www.snn-rdr.ca

A Teacher's Handbook

A TEACHER'S HANDBOOK

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FOREWORD

As a teacher and lifetime learner, one of the powerful and rewarding instructional tools you have at your disposal is the Internet. Resources and answers that would normally take you hours and days to find an answer for are now available to you within seconds and not only answered but expounded upon. Due to its timeliness and currency, the Internet can expand that moment with pictures, facts and human stories that make learning come alive.

As Florence McGinn[1] stated "the most beautiful thing that technology can offer is the individualization of education that will cross the gaps that students fall between". McGinn went on to say that technology and the internet enables teachers and students from all over the world to be connected; then collaborative learning can occur.

SchoolNet News Network (SNN) www.snn-rdr.ca is part of this new learning process. This 'cyberschool' connects Canadian students, teachers and the media community in a collaborative learning environment to stimulate student participation in journalism education. SNN's vision is to "*promote student growth and community development through journalism*".

SNN's primary objectives are to assist you, the teacher, bring media education into the classroom and to provide your students with additional tools to develop their writing, research and reporting skills. As well, SNN provides your students with a safe, educational and structured environment on the internet to publish their articles. We are committed to working with teachers to successfully integrate online learning and journalism into the classroom.

We wish to thank Industry Canada's SchoolNet Program and STEM~Net, Newfoundland and Labrador's Student Teacher Multimedia Network for their support of SchoolNet News Network. We'd also like to thank teacher Larry Danielson from Garden Valley Collegiate, Winkler Manitoba for his major contribution to this handbook. Thanks also to our National Advisory Board members, participating teachers and students for their assistance.

If you have any questions about SNN or what is enclosed in this handbook, or are interested in having your students participate in SNN, check out the SNN website: www.snn-rdr.ca or contact the SNN Coordinator: email: snn@stemnet.nf.ca; tel: 709-737-2611; fax: 709-737-2049.

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1 A Teachers View: Florence McGinn, 1999, p.74

CHAPTER 1

SNN and Student Journalism

OVERVIEW

Teachers are faced with many challenges in this highly-technological society. With the internet and its never-ending information stream, multi-channel television, movies and videos, young people are exposed to massive amounts of information. They are exposed to conflicting messages and information on human rights, news events and social issues. They visit websites that challenge them, anger them, inspire them.

By integrating SNN and student journalism into your classroom, you can focus your students on thinking critically about what they read and to respond as informed citizens. SNN - www.snn-rdr.ca provides students with an outlet for their writing and an opportunity to collaborate with students in other parts of Canada and the world. Through SNN students develop tremendous skills that transfer to all curriculum subjects. Skills that are also important to their future careers. These include:

- written and oral communication, interviewing and listening
- investigating, critical thinking, researching, comprehensive reading, analyzing information
- a variety of computer programs to create and edit their stories
- email to connect to professional journalists, other students, teachers and resources
- the internet to gather information and statistics
- graphics and photos in their stories
- video/audio equipment to add a broadcast aspect to their stories

Chapter One introduces you to SchoolNet News Network's mission and goals. It provides ~ ~

- information on media education and how you can integrate it into various subjects
- guides on how to get started with journalism in your classroom
- a glimpse of the type of lesson plans and resources provided on the SNN website
- ideas on how your students can be involved
- tips on how your students can get their work published for other students to see and read

and,

- information about how professional journalists can assist your students through our Mentorship Program

BUILDING LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Mission Statement

SchoolNet News Network (SNN) connects Canadian students, teachers and the media community in a collaborative learning environment to stimulate student participation in journalism education.

SchoolNet News Network (SNN) www.snn-rdr.ca is a multimedia journalism network for K-12 students across Canada. SNN and its French counterpart Rédaction de Rescol (RDR) offer young Canadians a chance to take part in the fastest-moving development in media history - online publishing and broadcasting. The SNN website receives 50,000 - 65,000 visitors each month. That's a lot a people seeing your student's work.

SNN has three elements:

1. Media awareness and literacy. As a student journalism network, SNN provides teachers like you with additional tools to show your students how the media works. It encourages students to think critically about what they read, see and hear in newspapers, radio and television broadcasts and online media. The Classroom Section www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/class.html features lesson plans, writing guides and activities to use with your classroom curriculum.

2. Journalism education. The SNN Newsroom www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/news.html helps your students develop good writing, reporting and researching skills. One of our most successful programs is the SNN Mentorship Program www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/helpfrompros.html . This Program connects students with professional journalists throughout Canada for assistance on writing skills, research, and career information.

3. Online publication and broadcast. Through its monthly online Student Magazine www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/moned.html, SNN gives student reporters an opportunity to publish and broadcast their work in an emerging media form, in a safe, educational environment.

SNN is accessible to students and teachers across Canada regardless of their access to high end computer equipment and is open to all Canadian students whether they participate as a class with the support of their teacher or as an individual.

When the SNN Coordinator receives articles from students, they are reviewed, edited where necessary and then placed online in SNN's Monthly Student Magazine. At the student or teacher's request, unpublished articles can be returned to the student with suggestions to improve their story for future publication.

Recognition. www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/awards.html In 2001 SNN won the Award of Merit from AMTEC. In 1999 the Award of Excellence from the Association for Media and Technology in Education (AMTEC) and the Canadian Education Association Achievement Award.

JOURNALISM IN THE CURRICULUM

As a teacher, you can use student journalism as a way of engaging your students in working on outcomes that are vital to the whole curriculum:

- effective communication
- problem solving
- critical thinking
- investigation
- collaboration
-responsible citizenship
- understanding the world as a set of related system
-using technology

Student Journalism is a friendly entree into many traditional areas of study, and a way of showing the connections among those areas. The SNN website Classroom Section www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/class.html provides many cross-curriculum lesson plans and activities for your use in the classroom. Here are a few ideas on integrating media education and journalism into the curriculum.

English and Language Arts. As a language arts teacher you might have your students analyze articles in different newspapers, news broadcasts and internet news sites. This can help them understand which ones are written well, objectivity and unbiased. They can summarize an article using various formats already used in language arts, such as:

- Persuasive essay similar to Opinion writing
- Thesis statement- Writing a lede/lead
- Feature/Profile writing

Media Studies. A natural fit with journalism, students can develop stories such as understanding how media works and the amount of media we are exposed to; explore the values and tastes that related to students' own culture; analyze implied messages of verbal content in the media; write opinion stories about different media issues: teen image, violence, health issues and government regulations. See SNN/RDR website for further information on media education.

Social Studies/Family Studies/Health. Issues ranging from family violence, parenting, human rights violations, poverty, social issues in their community and social issues in their schools are discussed daily in schools. Through writing and journalism, students have an opportunity to express their views on issues that matter to them.

French immersion/ First Language. French immersion & french teachers can draw on the educational resources available through SNN and its French counterpart, Rédaction de Rescol. You can encourage your students to develop their language skills by translating from English to French OR French to English. Select stories from the current issue of SNN/RDR and assign them to students for translation.

Technology. Technology students learn how to research using effective researching techniques and how to critique websites. They also develop good computer skills, use software program to write their stories and multimedia equipment and software in the development of audio/video stories.

History. If history doesn't seem relevant to your students' lives, ask them to think of it this way: history is simply the current events of yesterday. And today's news will be in the history books of the future. Writing about current events and history can help your students understand how it is influenced by media.

Geography. Your students can tell others about what is happening around the world by getting them to trek around the globe through the internet and exploring interesting places and report on issues facing other countries.

Science. Writing on science issues offers your students a unique perspective on the study of biology, chemistry, palaeontology, physics, oceanography or technology. As well they can report on developments in science: computers, medicine, space. It can also help your students understand why ecological, conservation news is hard to locate in mainstream press.

GETTING STARTED

Bringing SchoolNet News Network into your classroom is easy! Here's how:

1. Review the information contained on the SNN website www.snn-rdr.ca. Check out the SNN's Classroom - Where to Begin section www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/wtb.html . There you will find the SNN Writing Guide, information on journalistic writing skills and lesson plans. The first lesson plan provides a step-by-step process to create a newspaper article. These lesson plans also show you how to integrate SNN and journalism into the regular curriculum — whether it is language arts, history, geography, math, science or technology.

2. Visit the Teacher's Lounge www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/tl.html. In the Teachers Lounge you can make contact with participating SNN teachers who are involved in journalism studies, broadcast media and communications technology. You can also access tremendous resources in the Research Library such as media issues, journalism and media websites.

3. Contact SNN. Once you have reviewed the SNN website, contact SNN at snn@stemnet.nf.ca. The Coordinator will discuss with you how SNN can help you and your students.

4. Start your class with Lesson Plan 1 www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/lp.html. This lesson plan explains the basic principles and structure of a newspaper article. It is an excellent foundation to integrate online journalism with your classroom.

5. SNN Mentorship Program www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/helpfrompros.html. SNN is the only student journalism website in Canada to offer students a chance to connect with professional journalists. Once you or a student request a mentor, the SNN Coordinator will find the right match for them. The student will then send a story or story idea to their mentor via email for discussion.

6. SNN can help your students. Through the Newsroom www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/news.html SNN provides students with story ideas, news resources, an editor's desk to submit their writing, interaction with other student reporters and shows them how the media works. The Reporters Toolbox covers starting a story, editing, research, doing interviews, using video/audio and copyright information.

7. Publish your students' articles. Once your students have completed their stories, they can submit their articles to the SNN Monthly Student Magazine www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/moned.html. All they need to do is forward their articles via email to SNN: snn@stemnet.nf.ca.

REPORTING FOR SNN

SchoolNet News Network (SNN) teaches students how the media works, gets them writing in a journalistic style and lets them publish their work in an emerging media form. The Internet is the only form of publishing that allows a journalist to incorporate everything from text and graphics to audio and video.

A new edition of SNN is published each month on the web at www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/moned.html. Our website is continually updated as new stories, photos, videos and audio recordings come into SNN from student reporters across the country. Each month approximately 50,000 - 65,000 visitors check out the SNN website and student work.

Ways your students can get involved in SNN:

1. Your students can become regular contributors to SNN. Through SNN's student correspondent email list, SNN keeps in touch with student reporters across Canada. Students receive information on story ideas and find out what other students are writing about.

2. Teachers can encourage interested students to form a SNN News Team for their school. Each month, one student can lead the group in discussions of story ideas and current issues in their school or community. Then assign stories to each member of the Team to write/produce.

3. School News. Students can write about specific issues in their school, school activities (sports, drama) and publish them in the SNN Student Magazine 'School News' section. SNN can also set up a web page specifically for your school's news.

4. Spotlight on Schools - www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/spotlight/index.html. Students and their schools can also participate in 'Spotlight on Schools', a half-hour online newscast featuring video stories from schools across Canada. As well, schools can send highlights of events/activities happening in their school and their community. These highlights can be in print (with photo if available), audio and video format.

5. Multimedia. Multimedia stories (audio, video, photography) can feature a school activity, community activity or teen discussion on an issue affecting them. Students must submit a brief written overview on what their multimedia story is about. Check out the SNN Student Magazine for samples of student audio/video stories www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/moned.html.

SNN STUDENT MAGAZINE

1. Each month, SNN publishes student work in the SNN Student Magazine www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/moned.html - a magazine written by students for students.

2. Articles cover several categories: news(local, national & international), school news, opinion, profile, sports, entertainment and arts and expressions (poetry, photos, short stories).

3. Students can write about subjects such as:
   ~ teen issues such as peer pressure, school, friendships, bullying, dating, drinking/drugs
   ~ media issues - stereotypes in the media/movies, advertising geared towards teens
   ~ cultural diversity in Canada
   ~ hobbies/activities they are involved in
   ~ entertainment: movies, cds, television shows, musicians, videos

4. Spotlight on Schools - www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/spotlight/index.html. Students and their schools can also participate in 'Spotlight on Schools', a half-hour online newscast featuring video stories from schools across Canada. As well, schools can send highlights of events/activities happening in their school and their community. These highlights can be in print (with photo if available), audio and video format.

Submitting Articles to SNN:

1. Format. Articles are to be submitted in word or word perfect format. Do not use fancy or large fonts or indentations. Most stories should run from 200 to 600 words while feature stories can be a little longer.

2. Students must ensure their articles includes accurate information. They must check their facts. If they use a website to obtain information, ensure it is a reputable website by an established organization, not someone's personal website.

3. Sources of information must be noted at the bottom of a student's article.

4. They must not use slanderous/libelous statements. If SNN feels a story features such statements, the article will not be published and will be returned to the student for revisions.

5. Articles can be submitted by email (as an attachment or pasted into the email) snn@stemnet.nf.ca OR in the Editor's Desk www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/editorsdesk.html.

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Being involved with SNN doesn't have to be an activity trap for you. Once SNN is introduced to students they can work with the SNN office staff in the development and completion of their stories.

Let's say a student is sitting at their computer in Manitoba, working on an editorial for SNN. They have all the facts before them. They have spelled out their point of view on the topic and have just written a great closing line, one that should convince everyone to share their opinion. But they are just not sure if the editorial flows. Does that comparison they made in the third paragraph work? Plus, it runs a little long. How can they trim it without losing important elements?

They don't have to ponder those questions on their own. They can send it along to an established journalist in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, any province in Canada and ask for their input?

That's how the SNN Mentorship program works. It pairs students with journalists who are working in newsrooms across the country. They connect via e-mail to discuss their story and any questions they have about reporting, writing, editing, and story ideas.

Here's How:

1. Fill out the request form provided in the SNN website Mentorship section www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/helpfrompros.html.

2. The SNN Coordinator will ask your student questions such as the type of writing they enjoy, their previous experience, stories they are working on.

3. Once the Coordinator receives that information she will match that student with the best journalism mentor in our program. She will contact the mentor to inquire whether he/she is available to work with a student.

4. Once a positive response is received in the office, the Coordinator contacts the student. The student will then make the initial contact with the mentor telling him/her about themselves.

5. The student begins a story and then sends the story to their mentor via e-mail for feedback. The mentor reads the story, offers suggestions on how to improve the story and returns it to the student.

6. The story may go back and forth between the mentor and the SNN reporter several times as the student reporter re-writes the piece or adds new information.

7. Once completed, the student can then submit the story to SNN for publication.

CHAPTER 2

SNN Curriculum Resources

OVERVIEW

The job of the journalist is challenging. The process of communicating information has sped up to the point that events happening around the world are reported and commented on within minutes because of new communication technologies such as the internet and videophones.

Newspapers, radio, television, the internet, magazines, photographs, and other information-gathering and distributing mechanisms now present their interpretation to a global audience, an audience that must be able to thinking critically about what they are being presented.

Student journalism helps students become better listeners, readers, viewers, and thinkers, as well as consumers of oral, print, and other media texts. It helps students write, speak, and represent more precisely, more clearly, and more persuasively. It provides students with opportunities to communicate important information to others and encourages them to use creativity and imagination while demanding discipline, responsibility, and ethical behaviour.

Schoolnet News Network (SNN) is Canada's journalism network for students. The SNN website www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/class.html offers you, as a teacher, lesson plans and activities you can use in the classroom. These lesson plans cover many subject areas such as social studies, media issues, global issues, history, and science.

This chapter provides you with a glimpse of what you can find in the Classroom Section of the SNN Website. The following pages outline information such as ~

- curriculum outcomes and learning objectives achieved through student journalism
- writing guides to get your students started with developing an story
- sample lesson plans and activities

For more lesson plans, activities, and resources, check out the SNN Website.

CURRICULUM OUTCOMES and LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Each province has its own curriculum outcomes for advanced writing, journalism and broadcast media courses, however, most follow curriculum outcomes and learning objectives such as those listed here.

CORE CURRICULUM

1. Explore thoughts, ideas, feelings and experiences
2. Comprehend & respond personally and critically to oral, print, television, radio and other media.
3. Manage ideas and information
4. Enhance the clarity and artistry of communication
5. Celebrate and build community

COMMON ESSENTIAL LEARNINGS

Generally, learning outcomes follow six key areas: Communication, Numeracy, Critical/Creative Thinking, Personal and Social Values and Skills, Technological Literacy, and Independent Learning.

Communication

1. use language to think about, listen to, view, read, write, discuss, and produce various media
2. recognize that each medium has a set of codes, conventions, and characteristics which affect the way the messages are transmitted and understood
3. extend their language repertoires and explore journalistic styles
4. communicate in various formats for various audiences and purposes.

Numeracy

1. read, interpret, and communicate facts and figures through reports, charts, and graphs
2. recognize and create organizational patterns to communicate quantitative information
3. use statistics to interpret and communicate information.

Critical and Creative Thinking

1. use language as an instrument of thought
2. think reflectively, critically, and creatively
3. listen, read, and view analytically and critically
4. make and justify decisions
5. pose questions and seek clarification
6. seek truth, accuracy, and objectivity.

Personal and Social Values and Skills

1. learn to interact, co-operate, and collaborate
2. understand the importance of social responsibility and personal integrity in the use of language and media
3. respect the rights of individuals
4. understand that the values of cultural groups differ
5. recognize social, legal, and ethical obligations of the press.

Technological Literacy
1. understand that technology is a tool to facilitate communication
2. learn how technology impacts on their lives, society, and the environment
3. understand how technological developments are shaped by society.

