

UNIT-1: Introduction to News

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INTRODUCTION TO NEWS – MEANING, DEFINITION AND VALUES

News is defined as current or new piece of data about any happening which is congregated, processed and disseminated via various media to a significant number of interested people. It is the presentation of facts about an affair or a situation which just happened or is expected to occur soon anywhere across the globe. It is something which is not known yet. News is exhibited in a way to spread awareness about the occurrences in the view of public's interest and is collated from trusted, genuine and unbiased sources.

News is reported through different media like newspaper, television, radio, and internet. Its intention is to report and spread awareness on a matter that could possibly affect people. News is anything uncommon and out of the mundane, monotonous happenings of life. It is anything which is anticipated with excitement by the general public and gets talking about. News encompasses any current happening, which is of social interest, and the finest news is the one which grabs the attention from most of the readers.

The word NEWS draws its inception from the word 'new' and is typically involved in enlightening people with some information not known before. This word is also considered to be an acronym, taking its name from the first letters of the names of the four directions – north, east, west and south, since it is primarily any information acquired from all across the geographical locations.

News is often confused with a generic term, information. There is a subtle difference between these two terms. While information could just be facts about any subject, news provides with certain new information to its viewers, listeners and readers. The weather report, which provides the information on the day's temperature or precipitation levels, does not make news. However, when there is a sudden change in weather, when heavy rains occur, when thunderstorm happen, which also lead to floods, or when a continued absence of rain leads to drought, then it becomes news. The on-time arrivals and departures of trains or aircrafts constitute only the information. However, any major drift in their scheduled plans or cancellations of a few, which further lead to stranding of passengers, becomes news. An engagement, a wedding or a breakup of prominent personalities is often included in sensational tabloid news.

NATURE AND SALIENT FEATURES OF NEWS

News is the mainstay of journalism. The world of journalism is persisted by the sole basis of news. The basic notion of journalism is to collect, present and interpret news, which is essentially new and novel, to the masses. News has become a key social,

political and cultural phenomenon and an indispensable source of knowledge. News also holds the capacity to define and re-fabricate the world around us.

Any piece of news or incident should answer to all the questions, which could possibly arise in the minds of the general public regarding it, like when, where, what, why, who and how. Unless the news report answers to all these questions, it remains incomplete and inadequate.

The main objective of any news piece is to articulate the factual report of the event which occurred, while retaining neutrality, credibility, fairness and objectivity. The facts should never be distorted or misshaped and should be reported exactly the way they occurred. The language employed in order to communicate to the masses should be simple, easy, concise and clear.

Since the news is being conveyed to the masses in general and not to any specific group of people, its basic aim should be to convey the message in a simple and easy-to-understand manner. The most important elements which evaluate the worthiness of news are timeliness/freshness, proximity/ nearness, prominence, magnitude, controversy, oddity/unusualness, consequence, emotion, usefulness and educational value. It should display courtesy, good taste and respect towards and on behalf of its audience. It must neither be insensitive, nor unsentimental or intolerable.

The news must carry the following values to lead to its ideal standards:

- **Authenticity and accuracy:** Every crumb of details that is produced in the form of news must be precise. Each detail, like the names of people, their ages, places, days, dates and time of the incidents being reported in the news, must be accurate. The language used must be correct in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary, structure, and grammar. The statements produced of the people involved must be precise.
- **Meaningful, interesting and factual:** The news story should be eloquent and should make sense. It must be presented in such a way that the listeners or the readers don't lose their interest. The news must avoid vulgarities and obscenities. It should not drift away from the principles of accuracy and objectivity and should not be fabricated or concocted. The most important elements to be taken care of while presenting any news report are facts and truth.
- **Objectivity and conciseness:** A news story needs to be neutral, unbiased, fair and accurate and should be free from any unnecessary details. It must be concise and not unreasonably long.

- **Clarity and comprehensiveness:** Simplified vocabularies, easy-on-tongue order of the words, correct and clear pronunciation are the key factors of news. The news is considered comprehensive only when it answers every possible question which might arise in the minds of the audiences.
- **Cohesiveness:** A news item must be well-knit, well-arranged and well-ordered.

News could be further identified as international, national, regional and local, and might cover a range of topics, like politics, sports, economy, entertainment and crime. It is a blend of hard and soft, positive and negative news.

News could also be instrumental in the development of a country. News is the principle source of knowledge on global affairs for people from across the globe. Many a times, it carries valuable messages and, hence, inspires and influences people psychologically, emotionally and spiritually.

Conclusion

News has been defined differently by different sources. However, the heart of each definition remains the same. News is the timely report which covers the events happened recently and interests a significant number of people. “News is what will make people talk” stated Charles Dana, a former editor of the *New York Sun*. It is recapturing of the events, ideas and situations which the audience would find interesting, important and useful. News is categorized primarily into two types, spot and diary. Spot news covers unforeseen event or situation; for instance, natural calamities and accidents. Diary news covers the anticipated events; for instance, speeches by some dignitaries or launch of a new scheme.

There are various criteria which help in enhancing the value of the news. These factors play a crucial role in helping the journalists decide the priority of a news story. All such decisions are made keeping into account the kind of audience the news is intended for. These elements of news are timelines, proximity, prominence, impact, conflict, disaster and progress and human interest. Any news could well be differentiated into two categories, keeping in view its packaging – hard and soft news. While hard news consists of basic facts – 5Ws and 1H – and comprises a bulk of news reporting, soft news covers a wider territory and may not be as timely or important as hard news.

The key features every news report should possess are fairness and balance, accuracy, attribution brevity and clarity. We shall discuss these in detail in the upcoming sections.

ELEMENTS OF NEWS

A significant characteristic of a news story is that it is of worth to substantial sections of the audience. There are various factors, also discussed below, which are kept in mind while deciding the worthiness of a news story. A news story should perform well in at least two of these areas in order to be considered as worthy. A publishing manager, looking at how well the story meets each of these criteria, decides whether or not it should be broadcasted.

