

# Journalism midterms



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

What is news? Define and explain briefly. involves the consideration of newsworthiness elements.

News is primarily about people, what they say and do, and why/how it matters to the reading audience. Distinguish between hard and soft news.

After your explanation, give a few examples for each. Hard news - Events that are timely and immediately important. Examples: killings, fires, accidents, city council meetings, speeches by government officials, etc.

Soft news: Events not considered timely or immediately important.

Examples: A luncheon to honor a retiring teacher, a car wash fundraiser by fourth-graders, the best gifts to buy for Valentine's Day, etc.

List and discuss the six criteria that are most often considered to determine newsworthiness. Timeliness

Eminence/Prominence

Conflict

Proximity

Consequence and Impact

Human Interest

The degree or combination of these factors will help determine the news value of information.

In addition to the criteria that editors most often consider to determine newsworthiness, there are other factors that influence whether a story is published. List and discuss five such factors. Instincts of editors and reporters

Audience

" News Holes"

Availability of News

Philosophy of medium

Pressure from publisher

Influence of advertisers

News Mix

Competition among media

Changing Demographics  
What is a summary lede? What are the two main purposes of a summary lede? Terse (35 words or less, one sentence) opening that provides the gist of the story and lets the reader decide right away if they are interested enough to continue.

1. Hook the reader 2. Inform the reader 3. Organize the story  
What is a blind lede? Explain it and when it should be used. Names not mentioned - used when the name of the involved party is not important. What is a buried lead? Why should it be avoided? When most important point of story is not in the opening paragraph. You want to avoid because it is confusing and less than interesting. Lacks focus and clarity. What is the preferred position for the time element in a summary lead? Time element is most important part of summary lead - shows immediacy. Its placement must not disturb flow of sentence. Usually, the best position is immediately after the verb. What is a nut graph? Explain its purpose and where it belongs in the context of a story. The " so what" paragraph that follows the lead - should be placed fairly high in the story, following the lead. This tells readers what the story is about. Especially important in features where a narrative (or other) type lead is used. What is the active voice? The passive voice? Which is preferred in

news writing and why? Active voice - the subject acts upon an object

Passive voice - the subject is acted upon

USE ACTIVE VOICE

WHY? It is more direct and vigorous. It is the best way to clearly convey the story information.

Only use passive when person receiving the action is more important than the person doing the acting.

Explain the following terms: A) dateline B) byline C) deck D) cutline

**Dateline:**  
The place and date the reporting was done. Date is often omitted. If no dateline, it means the location is the same as the publication or has little relationship to the story. Before story, all CAPS.

**Byline:** The writer or writers of the story

**Deck:** Subheading of the story with additional important information. Runs under/after headline

**Cutline:** The words under a photo. Informs readers about the content of the photo and how significant. Should be sufficient to convey gist of story without the reader going into the accompanying text. Contains the basic W's and H of the story.

What are the five W's and H? Where should they be in a news story? Should go in the summary lead for a hard news story. Most important elements absolutely must be in lead, lesser elements (or more complex ones) may immediately follow. Not all ledes are summary ledes. List and discuss five

alternate lede types . Write a quick illustrating example for each to demonstrate your understanding. Narrative: drops reader into the action

Contrast: lead that " shocks" the reader

Staccato: short words linked to central idea

Direct Address: lead where writer speaks directly to reader

Question: a lead that begins with a question, generally to be avoided because gives little information

Quote: a lead that begins with an unattributed quote, usually to be avoided because it is unclear.

None of the above, freak, hybrid: none of above of a mix of these Describe the inverted-pyramid form of news writing, and explain why most newspapers use it. A traditional news writing form where key points of a story are put in opening paragraph and the news is stacked in the following paragraphs in order of descending importance. In addition to the inverted pyramid style of story writing, list and briefly explain another type. Hourglass style - Like the name implies. Begins as an inverted pyramid, then there is a " turn" or transition. After the turn, it introduces a chronology of the events. Very common for trials or police/fire news. The major news is in the top half. The news after the turn provides background/details in chronological order.

Circle Style - Very popular for feature stories. Writer begins with a scene, based around the event or key source. The story progresses, then returns to the initial scene. It comes " full circle" - it helps give human interest to what could be a complex story about an issue.

Block style - Used for stories with multiple characters or events or a story that is multifaceted. It can come back full circle like the circle style but does

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not need to return to all the elements of story. Good for stories with multiple "ministories."

What are the four phases of a developing story? Phase 1 - The story breaks

Phase 2 - Attempt to explain why and how

Phase 3 - No longer front-page news. But, the follow-up looks to give make the story fresh again - further analysis or providing more human element.

Phase 4 - Story is no longer being covered, but follow-up angles may be pursued. Reporters keep an eye and ear open to see if major developments emerge. This then brings it somewhat back to the initial phase.

List three types of quotations that reporters can use in their stories.

Complete direct quotations

Partial quotations

Indirect or paraphrased quotations Explain why the word "said" is the most common verb of attribution. Said is used because it does not interject any personal feelings about the subject or way source sounded. Discuss these four conventions, which apply to the use of quoted material: On the record, Off the record, On background, On deep background On the record - All material can be used, with source identification

Off the record - The material cannot be used. Period. No exceptions (well, there are, but it is unethical if your source and you agreed all info from interview would be "off the record"). If you want to use the information in some way, get it from another source who WILL go on record.

On background - The material can be used, but attribution by name cannot be provided.

On deep background - Material can be used but not as a direct quotation or attributed to any source.

What are the major differences between a hard news story and a feature in terms of story form? Feature stories do not use inverted pyramid.

Feature stories can be presented in many diverse story forms; hard news is typically inverted pyramid or hour glass.

They use a narrative form, with a chronology that leads to a more defined "end" or conclusion.

What holds together a feature is a narrative thread. What holds hard news together is a logical progression of facts.

Features can often provide room for a writer's voice; hard news does not.

What types of stories fall under the feature category? List five feature story types - give a brief explanation for each. Personality profiles

Human interest stories

Trend stories

In-depth stories

Backgrounders  
Define libel  
Holding someone up to public scorn, hatred, or ridicule. The communication (publication) of false information that damages an individual in his or her profession, business, or calling.

Libel is most commonly caused by poor, inaccurate reporting and not by malicious intent. A second leading cause is misunderstanding of the law of libel.

Five Elements of Libel: publication, identification, defamation, fault, actual injury

List and discuss absolute defenses against libel. · Statute of limitations - it is generally 1-2 years (in CT, it is 2 years)

- Truth - burden is now on plaintiff to prove falsity, not on the defendant to prove truth
  - Privilege of reporting
  - Privilege of participant
  - Consent or authorization
  - Self-defense or right of reply
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