Independent Learning
1. learn knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to become lifelong learners
2. learn to use a variety of resources to assist their learning
3. learn to access information from a variety of sources.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Foundational Learning Objectives
1. recognize & appreciate the role of journalism in contemporary society and in their personal lives
2. recognize & explore the ways in which print and broadcast media create and present a message
3. recognize & create the various forms, conventions, and styles of journalistic writing
4. recognize the attributes of quality journalism and the legal, ethical, and moral issues which confront the free press
5. develop the speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing, and representing skills needed to create various print publications and broadcast productions.

Learning Objectives in Print Journalism
1. recognize the importance for journalists of interviewing, researching, and reporting
2. consider how print journalism has changed and evolved over the years
3. recognize how pervasive information is in contemporary society
4. recognize the role of news reporting in print media, especially newspapers
5. recognize the basic formats used in newspapers
6. write effective headlines
7. evaluate the quality and reliability of various forms and examples of journalism

Learning Objectives in Broadcast Journalism
1. recognize speaker's attitude, tone, and bias
2. relate the structure of the work to the author's purpose and theme
3. recognize the importance for journalists of interviewing, researching, and reporting
4. recognize the difference between writing for electronic media and writing for print media
5. understand the requirements for reporting news using radio, television, and the Internet
6. consider how electronic media, including the Internet, have changed journalism and will continue to affect it in the future
7. identify the conventions of the electronic media
8. recognize how pervasive information is in contemporary society
9. speak to share thoughts, opinions, and feelings
10. listen to understand and learn
11. understand how a radio or television production is created
12. demonstrate effective writing and production techniques.

WRITING GUIDE

The very first step in developing journalism skills in your students is to teach them how to write an article. Like any other written work, a good article follows a plan. Check out the SNN Classroom - Where to Begin section of our website: http://www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/wtb.html.

1. Come up with a topic.

Before you start work on a story, you must figure out what you would like to write about. What makes a good story? Just about anything, providing it's about a topic that involves people and matters to people!

When you are looking for ideas, listen to what's going on around you. What are people talking about? What gets them excited or angry? watch everything in your everyday life.

Ask yourself a few questions: The 5 W's of News
What's going on? What happened?
Who's involved? Who did what? To whom? Who was affected by it?
When did this change? When did it happen? In what order did the events occur?
Where is this happening? The location.
How did it happen?
Why did it happen? What caused it to happen?

Those questions will help you recognize a new development or trend in your peer group or in your community. They will help you narrow the focus of your story. And they'll help you as you try to do research and write your story.

2. Make a List

Write down in a point-by-point list everything you know about your chosen topic.

3. Focus your idea

A topic is a very general and broad category. But a story idea is something that's specific and narrowly focussed. Here's an example: Television and young people are a general heading that includes many different things. But a story idea would be: do today's television shows aimed at young people accurately reflect the lives of the intended audience?

In order to focus your story, try to boil it down to one statement or one question. If you can do that, you probably have a clear sense of what your story will be.

4. Decide on the form your story will take

There are many ways to approach a story. Perhaps your goal is to share information in a timely way. Or maybe you want to offer an in-depth look at an issue. Or perhaps you want to express your opinion on a topic. Here are some of the forms your story can take:

News: A news story is immediate and often delivers time-sensitive information that may change moments later. It must compete with many other stories for a reader's or listener's attention, so the punch line must be in the very first sentence. News stories include facts, quotes and details about what is happening.

Feature: If you often ask the questions "how" and why", then you would probably enjoy writing feature stories. A feature takes an in-depth look at what's going on behind the news. It gets into the lives of people. It tries to explain why and how a trend developed. Unlike news, a feature does not have to be tied to a current event or a breaking story. But it can grow out of something that's reported in the news.

Opinion: Think of an opinion piece as a persuasive essay — the writer has an opinion or a point of view on an issue and he or she wants to convince the reader to agree. In order to do that well, you must research your topic and know the facts. Pretend you are a lawyer - you want to convince the jury to believe that your client is right so you present as much evidence as you can that proves the point. Do the same when you write a column or editorial.

Review: In some ways, a review is much like a column or editorial. You are expressing your point of view on a subject — which, in this case, is a movie, a book, a cd or a performance. As in a column, you should try to back up your opinion with examples from the actual work.

5. Review your list/notes

Try and put your information in a chronological order of how you want to tell your research.

6. Do your research

Research takes many forms. It can be with searches of the World Wide Web, newspapers and other media, libraries, and documents. It can mean talking with a friend, parent, teacher about the subject. The research can also include doing personal interviews, attending news conferences, and covering events like meetings or conferences.

7. Bring in sound and images

Sometimes, you need more than words alone to tell people a story. That's where photos, graphics, video segments and audio clips can help. Photographs give readers a sight to go with what you write, so they can see the action for themselves. Video gives your audience a chance to see and hear what happened at an event or in an interview and audio bring the voices and sounds to life on the Internet.

If you decide to use photos, video you can work the images or video into your story.

8. Write a draft

Take your list again and review it. Start by telling your story out loud. Tell it to your mother, your friend, your teacher, a tape recorder, your cat. Explain what happened, who was involved, what they said, how it looked.

Then begin forming a rough outline of your story - Your first draft. Once you've formed a rough outline of your story, stop and take a look. Have you included all the points you wanted to make? Is there a better way to explain this point? Can you add more specific details that will help your reader see and hear what's going on?

The SNN Mentors Program offers students assistance in completing their story.

9. Show, don't tell

For example, you are writing a story about your teacher. You say 'She is a very caring person". Explain 'why she is caring'. This will lead you to use descriptive words, describe instances where she displayed a caring personality.

10. Checking your story structure

Write an index of your story. This will help information is placed in proper order and transitions used in your story make sense.

11. Edit and fine-tune your piece

After you've completed your story, take another look at it.

- Does it make sense to you?
- Can you shorten some sentences or delete some information without changing the meaning?
- Is there something you have missed? Have you left some questions unanswered?
- Circle any word you think may be misspelled; check the dictionary for correct spelling
- Check grammar or punctuation

If you are still having trouble with your developing your story, read articles written on the same subject. It will help you develop your own story.

Review by another person

Give your story to a friend, teacher, parent or mentor to read. Another person will often see mistakes or awkward sentences that you, the writer, have missed.

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN 1

Check the SNN website for more lesson plans: http://www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/lp.html

Lesson Plan: Writing an article for online publication

GRADE LEVEL Grades 7 to 12

CURRICULUM Language Arts, Journalism, Social Studies, History

OVERVIEW OF LESSON PLAN

This lesson provides step by step information for teachers to integrate online journalism into the classroom. Doing this lesson plan in association with SchoolNet News Network (SNN) http://www.snn-rdr.ca gives the teacher and student online resource material, professional assistance and an online publishing outlet for student writing in a safe, structured environment.

MATERIALS AND PREPARATION: SNN Writing Guide

COURSE OUTLINE 1.5 weeks

Brainstorming story ideas	1 day
Intro to school journalism	1 day
Research articles	2 days
Write/revise articles	3 days

DAILY LESSON PLANS

Day 1

1. Start out your class telling students that they will be writing articles for an online newspaper - SchoolNet News Network (SNN Online) www.snn-rdr.ca. They will each be responsible for one article, but may work in pairs to write two articles.

2. Teacher to review the SNN website prior to class. Brainstorm with the students on ideas for stories. Encourage students to include all facets of the teen life, school and its activities.

3. Once list is finished, allow students to sign up for topics either individually or in pairs.

4. Assignment sheet: Write down all the ideas presented and ask students to choose one. Write the students name next to the idea presented. If a student has another idea, write it down as their story with their name next to it.

Day 2

1. Pass out the SNN Writing Guide. Review Assignment Sheet with students.

2. Explain what limitations there might be. In some cases, students may censor themselves too much, and you will need to explain that it is okay to take risks.

3. Ensure that there are different types of articles: news, opinion, profile, sports, entertainment, feature. Limit the number of feature articles.

4. Talk about how to write a newspaper article. Show students SNN's Newsroom site which will provide students with information on writing skills, various types of writing, research & reporting guidelines, using video/audio, and copyright information

5. Talk with them about journalistic writing: that a 'lead' is the opening of their article and should hook the reader's attention. Their article should answer the 5W's of News. Tell them about the inverted pyramid - a writing format where articles can be written with the most important information first and the least important last.

6. To provide your students with additional assistance in their writing, connect them with professional journalists through the SNN Mentorship Program.

Day 3

1. Now that the students have learnt more about journalism, studied the Writing Guide, get them to begin their article. They can begin by brainstorming on their topic - using the SNN Writing.

2. Get students to use the library, the internet, newspapers and television broadcasts as well as other resources to research their story idea. This gives them practice in research and adds substance to their article.

3. Read your students an article you have found from the internet or a newspaper/magazine that includes facts/statistics. Explore with them how the facts/stats support the article.

4. Ask them where they think the reporter found these facts/stats. Tell student they must try to find two or more facts or statistics to support topic.

Day 4, 5

1. Continue researching and writing articles. Tell students articles will be due in two days. Students can also include photos with their articles (.gif or .jpeg files)

Day 6, 7

1. Have students exchange articles. Ask them to check that the 'lead' paragraph answers the 5w's.

2. Ask them to answer the question, "did this article 'hook' you into reading more? Why/why not?

3. Ask students to revise their articles if it is necessary and then forward their stories to SNN.

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN 2

Check the SNN website for more lesson plans: http://www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/lp.html

Lesson Plan: Music Theories: Exploring the Music World Through Reviews and Research

GRADE LEVEL Grades 7 to 12
CURRICULUM Language Arts, Journalism, Social Studies, Music

OVERVIEW OF LESSON PLAN
In this lesson, students explore the role of music in our lives as a springboard for writing music reviews and researching other genres of music. Use SchoolNet News Network's website: http://www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/ to assist students with learning more about journalism skills, provide interaction with other student/teachers throughout Canada and as a safe, structured environment for students to publish their writing.

MATERIALS AND PREPARATION:
- SNN Writing Guide (for reference)
- Copies of Music Reviews from SNN Archives or local newspaper

ACTIVITIES/PROCEDURES

1. WARM-UP/ DO-NOW: In their journals, students respond to the following:
- List as many different types of music as you can.
- What elements make one type of music different from another?
- What different roles does music play in our society?

Students then share their answers, and the teacher should write responses on the board.

2. Class discuss music, what it means to them and the different types of music they listen to.

3. Each student selects a favourite artist or musical group as the subject of a music review. The goal of the review is to persuade others to be interested in this artist or group, so language use is critical to the success of the review. Students should respond to the following in writing their reviews:

- What type of music does this artist or group perform? (e.g., hip-hop, jazz, blues, pop)
- What words would you use to describe the style of this artist or group?
- What emotions does the music conjure up in its listeners?
- What do you want to do when you listen to the music?
- What special talents does the artist or group possess, and how are these talents demonstrated?
- Describe a few songs performed by the artist or group and discuss how these songs relate back to the style of the artist or group.
- How does this music reflect the society in which it was written?

Hand out to students copies of the Music Review from SNN Archives or local newspapers/magazines so they can see how a review is done. Students should then read over their review and make the language more interesting, descriptive, and persuasive. Review SNN Writing Guide with students. Their article should answer the 5 W's: Who, What, When, Where, Why (and sometimes How).

4. Students brainstorm what they think is the basic information one needs to know about a genre of music to accurately report about it, such as where and when it began, musical instruments used, famous musicians associated with the genre, popular songs, and how the genre has evolved from its inception to today.

5. WRAP-UP/ HOMEWORK: Students refer to the board for suggestions from the journal writing exercise, and each student selects a different type of music as the subject of independent research. Students to do Music Reviews about the music group they have chosen.

These reviews are to be presented in class, along with any visual and audio aides. These reviews can also be published online with SNN through our Editor's Desk.

EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT:
Students will be evaluated based on written journal entry, participation in class discussions, thoughtful and cohesive review of a musical artist or group, and research paper discussing a specific musical genre.

FURTHER QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

* What roles does music play in society?
* What roles does music play in other cultures?
* How does one define "music"?
* How do various musical genres differ from one another?
* What does it mean when one says that a form of music "evolved"?
* How does music reflect the lives of those who write and listen to it, as well as mirror society as a whole?

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN 3

Check the SNN website for more lesson plans: http://www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/lp.html

Lesson Plan: Student Broadcasters

GRADE LEVEL Grades 7 to 12

CURRICULUM: Language Arts, Journalism, Media Studies, Social Studies, Current Events

OVERVIEW OF LESSON PLAN
This lesson will give the students a chance to express their creativity through giving an actual news broadcast. After researching their news material and practising their broadcast the students will video tape their final product. In doing this lesson, the students will become actively involved with events surrounding their lives, stay informed about current events happening around them and be able to report them in a creative way.

MATERIALS AND PREPARATION
- SNN Writing Guide (for reference)
- Copies of current local and national newspapers and current magazines
- Computers with access to the Internet for newspapers/magazines online
- Record current local TV news broadcast
- Video recorder

OBJECTIVES
1. Students will create a new broadcast which includes a variety of different segments.
2. To write a report that clear and understandable.
3. To use correct grammar and correct spelling.
4. To speak clearly and in a manner that is understandable.
5. To incorporate the 5 W's of News: who, what, when, where and why. See SNN Writing Guide.

TIMELINE One week (Friday to the following Friday)

ACTIVITIES/PROCEDURES
1. Introduce what you plan on doing the Friday before you are going to start the lesson. Tell students to look and listen for - on the internet, in the paper, on T.V. or on the radio.

2. View a portion of a news broadcast and have a discussion about the order of segments and how the reporters conduct themselves. (Is it always serious or is it all right to add some humour?)

3. Teacher to divide the class into groups of three or four. This will be their news team. If you decide on groups of four, have four different news segment names on pieces of paper for the students to draw out. This will be the part they will do their segment on. Same news segments would be: news, sports, community event, entertainment, city hall.

4. Assign the students to collect worthy information for their newscast for the next three days. Remind them to write important items down and write a few sentences about each event to help to remember what the story was about.

5. On Thursday, each of the groups will practice their broadcast in front of the class. No camera that day. Use SNN's Newsroom to work with students on using video.

6. Friday, you will record the students' broadcast. If you can, record each news teams broadcast on a separate tape. This will allow them to take the tape home and show it to their parents more quickly than the whole class sharing the tape.

7. Encourage students to add late breaking news which could have occurred on Thursday or Friday morning into their news report.

8. The class's news broadcast will be viewed by the class or by the entire school if possible. As well, the students broadcast can be sent to SNN for online publication through our Editor's Desk.

EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT:
Students will be evaluated on how well they covered the events they reported on; how they conducted themselves in front of the camera, and most important, how much creativity they put into the broadcast to entertain the viewers.

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN 4

Check the SNN website for more lesson plans: http://www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/lp.html

Junior Lesson Plan: My community: A descriptive writing activity

GRADE LEVEL Grades 1 to 6
CURRICULUM Language Arts, Journalism, Current Events, History, Social Studies, Art

OVERVIEW OF LESSON PLAN: What makes your community special? In this lesson students will compose a newspaper article to encourage people to visit their area. Use SchoolNet News Network to look at student articles and learn more about journalism skills.

MATERIALS AND PREPARATION
* SNN Writing Guide (for reference)
* Copies of local newspapers, travel guides, magazines, etc

ACTIVITIES/PROCEDURES
1. Teacher will discuss with class the elements of writing an article from the SNN Writing Guide focussing on the five W's of News.

2. Research information about your community through local travel guides, newspapers, internet. Here are some questions that could be answered in your article:

* What resource/industry brought people to the community? What industry is there now?
* What historic sites can visitors see?
* What services can be found in the community? (hospital, police, schools, theatres, shopping malls)
* What major cities are close to the community?
* What activities are available? (swimming, tennis, hockey, music, art)

Teachers can have each student focus on a specific question or include as many as they can. Furthermore, it is left to the discretion of the teacher whether the students write about a community or several communities in the same area.

3. In doing their research, students should examine the local newspaper, travel guides and magazines for photos or headlines they can use in their article. Once students have gathered information and photos for their articles, they should each write their own article using vivid words and images to entice tourists to visit their community. The article should include a heading, a descriptive text about their community (number of words and information will depend on the grade level) and a picture they have drawn, photographed, or cut out.

4. WRAP UP/HOMEWORK: Students are to write a descriptive profile article about their community. Their articles can then be sent to SNN for publication online through our Editor's Desk.

SAMPLE CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Check the SNN website for more classroom activities: http://www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/cr_begin/act.html

Activity : Exploring the Five W's of News

When reporters start writing a news story, they look for the answers to five simple questions -- known as "The Five W's". The answers to those questions are the basis for every story.

- Who? - Who is involved? Who did what? To who? Who is affected?
- What? - What happened?
- When? - When did it happen? In what order did events take place?
- Where? - Where did this happen? Did the location change?
- Why? - Why did it happen? What caused it?

The reporter will often try to include all or most of the answers in the first line or paragraph of the news story. That opening section is often called "the lede" or the "the lead". The opening lines give the readers a good idea of what happened as soon as they start reading the story. Here are several activities you can try in the classroom, using the Five W's:

1. Make copies of a news story from your local paper. Talk about what's going on in the story with the class. Then, ask your students to find each of the five Ws in the story. They can highlight or circle the relevant sections of the story or write them down on the worksheet below.

2. Once your students are familiar with the Five W's, try this exercise. Give half the class a copy of one news story and another story to the other group of students.

3. Ask them to identify the who, where, when, what, and why of the story and write them down on the worksheet below. Have the students switch those lists with someone on the other side of the class.