Timeliness/freshness: Immediacy or timeliness is an important requisite and an indispensable part of a news story. News is akin to a perishable commodity, which has a very short shelf-life. Time plays an important role in the news business. The newer and the fresher the news, the better it is. In this era of tough competition within the various forms of media, the stories grow old in a jiffy. The fresher the news, the more newsworthy it would be. Even a sensational piece of news, if delivered late, will lose its value.

Proximity or nearness: The place of its origin plays a crucial role in deciding the worthiness of news. This pertains to local issues, trends or events. People are more interested in home-grown news than in news from far-away places. Proximity here not just refers to the physical closeness, but also the psychological one. Stories from places with which people share special bonds, despite them being distances apart from these people, also have a similar effect.

Prominence: A recognized person, a known place or a familiar event has a stronger news value than something which the audience is not acquainted with. Public always shows profound interest in prominent elements like individuals, places, things and situations known for their social positions, achievements or prior publicity. Reports featuring them have a greater broadcast value.

Oddity or rarity: Extraordinary, unusual and unexpected events generate great public interest. If something is shocking or bizarre, the uniqueness alone could make it newsworthy. Readers are interested in knowing more about people, animals or things which don't fit the norm. A journalist should be cautious to not engage in anything bizarre for the sake of adding that shock value to the news. He should also never ridicule any people, group or community.

Consequence or impact: The number of people affected by a particular situation will affect its newsworthiness, whether it is a hike in petroleum prices, outage in electricity or an alleged outbreak of an epidemic. It could also be any news about some natural calamities, accidents or some damage, which would have resulted into a greater loss of life. Any happening which could possibly affect the lives of people in

any manner would have greater value and the one which would have a larger consequence or impact would be of greater curiosity.

Conflict: Anything which is connected with conflicts, arguments, charges and counter-charges, disagreement, fights and tension amongst people, nations and groups always makes a great news. It could be violent or non-violent; for instance, stories on wars, shootings or political disagreements, the ones involving differences in opinions of prominent personalities. The controversies surrounding various other aspects of lives, like people opposing price hikes or any controversial arguments made by important people also stir inquisitiveness.

Controversies and scandals: These are an integral part of human life. Vital news in stories covering romance, marriage, divorce, scandals and other illicit relationships of celebrities do grab great attention from the readers, who enjoy being amused by glitterati.

Emotion: Events which evoke sentiments for the fellow human beings and also stir up the emotions of brotherhood and humanity would be liked by the masses in general. Then, there are also a certain events which arouse in the readers an instant burst of emotions. For instance, when the space shuttle with Kalpana Chawala in it exploded, it was touted as a countrywide tragedy. When the first human being stepped on the moon, the emotion evoked among the masses was elation. By the end of every war between various nations, the emotion is jubilation. A tragic death of a prominent personality results in sorrow and empathy in the general public. Therefore, people are interested in knowing about such emotional events and want to participate in the drama of life.

Human interest: The general idea is that taking a glimpse at somebody else's life appeals to the voyeuristic part of human nature. This could also be connected with the emotions. We tend to connect with the stories of other people, and that is a part of what gives a story the human interest.

Progress, usefulness and educational value: Readers always want to know about the new technologies and how it could improve their lives every day. They also want to gain information on anything which could bring about significant change towards the betterment of the humanity. It could be an accomplishment in the field of research or engineering or an advancement in the parliamentary body. The columns giving details about education or job opportunities, blood donation camps or the ones which serve some human purpose are always credited. Also, news items which help one gain more general knowledge are marked as of great importance.

Further, there are additional factors which decide the importance of a news story. The assigned time on radio or television for the broadcast of a news bulletin or the space it would get in the newspaper determines the weightage it would receive and, also, whether it would be told briefly or in detail. The value of a news story is also determined or altered by its previous presentation via any other media. The most fundamental objective of news is to enhance eagerness and to inform, educate and entertain the audiences.

NEWS GATHERING PROCEDURE

News gathering is a task of persistence and courage. The journalists have to be persistent when it comes to collecting the facts, keeping their approach flexible. The focus should always be on gathering the information before they set out to cover any story or take an interview. They can take the help from reference books or past media coverage of the similar or the same event in order to get their grip tighter on the subject they would be covering. A few big media houses also have their own libraries with important reference books and files with newspaper clippings about influential people.

There are also study materials like yearbooks, encyclopedias, Guinness Book of Records and dictionaries, which come handy at the time of need. Some journalists put various other methods, often deductive or investigative, to use in order to gather relevant information. This not only helps in collecting the facts but also in having a solid knowledge of what has previously been written on the case.

There are three kinds of methodologies commonly followed by journalists while writing news. First, whatever the journalist sees is reported in the report. Secondly, there is interpretative, where the journalist writes what he sees, also adding his own interpretation of the event. Third, there are experts, who have years of experience working in the same beat. They write what they see while also adding their own analyses of the event in the report. A journalist should not go astray from the basic facts which couldn't be deduced further to anything solid or if the deductions are not strong enough.

Sometimes, journalists disguise their guess work for the intelligent deductions they do in order to build reputation for expertise. These gimmicks must be avoided, as nobody wants to know what they think. People are more interested in knowing the facts and a good journalist would always pick the right facts for broadcasting. It could well be a mixture of their discovery and deductions, but it should never be solely their invention.

Journalists must weigh the validity of answers given to their inquiries made while getting the facts. They should try to perceive whether the interviewee is cooking up or putting forth the facts. Having a sharp intellect and a relevant experience comes handy for this task. Of course, building up questions in a definite direction in order to arrive at the basic details of the case is another skill they should develop. There has to be a clear demarcation between deduction and assumption. All assumptions must be tested for authenticity and all facts clearly noted down in sequence before a report is finally framed.

Journalists should have a 'nose for news' and should be in search of a 'tip' which might lead them to a potential story. They might also get a story idea directly from the source. This source could be primary or secondary. Primary sources might include a person with firsthand information on the topic, an original document or an official report. Secondary sources could be a reference book, reliable websites or people with informed opinion on the subject. A news report must contain the information from at least one primary source.

