

Writing for Television News

Compilation and Editing

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POINTS

- Attention
- Theme & Date
- Type of Story
- Visuals & Time
- Codes
- Supers
- Anchor-intro
- Voice-over
- Bytes
- Repeats
- PTC
- Sign-off

Writing for TV News

- ▣ News is very important thing in today's media scenario and there are a numbers of factors to modify the importance of news in actual practice.
- ▣ The policy of news medium may increase or diminish the importance of the story. The class of viewers and listeners that dominates the audience of a channel determines largely what is news for that medium.
- ▣ The amount of time available on television determines whether is told briefly or in detail and thus time alters the value of a news story.
- ▣ Repeating the same news also sometimes decreases the importance of a news story.

How to write the news?

- ▣ The news story is totally and radically different from all other kinds of composition. A narrative, a short story, a novel, a play, a drama, book, or a film script begins with a description of the background or with the introduction of various characters and conditions. The story ends soon after the climax is reached. On the contrary, a standard news story starts with the climax and leaves the details for the closing sentence.
- The story in all other cases opens gradually and major information is given in middle of a story while in news it opens with a bang all concrete things are mentioned at start and then the relevant detail is described.

News-writing for the Television

- ▣ Feature Openers
- ▣ Developing the Story: sequence of logic, time, place, impact
- ▣ Signposting, Last Line, Last Words
- ▣ Accuracy
- ▣ Writing to Pictures
- ▣ Simple short sentences
- ▣ No adjectives

News-writing for the Television

- ▣ The News Angle
- ▣ Multi-angled Stories
- ▣ Hard News Formula: 5 Ws, 1 H, and What does it Mean? (What when where why who whom how)
- ▣ The Intro: Anchor-read matter
- ▣ Contrast with the VO 1 and/or Bite/s 1
- ▣ Placing Key Words

Contents of news What?

- ▣ What happened? What is the event?
- ▣ When? When it occurred, at what time it took place?
- ▣ Where? The place, where the incident occurred.
- ▣ Who? The persons involved at that occasion. Why? The reason of that particular issue.
- ▣ How? The sequence of the event.

Script for TV news - 1

- ▣ Write your script before shoot (rough outline including
- ▣ interviews/bites as you should have an idea what they are
- ▣ going to say..)
- ▣ Ask the simple questions before you write -
- ▣ What is the story ? Keep it simple. Can you summarise it in
- ▣ two or three sentences ?
- ▣ Who is your target audience?
- ▣ As this will dictate how you tell the story and how much detail needs to be given. Older viewers can be expected to have prior knowledge of certain issues.

Script for TV news - 2

- ▣ What's the news angle? Who is telling the story and from what point of view?
- ▣ Structure of the story ? What sequences you will need to tell the story visually? Any archive footage?

Characteristics of Writing

- ▣ There are four Cs to broadcast journalism: – Correctness – or accuracy – Clarity – clear, precise language that contains no ambiguity; viewers cannot re-hear broadcast news – they must understand it the first time – Conversational – broadcast news must sound more conversational b/c people will be reading it aloud – Color – writing that allows the listener to paint a picture of the story or event being reported.

Characteristics of Writing

- ▣ News more than an hour or two old may be considered stale.
- ▣ The maximum length for almost any story is two minutes; normal length is 30 seconds.
- ▣ Slang and colorful phrasing is generally not permitted in broadcast news.
- ▣ Should be written in the present tense.
- ▣ Omit the time element in most news stories.
- ▣ Broadcast writers have to produce in a highly pressurized atmosphere: deadlines are imminent.

Story Structure

- ▣ Dramatic Structure—most common structure for broadcast news; it has three parts: – Climax—gives the listener the point of the story in about the same way the lead of a print news story does; it tells the listener what happened. – Cause—tells why the story happened—the circumstance surrounding the event. – Effect—gives the listener the context of the story and possibly some insight about what the story means.

Story Structure

- ▣ Broadcast journalists think of their stories as completed circles, not inverted pyramids.
- ▣ Stories must be written to fit into the time designated by the editor or news director.
- ▣ Getting the listener's attention is of top importance in broadcast news! The first broadcast news story sentence should be an attention getter!
- ▣ Broadcast news stories cannot go into the detail and explanation that print or web stories can.