4. Invite the students to write the opening lines of a story, using the information listed on the sheet they received from their classmate.

5. Once everyone is finished, compare them to the original stories and those of their classmates. Did everyone come up with similar stories?

CHAPTER 3

SNN Journalism Resources

OVERVIEW

Reporters have three key jobs: getting an idea for a new story, digging out the key information; and, writing or telling the story.

Whatever the source or media, reporting what happened, informing your audience or expressing your views on a subject in plain clear language is the goal of a good reporter.

To help student journalists develop their journalistic skills, SchoolNet News Network (SNN) provides teachers and students with extensive resources on journalism skills – such as how to research a story, the 5'W's of News, interviewing, writing a story, covering an event, reporting for radio and producing a video story.

Chapter 3 provides you with a good overview of the journalistic and multimedia skills necessary for your students to be student reporters in today's world. In this chapter you will find ~

- tips on what makes a 'good story'
- information of various types of stories: news, opinion, sports, entertainment
- guides on conducting good interviews
- producing audio and video stories

For more detailed resources, check out the SNN website - Reporters Toolbox section: http://www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/reporterstoolbox.html

THE NATURE OF NEWS

It's Difficult to Define

Impact and immediacy are central to any definition of news. The Funk & Wagnalls Dictionary defines news as:

> "1. Information of a recent event, development, etc., especially as reported in a newspaper, on the radio, etc. 2. Any new or unfamiliar information."

Yet news is often an elusive thing to define -- almost as hard as trying to pin Jell-O to a wall. That is because something that is considered newsworthy to one person or audience may not be considered news by another. For example, a story that may be the top story on the front page of The New York Times may not appear in The Globe and Mail at all. Or a story in The St. John's Telegram may not appear in any other paper in Canada.

Relevance is a key factor to determining what is news. But news reporters and editors have to decide what is relevant on behalf of their readers and listeners. That is why it is also part of the job of reporters and editors to think about the needs of their audience. Thinking about who their audience or readers are will help determine what a student will consider newsworthy -- and what they will write stories about.

(Written for SNN by Lawrence Surtees, former telecommunications reporter for *The Globe and Mail* and now a senior research analyst at IDC Canada.)

It's New

A news story might deal with an event that is expected or unexpected, but by its nature it is something new.

"It's got to be something out of the ordinary," says Paul Deal, a Senior Broadcast Journalist for BBC Radio in London, England. Having a record entry in the Roland Pumpkin Show is not really news, says Mr. Deal. "That's nice for the pumpkin growers, but it doesn't mean a thing to anyone else. You've got to hope–without being vindictive or nasty–that something unusual will happen there. Otherwise, it's too predictable. It's got to be somebody stealing the giant pumpkin the night before the judges were due to judge it. Or that they dropped the giant pumpkin off the truck. Because then you've got a story."

Interest and Importance

A news story is factual, but not all factual stories are news. Not even all new facts are "news."

In addition to "immediacy" or "timeliness" of information, news needs to have both interest and importance for the reader, listener, viewer.

A story that is of great interest tends to appeal to many people; a story that is of great importance tends to affect many people. For example, the story of a lost pet and its eventual recovery may interest many people, but it will have little direct effect on their lives. On the other hand, a story about legislative changes for the operation of motor vehicles may not attract many readers, but it may affect every driver in the province.

The ideal story combines both great importance and interest.

News: Hard & Soft

Journalists often talk about news as being "hard" or "soft." It is an important distinction.

Hard news is high in importance or significance; it affects a large number of people, even if does not make exciting reading. It is informative, timely, and tends to address the minds of the readers, listeners, or viewers. Such stories may deal with government policy or economic issues.

Soft news is high in interest; it attracts a large number of people, even if does not affect their lives personally. It is entertaining, less timely, and tends to appeal to the emotions of the readers, listeners, or viewers. Such stories may deal with the lives of celebrities, the courage of individuals in the face of misfortune, or simply events that are odd and amusing.

News media need a balance of both hard and soft news stories. The soft-news stories attract our attention; the hard-news stories help us to make decisions that are informed and responsible.

News: The Expected and the Unexpected

Paul Deal is a Senior Broadcast Journalist for BBC Radio in London, England. Much of the news they produce is planned in advance. Many events are scheduled or at least expected–the meetings of Parliament, the decisions of political leaders, or the celebration of historical dates. The background information can be gathered and the approach to the news coverage can be planned and rehearsed.

However, as Mr. Deal notes, all this planning "doesn't take into account the unexpected." When there is a natural disaster or the unexpected death of a well-known figure, reporters may be diverted from one story to another. "We had business and political reporters in Genoa for a G-8 Summit," he recalls, "and then Mt. Etna started to erupt. One of the business reporters was diverted from Genoa to go and cover this volcano. It was odd to us to see this business reporter standing on top of a volcano, saying how hot it was. But he was a BBC man already in Italy and they got him there quickly."

News: Good and Bad

Don Radford is the managing editor for a number of small-town newspapers in Southern Manitoba. He knows that many news, feature and sports stories can be written about successful people and fortunate circumstances.

"Some people have the opinion that media is just interested in bad news," he says. "I don't think that's true at all. The news media is focussed on bad news because there's so much of it, not because that is what we want to do. We would sooner print good news about people."

The Reporter's Social Responsibility

Knowlton Nash, CBC Reporter, is an experienced Canadian newsman. In his book "History on the Run", he writes: "...our job in a free society is to inform, to enlighten, to enrich, and to enlarge public understanding of uncomfortable problems, sometimes providing facts that painfully or fatally wound a theory. That puts heavy responsibility on our journalistic shoulders to try to be fair, accurate, honest, balanced, and thorough, in short, to be socially responsible."

QUALITIES OF A GOOD STORY

Whatever the form, a good news story has at least seven elements, says Donald Murray, writing coach of The Boston Globe, in his guide to writing:

1. Information

Substance is the raw ingredient of a story. A writer must have specific, accurate and revealing details to work with to be able to write well.

2. Significance

Good stories affect people, impart information they need to know and tell what is happening and may happen.

3. Focus

Memorable stories are limited and precisely focussed. They say one thing. Says Murray: "They tell not of a battle, but of a soldier; they talk not about governance, but about a deal; they discuss not a socioeconomic group, but a person and a life."

4. Context

An effective story offers perspective to a reader so they know the context of where a story came from, where it is going and how widespread or typical it is. And a skilful writer weaves context throughout the story, rather than delivering it in one huge paragraph.

5. Form

A writer must give a story a natural and logical shape. A narrative will work if it contains all the information a reader needs and if the story can be arranged in a chronological order. The form of a story must also give a reader a satisfying sense of completion and that the information presented is heading toward an inevitable conclusion.

6. Faces

People like to read about people. Journalism presents ideas by introducing readers to the people who create ideas or are affected by them. And news stories work best when the writer gets out of the way and lets the people in a story tell the story to the reader.

7. Voice

Even in the electronic age of instantaneous, mass communication, a writer speaks to one reader. How a student chooses their words, particularly in their narrative, to speak to their audience determines their voice.

AUDIENCE

A journalist is always conscious of the intended audience for a story. The needs and interests of particular readers, listeners, or viewers do much to determine the shape of a story.

As Conrad Fink points out in “Writing Opinion for Impact”, an audience can be considered geographically, demographically, and psychographically.

Geographically, we may speak of stories that are local, provincial, national and international. The local story is geared to the interests of people in the immediate publication region or broadcast area. A provincial story is one that deals with issues affecting most residents in a province. It would appeal to readers not just in one city or community, but to readers anywhere in the province. Similarly, a national story is one that deals with issues affecting most Canadians and will appeal to readers throughout Canada. Finally, the international story reports on matters of global significance.

It is easiest to write for a very specific audience and some publications and broadcasters make great efforts to define the characteristics of their audience.

Demographers study the characteristics of human populations and their findings greatly aid social planning. Such demographic factors as the age, gender, income bracket, and educational level of an audience has strong bearing on what matters will be of most interest. A news report on retirement planning may be of most interest to older readers, while the account of a teen-aged athlete may appeal most to younger readers.

An audience can also be considered psychographically–that is, in terms of its attitudes and beliefs.

People may be described in political terms: e.g. radical, conservative, liberal; left-wing, right-wing, middle-of-the-road; a hawk, a dove. People may be described philosophically: e.g. idealist, realist, pragmatist, romantic. People may be described in terms of their religious faith: e.g. Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist.

Some publishers and broadcasters define their audiences in great detail, while others do so only generally. Yet, intuitively or explicitly, journalistic writers will think about the geographic, demographic, and psychographic characteristics of their story's audience.

Know Who is Reading Your News

As a reader, you should know who is writing the news you are reading. And, as a news writer, you should also know who is reading the news you are writing.

Paul Deal is a Senior Broadcast Journalist for BBC. Radio in London, England and at any given hour he might write news reports for one of radio networks–BBC. Radio 2, 3, 4 or 5. "You've got to think about the age and background of your listener.

I have in mind a typical listener for a particular network. If I was writing for Radio 3, I'd have in mind someone like Diana's father, the Earl of Spencer. He was very academic and very intellectual."

As Mr. Deal explains, the news content on the different radio networks is quite similar, but the writing style changes to suit the interests of the particular audience. "What the Radio 1 people try to do, for their young audience, is to keep them interested in news and still give the big story of the day. We don't just give them show biz pap....Radio 1 news people still tell the big political story and the big world story, but they do it in a sharper, snappier way with fewer details."

The Test of a Good News Story

Paul Deal is a Senior Broadcast Journalist for BBC. Radio in London, England, and has previous experience as a newspaper editor. His test for a good story is that it "gains a hearing."

"It's the sort of story that stops you in your tracks," he says. "You see a friend and say, 'Did you hear that the Concorde crashed?'

Or it is something that would get you going in a stimulating conversation." Mr. Deal recalls a such a story that he heard from Canada. "In one of your deep, cold winters, some bloke got up and was going to work. And as he went outside in all the snow and ice to get into his car, his toddling daughter wandered out through the door and was exposed to these arctic temperatures you have. But there was a happy ending. Somebody realized that she was outside and she survived. You think, 'What on earth? How did she survive that?'"

A Story That Travels

Community papers often address a local audience and a story is relevant if it relates to the interests of people who live in the immediate region. However, some stories can be shaped to meet the interests of people who live much further away.

Paul Deal is a Senior Broadcast Journalist for BBC. Radio in London, England, and he has a keen understanding of differing audience interests. "A story that travels," he says, "has got to have some general interest."

If someone drowns at the lake or an accident on Main Street claims two lives, that means something to the immediate community. "It has an impact on local people," Mr. Deal explains, "but it doesn't really mean anything to people on the other side of the country."

A story that travels is one "that has significance elsewhere."

Community News Audience

Don Radford is the managing editor for a number of small-town newspapers in Southern Manitoba. He sees the audience for his publications as a very broad one.

"As a free-distribution community newspaper," he says, "we don't have the luxury of being able to define our audience. Our audience is the entire community and we try to do as much as possible for a broad section of the community and that's who we write the stories for."

Writing for a National Audience

(Written by SNN Staff and Steve Kimber, University of King's College School of Journalism)

Journalistic writing is meant to be not just self-expression but rather to communicate a specific story to someone. It is very much audience-oriented.

Local Story with National Appeal

- If your article deals with something that is happening in your school or community, find an angle that appeals to a national audience. Ask yourself if students in schools elsewhere would be interested in what your school is doing? For example, an innovative course, a student who is doing something unique with his/her life or in his/her community.

- When you are trying to figure out what to include -- and not include -- in your story, it sometimes helps to imagine you're telling your story to one person. Imagine a student in another part of the country who has similar interests to you but doesn't know anything about you, or your school, or your community. What would you need to tell that person to help her or him understand the story you're trying to tell?

- Make a statement in your article referring to what students may think/feel on a national level.

- Research your story idea to see what is happening in other provinces.

National Story that appeals to Youth

- Gathering the local perspective on a national story brings home the importance, impact and meaning the story has in their lives. It can help students in other provinces understand why a particular event is important to them, their school, their community.

- Writing stories that concern and are specially of interest to people throughout Canada ie. the plight of Western farmers - how do youth in those provinces feel about their future? How does their plight relate to students in other provinces ie. children of Newfoundland fishers?

- While you want to reach a broad general audience with your story, that doesn't necessarily mean you should eliminate all of the specific details that give it life. In fact, perhaps paradoxically, the more specifically you write your story, the more likely readers will connect with it. The children of Newfoundland fishers, for example, may not think they have much in common with the children of western farmers but when they read a story that focuses on how factors beyond anyone's control - like the weather - can affect a farm family's life, they may suddenly realize that there are more similarities than they would have guessed. And then they can make their own connections with the story.

MAKE IT INTERESTING

Journalists, when writing stories, have a good sense of the elements or values that attract interest. Knowing these can help not only beginning journalists, but all who want their conversations to be interesting. These news elements can be described in various ways, but the following ten are commonly found in guidelines for journalists.

Timeliness

Timeliness tops the list of ways to be interesting. "The essence of journalism is its timeliness; it must be served hot," Thomas Griffith once said. A senior editor of *Time* magazine, Griffith knew that readers were attracted to news of recent events.

For television, radio, and Internet outlets, this may mean instant coverage. For daily papers, it means every 24 hours. And for magazines and community papers, it may mean weekly or monthly. Yet whatever the frequency of publication or broadcast, news requires a sense of immediacy. Timeliness puts the 'new' in news.

Proximity

We tend to be most interested in what is close to us. Often this means a person or event that is geographically near to us. However, it also includes psychological or demographic nearness. We respond to stories that reflect our ideas and attitudes, and we note what happens to others whose age, education, and economic circumstances are similar to our own.

Currency

As a way of gaining interest in a news story, currency is closely related to timeliness. The person, event, or idea may not be new, but it is newly come into public attention. John Cabot's arrival in North America is a fact of history, not news, but the Canadian celebrations 500 years after the event made it the subject of current stories.

Thomas Kuhn, an historian of science, used the word "paradigms" in 1962 to describe such models as Copernican astronomy and Newtonian physics that provided the mental framework for other scientific thinkers. Twenty years later the word gained wide currency as a word for mind-set or our way of looking at world.

Currency deals with events that people are talking about or ideas that have gained popular attention.

Consequence

A consequence is the result of some action or event. As a news element, consequence affects the well-being of many people. Most of us are interested in stories that deal with the outcome of provincial or national elections, the damage caused by natural disasters, the spread of epidemics, or of changes in the stock markets. These are stories of consequence.

Prominence

It is said that "names are news." Certainly, our interest is whetted more by information about well-known individuals or organizations than by complete unknowns. Although they have little direct effect on our own lives, stories about the personal activities of political leaders, business figures, entertainers and celebrities are apt to catch our attention.

Conflict

Conflict is central to most fiction stories, and for good reason. Readers, listeners, and viewers are fascinated by tales of people facing challenges, dealing with tensions, or overcoming obstacles. Factual stories also gain interest through the use of conflict.

The type of conflict may be as simple as the competition between rival sports teams or as complex as the battles of warring armies. Wherever there is a story of a struggle, a clash, or a controversy, there is a story that will attract our interest.

Drama

The playwright Oscar Wilde once said that "Life imitates Art far more often than Art imitates Life." Certainly, many true life stories have the elements of good drama: a well-defined setting and a conflict between characters that arouses our feelings. Whether we are amused, angered, or attracted to the characters, we are interested in their story.

Relationships

All of us are involved in relationships–with friends and members of our family; with people at school, at work, or in the community; and even with pets and other creatures. Drawing on our own experiences and emotional bonds, we identify with people in stories about friendship, romance, marriage, divorce, death, children, pets, and so on. As a news element, relationships may be "soft" rather than "hard" but stories based on them do stimulate our interest.

Progress

Contrary to the saying that "Good news is no news," stories of modern accomplishments are often very interesting. The progress news element describes people achieving a goal, and in our news reports, it is easy to locate accounts of scientific discoveries, medical break-throughs, and technical innovations, and feats of engineering.

Oddity

By its very nature, news deals with matters that are out of the ordinary. Some events, however, are very unusual and reports of them appeal to us because of their oddity or absurdity.

Murray Foster, a graphic designer in Vancouver who has clipped and published dozens of such stories, calls them "All the News that's Nuts!" In Foster's book and in our daily papers, we read of the dog that blew up a house, the driving instructor whose office was crashed into by an errant motorist, the parrot that told where a jail-breaker was hiding, the police officer who shot himself while demonstrating gun safety, and the boy scout troop in France that cleaned the graffiti off of cave walls only to discover they had erased 15,000-year old paintings. Such incidents are notable as extreme exceptions and, for those of us who are not involved, provide entertainment.

THE NEWS STORY FORMAT

The News Story

(Text written by Lawrence Surtees, formerly the telecommunications reporter for The Globe and Mail and now a senior research analyst at IDC Canada.)

News writers produce news stories.

They are called "news stories" because they tell stories about ACTUAL PEOPLE, PLACES, EVENTS and THINGS.

Yet a news story is different than traditional stories, such as legends, fairy tales and other works of fiction. Those stories are usually much longer and are organized very differently. The job of a fictional story is to entertain and those stories can afford to deliver their main point at the end of the story, which is often why they begin with the phrase, "Once upon a time. . ."