Journalists often quote 'anonymous' sources in order to get the inside information, which the source might not reveal otherwise. This type of source is generally frowned upon in journalism, and must be verified with another source. They should also be cautious with 'internet' sources, as the information contained in websites generally does not have a reliable source to quote.

Further, they should refrain from sensationalism, which is a tendency to publish news which arouses an intense but brief interest in the audience. It could be shocking, exciting, unusual, disgusting and, at times, might not be newsworthy, too.

A journalist can't create stories from his/her own imagination. An extensive coverage of any said event must be done for a news story to be intricate. It is a collective effort and action of the entire team that is involved in the same.

Gathering Information from credible source:

The first step in news gathering process comprises of the identification of the news source. The main goal is provide a judicious, timely interpretation of a recent, exciting, and substantial event or development. The news sources must be verified for credibility. The news source could be news agencies, press releases, press conferences, public relation companies, institutions, organisations, local government, court cases and trials, interviews, other media sources, etc.

News gathering conventionally involves calling out an editorial meeting for press briefing. This is when the journalists are given roles which they would

perform through the day, the cameramen are allocated their responsibilities and the team is informed and briefed on what they will cover in the day. The reporters, along with the cameramen, go to the field and start accumulating information from the sources. This is generally done by observing, listening, writing and recording what people say in case of a meeting, by interviewing the sources and eyewitnesses, and by being credible enough to have practicalities in the news items. In cases where the information has to be pulled together comprehensively, the person who has witnessed the event firsthand or the one who has an extensive knowledge on the said topic must be contacted first either personally or via any of the media. Exclusive spot footage of the incident and the pictures supporting the same is a necessity. In case of interviews, a thorough research and planning is must.

In a news item, the basic facts it heart and soul. Without elaborate details, citation of precise sources and exact evidences, the writing will not have the intended influence on the audience.

Framing a news story:

Once all the information is gathered in its basic form, the journalists need to frame it all articulately in order to inform the readers about the circumstances. They, however, must adhere to the actualities collected. The skills like writing and editing are the backbone of the successful journalism. The news story should not only have eye-catching titles and lead sentences, but also the focus on human interest, which could make the reader feel connected to the situation. The structure of the story should be decided in a way that the key points and quotes are picked directly from interviews and investigative notes and observations are included to support the topic. The most important information must be stated in the beginning and the supporting facts must be presented throughout the report. The lead, the heart of the story and the conclusion must be positioned appropriately. All the unbiased, truthful and factual details should be presented to the public.

Editing and broadcast:

All journalists or reporters are eventually lead by an editor. A newspaper or a news channel might have numerous editors to oversee various beats. The news editors and the video editors collaborate with the teams and supervise the planning and the preparation processes. Also, executive editors, managing editors and other editors are appointed to cover various beats like, international, national, local, sports, advertisement, entertainment, features and obituary. The various teams collaborate with utmost professionalism in order to

focus on maintaining authenticity, accuracy, objectivity, precision, clarity and comprehensiveness.

News can be broadcasted through different media like newspaper, television, radio and internet. In the case of television or audio-video media, a good footage is more important as visual footages appeal to the audience more. A news story with the reporters commentating from the live location is preferred over studio reporting. The newspapers or print media should include supporting visuals in the worded report.

In an editorial setup, the editor frames the layout, does the paste-up and seals the report with proofreading. The copy editors check for spellings, grammar and other typo errors and for any other loopholes in the story, which might leave the audience confused or asking for more. The inverted pyramid format should be followed while framing the report. This implies that the most important information should be included at the top of the story and the lesser important at the bottom. In order to make the storyline more credible and to build trust with the readers, attributing the information sources is a must.

News can rarely overrun. The editors, or the *Gatekeepers*, in a media house control what would and what wouldn't be broadcasted in the news bulletin or printed in the newspaper. The decision to accept or reject news stories to be broadcasted or published must be made on the basis of economics, rating, time limitation and the elements of the news. Their decisions translate directly into the content of the newspaper and bulletin.

After the completion of editing, the news is finally broadcasted. In case of newspaper, the tasks like paging, which is creation and composition of the pages of the newspapers, is laid out and designed using various softwares. The tasks like printing, folding and distribution are thereby followed.

Furthermore, developing a follow-up story is equally important in order to record the further developments on the story line. Journalism can be an incredibly informative and useful form of writing as long as proper information gathering and writing techniques are employed. The most important thing to remember when framing a news report is that writing must be done with a goal of informing the public. Doing so requires including facts, not opinions, and providing as much information from all the sides of any given issue as possible.

HARD NEWS VS. SOFT NEWS

Journalism is a method of reporting which roughly tells about the things that really happened. The fundamental of journalism has always been the news; the concluding word has developed so many tributary meanings that it has given birth to two very important terms i.e. Hard News and Soft News. In fact, it is the most fundamental distinction of news. While hard news has a high level of news worthiness and demands immediate publication, soft news doesn't require timely publication and has a low level of significant informational value. These might include gossips, offbeat events or human interest topics. Hard news primarily revolves around politics, economic or social topics, which demand instant reporting owing to its importance and short lifespan. Soft news has very little basic social or personal importance, so it could be reported any time. While hard news often necessitates accompanying analysis or commentary, soft news includes gossip, local social scandal and human interest stories which have little implication beyond their immediate circle.

Let's discuss these two terms with a few examples.

Hard News

Hard News can be defined as up-to-the-minute news and events that should be reported immediately. It relates the circumstances of a recent happening considered to be of general local, regional, national or international significance. The nature of Hard News is perishable, so it should be aired instantly; otherwise, it becomes stale and is replaced by other hard news stories. It is latest news, which the public needs to know. Typically, hard news materializes by itself, for example, accidents and natural disasters.

