on the page.
4. It indicates the relative importance of a story.

- **A good headline** should be accurate, clear, grammatically correct, strong, active, fresh and immediate. It should catch the reader's attention.

- **The two most basic rules for headlines:**

- 1.They must be accurate.
2. They must fit the available space.

- **For headlines to be accurate**, the headline writer must understand the article thoroughly before writing the headline; the copy editor who doesn't have a good view of what the article says isn't likely to write a headline that communicates clearly and accurately.

- **Accuracy tips:**

1. Spell check after writing the display type.
2. In particular, double-check any proper names or any numbers.

The headline should sell the article to the reader. Tell readers why they should be interested.

Every news story headline should have an active Verb; headlines on feature stories can be more creative. But aim for complete thoughts. Tell the story, but avoid the "clears hurdle" or "man dies" phenomena. Get the most important element first, the least important head element last.

- **Attribute** heads that convey opinion. If the lead needs attribution, chances are the headline will, too. Most times, attribution will go at the end of the headline.
- **Headlines should be accurate in tone:** don't put a light headline on a serious story. Be careful not to put a first-day head on a second-day story.

Match the tone of the story. Be original and creative, but not trite and cliché. If you do employ word play on an idiom or common phrase, be sure the meter is exactly the same. The headline will ring falsely otherwise. If you use a pun, be honest with yourself. Will it make the reader smile, or groan?

- **Don't repeat the lead in a headline.** Write a better headline than the lead. And don't give away the punch line of a feature story that has a surprise ending.
Be aware of any unintended double meanings: Real-life examples of some headlines that were published: Old man winter sticks icy finger into Virginia. Teens indicted for drowning in lake; FBI ordered to assist Atlanta in child slayings.
- **Avoid bad breaks** at the end of lines, such as dangling prepositions or conjunctions.
- **Avoid headlines:** Words such as mull, eye, rap, hit, slam, vie, assail, and seen and bid are headline weaklings. Alter your approach to get away from them. Look for a fresh approach.
- **Don't go for the obvious.** On fire-related stories, for example, stay away from verbs such as spark and snuff; on storm stories, stay away from verbs such as spawn, dump, blow, churn. In articles, hurricanes always seem to churn, and tornadoes are always spawned. And nothing should be taxing around April 15.

Some Tips

Best headline writers are spontaneous and creative; the best headlines instantly come to you.

- Headline writers have to be the best writers at the newspaper.
- Many times, the best headlines you come up with cannot be printed!
- Continuity leads to better headlines; one must write them day after day to get good at it.
- Read others' headlines to get ideas, but doing so isn't necessarily going to make you a better headline writer.
- The most-effective headlines are those that give an old cliché a new twist; readers are familiar with the cliché, but something different about it will reel them in.
- The more conversational the headline, the more the readers will like it.

Don't be so quick to abandon using articles such as "a," "and" and "the"; sometimes these words are needed for clarity. Also, headline styles change over time.

Four-part test for each headline:

1. Is it accurate?
2. Is it clear?
3. Is it proper in tone?
4. Does it have a twist?

Some do's & don'ts

Make the headline easy to read. The key purpose of the head: to communicate.

- Don't mislead reader.
- Don't exaggerate; maintain neutrality.
- Remember the rules of grammar and use them.
- Don't split nouns, modifiers, verbs and prepositional phrases over two lines.
- Each line should be a unit by itself.
- Abbreviate sparingly.
- Verify accuracy - and avoid any word that can carry a double meaning.
- Make the head complete in itself (especially true for news heads).
- Don't begin with a verb ("Saves daughter from fire").
- Use present tense to indicate past ("Bush wins presidency").
- Don't use present tense to indicate future unless necessary; add time element for clarity.
- Don't use common or unrecognized names in heads.
- Don't use *said*, when you mean *said to be* ("County said considering tax increase").
- Don't use feel, believes or thinks.
- Don't pad heads with unnecessary words.
- Avoid slang unless relevant to feature story and headline.

SUMMARY

The earliest newspapers had no headlines on the front page, which was devoted entirely to advertisements, and the headlines inside did no more than announce the subject of the report. Today, every newspaper has its own style of headlining a story. Some newspaper give straight hard headings, while some other prefer to

give exciting and sensational headings. It normally depends on the policy of the newspaper.

The skills necessary for successful headline writing include: 1) accurate perception of the story 2) a vocabulary that is both broad and deep 3) a sharp sense of sentence structure and 4) a keen eye for ambiguity.

EXERCISES AND QUESTIONS

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Q2. What are the various styles of writing a headline?

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