A news story is almost the opposite. It is immediate and often delivers perishable information that may change moments later. It must compete with many other stories for a reader's or listener's attention, so it contains it's punch line in the very first sentence. But a news story is different than other types of non-fiction writing because of "news". If you read something and say to yourself, "I know that," then what you're reading probably is not news and can be considered a historical fact.

The 5-W's and H . Who? What? Where? When? Why? and *How?*

The 5-W's and H are sometimes called "the journalist's questions" because they are so frequently used by reporters gathering news information. They are probably the most familiar heuristic device–that is, a mental tool that helps us to learn or to discover something.

Answers to the 5-W's and H identify the characters involved in a story, the action, the setting--time and place--and the motivation of characters or cause of action. This information will not give a reporter comprehensive knowledge, but will indicate enough about the story that the reporter can determine which facts to feature in a lead. Usually the lead will begin with the *What?* or *Who?* and then provide the *Where?* and When?

A *What* beginning:	"A report on our changing prairie weather was released by the Canadian Meteorological Society at its annual meeting in Toronto on Wednesday."
A *Who* beginning:	"Canadian singer Susan Aglukark arrived in New York on Tuesday to give her Carnegie Hall concert."

The Angle

The main idea of a news story and lead is called the "angle." It is also referred to in newsrooms as the "hook" because the angle is used to grab, or hook, the attention of readers and to make them want to read the rest of the student's story. It is the main point a student learned from their reporting and that the rest of their story will try to support.

Finding the angle of a news story forces a newswriter to be critical of a story idea and the reporting. A news writer will discover if there's no angle in an idea or the facts that have been gathered before an editor, teacher or reader will.

Writing the lead and angle involves making some difficult decisions. A news writer must sort through the facts that were gathered from the reporting and decide what the theme is. There may be several different themes, but the writer must decide what the central theme of the story will be in the lead.

Then students must consider what form their story will take.

In sorting through a mass of material, Carman Cumming and Catherine McKercher of Carleton University tell reporters to think about "S-I-N" -- which stands for Significant, Interesting and New. Students should look for either of those three things from their research and interviews and they will be able to find a compelling angle for their lead.

Whammy

The late Walter Steigleman, a journalism teacher in Iowa, told his students to look for the WHAMMY. He explained that the whammy is the single fact that makes your story unique.

Consider the following example, based on a radio interview with Vern Walters of Lunenburg, Nova Scotia with CBC's As It Happens in early March 1996:

> Vern Walters, a third-generation blacksmith from Lunenburg, has decided to retire and has put his shop up for sale, closing a 120-year-old family-owned business.

That lead has all the required elements. But a "whammy" is provided when it is learned that Mr. Walters is probably Canada's only working maritime blacksmith -- a blacksmith trained to do special blacksmithing to build and repair boats:

> Vern Walters, one of Canada's last remaining maritime blacksmiths, has put his shop in Lunenburg up for sale, closing a family-owned business begun 120 years ago by his grandfather.

That story also illustrates the human interest story, which focuses on an interesting or unique person.

The only way to really understand leads and angles is to try writing one. News writing is like learning to play a musical instrument -- the more you practice, the easier it gets and the better you become.

Organization of the News Story

Borrow a recent daily newspaper from a parent, friend, school library or teacher and look at the front page. Scan several stories briefly. No matter how different the news is and the stories they tell, it doesn't take long to realize they all seem similar.

News stories are organized in much the same way. And once you learn how they are organized, they will be much easier to write.

The first paragraph is called the lead (pronounced as in "to lead")

The rest of the story is called the body, which generally backs up the lead.

And, finally, as with any good story, there should be a pithy ending.

The structure of a news story is often referred to as the "inverted pyramid." That is because the main, and most important, point is contained in the first sentence. The rest of the story contains elements of less importance as the reader nears the bottom.

The inverted pyramid arose during the era of movable lead type. It allowed editors and composers, who laid out columns of type set stories, to trim a story quickly at the last minute from the bottom up. The replacement of hot type with computers has made it easier to edit a story to fit its allotted space on a newspaper page--and eased the strictures about news story writing.

The rules of news writing have relaxed over time and different styles are popular with various newspapers. But many reporters still use the inverted pyramid technique to organize their stories and ensure that the most important information goes at the beginning of the story.

Body of the Story

The rest of a news story is called the body. In a hard news story, the body supports the lead and in the classic inverted pyramid style is organized so that the facts and quotes are written in declining importance.

After the lead, a story may have a theme paragraph that spells out the theme or sub-themes in greater detail. The story then proceeds with sections that explore the theme and sub-theme in more detail, and in order.

In addition to the writer's narrative, each sub-theme is backed up with background facts and relevant quotations that you have selected. Remember that readers want to know who said something that appears in quotation marks, so identify the speaker. And that means asking permission and making sure you know how to spell a source's name correctly.

The body of a story can be written in other ways that depart from the inverted pyramid. One form is called the hourglass, which tries to retain the suspense of traditional fictional storytelling.

But a story should proceed in a natural and CHRONOLOGICAL order. Sticking to a logical order will make it easier to write the story, as well as to allow you to keep track of your ideas and material. Don't jump back and forth and keep paragraphs short and simple -- one idea at a time.

After you write down a lead, begin the body of the story with a brief point-form outline. An outline is really simple, especially on a personal computer, quick to start, helps organize your thoughts -- and allows you to remember all the great stuff you want to put in your story.

News writers also refer to a story's "flow." Writers don't just plop down a string of ideas and sub-themes, one after another. You have to string them together, which you do by writing "transitions." Those come at the end of one idea and relate that thought or statement to the next idea.

Endings

Inverted pyramid stories don't need a strong ending since those hard news stories simply end when there is nothing more to say. But other kinds of news stories often need a good ending. And as with any other kind of writing, the ending can be as difficult as the beginning.

One way to end is with a "kicker," which is often a catchy quote. Another effective ending is to conclude with a quote or anecdote that relates the story back to the main theme and leaves the reader thinking about the essence of the story.

But avoid preaching or lecturing at the end of the story. It is often hard to resist, but if the story is told well, the quotes and facts that a newswriter chooses will allow the reader to come to the same conclusion on their own.

The Inverted Pyramid

If you have ever had to inform a friend or family member of important news–e.g. the winning of a prize or the death of someone close to you–you know that is the news you share first. You save any "small talk" for a later point in your conversation.

Called the "inverted pyramid,"that is the same principle used in most news stories: the most important information is given immediately. McKercher and Cumming, in *The Canadian Reporter*, note that this method of organization is "a newsroom staple" and has three main functions: it aids readers as they skim many stories and note the most important information; it aids writers as they make quick decisions about significant aspects of a story; and it aids editors who may have to shorten stories without a careful reading.

The term "inverted pyramid" may sound strange, since today we rarely talk about the pyramidal structure of traditional stories. Gustav Freytag, a 19th century German writer and scholar, popularized the concept in his book *Technique of the Drama*. Freytag described how the dramatic action of a story developed as "a pyramidal structure." At one side of the base was the introduction; at the top was a climax (or turning point); and at the far side of the base was the catastrophe.

Apart from discussions of literary critics, the pyramid concept today is mostly used by journalists, technical writers, and web authors who use the reverse–or inverted–order to organize their information for quick access by readers. The most important news–the *catastrophe*–is presented first, then pivotal events follow, and finally the initial causes are presented as background information.

TYPES OF FACTUAL STORIES

You will find many types of factual stories in newspapers, magazines, and broadcast media. Those highlighted in this sequence are only a basic introduction. For a more detailed treatment, please consult any journalism text.

The major types of stories considered here are news, feature, and sports. These types may be further described in terms of their use of time and use of form.

USE OF TIME	Type of Story
Looking Forward	the Advance Story
Looking Backward	the Follow up Story
Looking Forward and Backward	the Combination Story, or Combo
USE OF FORM	**Type of Story**
News	Summary of Story
	Action Story
	Quote Story
Feature	News - Feature Story
	Backgrounder, or Sidebox
	Personality Profile
	Human Interest Story
Sports	Sports - News Story
	Game Story
	Sports - Feature Story

News Story vs. Feature Story

A news story is one that provides facts about recent events that are of importance to readers, listeners or viewers. The information is new, timely, and important. As Laurence Surtees says, "Relevance is a key factor to determining what is news."

A feature story is also factual, but the events or activities reported may not be as recent or as important as those of a news story. A feature story may emphasize aspects of high interest and be as entertaining as it is educational. The information provided is more "soft" than that found in regular news reports.

Feature stories are popular in magazines, community papers, and other media that cannot provide reports that are "up-to-the-minute" or at least "daily." The information does not go out-of-date as quickly.

As Jock Lauterer says in his book on *Community Journalism*: "Many if not most features are what we call 'evergreen.' That is, the initial leaves of information won't fall with time; they'll keep–depending on the story–indefinitely."

Feature stories also allow the writer to be more creative and to use the devices of short fiction–e.g. rounded character development, a conflict-driven plot, dialogue, and a detailed description of setting.

A feature story may employ the inverted-pyramid or the traditional narrative form of organization. Such leads as drama, conflict, prominence, progress, relationships, and oddity are commonly used.

Sports Stories

Sports is one of many beats covered by print and broadcast media. It is such a strong and broad field of interest that it is often referred to as a type of writing–e.g. "news, features, and sports."

Certainly, sports writers enjoy more prominence than their counterparts on such important beats as education, arts, crime, religion, and local government. Yet they also face a special challenges. Most sports reporters need to understand the rules and strategies of many sports and to keep track of a host of players and coaches in the midst of game schedules that both change and overlap. They need the enthusiasm of a fan, the knowledge of a coach, the fairness of respected referee, and good writing skills. The pressure is intense.

By the time they report, the outcome of the events they cover is usually known to their audience. Live coverage by television or radio stations will have told how the game or competition turned out. To rekindle a sense of the game's excitement, sports reporters tend to use more colourful language, even in sports news. We may read or hear that a team has "slipped into the lead," "clinched a championship," or "demolished the opposition."

Besides its distinctive writing style, most sports writing also has a different emphasis in substance. The focus of an after-the-event sports story is on the *how* and *why*. The writer will not only summarize highlights of the event, but help to interpret them. A new player may be described as having made "an *impressive* debut." A team's loss might be blamed on its "*sloppy* first-half." A team's victory might be said to "*redeem*" an earlier defeat. In regular news, such interpretive words would be considered as the intrusion of editorial opinion. In sports writing, however, they are accepted and expected.

While professional sports events enjoy extensive coverage, the beginning sports writer generally reports on amateur competitions. This is an excellent learning opportunity. The pressure is less intense and there are a wide-range of events that would otherwise go unreported.

A Good Sports Writer

Don Radford is the managing editor for a number of small-town newspapers in Southern Manitoba. In his career, he has done all types of reporting. The sports reporters who do best, he says, "are the people who obviously love sports." However, there is a difference between sports enthusiasts and good sports writers. Radford observes: "There are people who are really interested in sports, but basically watch it on TV. But some of them also read a lot of sports. You can see the difference in the people who read sports as well."

The Advance Story

Many factual stories describe events that will take place at some time in the future. Such a story might announce the expected visit of a political leader, the booking of a concert or an arts performance, the scheduling of a sports tournament, or the planning of a special celebration.

Much news can be predicted or anticipated, and when it is written about ahead of time, it is called "an advance story." The purpose of advance stories is to inform people of events and activities which are of interest to the public. The emphasis in the report will be on the who and the what. If available, the date, time, and place also should be included. The inverted-pyramid structure is most commonly used.

Since this is a factual story, the writer should not express any personal opinion on the importance or quality of an event or activity. Such promotion or commentary is best provided on the editorial pages. It is appropriate, however, to quote the opinion of those involved in the event or activity.

The Follow-up Story

As the name implies, this type of story follow-up on an event or activity that has taken place.

The story topics are similar to those of an advance story, but the treatment of details differs from the advance story. The emphasis in the follow-up story tends to be on the "why" or the "how" of the event or activity. The inverted-pyramid structure is often used in a follow-up story, but other patterns might also be used (e.g. chronological), especially if one is writing a feature story.

As in the Advance Story, the writer should avoid any direct editorial comment on the importance or quality of the event. The success or failure of a public event is a matter of interest to news readers and can be reported in the response of organizers or participants in the event. For example: "Tournament organizer Jan Holbrook expressed disappointment with the limited turnout, but said that adverse weather conditions discouraged many soccer fans from attending."

The Combination Story (Advance and Follow-up)

The Combination Story, or "Combo," looks both forward and backwards in time. It starts with an event or activity that will take place some time in the future, and then situates that information in the context of what has already occurred.

The structure of such stories is more complicated, but it is an important form for events or activities which occur over a period of time. Sports writers use this form to describe an upcoming game in a series, and then look back on the current standing or past performance of participating players and teams. Similarly, a report on an upcoming concert or arts performance that is part of a series might use

this approach–to indicate the features of the scheduled concert and to note the programs that have already been presented.

The Summary Story

The summary story gives a basic overview or review of an activity or event. Commonly used in news reports, it includes some or all of the 5-W's and H and uses the inverted-pyramid pattern of organization. The story lead generally features the who or the what and the most important information is presented first.

One can distinguish two types of summary story: the single-feature and the multiple-feature.

The *single-feature* story emphasizes one primary fact and then elaborates information related to that fact.

For example: "'Jazz Jam' attracted a much smaller crowd for its two-day music festival, held last weekend at the Centennial Park in Renford."

The focus of this story is on the small turnout for the event. The story might be further developed with comments from the organizers, performers, or participants and information about the implication of the low attendance (e.g. unexpected debt for the sponsoring organization, questions about the festival in future years, etc.)

The *multiple-feature* story emphasizes several facts and then elaborates information about each of those facts.

For example: "Poor weather, increased ticket prices, and an unexpected mail strike all contributed to the limited turnout at Renford's annual 'Jazz Jam' last weekend," says local organizer Melony Washburn."

The focus of this story is on the several causes for the limited turnout. The story might be further developed by dealing with each of the causes in turn–the weekend weather, the reasons for the increased ticket cost, and the impact of the mail strike.

The Action Story

The Action Story is well suited for news reports on activities or events that include considerable movement in space or time–e.g. a sports game, an outdoor adventure, a parade or tour, a fight or accident, an event-filled tour.

The action story uses the summary lead and, for the most part, the inverted-pyramid pattern of organization. It starts with highlights of the activity or event and then fills in the details. Portions of the story may require traditional chronology--a sequence with one action following another–but the overall story proceeds from the most important to the least important facts.

The Quote Story

The Quote Story is a good type to use when reporting news of a speech, an interview, or the proceedings of a meeting. Most of the information is given in the form of quotations.

The quote story uses a summary lead and, for the most part, the inverted-pyramid pattern of organization. If the speaker, interviewee, or participant in a meeting has made a statement that effectively focuses the story, a quotation lead may be used. Otherwise, a regular summary lead will provide the most important information at the outset.

A quote story deals more with ideas than physical action but it proceeds from the most important facts to those of lesser importance.

The News-Feature Story

The News-Feature story shares characteristics of both news and feature stories.

Like a news story, it uses an inverted-pyramid structure and deals with an activity or event that is timely, current, or of consequence.

Like a feature story, the information presented is more "soft." It may focus on a person involved in a news event or explore the emotional side of a previously reported news story. It can provide depth and understanding that is lacking in a news summary.

News media shifted from "hard" news to news-feature stories about 48 hours after the bombing and destruction of the World Trade Center in New York City in September, 2001. These news-feature stories recounted the dramatic escape of individuals from the buildings and the heroism of policemen and firemen who perished in the rescue efforts. Such stories conveyed the emotional significance of the horrific events.

The Backgrounder (or Sidebox)

A backgrounder is a short feature story that provides additional information on a news event. In print form, it frequently appears as a box at the side of a news article.

It often accompanies a longer news report and offers either a broader perspective or a deeper understanding of events. The background information may help readers, listeners, or viewers to understand the larger context of a story. Or it may give the reaction of local people to a provincial, national or international news report.

A backgrounder may use any type of lead and pattern of organization (inverted pyramid or chronological).

The Personality Profile

Also called a "news maker," this type of story explores the personality of someone who is prominent in the news.

Bruce Garrison, in his book on Sports Reporting, describes this feature story as follows: "Personality profiles look at the individual, in most cases focussing on one person. These stories 'sketch' someone in the news, usually an individual who has performed exceptionally or for some other reason has been singled out. The profile is devoted to explaining why the person is special."

A profile occupies a transition point, in the Spectrum of Nonfiction, from narrative to expository writing. The hybrid nature of this type of feature story gives it great power, but also complicates the composition task. The writer must blend the story with the expository.

Feature Writing–Stories of Accomplishment

Most news stories emphasize immediacy and tend to go out-of-date quickly. Feature stories, on the other hand, stay current much longer.

Don Radford is the managing editor for a number of small-town newspapers in Southern Manitoba and he describes the qualities of a good feature story:

"It's sort of cliche, but 'someone accomplishing something.' People doing something they didn't think they could do, or that other people didn't think they could do. People like to read about people succeeding. You often hear that people are small-minded and don't like hearing other people's success stories. But the truth is that they do. Perhaps it inspires them to try their own thing."

The Human-Interest Story

This feature story describes the experience of an individual, or group of people, that is apt to interest many readers, listeners, or viewers.

Found in many publications and broadcasts, the human-interest story is definitely "soft." It may have no real importance in terms of its impact on others, yet it appeals to our emotions and helps us to appreciate more the human condition. Sometimes a human-interest story that is 'lighter and brighter' helps to provide balance for hard news that is conflict-ridden.