Illustrations of Hard News Headlines

- The Trump – Clinton Cliff Hanger
- How Big Is the Black Money Catch?
- Confessions of a Digital Start-up Founder
- GST Will Not Change India
- Alexa Send Up Breakfast: Amazon launches Echo for Hotels
- Magnitude 6.1 quake in Japan's Osaka area kills four, halts factories

Rally chorus: Oust Modi, but need to prove we can deliver

'Must Focus On Stability And Strong Policies'

Times News Network

Kolkata: As they put up another show of unity against the Modi government, opposition parties also took a reality check of the need to buffer themselves against the criticism that they were a ragging assembly glued together only by dislike for BJP.

At a mammoth rally hosted by West Bengal CM and Trinamool boss Mamata Banerjee at the historic Brigade Parade Ground and attended by 25 parties, former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda seemed to recognise that the proposed anti-BJP front would be severely hampering if the potential components did not move beyond accusing BJP of arrogance and divisiveness in high on a common plank. "People are ready to respond to our 'oust BJP' call. They will be asking us who's our Modi. We have to work together to create an impression among the public that this coalition can provide a stable government. The task is less easy than said," said Deve Gowda whose prime ministerial innings came to an end just after 10 months in office on withdrawal of support by Congress.

"Next comes seat sharing. There are ten or three parties in each state. Secular national-level leaders should get involved and decide over seat-sharing. After this, we need to form a small team of experts and draft a policy document," said the former PM in what appeared to reflect a recognition to solidify the mutually shared anti-BJP sentiment into a programme-based platform. "We have only two months for the entire process," he stressed.

BJP has mocked the path handkerchief challenge by seeking to tap into fears of instability and by claiming that the unlikely combination of its opponents was no disparate to be a viable alternative with a clear leadership.

Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge also seemed to appreciate Deve Gowda's concern, but struck an optimistic note: that opposition parties have travelled some distance just by coming together. "Our destination is far off. Even if there is not a marriage of the area, we will hand in hand," said Kharge.

Mamata Banerjee, however, chose to focus on a more pragmatic concern: the need to consolidate anti-BJP votes in each I.S. constituency.

Let all oppn parties support the strongest BJP opponent in each seat. The Modi government has reached its expiry date
—Mamata Banerjee

We should work together to create an impression that we can deliver a stable government
—H D Deve Gowda

The Modi government did in five years what Pakistan couldn't do to destabilise India in the last 70 years
—Arvind Kejriwal

Narendra Modi has allies like CBI and ED; we have announced our allies
—Akhilesh Yadav

This PM is a publicity PM. We want a performing PM
—Chandrababu Naidu

Let us get set for the second battle of independence
—M K Stalin



PM Narendra Modi, after inaugurating the National Museum of Indian Cinema at Peddar Road on Saturday, promised a single-window system for film permissions and said the process to make piracy a stricter offence has begun. Earlier, he called the Kolkata rally a grand alliance against the people

► Related report, P 13

Figure 1 Times News Network (2019, January, 20th). Rally chorus: Oust Modi, but need to prove we can deliver. *Times of India*, Retrieved from <https://epaper.timesgroup.com/Olive/ODN/TimesOfIndia/?olv-cache-ver=20190109054138>.

Characteristics of Hard News:-

- **Timeliness:** refers to events that are up-to-the-minute and must be broadcasted to the masses; this is also termed as breaking news.
- **Importance:** refers to what is important to the viewers. Sometimes the magnitude of a story doesn't matter.
- **Proximity:** refers to 'what's happening around us'. This could range from worldwide to indigenous. Proximity is another important characteristic of Hard News, as it keeps the public informed on what is going on across the world.
- **Prominence:** refers to 'significant people'; everything they say and do makes it to the news.
- **Oddities:** refers to something which is not quite ordinary, or something which might as well be entertaining; people, perhaps, like hearing the unfamiliar things.

Soft News

Soft news is defined as the information, which is principally entertaining or personally useful. Soft News refers to a blend of information and entertainment, often relating to people's secluded lives. It could be family-friendly and could be written in an educational tone. Soft News is also called **market-centred journalism**.

Soft media can be involved in the process of television agendas, magazines or print articles. Soft News topics or events are low-impact and sociable.

Illustrations of Soft News Headlines

- Using Light as a Therapy for Alzheimer's Disease
- Self- Driving Cars: Where Are We At?
- Robots, the Future of Food?
- A DIY Smartphone Microscope!
- Seeing the Brain..... With Diapers (What?!)

Figure 2 Figure 1 businessinsider.in (2019, January, 20th). Five goals to being out the inner winner. *Times of India*, Retrieved from <https://epaper.timesgroup.com/Olive/ODN/TimesOfIndia/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=TOIM%2F2019%2F01%2F20&entity=Ar0>

Characteristics of Soft News

- No restriction of timeliness: The nature of soft news is not perishable; hence it doesn't need to be aired as soon as possible.
- Covering the personal aspects: Soft news always tries to cover the individual aspect of one's life to create curiosity amongst the viewers.

- Mode of entertainment: Soft news serves as a medium for entertaining the viewers and keeping them updated, too, with the present scenario.
- Sharing new ideas and concepts: Soft news tries to share new and different ideas prevailing in the market so that the viewers are up-to-date and their curiosity is answered.

The consumers are often divided on the basis of their interests in consuming various types of news, i.e. 'hard' and 'soft' news. 'Hard' news is characteristically cast-off to topics that are routinely, timely important and consequential, such as politics, international affairs, and business news. On the contrary, soft news covers the topics like entertainment, arts, celebrity and lifestyle news.

Hard and soft news are also differentiated on the basis of their manner of presentation. A hard news story takes a realistic approach in answering the various component of news; for example, what happened? Who was involved? Where and when did it happen? Why? On the other hand, a soft news story tries to entertain or counsel the reader. A few examples might include guidelines on how to make your dish more delectable, or what to look for when buying a new house.

One more point of difference between hard and soft news is in the terms used to describe them. Hard news involves usage of the terms like breaking news, whereas soft news doesn't use such terms, as it does not perish with time.

Soft news tends to advise or entertain the reader; the primary objective behind it is infotainment, irrespective of any deadlines. Hard news needs to be circulated within the deadlines only.

