



KEY STORY TYPES

Chapter 13

“All the News: Writing and Reporting for
Convergent Media”

Multimedia Reporting Course

BEGINNING REPORTERS...

- ▶ Are often general assignment reporters covering different types of stories every day
- ▶ Types can be crime, accidents, government, education, meetings, news conferences, court hearings, among others
- ▶ In each case a good writer/reporter will try to determine what makes each story unique
- ▶ And will look for a fresh perspective or a new way to tell the story
- ▶ That's the only way to hold an audience's attention over time
- ▶ It's also very important to make sure the basics, the basic information, is not overlooked in the process

TIPS FOR COVERING EVENTS

- ▶ Obtain any available advance information
- ▶ Conduct research
- ▶ Prepare questions
- ▶ Ask clarifying questions
- ▶ Listen and take notes
- ▶ Watch for sparks
- ▶ Check details
- ▶ Always think about what the event will mean to the public
- ▶ Get to the event before it starts in order to introduce yourself (as a reporter covering the event) to the key participants
- ▶ Get there early to get a good seat where you can see and hear everything clearly

FINDING THE NEWS

- ▶ Focus on the most important, interesting and newsworthy thing or things that come out of the event/meeting
- ▶ Don't report everything that transpired, that's not the purpose of your coverage
- ▶ You must decide what the public should know about, things that may affect them
- ▶ Common mistake among new reporters is leading with the fact that someone spoke or that an event took place and not what was important or newsworthy
- ▶ After establishing the story angle with your lead, continue the story in descending order of importance style (known as the "inverted pyramid")

ACCIDENTS AND DISASTERS

Crashes, fires, shootings, traffic, chemical spills, hurricanes, floods

- ▶ Names, ages, addresses, conditions of victims
- ▶ Where injured are being held
- ▶ Exact location of ax/disaster
- ▶ Law enforcement agencies investigating the event
- ▶ Damage estimates
- ▶ Cause, if known
- ▶ Answer as many of the 5 Ws and H as possible
- ▶ You also want to get interviews with investigators, witnesses and victims, if possible
- ▶ Must always use attribution, citing sources of information
- ▶ If facts are not yet known, say so
- ▶ If information is not being released by pertinent agencies, say so
- ▶ See sample report, page 238-9

CRIME STORIES

- ▶ Account for a large percentage of all news stories
 - ▶ Crime news is always one of the most popular types of news
 - ▶ People want to keep tabs on what's going on around them so they can take any necessary steps to protect themselves and their families
 - ▶ Important to remember that people are innocent until proven guilty so use qualifying words like alleged, according to police, is suspected of..., etc.
- ▶ Challenges in crime reporting include gathering information from victims and authorities
 - ▶ Key facts/details to find:
 - ▶ What happened, when and where (police report/interview)
 - ▶ Victim(s) name and condition
 - ▶ Status of investigation
 - ▶ If someone has been charged, if so person's name, age, address
 - ▶ Description of at-large suspect, but generic descriptions shouldn't be used
 - ▶ Punishment if convicted of crime

ONLINE REPORTING OF EVENTS, CRIMES, ACCIDENTS, ETC

- ▶ Online advantages include:
 - ▶ Stories can be posted and updated rapidly
 - ▶ New stories can be linked to older related stories
 - ▶ Official documents can be linked for readers to see for themselves
 - ▶ There can also be links to multimedia enhancements such as photos, videos, maps, crime scene animations
 - ▶ Interactive in that the public can post comments, concerns, photos, videos

Television News Split-Page Scripting

Story Slug

Your Name

Date

TRT: :30 (length of story in
seconds/minutes)

Take VO here-----

Super: Charleston/Today

- ▶ Television news uses split-page scripts during live broadcasts. This is done so that the necessary technical information, on the left side of the page, can be followed by the many people who have a hand in putting on a live program.
- ▶ The anchors read the copy on the right side that runs through the teleprompter on the studio camera.

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