Bruce Garrison, in his book Sports Reporting, says: "A strong human interest feature does three things: (1) It describes an extraordinary experience; (2) it shows how people have coped with a problem common to many people; and (3) it focuses on a timely issue of wide regional or national concern."

A human-interest story may emphasize such news elements as relationships, drama, conflict, or oddity. While the inverted-pyramid pattern of organization is not common in this type of feature story, punch and anecdotal leads can be used effectively.

The Sports-News Story

Sports-News reports on recreational activities or events. While the subject matter is sports, the story is news and the techniques of most news stories can be found in sports reports. Advance stories indicate when and where sports competitions will be held. Follow-up stories note the outcome and performance of competitions. Combination stories look forward to upcoming games and backward to the record of teams or individuals during the season.

Both the summary-story and the action-story approach are common in sports-news reporting.

In sports news that follows up on an activity or event, the outcome is usually known to the audience. Consequently, the writer's emphasis shifts to the *how* or the *why* of the outcome. Key plays in a game are interpreted. A performer's strengths or weaknesses are analysed. The reaction of spectators is gauged and players and coaches are interviewed. To convey the excitement of competitive events, the style of sports writing tends to be more colourful than regular news.

A sports-news story tends to use the inverted-pyramid pattern of organization. This develops the story blending in game statistics and statements from players and coaches.

The Game Story

The Game Story is "the foundation of most sports sections," says Bruce Garrison, in his book Sports Reporting. A good sports reporter must be able to follow the action of a game, play-by-play, and then to report its highlights in an interesting manner.

A game story aims for immediate publication or broadcast, since few people care about the details after much time has passed. The writer gives both a summary and an analysis of a particular game–e.g. a summary of game highlights and key plays, an evaluation of the athletes' performances, and comments on the success or failure of strategies.

While the game story reports the outcome of a particular competition, it should also suggest the meaning of that outcome. The writer might compare the results with a team's past performance or indicate how it affects its seasonal standing.

The Sports-Feature Story

Sports stories use a variety of feature techniques–the backgrounder, the profile, and the human-interest approach. Live coverage by television and radio tends to give most of the "breaking news" in the sports world, but feature stories can give a depth of understanding that enriches such viewing and listening.

Backgrounders give sports fans a sense of involvement that may be missed by the play-by-play coverage. Profiles describe the personalities of the athletes and their advisers, sometimes giving one a sense of the person beyond the demands of the game. Human-interest stories tap into the lives of the fans and the hundreds of passionate people associated with a particular sport.

A feature-story approach helps writers to overcome the challenge of deadlines. In a sports story reported days after the event, a feature approach does much to attract and sustain the interest of readers.

OPINION WRITING

A Good Editorial

A good editorial achieves the intent of its author to communicate a particular message. It makes a point clearly as it provides the facts and arguments to support it. Good editorials are written by persons who feel strongly about what they have to say.

How do journalists acquire this ability to be so concise and at the same time so persuasive? They follow four cardinal rules:

- Choose the words (diction) carefully;
- Organize the facts and ideas in logical sequence;
- Follow a set plan of logic and persuasion; and
- Include the reader in what is being written.

Types of Editorial

Editorials are one of the most familiar kinds of opinion writing. Although there are different kinds of editorial, the underlying purpose of any editorial is to convince by presenting evidence to support a point of view. The degree of persuasion evident in an editorial varies from one editorial to another. This variation in purpose results in four basic types of editorials:

- Editorials of argument and persuasion take a firm stand on a problem or condition and attempt to persuade the reader to think the same way. This editorial often proposes a solution or advises taking some definite action.

- Editorials of information and interpretation attempt to explain the meaning or significance of a situation or news event. There is a wide variety of editorials in this category, ranging from those which provide background information to those which identify issues.

- Editorials of tribute, appreciation or commendation praise a person or an activity.

- Editorials of entertainment have two categories. One is the short humorous treatment of a light topic. The second is a slightly satirical* (ridiculing) treatment of a serious subject. Satire is the use of sarcasm or keen wit to denounce abuses or follies. While it ridicules or makes fun of a subject with the intent of improving it.

Structure of Persuasive Editorial

Persuasive editorials are written according to a well-established pattern or form. This pattern is simple and includes these points:

Writing Editorials: Advice from an Editor

Don Radford is the managing editor for a number of small-town newspapers in Southern Manitoba. Over the years, he has written hundreds of editorials and his writing advice is based on much experience.

He says: "When I write editorial pieces, I try to find something that is current in the community. That's the ideal thing. But there aren't always important things in the community that deserve comment, so then I fall back on the regional, provincial, and national levels."

"In an editorial, you should point out what you think is wrong, but not beat people over the head with it. You should then suggest what they should try to do. Point out the problem, offer some sort of solution, and be fair to people."

Editorials are often serious, but Radford also notes the value of humour. "If you have a point to make, and can make it with humour," he says, "so much the better. Humour is one of the hardest things to write, but that's what people respond to the most."

Writing Columns: Do's and Don'ts

Don Radford is the managing editor for a number of small-town newspapers in Southern Manitoba. Based on his experience, he offers several tips for writing a newspaper column.

1. Write from personal experience. Get your life experience into it–or the experience of someone very close to you. That helps the reader relate to it.

2. If you get an idea for a column, jot it down and let it percolate for several days. Bounce your idea off family members and colleagues, so that you get a feeling for what other people think of your idea. If the reactions are negative, you may conclude that it is not such a great idea. "I would be very afraid of anything I wrote that I didn't bounce off somebody," Mr. Radford says.

3 Don't be nasty or include snide little digs at someone. Don't write something that makes a person look foolish, whether it is a neighbour or someone down the street. "You can have fun with people," Mr. Radford advises, "but don't do it so they look foolish."

WRITING THE MOVIE REVIEW

1. The approach to the subject.

The brief introductory paragraph (lead) tells the reader what movie is being reviewed. This introduction indicates the chief point you intend to develop. It highlights the main feature or most timely aspect of the work. It may emphasize or summarize your reactions, favourable or unfavourable. It may even feature audience or spectator reactions. A movie review can begin in one of many different ways, but it should make clear to the reader what movie is being reviewed.

Example (opening): *"I'll see you when I see you," Chris Lloyd says to his father Walter, in Arthur Penn's movie "Target." Father and son are about to be separated because Walter has decided to continue alone in his search for his kidnapped wife Donna. Chris is concerned about the welfare of his father, not only because the man is going into a dangerous situation, but because Chris has just begun to understand and respect his father.*

2. Presentation of the subject

- Gives a short summary of the plot, but not so much that the story will be spoiled for those who wish to see it.
- Enumerate the leading characters and specify some of their qualities. (Who plays the leading roles and how good is their acting?)
- Names the director of the movie and discusses the theme ("vision" or main idea) of the movie. Comments on the visual techniques (including special visual effects) and the sound track (including the musical score and special sound effects).

Example (sound effects): Throughout the action and also during the scenes where the father-son relationship develops, the musical score is typical. The music is eerie, adding tension to already tense moments (for example, when the man with glasses attempts to kill Walter), and is slow and 'happy' to provide greater emotional satisfaction to the family scenes (especially the reunion at the end). The music is appropriate, but would be more enjoyable if it were original and less predictable.

- May include background on the actor(s) or the director.

3. Critical evaluation of the movie

a. Evaluate the film in terms of its purpose–e.g. to entertain, to educate. How well does it succeed in accomplishing this purpose?
b. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the film by relating specific examples from the story or acting scenes.
c. Suggest for what audience the movie is appropriate and why. Does the movie contain language or visual content that would offend certain viewers? (e.g. General: All May Attend; Parental Guidance Recommended; Restricted: No Admittance Under 18; Not Suitable for Children; Violence Warning; Language Warning)

(These guidelines utilize a critical framework suggested by English, Hach, and Rolnicki in *Scholastic Journalism*, 9th ed. p. 157)

WRITING THE LEAD

The lead, or opening paragraph, is the most important part of a news story.

In a single paragraph, a lead must summarize the basic facts of a story and convey to a reader what you found out in your reporting. But it must be more than just an opening to your story. The lead must also catch a reader's or listener's attention and make them want to read the rest of your story.

And that makes the lead the hardest part of a news story to write. Unfortunately, there is no magic formula to tell you how to write a perfect lead. If it's any consolation, you are in good company because any experienced writer will admit it never gets any easier to write a great lead.

Journalists are taught a simple rule about basic news leads, called the "5-W's." They are: Who? What? Where? When? Why? A sentence or paragraph that gives a reader the answer to all the five W's will automatically summarize any story.

There are many other kinds of news leads, but they all fall into two categories: "hard" leads and"soft" leads. The choice depends on the nature of the story and determines the form of the rest of the story. A hard lead is suited for an urgent, breaking event, while a soft lead is more indirect and suited to feature writing.

A hard lead:

> If Canada and France don't reach an agreement on fish quotas by Sept. 30 Ottawa will unilaterally impose one, Fisheries Minister John Crosbie says.
> -- *St. John's Evening Telegram,* Sept. 16, 1992.

A soft lead:

> Bryan Adams spoke and the fans listened. "Be good to Osoyoos," Adams told the crowds of 30,000 who gathered in the Okanagan town Sunday for the only B.C. stop in his Waking Up the Nation tour. "Osoyoos has been good to you tonight. So have a good time and don't wreck the place." Then the clean cut kid from North Vancouver gave the fans what they had come for.
> --*Vancouver Sun,* Sept. 8, 1992

Any lead must also impart the central idea, or theme, of your story. A good lead, and a good story, needs a newsworthy idea.

> (Text written by Lawrence Surtees, formerly the telecommunications reporter for The Globe and Mail and now a senior research analyst at IDC Canada.

Types of Leads

Leads can be classified in different ways.

The simplest one is the "*Wh*-" pattern: Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How.

A more useful classification for beginning reporters may be the rhetorical approach, describing the function of basic types of leads. Detailed classifications and illustrations can be found in most journalism texts, but the following six leads will give a beginning reporter a good start:

Summary Lead

The summary lead is one of the most common, especially in "hard news" stories.. Most or all of the 5 W-s and H facts are included. The body of the news story then develops those facts.

In writing the summary lead, one must take care not to include too much information. Too many facts, names, or figures in the lead may discourage the reader from continuing.

Summary Lead

WILLIAMSBURG, VA. One of the largest and most valuable collections of books on dogs, the Chapin library of 2000 volumes, has been presented to the library of the College of William and Mary by Howard M. Chapin and the late Mrs. Chapin who spent twenty years assembling the collection.

Notice how much information is contained in one sentence: the name of the collection, the extent of the collection, the length of time required to assemble the collection, the names of the donors and the name of the college receiving the collection.

Comprehensive Lead (also called the Round-up Lead)

The comprehensive, or round-up, lead gives an overall picture of a number of events, each of which has some relation to a central fact.

Comprehensive Lead (or Round-up Lead)

WASHINGTON - A distinctly Democratic trend was discernable today in yesterday's elections. The Democrats captured three of the five congressional seats at stake in the balloting, elected a governor in Kentucky, and were generally successful in mayoralty contests in New England states.

Notice how the comprehensive lead shown above presents the essence of the news. The facts follow the lead.

Question Lead

The question lead begins with a question that is in the mind of readers, listeners, or viewers. The explanatory facts follow in the next sentences. While the question lead should not be over-used, it is an effective way to focus the story on a particular issue.

Question Lead

Why spend valuable tax dollars on high school sports? Jean Beaumont can give many reasons. Beaumont, President of Manitoba High Schools Athletic Association, addressed this tough question at a public meeting in Winnipeg last Friday.

Quotation Lead

The quotation lead gives the direct statement of a speaker. The statement used in the quotation lead is especially notable and points to the heart of the story.

Quotation Lead

"*The Glass Menagerie* is a classic in modern theatre," said Anne Lazarre, director of Prairie Arts Performers, "and we are pleased so many people in our region came out to see our production."

Punch Lead

The punch lead begins with a "punch" or thrusting blow. Direct and forceful, it immediately focuses on the main feature of the story.

Punch Lead

Tiny little legs, seared and blackened by third-degree burns, have been rebuilt by medical science for four-month old Sandra Brown. For more than a month, the child, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Brown, has been on her back in the local General Hospital, her heavily bandaged legs held in the air.

Notice how the above lead contains the "punch" of the story, while important details follow in the second paragraph. Such leads are usually used with "soft news" and can be very effective in feature stories.

Anecdotal Lead

The anecdotal lead is a brief, quickly-told tale that foreshadows whatever is to follow. It is especially popular in feature stories.

Anecdotal Lead

NEW YORK - Poor old Pat Crowe was picked up - once again - on the Bowery. Soaked with rain. Hat in Hand. Begging for pennies. Once he held up trains.
"I'm Pat Crowe," he boasted at the police station. The young detective did not know who Pat Crowe had been. The old man brought out his thumbed deck of yellowed clippings to convince them that he had once been a man. That's New York for you. A tragedy on every corner. No one knows or cares.

The challenge in using an anecdotal lead is to provide a smooth bridge smoothly from the anecdote to the story that follows. Often the "bridge" sentence directs the reader's attention to the theme of the story–in this case, to the impersonal, uncaring face of New York.

STORY IDEAS & STORY DEVELOPMENT

Getting Ideas for Stories

Don Radford is the managing editor for a number of small-town newspapers in Southern Manitoba. With dozens of stories to publish every week, he knows how challenging it can be for reporters to come up with good ideas.

"You can get ideas from things that have been announced," he suggests. "You can sit down and read the Coming Events calendar and the Classifieds. There are little things that remind you... 'So-and-so is coming over to help so-and-so's family.' You ask yourself, "Why are they doing this?' Then you ask around or make some phone calls."

Follow-up stories on published articles are also a good source of ideas. "You read what you've written in previous weeks," Mr. Radford says, "or what somebody else has written. You think: 'Okay, that's what he said he was going to do...I wonder if he actually did it.' Or you see what a particular group had planned for a weekend, and you wonder how many people showed up.'"

As Mr. Radford notes, reporting involves research, even when generating ideas for stories. "Another way to do a story is just to go out and talk to people in the community. It doesn't have to be–"Hi, I'm so-and-so from the Times." It can be sitting down and having coffee in Robin's Donuts and hearing people talk. You'd be surprised how many things come out of coffee-shop talk. People sometimes say, "Oh, that's coffee-shop talk. I don't listen to it." But what you hear as gossip may have a lot of truth to it. The main thing is to extract the truth. By hearing things that are talked about, you can stumble onto many things."

Asking 'Why?'

Don Radford is the managing editor for a number of small-town newspapers in Southern Manitoba. His reporters need to have "a nose for news," a sense of what will be interesting and relevant to the readers in his communities.

"A person has to be able to walk around, look at things, and immediately wonder 'Why?" Radford says. "Why is that there?"

STORY IDEAS

1. Your school: Recycling, drama, sports team, spirit days, concerts, technology

2. Your community: where you are from - name of community, location, special features, businesses, libraries

3. Your family: your father, mother, grandparents. Who they are? What they do?

4. People you admire: community leaders, friends, politicians, social activists

5. Youth group you are involved in: cadets, Junior Achievement, Youth Ventures

6. Extra-curricular activities: sports - tennis, hockey, softball, soccer; arts - dancing, drama, music, singing

7. Current events in the news: check newspapers online: the situation in Iraq; the oil industry and its affects on the environment; the collapse of the fishery, education cutbacks and how it affects your school and other schools.

8. Education: profile a career you are interested in, the stress of high school

9. Sports: favourite hockey player; views on a recent event in sports

10. Music: favourite cd, singer, group; views on a recent cd you listened to

11. Movie: favourite actor, movie, views on a recent movie you've seen

12. Opinions on teen issues: clothes, how advertisers target young people, trying to look like the girl in a magazine, drinking, smoking, bullying.

13. Special celebrations/holidays: Christmas: traditions in your area, with your family, what it means to you; Remembrance Day: interview a veteran, talk about someone you know; Anti-Racism Day: Does racism affect you - talk with people it does affect.

WRITING YOUR OWN STORY

Start with an Open Mind

Don Radford is the managing editor for a number of small-town newspapers in Southern Manitoba. In his career as a reporter, he has written hundreds of articles and knows how important it is to keep an open mind as he organizes his story information.

"I try to empty my mind totally," Mr. Radford says. "I go in, let my mind get filled up, and then figure out what the story is."

If the reporter has determined the story angle in advance, Mr. Radford warns, there is a danger of missing the real story.

"It is really important to have an open mind," he says. "After completing the interview, go back and talk with a colleague or an editor.

'So, what's the story, do you think?'
'Well, I think what he said about this...'
Okay...perhaps, but what about this part of it, too?'
You develop the angle after you have all of the information."

Advice for your First Draft

Don Radford is the managing editor for a number of small-town newspapers in Southern Manitoba. He encourages beginning journalists to "find something in the story that refers to people, not just things." The story should be about "somebody doing something." For example, a good story might describe not just the decision of a school board–as a corporate organization–but the actions or comments of an individual trustee.

Mr. Radford also advises the beginning journalist to provide readers with adequate explanations. Speaking about beginning writers, he says: "A major mistake is assuming that the reader knows as much you do about the background." Aim to provide good explanations of the information reported and be careful not to assume that the reader knows more than he or she does.