Hard news stories emphasize on facts and not opinions or analysis. Hard news covers the most important aspect of a story - 5 Ws and 1 H, i.e., who, what, where, why, when and how. Soft news, on the other hand, doesn't necessarily cover the facts; it might cover opinions also. Soft news has less propinquity than hard news. Writers of soft news often focus on the reader's emotions, not his/her intellect.

The reporting time in hard news is small and covers up-to-the-minute news and events that are to be reported immediately, while the soft news concerns more with background information or human-interest stories.

Let us sum up the major differences between hard news and soft news:

Hard News

- It has to do with the country.
- It highlights an important issue.
- It is of human interest.
- It is useful.
- It is “out there” (as in, it is gaining widespread interest elsewhere.)
- It could cover the following beats:
 - International news.
 - Political news.
 - Business and economic news.
 - Health or education news.

Soft News

- It might have a great impact on people.
- It could be unusual or unexpected.
- It could be first of a kind.
- It could be timely.
- It could be controversial.
- It might involve protuberant people.
- It could cover the following beats:
 - Entertainment news
 - Lifestyle news
 - Arts and culture news
 - Sports news

It has been seen that on an average, the curiosity levels are higher for hard news among the masses in a majority of the countries. However, this is likely to be subjected to the interest of the local public. People who might have a great interest in the hard news might also have an interest in the soft news and vice versa. Being able to differentiate between the hard and the soft news helps one to know how news is covered and what sorts of stories various news media are inclined towards printing or broadcasting.

THE BASIC COMPONENTS OF A NEWS STORY

News story is a written or recorded piece of information or an interview which holds a potential to inform its targeted audience about an upcoming announcement, an important incident or a controversy which requires the masses’ attention. A well-written news story must include all or most of the below mentioned components:

The Headline

The headline of a news story is the first opportunity to grab the reader's attention and is often a one-liner which summarizes the contents of the story. Its primary function is to grab the eyeballs and, thus, helping in setting the first impression of the story right. Effective or impactful headlines should be written with a logical sentence structure, should convey the message in active voice and should be phrased in present-tense verbs.

An impactful headline is crucial in making the reader interested in reading the article.

It uses the right words and thoughts to get the reader's attention and, further, his interest, to explore what follows the headline. It's important to spend enough time to frame the right headline. Otherwise, it could just have the readers glance over it without further getting into the details. Often, the reporters try to keep the headlines terse or abrupt to leave a shocking impact on the readers about a story. However, a good headline should be accurate, clear, and easy to understand.

The Byline

The byline is a printed line of text included at the top of the newspaper or magazine report and tells about the journalist or agency responsible for writing the article.

The Place line

The place line is a brief piece of text, often a part of the dateline, which briefs about the place from where the story has been originated. They are usually placed before the first sentence of the report, right on the first line of its text.

The First Paragraph or Lead

A news story with a strong lead is more likely to be read. The reader would want to gather all the key points of a report by merely looking at the leads. Therefore, a lead should not only cover the most important facts of the story briefly, but also set the tone of the story in a way so that it intrigues the readers to know more. A lead should, however, not deceive the readers in any way. If the readers anticipate some information right at the beginning, it should be delivered in the lead. Through the lead, a reporter should try to answer all the crucial questions which anybody, who confronts the breaking of a news, might ask.

Good leads carry the answers for as many of the basic questions as possible in a single sentence. It should strive to answer the five W's and 2 H, that is, who, what, when, where, why and how. Suppose the news story concerns the damage caused by fire, the lead should answer the questions like, 'who all were impacted?' by telling about the casualties and the loss; 'where did it happen?' by giving the location where the fire broke out; 'what caused the fire?' by giving the details of the factual cause;

‘how much of loss has been incurred?’ by telling about the probable financial loss and about the insurance coverage.

The length of a good lead should be one-two sentences, containing around 25 to 40 words. Although, there are many ways to write the leads, a good lead should discuss only one idea or perspective to keep it simple and short. This way, the readers will get the straight scoop on the news story, without getting confused unnecessarily. In general, the lead should have the most critical information in the very first sentence and the related information could follow in the subsequent sentences. Additional attribution in the lead can be placed at the end of the sentence.

The Body

The second and the next paragraphs expand on the lead and serve as running text of the news story. The body could be framed in various styles based on the type of the news report. Usually, the facts of a story are presented in decreasing order of importance, not necessarily in chronological order. The least important information should appear towards the end of the article, so that their possible omission during the editing doesn't take away any important facts.

Based on the type of news article and news story, the body might include the following components:

- **Quotes:** Quotes are added to enhance the interest and add support to the story. Attribution of quotes to a certain person is the primary way in which quotes are used in a new story. This helps the reader understand that it is not the author's words put directly, but rather those of another person. It is important to keep the quotes relevant and ensure that they are taken from the right source.
- **Background:** A news story can carry some background for the reader to understand the scenario better. The more complicated the story, the more pressing the need for a background would be. In such cases, the readers of the article need to be apprised of all the facts of the story. A well-written background detail, if included in the body of the news story, can help the reader in connecting the story with the past events.
- **Attribution:** Attribution is the mentioning of the source of the information in the news story. It allows the reader to accept or judge on the facts set out in the story. Its inclusion will elevate the merit of the news story.
- **Reaction:** A news story, which might contain some controversial information, is a good selection to have a part in it that carries the reactions, i.e., a few comments from someone who is familiar with the situation or from a representative of the government or an ethnic group.

The Conclusion

A news story can have a firm conclusion or a reference to some anticipated future action. If the conclusion is left too short, it would leave the reader discontented. A clumsy conclusion could undermine all the efforts put in by the writer and leave the reader dissatisfied. Usually, the conclusion can span from 20 to 30 words and require summing up the overall news story.

Let us have a look at the following news report. Here, we see that the headline is very descriptive and leaves no space for any guesses. It also compels the reader to know more. The headline is followed by the byline and the place line. The news report adopts the inverted-pyramid style of writing, where the most newsworthy key points come first in the introduction. This way, the main details come first, while the minor details appear in the end. The report clearly specifies the background, appropriately quoting the relevant people from the industry and attributing the officials in order to make the report even more reliable and specific. Lastly, the story ends with a logical conclusion, summing up the details while adding a little extra information.