Style of writing

- ▣ Conventions of Broadcast Writing: – Titles usually come before names.
- ▣ – Avoid abbreviations, even on the second reference — except FBI and UN.
- ▣ – Avoid direct quotations if possible. – Attribution should come before a quotation, not after it.
- ▣ – Use as little punctuation as possible, but enough to help the newscaster through the copy.

Style of writing

- ▣ Numbers and statistics should be rounded off: – Numbers one through nine should be spelled out; numbers 10 through 999 should be written as numerals; write out hundred, thousand, million, billion, and use a combination of numerals w/these numbers where appropriate (i.e. 15-hundred) – Don't write a lakhs or a billion, but ten lakhs, one billion

Style of writing

- ▣ Personalize the news when possible and appropriate (use the word “you”).
- ▣ Avoid external description—President and chief executive office of the United States of America should just be stated: USA President...
- ▣ Avoid using symbols when you write.
- ▣ Use phonetic spelling for unfamiliar and hard to pronounce names and words.
- ▣ Avoid pronouns whenever possible.
- ▣ Avoid apposition—a word or set of words that renames a noun: ie: Tom Smith, Mayor of Mobile.

Style of writing

- ▣ Use the present tense when it is appropriate.
- ▣ Avoid dependent clauses at the beginning of the sentences. – Ex: Stopping at the first leg of his European tour...

Types of formats

- ▣ Mini documentary—This format allows a story to run more than a minute, and as long as 15 minutes. It allows for a variety of sound bites, interviews and even music to be incorporated into the broadcast.

Types of formats

- ▣ Reader copy: Read by an anchor— Voiceovers: Reporter speaks over video, with original sound turned down, or off— Voiceover to Sound bite: Reporter talks over the video until time for the sound bite, then his voice is turned down and the sound bite is turned up

Types of formats

- ▣ Television newscasts can use any of the following formats: – Package Stories: Anchor introduces a prerecorded mix of video, sound, voice and standup reporting – Live Shots: An anchor will introduce the story and tell the audience that the broadcast is going live to the scene, then the reporter on the scene takes the story from there, either with standup, or interview.

Anchor writing

- ▣ Top line what the news is , why you need to know more , introduction to reporter if needed
- ▣ Don't pack too much
- ▣ Keep changing facts and figures in anchor
- ▣ Write the way your audience speaks
- ▣ Names should be there if required only
- ▣ Make it punchy
- ▣ As with any TV script, read it loudly to make sure it sounds ok.
- ▣ Write in a way so that viewers get interest to watch the news.

Piece to camera or PTC -1

- ▣ Opening Ptc / mid Ptc / end Ptc
- ▣ Why would we want to include a Ptc ?
- ▣ What information would we convey in a Ptc?
- ▣ Do we have something to show or demonstrate in this Ptc?
- ▣ Where and when might we do this Ptc?
- ▣ How will the 20 sec Ptc fit into the story? .

Piece to camera or PTC -2

- ▣ Ptc can be an effective way of explaining complicated issues or concepts.
- ▣ Reporters presence at the location
- ▣ Join two different locations/stories/case studies.
- ▣ Join two or more reporters in a pkg as mid ptc.
- ▣ Don't repeat info of pkg in the ptc.
- ▣ Try to do your ptc such as if someone edits it, it maintains its sense.
- ▣ Ptc can be conclusion of your story / analysis of the situation/ information of upcoming event ..
- ▣ Don't think that every story needs a ptc.

Interviews / bytes

- ▣ Choose a focus for the interviewee : what's the story
- ▣ Prepare yourself well. Prepare your questions.
- ▣ Choose the interviewee and prepare him/her: tell what do you want from him, what's your story.
- ▣ Put questions clearly , simple short sentence.
- ▣ Listen to answer, react.
- ▣ Don't record too long- you should know what the interview is doing in your story.
- ▣ Have outline in head.
- ▣ Don't ask double questions.

Anchor reading

- ▣ Its what you are saying and how you say it
- ▣ Write for TV. Be clear about what you want to say.
- ▣ Write small sentences.
- ▣ Research pronunciations then practice them.
- ▣ Try for conversation.
- ▣ Tell it rather than read it.
- ▣ Engage your listeners
- ▣ Relax. Calm yourself.
- ▣ Breathe into the abdomen, rather than upper chest

▣ **Reference**

Internet Link

- ▣ https://www.slideshare.net/DGMediaSchool/tv-news-42508171?from_action=save
- ▣ https://www.slideshare.net/arzoosahni/television-news-writing?from_action=save