Learning the News Style

Even when the content is similar, the style of news writing in different publications may vary considerably. Paul Deal is a Senior Broadcast Journalist for B.B.C. Radio and he regularly writes in differing styles for the audiences of the different networks--Radio 2, 3, 4 and 5.

"You can develop the skill of writing for different audiences," he says. "I used to enjoy doing Radio 1 news summaries....Radio 1 listeners want everything delivered in a fairly snappy way. It was an interesting professional challenge to write a Radio 1 summary one hour and then do a Radio 3 summary an hour later."

One learns the various styles by reading the scripts and paper and by listening to the broadcast output. To learn the style of a particular publication or broadcaster, Mr. Deal explains, "you become immersed in that house style and learn more about the stories they would choose and how they would write a story."

A Writer's Voice

"Voice?" You are probably thinking, "This is getting really weird!"

But it's not strange at all. A memorable news story creates the illusion of an individual writer speaking aloud to an individual listener, Don Murray says in Writing for Your Readers.

A newspaper is filled with fascinating conversations. Your job as a newswriter is to find your voice and keep it consistent throughout your story. Try reading a paragraph from a book or newspaper to yourself right now -- and listen to the voice that says the words silently to you. The voice comes from the written words and is the voice of the writer.

The voice of a story begins with your point of view and how you view the subject that you are writing about. Your own background, experiences, knowledge and attitude affect your voice.

A writer's voice is then tuned by language and selecting the right words, then the right phrase, the right sentence and right paragraph. Once you start writing, it is just important to read your own words -- and to rewrite and reread.

What's the right word? Mark Twain wrote, "The difference between the right word and the almost-right word is the difference between lightning and a lightning bug."

(Written by Lawrence Surtees, formerly the telecommunications reporter for *The Globe and Mail* and now a senior research analyst at IDC Canada.)

Rehearsing your Story

In the theatre of our minds, we fashion many scripts. Some of these, we turn into private roles that guide our daily actions. Others we shape into public stories that we share with readers and listeners. Donald Murray, in his book Expecting the Unexpected, describes the rehearsal process that accompanies our composition of such public stories.

"Experienced reporters listen to write," he says. "They rehearse what they're going to say by saying it in their heads, out loud, or on paper, to hear how it sounds, and keep saying it over again in different ways until it sounds right.

We all rehearse when we want to ask someone for a date, a raise, a loan; when we write a note or make a phone call to congratulate or offer sympathy; when we hope to make a good impression at a party or make a sale. We say, over and over in our heads, what we hope we'll be able to say later. We listen to how it sounds, trying–by practice–to sound natural, trying out different words, in various orders, changing paces and rhythms.

Rehearsal is a vital part of planning for most newswriters. They won't proceed until they hear language that seems appropriate to the meaning, illuminates it, makes the meaning clear, and emphasizes it. Each reporter has his or her own voice, a personal way of using language, that has to be adapted to a voice that is appropriate to what is being written. Y00ou speak with your own voice at the family reunion, at a formal meeting, in the locker room, at a wake or viewing, at a wedding. Your voice is yours but you tune it so it is effective in each situation. Voice is style, and more; it is intensity, caring, and above all illumination."

Copy Editing

Once your first draft is written, and you have checked to insure that you have reported the information accurately and fairly, you are ready to copy edit the article. Don Radford is the managing editor for a number of small-town newspapers in Southern Manitoba and he has extensive experience editing the articles that he and others have written.

He says: "The first thing I look at is whether everything is spelled right. Names, specifically. The most important book you'll ever see is your dictionary. I also check for errors in grammar and in matters of fact...Did you say that the capital of Ontario is Ottawa? I try to pick out the obvious errors, because those are the things that can you shoot you down quickly in the eyes of your audience."

INTERVIEWING

Reporting: The Heart of a News Story

News writers, like other writers, develop their stories from ideas. But there is still something extra that makes a news story different from other forms of writing. That is because news writers must go out into the world and report the news. A news writer must first be a reporter–a person who finds and gathers the news.

Once you have an idea about something you think is news, you then try to find out as much as possible about the story.

Reporting often involves research–going to libraries, reading about an idea, think about where to get more information and who to talk to (all things that the Internet can help with). Most of all, reporting involves meeting and interviewing people who either know about the story or who are part of it. Those people are called sources.

Reporting is at the heart of a news story. Interviewing real people provides the meat of a good story–quotes of what they said. Talking to people often leads to unexpected information that can take a story in a whole different direction. And people often tell wonderful stories, called anecdotes, to illustrate what they are talking about.

It is reporting that makes a news story so different from other forms of writing. And it is meeting people and learning surprising, unexpected–and sometimes, amazing–things that makes reporting so rewarding. And any of those ingredients will make your news story interesting.

A cautionary note on reporters and their sources is in order first. As a reporter, you must always identify who you are and the fact that you are a reporter before beginning an interview. And if you want to interview someone or use what they have said in a story, you must ask permission and inform the source that you would like to publish that information or quotes. This is more than just courtesy and good ethical practice. If reporters do not reveal who they are and ask permission, then they may be invading people's privacy–and undermining society's confidence and trust in journalists. So, ask first and avoid problems later.

(Text written by Lawrence Surtees, formerly the telecommunications reporter for *The Globe and Mail* and now a senior research analyst at IDC Canada.)

For reporters, the interview is an essential part of the information-gathering process.

Arranging and conducting interviews can be a fascinating activity, but for beginners it can also be an intimidating one. Much of the fear involved in contacting interview prospects and later meeting with them can be reduced through careful preparation and an understanding of the process.

Types of Interview

Face-to-Face Interview: When possible, arrange to meet in person with your interview source. Such face-to-face meetings allow you the greatest flexibility in the direction of the interview. You also can determine much from the body language that will you with your secondary questions–e.g. follow-up, probing. If the interview is recorded, the reporter must advise the person that his or her comments are being taped.

Telephone Interview: When it is not possible to meet in person with your interview source, a telephone interview is a good second choice. Although one lacks the body-language cues, this approach still allows the interviewer to create an intimate rapport with the other person on the line. The interviewer must use some technical means to record the conversation (e.g. a recorder jack in the phone line or a pick-up microphone on the phone receiver) and, legally, the interviewer must advise the person that the conversation is being recorded.

E-mail Interview: This approach is increasingly popular, because it offers 'time-shift." It works best in those circumstances where the person interviewed is very comfortable using e-mail and is fairly skilled with written communication.

Preparing for Your Interview

The following are recommended steps as you prepare for your interview:

- Locate and read articles previously published on the subject.
- Gather background information concerning the subject matter of the interview.
- Gather background information concerning the person to be interviewed.
- Prepare a list of prospective questions.
- Arrange for the use of recording equipment (if you plan to tape-record the interview)

Composing Your Interview Questions

An important part of preparing for an interview is your composition of the questions. While some of the information gathered will come from questions you think of 'on the spot,' much of it will derive from those questions you have prepared in advance.

It is helpful to understand the different types of questions and know their functions. Interview questions can be classified in three basic ways.

Open or Closed Questions

Open questions are broad in nature, often specifying only the topic to be covered.

Examples of open questions: *Tell me about your school's upcoming musical? What do you know about this year's volleyball season?*

Closed questions are restrictive in nature. They limit the options available to the person responding.

Examples of closed questions: *When is your school's next musical? Which is the first volleyball team that our school will compete against.*

Primary or Secondary Questions

Primary questions introduce topics in an interview or new areas within an topic. These questions can be taken out of their context and still make sense.

Examples of primary questions: *What is your favourite hobby?*
How do you think school spirit can be improved?

Secondary questions aim to draw out more information obtained in a previous questions. These questions ae also referred to as "follow-up" or "probing" questions.

Examples of secondary questions:

If a person interviewed has just said that stamp collecting is her/his favourite hobby, a secondary question might be: *Do you collect any particular kind of stamp?*

If the person interviewed has just said that school spirit can be improved by having more Pep Rallies, a secondary questions might be: *Do you think that Pep Rallies should be compulsory for students to attend?*

Primary questions can be prepared in advance; most secondary questions are asked in response to comments made by the person interviewed. Good listening skills are essential. If an interviewer follow-up on information provided, the best story angle and leads might be missed.

More about Secondary Questions

While an interviewer can prepare good primary questions, the best secondary questions are those which are asked in response to what the interviewed person has said. Such secondary or follow-up questions improve with practice, but it helps to be familiar with their different purposes.

In brief, follow-up questions ask for clarification of a response, seek the justification for a statement, offer opportunities to show relationships, or provide cues and prompts when a person has difficulty responding.

Examples of follow-up vocabulary:

For clarification: *"Explain..." "Tell me more about..." "What do you mean..." "Can you re-phrase..." "What else..." "In what way is..."*

For justification: *"How is that the case?" "Why do you say that?" "Can you give me an example that?" "What additional information can you give about..?" "How would you accomplish that?" "Are you sure that...?"*

For relationships: *"How does your reply relate to...?" "How does that differ from...?" "In what way is your answer similar to...?" "Suppose that.....; then what?"*

For cueing or prompting:

Interviewer: *"What do you think of Diana Krall's music?"*
Person: *"I don't think that I've heard it."*
Interviewer: *"She's a Canadian jazz singer."*
Person: "That's not the kind of music I usually listen to."

Neutral or Leading Questions

Neutral questions allow the person interviewed to decide on an answer without direction or pressure from the interviewer.

Example of neutral question: *Do you like studying Fashion Design?*

Leading questions encourage the person interviewed to agree with an answer that the interviewer wants or expects. This type of question should be avoided.

Example of leading question: *You like studying Fashion Design, don't you?*

Preparing for an Interview: An Editor's Advice

Don Radford is the managing editor for a number of small-town newspapers in Southern Manitoba. He offers a number of suggestions on how a reporter might prepare for an interview:

> "Go to the newspaper files. Find out before hand what the newspaper has written on the individual or topic. That will give you the background. It will give you ideas for questions."

Also try to get some general background information. For example, before talking with somebody about how the water treatment plant works, spend some time learning about general issues–water treatment, provincial or national water concerns–to fill in the gaps that will invariably happen during an interview.

Talk to senior reporters and to colleagues in the newsroom. Mention the topic of your interview and listen to suggestions and questions from colleagues. Bouncing ideas off colleagues can really help you to get prepared."

Arranging for Your Interview

The following steps are recommended when you prepare for your interview:
Contact the person whom you intend to interview as soon as possible.

Indicate who you are (if the person does not know you well), state the purpose of the desired interview, and indicate approximately how long it will take.

Arrange a time at the convenience of the interviewee, but seek the earliest possible time. (Even feature-story topics lose their relevance in time, so be creative if you are requesting interview time with a busy person).

Ask permission to tape the interview.
(Most people agree to use of a tape recorder if its purpose is well-explained: 1) it insures that you are accurate in your recording; 2) it aids you in identifying good quotes; 3) it allows a teacher to credit your work and to suggest ways in which you might improve.)

Conducting Your Interview

The following guidelines may assist you when you conduct your interview:
Have questions prepared before the interview.

(The number of questions you prepare will vary with the subject and length of the interview, but they should anticipate directions in which the interview may go. Based on your background research, these questions will help you to 'think-on-your-feet.')

If you have a story angle (e.g. main story idea) in mind, be ready to change it if, during the interview, unexpected facts point to a better angle. Remember that the best news stories deal with something "out of the ordinary."

Begin the interview with easily answered questions. Such questions allow both you and your interview subject to warm-up to the topic. (e.g. At the beginning of the interview, don't ask a traveller what was her most interesting experience. Build up to such big questions by asking when she returned from her last trip or how long she intends to remain in your town.)

Ask specific, definite questions rather than general ones.
(General = "What do you know about Moon Dog's next album?"
Specific = "What is the name of Moon Dog's next album?")

Thank the person for his or her time at the end of your interview. Ask if you can check back with the person if you have any final questions crucial to the story. (The person may welcome a copy of the story once it is published or broadcast, but showing the story in advance is not encouraged; the person may insist on changes that have nothing to do with accuracy.)

Listening with Both Ears

Don Radford is the managing editor for a number of small-town newspapers in Southern Manitoba. He knows that the most important task of a beginning journalist is to get information that is complete and accurate.

He says: "Learn how to listen to what people are telling you, so that you can follow the story. Don't sit down with six questions and then leave when you've asked them. Be interested in what the person is telling you. From that, you can shape the story."

A beginning reporter may not know how to put a story together, but if the information is complete and accurate, "that is most of the job." An editor or more experienced writer can latter assist with the final composition.

Note-taking for Beginning Reporters

Don Radford is the managing editor for a number of small-town newspapers in Southern Manitoba. In journalism school, he had no training in note-taking and, as a reporter, he learned his approach by trial-and-error.

"Whether you develop your own short-hand system or pick up someone else's," he says, "it's something you have to learn. Ideally, note-taking should be just words and phrases.

You should write the story as soon as you've finished your interview, and those words and phrases should just be things that jog your memory."

While direct quotations need to be written exactly as the person has spoken, Mr. Radford cautions that it is "deadly" if one tries to report an interview word for word. The reporter should listen carefully and make just enough notes to prompt the memory when writing the story.

Interviewing with Limited Preparation

While good reporters prepare carefully for their story interviews, they sometimes encounter opportunities to gather information when they have not had time to do background research or to prepare questions in advance. Don Radford, managing editor for a number of small-town newspapers in Southern Manitoba, offers advice for interviewing such circumstances.

He suggests "going in and making it obvious that you don't know anything about the topic."

"Frankly admit to your interview subject that you know virtually nothing about the topic," he says, "and ask if they would be so kind as to explain. You can get scads of information like that. If you say, 'I'm sorry to admit this, but I have no idea of what you do here' or "I have no idea of how your water plant works,' the vast majority of people will say "Oh" and then tell you their story. Then you must really listen as people talk. When you have no guidelines to go by, the story really comes out of the listening."

SOURCES: Attributions

Know Who Is Writing Your News

"You've got to be conscious of who is writing the news that you're reading," says Paul Deal, a Senior Broadcast Journalist for BBC Radio in London, England. He encourages readers to think about why a newspaper has chosen to do a particular story or why it has featured it on its front page.

He says: "Look at your national papers and any national on-line service. Take a big political story and ask: 'Why have they done that? Why is that report only two paragraphs long in one paper whereas it's the lead in another one?' There will be a reason why they are telling a story the way they are telling it. If you read a story that's on the front of the *Daily Telegraph*, it fits in with their view of the world. They've not selected the story by accident. They've thought about it and that's their view of the world."

"You've got to be sceptical and ask yourself, 'Why is this paper writing this story the way it is?" Mr. Deal advises. "Or 'Why is this TV program telling us this story in the way it is?'"

Says Who? The Attribution of Sources

Attribution is the crediting of one's sources of information.

Writers of factual stories do not use the same conventions as their academic counterparts to credit their sources. There are no footnotes or in-text citations, nor are there bibliographies or works-cited pages. Instead, the source of information is identified within the article, the expertise or authority of the person is indicated, and quotations are provided.

Attribution is important for several reasons. First, it helps readers or listeners to evaluate the information or opinion. What are the person's qualifications for making such a statement? Is this person likely to be well informed on this particular subject? Is the person reputable and reliable?

Secondly, an attribution allows a writer to include opinions in a factual story without being accused of editorializing. Since the writer aims not to intrude personal opinions into a story, the source of any opinion needs to be identified clearly. Then, it appears as a verifiable fact that someone apart from the writer of the story has expressed such an opinion.

Finally, an attribution helps to protect the writer if the information is found to be inaccurate or the opinion proves to be damaging. Writers and news editors work diligently to be accurate and fair, but an attribution shares the responsibility with the source.

Saying Who is Who

When you first attribute information to a particular person, give both the first and last name and whatever additional identification may be needed for the reader or listener to evaluate the person as a source of information:

"Charitable giving is up 20 percent this fall," says Peter Homenecki [name], *chairperson* [position] *for the local United Way campaign* [organization].

Subsequent references may include only the person's last name:
"Better training for our door-to-door canvassers has been a major factor in the increased donations," Homenecki [last name only] *added.*

Sometimes the necessary information is established in advance, allowing the writer to use only a last name with the actual quotation. Here is an example from Heather Royce-Roll's article "Acting classes help kids with facial differences":

Williams-Stark came up with the idea for Making Faces after his partner Abby Thomas suggested he join AboutFace eight years ago. With social worker Heather Beverage and AboutFace executive director Anna Pileggi, he's been helping children for three years.

..."If you can't change what makes you unattractive by Hollywood standards, how do you fit in?" asks Pileggi. "Very often, the kids want to be invisible."

Since Anna Pileggi has been identified in the text as the executive director of AboutFace, her quotation several paragraphs later only needs the last-name identification.
If the quoted information comes not from an interview but from a published source, that too needs to be indicated.

"If you don't have a destination, you'll never get there," says businessman Harvey Mackay in his popular book Swim With the Sharks Without Being Eaten Alive.

Where to Place the Attribution

An attribution can be placed before, after, or in the middle of quoted information. In printed stories, it is most common to name the people and give details about who they are at the end or in the middle of the quoted material. The reader's eye can scan a sentence and see cues indicating the material is quoted–e.g. quotation marks and commas.

"Charitable giving is up 20 percent this fall," says the campaign chairperson, "and that is remarkable because unemployment is high, inflation is up, and our local economy has not improved."

When the quoted statement is fairly short, the end position is useful.