It's 'white January' as 5th snow spell hits hills; heavy snowfall alert in J&K, HP

Amit Bhattacharya
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: January continues to be "white" in the hills of north India as the month's fifth spell of snow hit the region from Friday. Heavy to very heavy snowfall is expected across J&K and Himachal Pradesh on Monday and Tuesday, with Uttarakhand also in the snow belt weather. After barely a day's break, yet another spell of moderate snow is likely to lash the region from January 24 to 26, brightening the prospects of a snowy vacation for Republic Day holidaygoers headed to the hill stations of Uttarakhand, and, particularly Himachal Pradesh.

"We have issued a red alert in J&K from Saturday till Tuesday, and in Himachal Pradesh for Monday and Tuesday, as very heavy snow/rain is expected in parts of the region. For Uttarakhand, a lower level alert has been issued for heavy snowfall on Monday and Tuesday," said D P Yadav, head of IMD's regional meteorological centre.

With at least six active western disturbances, against a normal of four five, snowfall this January is set to be the highest in the past several years. The difference between this season's snowfall and what was seen last January —

which was a particularly dry month — is clearly captured in NASA's satellite images.

Good snowfall is crucial for water availability in summer months, across north India. "This is the best snowfall we have had in Uttarakhand in at least the last three years. Snow is the main source of water in the Himalayan rivers that feed the northern plains. If we get two-three more snow spells in February and March, water discharge in the rivers will remain relatively high till peak summer," said D P Dikshit, glaciologist at the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology in Dehradun.

Uttarakhand's lone snow gauge at Mukeshwar has only recorded trace snowfall this month (on January 6), indicating that the lower hills in the state haven't received much snow yet. However, the higher reaches are covered in white, including the Badrinath and Kedarnath shrines. "In Munsiyari in Pithoragarh district, we have had around five spells of snow so far this winter, which is around normal," said mountaineer Manika Virde, who lives in Garimoli village near Munsiyari.

Birnagar has already received 14cm of snow, very close to the month's normal of 17cm. "We expect above normal snowfall this winter,"

said Sonam Lom, chief of Srinagar meteorological department.

Himachal too is in line for record snowfall. Kothi in Kulthi district has received 11cm of snow this month, nearly 11 times more than what it got last January (7.1cm). "Temperatures have been quite low this month. This, coupled with frequent western disturbances, has brought heavy snow in many districts of Himachal," said Manmohan Singh, head of the regional met department at Shimla.

Shimla has received 8.4cm of snow so far this month, surpassing last January's 6cm, with more expected in the next few days.

WHITE BLANKET: Tourists at snow-clad Solang Valley in Manali on Saturday



Figure 3 Amit Bhattacharya (2019, January, 20th). It's 'white January' as 5th snow spell hits hills; heavy snowfall alert in J&K, HP. Retrieved from <https://epaper.timesgroup.com/Olive/ODN/TimesOfIndia/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=TOIDEL%2F2019%2F01%2F20&entity=A>.

ATTRIBUTION

Attribution is stating who said something or in other words, it is a method of telling what the source or root of some information is. Attribution plays a vital role in all the media, be it print or audio-video. Attribution is frequently used by journalists, who deliver credibility and clear perception of an event or a story. The worthy use of attribution reflects on both journalism principles and strong writing. Attribution gives the impending data to readers or listeners, so that they are able to decipher what the source of data is and who is conveying it. Any information, be it spoken or written, could be attributed in a report. It could include data retrieved from interviews, reports, books, films, newspapers, radio and television. For example, if a purchaser has a terrible experience with locally manufactured merchandise and a good experience with an imported one, he or she may draw a conclusion that the terrible product is terrible because it has been manufactured locally.

Facts and Opinions Based on Attribution

There is some information, which is unanimously acknowledged as factual; for example, Earth is round, the month of January follows the month of December, Lucknow is the capital of Uttar Pradesh. Further to this, there is much more information which various people might claim as facts. This, obviously, excludes the information which is not attestable or is deceitful.

Some people are casual with handling the facts and spread only half the information or rather misleading information unknowingly. Attribution is a method of stipulating who said what. Public statements made by people in power carry more weight than any statement made by a common man.

How Repeatedly Should Attribution be Used

Attribution should be used at any point, when the viewers might want to know about the source of information and data collected.

One of the key characteristics of a good journalist is to always maintain a balance between making clear attributions of statements and the tyranny of boring the reader with too many phrases.

Some useful substitutes to the attribution verb “said” are warned, suggested, urged, asked and disclosed. However, all these words have different meanings and usages.

Although ‘said’ is an unbiased verb, which does not signify either belief or disbelief, using it too frequently could make the viewers doubt the information given by the presenter.

Hence, attribution must be used in a state of equilibrium or in a balanced way so that the viewers do not question either the source of information or the credibility of the

data being collected and published. The journalist, too, has a crucial role to play in using attribution in an approved and accurate manner.

Merits and Demerits of Attribution

Merits:

Attribution is one of the most important elements of news writing. It includes stating or identifying the information source. Therefore, one of the biggest merits of attribution is that it helps the reader confer from where the information has come and adds to the reliability of the report.

It also helps in building the trust of the reader. Mentioning the names and the designations of the individuals who are authorized to speak to the media add a lot of credibility to the news report. One can use attribution from both spoken and written information gathered from interviews, speeches, movies, reports, books or even from other newspapers or media houses.

At times, situations may change where the truth told at one point in time may be wrong in the next. In these cases, attribution helps a journalist in specifying who said what.

Also, attributing the words to the person who stated them saves a journalist from proving or disproving the truth in their words, as he would just report them.

Demerits:

Lack of attribution leads the reader to believing that the report is the journalist's own opinion and there is no excuse for this sort of confusion in the story. Therefore, a journalist must play safe in attributing the story where facts and opinions are not easily separated.