"Better training for our door-to-door canvassers has been a major factor in the increased donations," he added.

In broadcast journalism, the attribution is usually at the start of a sentence. As Paul Deal, a Senior Broadcast Journalist with BBC Radio in London, explains: "We try to get the attribution at the front, rather than at the end....You can give the listener some clues about who is about to say something that you're reporting on." Placing an attribution at the front may slow down story, but it helps to avoid confusion.

The Attributive Verb

The verb "said" is used most frequently by writers when attributing a statement to someone else. This simple verb is straight-forward and carries no editorial shades of meaning.

As a matter of style, you may wish to use a synonym and there are many–e.g. *stated, declared, noted, pointed out, claimed, insisted, suggested*...and so on. However, caution is needed. Varying the attributive verb might change the meaning.

"Charitable giving is up 20 percent this fall," the campaign chairperson said yesterday.

This statement suggests that the 20 percent increase is a matter of fact.

"Charitable giving is up 20 percent this fall," the campaign chairperson claimed yesterday.

This statement, by contrast, suggests there is some doubt whether or not the claim is accurate.

The attributive verb "said" is the reliable choice if a writer is uncertain whether an alternate word might distort the intended meaning or intrude an editorial opinion.

Direct and Indirect Quotations

When attributing a statement, a writer must decide whether to use a direct or indirect quotation.

A direct quotation uses the exact words of a speaker or writer.

"While in many respects the correspondents have an interesting life–they travel and they get to see the strange things going on all over–they do actually have a lot of pressure," says Paul Deal, a senior broadcast journalist with BBC Radio in London.

An indirect quotation paraphrases the words of a speaker or writer. Correspondents lead an interesting life but they must cope with much pressure, says Paul Deal, a senior broadcast journalist with BBC Radio in London.

A good direct quotation enriches a story. It may give a sense of the person speaking, or it may capture the essence of the story. At the end of her story "Acting Classes Help Kids with Facial Differences," Heather Royce-Roll uses a direct quotation by actor Williams-Stark because it sums up the main point of her article: *"Discrimination based on looks is 'the same as racism, homophobia or sexism. You're cheating yourself out of friends.'"*

Most people, when speaking off-the-cuff, do not say things that are easily quoted. An indirect quotation is recommended if person's statement is not well spoken or is too long.

Original direct quotation: *"The team played with lots of heart and...ah...what made it such a great game...ah...was that they...ah...they never gave up," Coach Walburn said.*

Indirect quotation: *The team played with lots of heart and never gave up, Coach Walburn said.*

Partial Quotations are used when the writer wants to retain the flavour of the original statement, yet still make a point effectively. In her "Acting Classes" story, Royce-Roll uses a partial quotation to describe William-Stark's facial disfigurement:
Williams-Stark himself remembers being a child and having "the worst bilateral cleft lip and palate case in B.C."

When taking words from their original context, a writer must be very careful not to change or distort the speaker's meaning.

Cleaned-Up Quotations are the subject of keen debate among the writers of factual stories. Should the words be quoted exactly as spoken? Does one leave in such filler words as "um," "ah," "well," and "I mean"? Can one drop interrupting phrases if they clutter up the statement?

Some publications are very strict in their use of direct quotations and permit no changes. Others are more lenient. For beginning writers, it is probably best to err on the side of caution.

Original example of quotation from Paul Deal: *"News listeners expect that news finishes on the dot. So that means--and you can see the problem already--because you have to be out at 18:30, you have to have a good idea which item will finish."*

Cleaned-up quotation: *"News listeners expect that news finishes on the dot...So that means you have to have a good idea which item will finish."*

The cleaned-up version of Mr. Deal's quotation may be clearer, but many publications would not print it because it has lost accuracy.

Punctuating Your Quotations

In academic writing, the material one quotes is usually drawn from secondary sources–e.g. books, magazines, Internet documents. In factual stories, the quotations usually come from the direct speech of a person who is interviewed. Fortunately, in both cases, the rules of punctuation are much the same.

A number of the basic rules are reviewed below. For more detailed explanations, please consult *Writer's Inc* or another handbook of writing.

Direct Quotation

Double quotation marks are used to enclose the exact words of the person. A comma separates the quoted material from the attribution and is placed inside of the quotation marks.
"I used the sun to stay oriented and ate berries to slake my hunger," said Todd Mackenzie, after being lost in the wilderness park for three days.

The first word in a direct quotation is capitalized. When the attribution appears in the middle of the quotation, the beginning of the second part is not capitalized.
"The blueberries tasted good," Mackenzie said, "but the lake water was dark and sour."

Indirect Quotation

No quotation marks are used to include the paraphrased words of a person. However, a comma may be needed to separate the paraphrased material from the attribution.
The sun kept him oriented and berries slaked his hunger, said Todd Mackenzie, after being lost in the wilderness park for three days.

Partial Quotation

Use double quotation marks around all of the exact words.
In classic understatement, Todd Mackenzie admitted he was "a bit worried" when the search plane failed to see him by the shore.

If the exact words appear at the end of a sentence, the period should appear inside the double quotation marks. When the search plane failed to see him by the shore, Todd Mackenzie was "a bit worried."

Cleaned-Up Quotations

A writer needs to be very cautious when editing or adapting a direct quotation. Careful punctuation is essential to let the reader know how the quotation has changed.
If material is omitted, an ellipsis (three spaced dots) should be used.

Original Todd Mackenzie statement:
"I about went crazy, beating off the mosquitoes, and hearing all the weird noises, hearing things thrashing around in the woods. It really spooked me."

Todd Mackenzie statement with material omitted:
"I about went crazy, beating off the mosquitoes and...hearing things thrashing around in the woods. It really spooked me."

If material is omitted at the end of a quotation, use the period and an ellipsis (a total of four spaced dots).

Original Todd Mackenzie statement:
"I was a bit worried when that search plane flew over twice and didn't see me, because I couldn't get out of the shade of the trees."

Todd Mackenzie statement with material omitted at end of sentence:"I was a bit worried when that search plane flew over twice and didn't see me...."

If material is added within a quotation–in order to explain or clarify–the additional material should be enclosed within brackets.

Original Todd Mackenzie statement: "I knew I was in big trouble when they found my food."

Todd Mackenzie statement with clarifying material added:"I knew I was in big trouble when [two bears] found my food."

REPORTING FOR RADIO

http://www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/nr_reporterstoolbox/multimedia.html

Radio uses voices and sounds as newspapers use pictures to illustrate or emphasize a story. News can be more interesting and more effective when the listeners hear the event taking place or hear the voices of those making it happen."

Radio is intimate - you're talking to one person at a time. When you hear someone's voice on the radio, it feels as if they're talking directly to you. It's like having a conversation with a friend.

Audio clips help to paint a picture with sounds. Of course, one of the major benefits of using audio tape is that you can hear people's voices. On radio, tape clips are used to help tell a story. The announcer will read part of a story, then he pauses to play a piece of tape of a person involved in the story.

How does radio compare to print and television:

- Unlike print, radio listeners can't go back to the part they've missed. It has to be clear the first time, because there is no second chance.

- Unlike TV, there are no pictures to reinforce your words. That means your script has to do all the describing. It also has to grab the listener's attention. You can't back into the main point - you have to get to it quickly without a long preamble.

A radio story can be done in many formats. You will need to determine what type of radio story you wish to do before you begin taping or interviewing. Most radio stories involve the announcer reading part of the story, then pausing to play a piece of tape of a person involved in the story.

- soundscapes - a creative mix of sound and voice, mixed digitally, about an event or issue, usually 4 to 5 min in length.
- mini-docs - a highly focussed mix of script and voice/interview clips, with a sound bed, usually 4 to 6 minutes in length.
- commentaries - the taped performance of a written (and edited) script - not about a macro issue - but about a personal issue/experience, usually 3 min in length.
- streeters - a mix of voices/interview clips (one after the other) about an event or issue, about 3 to 4 minutes in length. usually the same question is posed to all interviewed.
- discussions - a taped group discussion on a topic chosen by the group, usually edited down from 20 minutes of freewheeling talk to about 5 to 6 minutes of broadcast-ready tape.

Using Audio Equipment

To produce audio stories students will need equipment: cassette recorder or minidisc player, mic, headphones and adaptor to hook it up to your computer.

1. Get comfortable with the equipment ~ Play around with the tape recorder until you are very familiar with it. It's important to do this before you begin; if you're relaxed with the recorder and the microphone, the people you're interviewing will be too.

2. Get organized ~ Always make sure you have enough cassettes and an extra set of batteries.

3. Do a test ~ Always do a test before you begin. Record a few seconds, then play it back to make sure the sound is good.

4. Label your tapes ~ Always label the tapes before you start. When you're in the field it's easy to forget and tape over something you've just recorded. (It happens.)

5. Always wear your headphones ~ Recording without headphones is like a photographer taking pictures without looking through the viewfinder. Headphones help you focus on exactly what you're recording. If something sounds weird, stop and check it out.

6. Keep the microphone close ~ The most important thing of all: keep the microphone close to the sound source (your mouth or the mouth of the person you're interviewing). About 5-6 inches is good, the length of your outstretched hand. If it's any farther away you will still be able to hear what people say, but the recording will lose its power and intimacy. It's also best to keep the microphone a little bit below the mouth to avoid the "popping P" sound. Check this with your headphones on.

7. Ensure the record options on your recorder are set correctly.

8. Use the recorder's counter. When you go out to do an interview move to zero on your recorder's counter at the top of each tape, and take notes on what number the tape is at when different things happen. This will make it easier for you to follow what's going on when you're in the studio.

Recording your story

1. Record interviews in a quiet environment. Office. Living Room. Studio. Be aware of light hums, computer noises, air conditioner whistling.

2. Activities and events are good tape material if it fits into the story somehow. Cafeterias, a trip to the mall. There is a lot of drama to be had here even for background ambience. Dialogues or interviews that take place here can be highly interesting.

3. For one-on-one interviews, record in mono. For ambience, interviews with two or more people or events, record with a good stereo mic.

4. When you are ready to record your portion of your radio story, the lead in and closing, for example, remember good voice, expressive words are important elements of radio reporting. Paint a picture with your voice. You have to give listeners something to "look" at through your voice.

Writing for Radio

1. Radio writing has to be tight and clear, and above all, interesting.
2. You have to be creative and pay attention to words, sound and language.
3. Use one idea to a sentence.
4. Anchor a story with present or present perfect verbs in the lead.
5. Begin sentences with a source, with the attribution, if needed, and use paraphrased quotes.
6. Use ordinary, one- and two-syllable words whenever possible.
7. Use vigorous verbs. Simple sentences with active verbs.
8. Keep in the present tense. Present tenses give immediacy and energy to news writing, allowing listeners to feel that they are hearing about the news as it is taking place.
9. Radio is conversational so your writing has to sound like it is "talked", not read.
10. Keep it rolling ~ The golden rule of radio is that the best moments always happen right when you've stopped recording. There's a reason for that: as soon as you push "stop," people relax and are more themselves. Natural, truthful moments are priceless. Tape is cheap. Keep it rolling.

Interviewing

There is one simple rule for getting people to talk openly and honestly: you have to be genuinely curious about the world around you.

1. Have interviewees identify themselves on tape. Start the interview by asking Who are you? (Even if you know who they are!!)How old are you? What do you do and how long have you been doing it? or whatever introductory question is appropriate for the particular story.

2. Once you've located some of the people you want to talk to organize a list of subjects to be covered and questions you want to ask for the interview.

3. Have a list of questions ready for your interview; however, remember that unexpected comments or information can come from the interviewee so listen attentively and change focus if necessary.

4. A good interview is a conversation between two or more people. Even though you are asking questions, you are involved in the dialogue.

5. Be absolutely silent when your subject is talking. Don't laugh, and never interrupt a subject.

6. Don't let outside noise ruin a recording. If a truck passes or there's a siren or some other noise, just stop the interview until the noise passes. If the subject is in the middle of an important story, let him finish it, then have him repeat it.

7. Help the interviewee be more descriptive. For visually descriptive information, ask your subject to paint a picture with words of whatever you need them to describe.

8. Emotional content works very well on radio. Questions like 'How does this make you feel?' tend to yield good tape.

9. Don't be afraid to rerecord. Remember: everything can be edited. Rerecord it until you're completely happy with the reading.

10. Sounds and ambience adds to your audio story. Gathering sounds after your interview will add a great deal to your story.

11. Collect good sounds ~ Every time you record, collect all the specific sounds you can think of: dogs barking, the sound of the ocean, students in the hallways, sounds from a sporting event, doors slamming, the radio being turned on, the sound of your blender. Be creative. You will use these sounds later when you produce the story.

12. If you are doing a story on traffic, sounds of cars, car horns; if you are talking about the ocean, fishing, sounds of the water splashing against the rocks.

Putting your piece together

It is a good idea to listen to your tape before inputting into your computer. Write a sort of shotlist (a list of what is on your tape) for yourself with times and content of your tapes. This will help you edit your tape into the radio format you've chosen.

PRODUCING VIDEO STORIES

http://www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/nr_reporterstoolbox/multimedia.html

With the right equipment, you can put still photos and even moving pictures on the Web. You can also use video clips or segments to help tell your story.

You see it on the CBC, on Much Music or on the Sports Network. The announcer will read an introduction to a story, then she pauses to play a piece of video tape that helps tell the story. Sometimes it's a scene of a sporting event, a parade, an accident or a news conference.

Other times, it's a segment that features one or two people talking about the issue. Here are some tips you can use for using video in your story:

1. Once you start writing your story, think about the video-taped images and interviews you have recorded and consider how they could fit into your story. For example, a shot of an event might help you show the audience.
2. Exactly what it was like to be in that particular place at that time. Or a person involved in the event might be able to explain something better than you could say it yourself.
3. When you're writing for an online publication like SNN, try to present your story so that everyone can read it -- whether they can play the video or audio elements or not. That means including the information that appears on video and audio in your written version of the story.
4. Perhaps you'd like to include a part of interview with one of the people involved in the story. It's best to use a section that includes clear recordings of both the questions and answers. If the questions can't be heard very well, it's better to just use video of the person's answers to expand on a point made in your story.

Elements of a video/television story

As you watch news and feature reports on television, you will notice that many different elements are used in the reports. They include:

1. Stand-ups. A reporter at the scene of a news report. It could be a live report or is sometimes used at the beginning and end of a story or package.
2. Voice overs consist of news copy read by a reporter while edited video is shown on the screen.
3. Graphics can help make stories easier to understand. These include statistics, or a photo with a written description or statement.
4. Natural sound is used to enhance authenticity for the pictures seen and the words heard.
5. The term Packages relates to a complete, self-contained report. It uses a combination of graphics, voice-overs, and standups.

What kind of stories make good video?

1. School activities such as Aids Awareness Days, Sports, Drama, etc.
2. Profile of your school or unique/special school program.
3. A Tour of your town or tourist attraction.
4. Career Profile -interview a doctor, teacher or journalist.
5. A Day in the Life. It's another way of doing a Career Profile. Following a person through a typical day.
6. A dramatic piece. As an individual or group program, you could develop a story focussed on a key teen issue: career options, leaving home, drinking, smoking, dating, teen images.....etc.

Once you have your topic, brainstorm about it. Who to talk with? What visuals to use? Interview ideas? Where to find information?

Storyboard

Once you have your idea, you need to develop an outline of your story. It can be as simple as stating the shots you want, the intro and closing. Or for a feature story on your community you can outline each visual image, a voice over to each scene, etc.

A storyboard is a visual script for your story. It is a guide, a plan and a blueprint from which you will direct you story. It is taking your ideas and translating them into visual images. You do it by providing both a visual description and a written description.

You save countless hours of unnecessary shooting and editing by doing a storyboard. If you plan it in advance you don't have to worry about wasting time shooting footage you will never use.

There are four things that a storyboard does for you. First, it is a way to work out and discuss your ideas. Second, it is a visualization of how your story will look. Third, it is a description of how the story is sequenced and put together, and fourth, it is a step by step guide to making and shooting your story.

To create a storyboard, you should follow three basic steps.

1. Analyze (break down) your story into its component parts.
2. Evaluate and choose what shots you need for your story.
3. Synthesis - the process of developing and putting your project together.

Developing a storyboard

1. Put your shots and scenes of your storyboard in an order that tells your story clearly.
2. Plan your story so that the visual images and the script can be clearly understood by reading your storyboard.
3. Plan your film in the most interesting and appealing way possible for the audience.
4. Plan not only what happens in each shot, but also how fast or how slow you want it to happen.
5. Eliminate unnecessary or repetitive shots and add missing shots. Cut long boring shots and break them down into shorter more interesting shots.
6. Make sure there is a smooth, clear, logical flow from shot to shot and scene to scene.

Script writing for television/video

When you watch the news on television, you will see different styles of news reports. One style focuses mainly on interviews and discussions. They are generally called semi-scripted stories. They resemble a basic outline, indicating where the interview is to be placed, an introduction (which could be a standup by the reporter or graphic) and a closing (either by the reporter, a voice over or again a graphic).

The second style is called fully-scripted stories. These stories list the complete audio and video for every minute of the story. This would include a dramatic story, a documentary or feature story. In a fully scripted show the overall content, balance, pace and timing can all be figured out before the production starts.

Keep in mind that writing for the electronic media is not the same as writing for print. Those who write for print enjoy some advantages that their counterparts in radio and TV don't have. For example, a reader can go back and reread a sentence. If a sentence is not understood in a TV production, the meaning is lost—or worse, the listener is distracted for some time trying to figure out what was said.