A journalist must strike a balance between the requirement in a story for clear attribution and the risk of boring the readers with phrases like, "he said".

The word "said" in attributing both quotes as well as the reported speech could be replaced with the words, like recommended, urged, advised, asked and disclosed. However, each of these words has a strong meaning and must be used very carefully. The journalist must be clear with his selection of attributive verbs. Using neutral verbs, like stated, referred to or according to helps in breaking the monotony and repetition.

One of the greatest dangers facing young media professionals is accepting what people deem as the truth. Just because someone said something, doesn't necessarily mean it would be true. Although they might not be knowingly telling a lie, but they

might just be careless with handling the truth. The journalist should decide how much importance should be given to such opinions.

Here is one example of attribution from the news report we just analysed in the previous section:

Good snowfall is crucial for water availability in summer months, across north India. "This is the best snowfall we have had in Uttarakhand in at least the last three years. Snow is the main source of water in the Himalayan rivers that feed the northern plains. If we get two-three more snow spells of in February and March, water discharge in the rivers will remain relatively high till peak summer," said D P Dobhal, glaciologist at the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology in Dehradun.

Figure 4 Amit Bhattacharya (2019, January, 20th). It's 'white January' as 5th snow spell hits hills; heavy snowfall alert in J&K, HP. Retrieved from <https://epaper.timesgroup.com/Olive/ODN/TimesOfIndia/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=TOIDEL%2F2019%2F01%2F20&entity=A>.

BALANCE AND FAIRNESS

Balance and fairness are model catchwords of media and journalism integrities. Fairness channelizes that a journalist should struggle for precision and truth in reporting, and not pitch a story so a reader concludes the reporter's desired assumption. Fairness and balance could be used as synonyms for each other, yet these two words have their own identities catering within journalism. While the word, 'balanced' refers to unbiased and not essentially reasonable, the word, 'fairness' means remaining neutral and not leading the readers to conclusions which may not be wholly authentic or precise. However, both the terms hold key positions in journalism, and many ethical penalties could be levied on the journalists because of the absence of fairness or balance in a news report.

Broadcast journalism represents the power of speech of those only on both extremes of the spectrum or voices. Media detractors and ombudsmen of all party-political influences are hasty to believe such reports without rechecking any of the facts.

Journalists are frequently criticized for keeping balance and fairness at bay in the situation of a breaking news. Some media houses publish unsubstantiated articles or taglines which are incomplete or tell a story in fragments. In order to overcome this problem, the watchdogs of journalism have established several rules and norms.

A journalist must adhere to the rubrics and procedures being drawn by IPSO and OFCOM, which are the statutory bodies regulating the newspaper and magazine industry in order to uphold the highest professional standards of journalism.

Journalists must obey these rules in their work and, obviously, being fair and balanced is an ethical obligation they must sustain. Fairness, in a journalistic milieu, is about exploring all sides of an issue and reporting the investigations accurately.

How Should a Journalist Accomplish the Equipose between Balance and Fairness

1. Usage of neutral language

For instance, let us roughly state that the resident school board is discussing whether or not certain books from the school libraries should be vetoed out. Many residents representing both the sides of the issue are present in the meeting.

The journalists may have robust spirits about the subject. Yet, they should interview participants who support the ban and, also, those who oppose it. When writing the news story or article, they should convey everyone's opinions in a nonaligned or neutral language, maintaining a balance between the opinions of all sides of the gathering.

2. Proper usage of quotes and evidences available

The journalist should selectively use quotes and evidences to mount a story in a way that the reader is not left upset in any manner.

3. Exploring both the sides of a coin

A journalist must have no impetus other than presenting sited and validated facts. He/she should study and examine both the sides of a coin and should only frame a story after thorough research. Fairness in journalism also implies exploring all the sides of a subject and reporting the conclusions accurately

4. Usage of proper tone and language

Journalists should carefully articulate the report in a language and tone, which safeguards them from imprecise or biased depiction of the facts. As a journalist is an individual who is working on behalf of the public, his primary duty is to maintain equipose between balance and fairness in journalism.

Important Points to Remember:

- There are a few points to keep in mind while considering balance and fairness. Such rules apply only to the journalists covering hard news and not to the columnists writing op-ed pages or the critics working for the various arts sections.
- Also, while maintaining balance and fairness is important, they shouldn't get in the way of a journalist while investigating and reporting the truth.
- While considering balance in reporting, every opinion is treated as equally valid, no matter how outlandish it may sound and questions of fact are offered up for public debate. For instance, if a person says that earth is round, someone else is invited to say earth is flat. Simply put, balance is mathematical.

- Fairness, on the other hand, involves listening to people, observing them vigilantly and distinguishing genuine from sham. The journalist should have no motivation or desired outcome other than reporting the facts, otherwise it would be activism.

One example below, portrays balanced reporting done with the help of statistics and attribution.

Woman power: No. of female voters surging across India

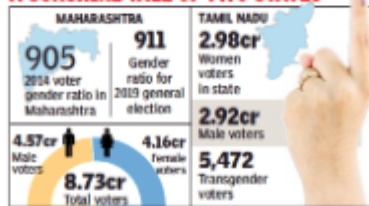
Gender Gap Narrows In Maha Rolls

Bhaskar Jain & Siva Kumar | 11/11/14

Mumbai/Chennai: For a country that suffers from low sex ratios and female literacy rates, the 2019 general elections will herald a level of gender parity giving women voters a greater say. The latest enrolment data from two large states—Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu—shows that the gap between the male and female voter base has narrowed considerably in one state, while in the other, the number of women voters has overtaken that of registered men.

The increase in enrolment of female voters in both states is in keeping with the broader national trend of improved voter sex ratios (number of women voters for every 1,000 male

A SUNSHINE TALE OF TWO STATES



voters). In the 2014 polls, Kerala, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Pondicherry already had more women in the electorate than men.

Tamil Nadu has now joined the club of its 5.16 crore voters, as per the final revised rolls released on Thursday. 2.86 crore are women and 2.80 crore, men. The number of women voters in the state has increased by 11% against a rise of 8.5% for men, in the last five years.

Maharashtra, where the voter sex ratio was traditional

ly skewed towards men, has shown an increase in women voters by 15 lakh. As per final rolls, there are a total of 8.73 crore voters in Maharashtra, of which 4.57 crore are male and 4.16 crore are females. The voter sex ratio this year is thus 911 against 905 in 2014.

"The voter sex ratio before 2014 was 875 or 880. It was then that we undertook a special drive to enrol more women to increase their representation," said a senior official in Maharashtra. The drive in the

states has involved door-to-door verification, contact programmes using educational institutions, and outreach through women self-help groups and networks such as those established by welfare schemes like the anganwadis.

Over the past decade, there has been increasing emphasis at the national level to increase electoral participation of women in all states. The all-India sex ratio of voters had, from 755 female voters for every 1,000 male voters in the 1960s, improved to 883 female voters in the 2000s. It was 940 in 2011, the highest since 1971.

By 2014, all the southern states had voter parity or near parity between women and their male counterparts. Kerala, of course, had more women voters—a reflection of its overall sex ratio while Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka had nearly the same number of voters of both sexes.

► EC's efforts, P 16

CREDIT LINE

Credit Lines form an integral part of a newspaper. It is a line of text of printed acknowledgement indicating the onset or origin of a news dispatch, published article, film or other work. A credit line also includes the name of the individual or organization which produced or distributed the photograph, map, chart or drawing.

How does Credit Line Work?

As stated above, the line of text which concedes the source of a news report, photograph, chart or graphics is called the credit line.

The statutory bodies governing a news report could be credited to PTI (Press Trust of India), AP (Associated Press) or ANI depending on which news service has moved the story.

The moment someone sees the credit line of a news report, he/she can easily decipher the source of the news. Besides giving credit to the equitable source, the credit line also gives newspapers a fig leaf in case a question is raised about the legitimacy and accurateness of the report.

Credit line styles

Different newspapers follow different styles while encompassing credit lines to news activities. The most communal conducts are:

Style 1

The name of the organization can be added just before the text taken from the news agency or line service.

Style 2

Brackets could be applied to break up the text which is inserted in the middle of a running copy. Also, the added text must have a proper credit line as shown in this story:

Mumbai, January 1st: Five persons were burnt and another 23 suffered serious burn wounds when a fire broke out in the city's Shoppers Stop mall on Sunday evening.

(According to PTI, the number of those killed in the fire stands at 10.)

The fire, which broke out on the first floor, destroyed three clothing stores and one grocery store.

Style 3

When copy from two agencies is added without clear differentiation, then the credit line must state the name of the agencies at the beginning.

Style 4

In case of a photograph, chart, report or graphics, the credit line must be acknowledged clearly at the end of the caption or underneath the graphic.

DATELINE

A dateline is a brief piece of text, which defines where and when the story or the article was written or filed. However, the date is often misplaced in the date line. Simply put, a dateline is a geographical identifier included at the opening of a news article or a press release. Datelines are usually placed after bylines. A dateline should include the name of the city, which in turn would specify the name of the place where the story was created. Also, the dateline indicates the date on which the story was written.

Dateline for unknown places

Sometimes, the place where a story has originated remains unknown. For example, the place where an accident happened may be a very small village. In this case, the dateline would indicate the name of the village followed by the name of the district. This would help the reader identify the place where the story belongs.

Dateline for moving locations

There are no datelines mentioned for a moving location and it remains the same for the afternoon and the evening newspaper.

How to Write a Dateline: -

Identify the Proper Topographical Area

Before writing the dateline, one should keep in mind the most suitable geographical area. It could be a town or a city from where the journalist is reporting or an event or the hometown of the person mentioned in a press release. He should also be aware of the AP and ZIP Code abbreviations.

Choose Your Dateline Style Associated Press Style

One should use a proper and feasible writing style for dateline. The capitalization of the sentence in which the words are lowercased should also be considered well. All the abbreviations should be put properly in the dateline.

Date Information

Press releases often include the date when the information is or will be released in the dateline.

Relative Locators

Dateline should indicate the location of the news,, too. A few instances have been included here to tell you more about the styles of the datelines.

Times News Network

Mumbai: Bombay high court on Wednesday struck down notices issued by Mahar-

Tushar Pawar & Neha Madaan | TNN

Nashik/Pune: Dilip Suryavanshi has been cultivating onions all his life in the Nirpurvil-

उपचुनाव : जींद में भाजपा रामगढ़ में कांग्रेस का परचम

जींद में पहली बार **कमल**, रामगढ़ के साथ राजस्थान में कांग्रेस का **रातक**

अमर उजाला ब्यूरो

जींद/जयपुर। आम चुनाव से ठीक पहले राजस्थान के जयपुर और

	हरियाणा		राजस्थान
	12,935		12,228

विंडीज महिला टीम की पाक पर जीत

कराची। वेस्ट इंडीज की महिला

REVIEW QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. What role does journalism play in society? What skills does a good journalist must have?
2. Should journalists always protect their confidential sources?
3. What are the issues faced in communicating on a wide scale?
4. List the various news gathering procedures practiced in crime reporting.
5. What are the most basic qualities news must have? How can you measure a story's importance?
6. List down your honest responses to the following questions:
 - a. Why do you aspire to become a journalist?
 - b. What do you think a day in a journalist's life is like?
7. Is it possible to keep all the prejudices or biases out of a news report? Does the social background or the outlook of the journalist not come in while reporting? Discuss in detail.
8. What kind of people do journalists look for as sources? How do they keep their sources going over a longer period?
9. Think of any news which has been big news in a newspaper recently. Then, jot down your ideas on the elements which possibly add to the worthiness of this news. Was this story news at all?
10. Refer to the front page of a newspaper and re-assess the news worthiness of the stories on the page. Do you agree that all front page stories have front page worth? If you were to rearrange the various stories, would you swap the lead story with any other story on that page or perhaps from an inside page? If yes, why?

FURTHER READING

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