Here are some tips for writing a television/video script:

1. Assume a conversational tone by using short sentences and an informal, approachable style. The active voice is preferred over the inactive voice, nouns and verbs are preferred over adjectives, and specific words are preferred over general words.
2. Engage your audience emotionally, make them care about both the people and content of your production.
3. Provide adequate logical structure. Let viewers know where you are going, which points are key concepts, and when you are going to change the subject.
4. Flow of story: You need to give the viewer a chance to process each idea before moving on to the next. If you move too rapidly, you'll lose your audience; too slowly, and you'll bore them. The best approach in presenting crucial information is to first signal the viewer that something important is coming up. Next, present the information as simply and clearly as possible. Then reinforce the point through repetition, or with an illustration or two.
5. If a script is packed with too many facts, or the information is not clearly presented, the viewer will become confused, lost, and frustrated.
6. Give your audience a chance to digest one concept before moving on to another.
7. Keep in mind that the average viewer has internal and external distractions, preconceptions, etc., which get in the way of the communication process.

Correlating video and audio

Ensuring your video and audio match is a crucial ingredient in video reporting. One way to do this not to just describe the pictures, but ensure your words aren't so far removed from what is being seen that you split viewer attention. Even though you will want audio and video to relate, watch out for audio that states the obvious.

Recording video for your story

Before you set out with your video camera, think about the story you want to tell.

1. What's your story? How do you want to get your message across?
2. What pictures and sounds do you need to help tell your story?
3. Do you need a shot of a specific location or building?
4. Of one person or a group of people?
5. Of specific things mentioned in your story?

Before you begin recording

1. Review your proposed story, what video you need. If other people are doing the story with you, make sure they are aware of shots that are needed.

2. Equipment. Do you have it all? is it working? Check the tape/s you will be using. Check the camera. Do a test recording and play it back to make sure the camera is working. Check the battery. Remember to bring your tripod, and to check that it works.

3. Check the audio and test the mics you plan to use. The locking parts should lock in place (and also release from being locked). The tilt and pan should operate smoothly.

4. If you'll be recording narration over the video while you shoot, you may want to practice what you'll say before the shoot. If you'll be conducting an interview, make a list of the questions and order them in a way that makes sense to you.

5. When you first arrive at the site, check for background noise and electrical outlets. Listen carefully to the sound around you because that is what your mics will hear. If you hear loud fans or traffic noise or voices, you may want to find a new location.

Setting up

1. Set the camera up on the tripod (if you are using a tripod).

2. Check the White balance: use "auto" for most situations. Use the "indoor" setting when the source of light is entirely artificial. The outdoor setting should be used when shooting outdoors under natural sunlight. Re-white balance if your lighting conditions change - that is, if you start video taping outside and then go inside.

3. Check camera focus: Use auto focus for most situations. On auto remember that the camera will focus on whatever is dominant in the viewfinder. Use manual setting when there are objects in the foreground or background of your frame that will cause the camera to change focus.

4. Run a test record. Check the sound and video again.

5. Fast forward 30 seconds into the tape, and then start recording.

6. Before you record, make sure you are using the viewfinder to compose the image you want.

7. Watch out for distracting backgrounds. Learn to use auto-focus and manual focus for different situations, play with camera angles, vary your depth of field.

8. When you are doing an interview, try to frame the person's head and shoulders in the shot so you can see his or her face clearly.

9. Do not stand back six feet and have her whole body in the shot if it means you can't see her face. This is also important if your microphone is in the camera (instead of a separate microphone attached with a cord) because you need to be close to the person in order to record his voice clearly.

Shooting

1. Consider whether or not you need a release form - this form is written authorization signed by the person you video tape that says you can use the video tape of them, their business, their school project, etc. If you are video taping for any reason other than personal use (for example, showing a tape to your class, putting material on the internet) you will probably need one.

2. For each scene you are shooting, you may want to create and use a shot list. This will list all or most of the shots you need to tell your story.

3. Allow the camera to record for five seconds before and after your shots (if you plan to edit later). This will give you areas to edit. Also, when you stop the camera, it may rewind a few seconds and tape over what you have just recorded.

4. Start with an establishing shot, then vary your shots. If it is appropriate, use some wide shots, some medium shots, some close ups.

5. Visualize your shots before your shoot them. Think about your composition and purpose. (Where is my main subject in the frame? What am I trying to show? If I pan, do I have a reason?)

6. Periodically put on the headphones (if you don't wear them all the time) to check to make sure the audio is good.

7. Keep the length of the shot appropriate to the scene and your goal. The average visual attention span for a shot is about 3-5 seconds. However, if you're interviewing someone, your shot may last as long as the interview does.

8. Think about the angle you are shooting from. Most shots are recorded at eye level, however low and high angles may be right for your situation.

9. Think about the backgrounds in your shots. Does the background add to the picture? Is it distracting?

10. Observe the lighting in your shots. Generally you want the light to be coming from behind you, so that it shines on the person's face or on the action. Do not shoot directly into the sun - it may damage the camera.

11. Keep in mind that you are gathering shots to tell a story.

After the shoot

1. Be sure to label all your tapes as soon as you take them out of the camera.

2. Remove the record tabs if you want to make sure no one accidentally records over this tape.

3. Put the equipment away. If you ran down the batteries, charge them for the next shoot. You want to do as much as you can to make sure the equipment is ready for the next crew to check out - it might be you.

Conducting a video interview

1. Know your topic. Brief yourself in advance of the interview about the person to be interviewed and the issues to be discussed.

2. Come up with two or three questions you want to ask. Do not read from your notes while interviewing. Check your notes before the interview starts.

3. Instead of an interview try to have a conversation. Interact with the interviewee. Show interest in the answers given.

4. Listen to the answers. Check for clarity and completeness. Listen to what is said, but also to what is left unsaid. This will provide clues about follow-up questions to ask.

5. Don’t be afraid of silence. Be quiet after an especially startling comment. Most sources will try to fill the void by restating a comment in clearer form or adding comments on a point that you hadn’t thought to raise.

6. Guide the interview so that you accomplish your purpose and obtain the comments you want.

7. Pace the interview by asking general questions that get the interviewee talking. If possible, save tough questions for later in the interview. You may have to ask the sensitive questions immediately if you face time constraints.

8. Do not answer your own questions. Avoid loaded questions in which the answer is presupposed. Let the interviewee supply the answers.

9. Ask questions that are brief and specific. Do not ask overlong questions. Ask one question at a time. Avoid double-barrelled questions in which two actions are equated (eg. do not ask, Should the premier sign the bill and pursue a policy of non-interference in municipal governments?).

10. Ask questions that require short answers. If you encounter simply yes/no responses, ask for a clarification, or qualification of the comment or simply ask, Why do you feel that way? Generally, restated answers provide responses that are shorter, to the point, and more usable on the air.

11. Ask for clear explanations for technical terms and jargon.

12. At the end of the interview ask, Is there anything else I should know or that you want to add? The comments that follow may provide useful insights.

Strategies for a Good Interview

1. Demonstrate that you have done your homework, that you have taken steps to brief yourself about the interview situation, the news source and the issues involved. This projects an image of a professional journalist trying to understand an event or situation.

2. Project an image of a human being, not just a journalist who is informed, intelligent, reasonably friendly and compassionate, and anxious to get comments for a story.

3. Take steps to make the source feel at ease — about your equipment, the interview setting, the questions to be asked and about you as a reporter.

4. Build rapport. Establish a cooperative, harmonious relationship between you and the news source. Get the source to share interest and enthusiasm for the story (eg. why the story is important, what you need to know, etc.)

5. Remain neutral. During in-person interviews, watch your body language and facial expressions as well as your vocal inflections and the words you use. They reveal your attitudes and expectations. Do not offer your opinions, and do not respond to the interviewee's expressions of opinions.

Interview Setup

1. Be conscious of the physical setting of the interview. The surroundings, the interviewee.

2. Place yourself next to the interview guest to establish an open, interested attitude and to give the guest the quality of attention needed. Interviewers often stand closer to interviewees on camera more than off camera. This is because the camera magnifies the distance between the persons in front of it, and this spacing often makes them look awkward or uncomfortable. So to eliminate this problem, interviewer and interviewee often stand shoulder-to-shoulder in two-shots, and the interviewer backs away as the camera zooms in to the interviewee.

3. Make microphone and camera placement as unobtrusive as possible.

4. Tell your interview guest in advance how long the live interview is expected to last.

5. Since interview time is limited, ask only one or two key questions of immediate interest.

6. Predetermine how the interview will end.

Voice

1. Vary the pitch in your voice. Nothing dampens audience interest in a story more than a voice that sounds dull and monotone. One way to vary pitch is to lower speaking volume. The apparent intimacy with the audience should increase while your pitch will tend to vary and follow natural, conversational patterns.

2. Your voice should be expressive and lively. Varying the pitch of your voice will help. But you must also understand and then convey the key ideas of each story that you want to tell. Journalists use several techniques to help convey key ideas:
   - Group words into logical clusters.
   - Underline key words in each sentence to remind you to emphasize these words when speaking.
   - Vocal expressiveness makes stories more interesting and makes information more easily understood and meaningful for the audience.

3. Vocal pace or rate of speaking needs to be slow enough to make words and ideas readily understood but fast enough to sustain interest. Generally, a reporter's reading speed will be a little faster than in regular face to face conversation.

4. The audience must not only hear what you say clearly and distinctly (your enunciation), the words you say must also be pronounced correctly.

Appearance

1. Be well groomed.

2. Dress in simple, tasteful clothing; avoid extremes in colour, texture and design. Do not wear white.

3. Don't move around, nod your head excessively. Keep your hands at your sides unless gesturing to emphasize a point. Any gestures should look natural and be motivated by story content.

4. Stand up straight; while on camera, angle or turn your body slightly toward the person you are interviewing. This avoids a flat appearance. It also controls the tendencies to rock from side to side or back and forth.

USING TECHNOLOGY

During the past seven years SchoolNet News Network (SNN) has provided Canadian youth with opportunities to use online technology (text, photos, hyperlinks, video and audio) to express their ideas thus furthering the acquisition of multimedia skills and information and communication technology (ICT) skills among Canadian youth. Through using the resources provided on the SNN website http://www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/nr_reporterstoolbox/multimedia.html students develop tremendous skills that transfer to all curriculum subjects and are important to their future careers. In particular, students develop strong technology skills such as using

1. a variety of computer programs to create and edit their stories
2. computer software programs such as CoolEdit, Adobe, Real Audio/Video and others to put their broadcast stories into digital format for the web
3. email to connect to professional journalists, other students, teachers and resources
4. the internet to gather information and statistics
5. graphics and photos in their stories
6. audio and video equipment to add a broadcast aspect to their stories
7. scanners to put photos on a computer for insertion into article
8. a variety of other information gathering techniques such as video conferencing

Modern journalism uses a range of technology. To take advantage of technological resources, students need to learn about an array of electronic technology and multimedia. They also need to understand that each medium has its unique aesthetic form, and that enjoyment of each medium is enhanced by awareness of how effects or forms are created. Students need to understand not only the messages of the medium, but also the impact of that medium. This overall appreciation can help them become wise consumers and users of technology.

Developments in electronics technology have made available adequate and low-cost equipment in computing, photographic, audio, and video production.

Desktop Publishing & Internet Access

Generally you will require computers with 16 megabytes of RAM (although 16 megabytes is preferable, 8 megabytes will run Windows 95), 540 megabyte hard drive (120 megabyte minimum), and 14" colour monitor; a laser printer with a minimum of 4 megabytes of RAM and 600 dpi (e.g., Hewlett Packard Laser Jet 4; Apple Laser Writer PRO 630). Word processing software such as Word, Wordperfect. If you wish to put material into html format, programs such as Front Page, PageMill, are some of the software programs that you might consider.

Other useful hardware and software might include single or double page monitors, scanners, CD-ROM drives (2 x speed CD-ROM, 16-bit soundcard with 16-bit playback capacity), modems, and additional RAM.

Photography: Digital cameras are now relatively affordable and will make your photos ready for input into your computer. Otherwise a 35mm camera is the camera of choice for most photographers. Other things to consider are lenses, filters and a tripod.

Radio: In addition to a tape recorder and microphones, the following would be useful: headphones, a control panel, editing equipment, and access to a quiet area. SNN Newsroom http://www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/nr_reporterstoolbox/multimedia.html section audio resources will provide you with information on recorders, etc.

Television: A simple camcorder will allow students to do a video/television report. However, if you have the financial resources, you can purchase high-end video equipment. Your local electronics store can provide you with information on names and prices of good video equipment. In addition to a video camera, tripod, and microphone (built-in), the following would be useful: a dolly, lights, a viewfinder, headphones, a control panel, an editing machine.

CHAPTER 4

Sample Student Articles

(Check out our Monthly Student Magazine http://www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/moned.html and our Archives Section http://www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/archives.html for other sample articles)

SAMPLE ARTICLE

Title: **"I Told You, I'm Canadian"**
Genre: OPINION

"I am Canadian"—now that's a great phrase, eh? The bold red white flag, the humble, laid back community, the diversity, the peace, the freedom…ahhh, the perfect country—and boy am I proud to be a
part of it, because yes, I AM CANADIAN.

"You're what?"
"Canadian."
"Oh. Well, I mean where are you really from?"
"I just told you—I'm from Canada."
"I mean, your parents, where are they from?"

Well this is where my tale begins. Yes, the plight of young Canadians with parents who have emigrated from a different country to lead a life in Canada. What plight, you ask?
Read on.

I—like millions of other youth my age, was born in Canada. Calgary, Alberta to be exact. My parents emigrated from Bangladesh in the seventies to lead a life and raise children here in Canada. My brother and I were born and raised in Canadian society, attended Canadian schools, watched the fireworks on Canada Day, and waved little Canadian flags out our car window as we sped down the highway.

My Dad was a die-hard fan of the Calgary Flames, we cheered for Team Canada during every Olympics—and gloated with pride when our men and women did a double defeat to the Americans in hockey at Salt Lake City 2002.Interwoven with our "Canadian" upbringing was a very strong sense of religion and culture. I was raised with strong religious standards that have molded and shaped my life and made me who I am today. My faith, Islam, is my way of life. Sometimes we turn off the hockey game to perform one of the five daily prayers, or delay our participation in the backyard fireworks to make time for reading the Holy Qur'an. The clothes I wear to special family gatherings are of Bangladeshi tradition and heritage, as is the food I eat. So, am I still Canadian? Of course. Canada thrives in diversity—no assimilating melting pot for us (we'll leave that to our neighbours to the South). So where does the "plight" come in? What am I hinting at?

Read on.

It's hard. It is very, very hard to live everyday of your life trying to "prove" that you are Canadian. To me, being Canadian is being who you are. No transformations, no massive make-overs to ensure that you'll fit in and look "right". To me, Canada is every culture united under one flag, one country, one cause. When you come to Canada and soon become a Canadian citizen, you do not leave your past traditions, cultures and heritage behind. Canada doesn't require you to strip yourself of your identity before you swear your allegiance to the country. Rather, Canada asks you to bring your cultural heritage along for the ride. Where's the unity, you ask? The unity lies in our desire as a people to live together

despite our differences—that's what we have in common—our differences. Here's the problem: All of the above is my opinion and I've come to realize that not all people may agree with what my ideal Canada is. And sometimes, that hurts.

Whether we like it or not, there is a definite presumption made by many multiple generation Canadians that those who are the offspring of residents originally from another part of the world, are not "really" Canadian. You have to feel it to believe it. And believe me, I've felt it. Somehow, it seems that some of us first generation Canadians just don't "fit the part" in the eyes of some Canadians who have been here for many generations. Somehow, in their eyes, (not all, mind you but some) they can't fathom how we, odd looking creatures with odd shades of skin in sometimes odd pieces of clothing, eating odd concoctions of food —can be Canadian. We don't look like the "normal, average Canadian" (I still haven't figured out what the "average" Canadian is).

Krispy Kreme is an American donut company that has just opened its first store in Canada, in Mississauga Ontario. It's Charity Week at our school and we're selling donuts in the main hallway of our school.
"Do you guys have Krispy Kreme Doughnuts?"
"Nope! We're selling, good old Canadian Tim Horton's donuts"
"I wanted Krispy Kreme!"
"We're staying with the Canadian kind---Oh Canada!!!"
"That's weird, you guys are saying all that about Canada, but not one of you is Canadian."

Whoa. That was a real conversation. How did our fellow school chum come to the conclusion that we're not Canadian? We don't look the part. Although all of us are in Western clothing, we have distinctive features. I'm wearing the hijab, the traditional headscarf worn by Muslim women, my classmate has dark skin and is of Philippine descent, and my other classmate also has a dark shade of skin and is of Indian descent. What could we have done to look more Canadian? We speak perfect English. I learned both Bengali and English at the same time, and am more fluent in English than in Bengali. In fact—I have an English accent when I speak Bengali! I want to know what our Krispy Kreme fan's ideal Canadian is. What did we have to do to look Canadian in his eyes?

The plight of the "by-birth" Canadian with immigrant parents:

1. When asked, "where are you from?" from an innocent inquirer: Replying with a simple, "I was born here" doesn't work. Your acquaintance is waiting for you to finish your sentence. "I was born here and my parents are from blah blah blah…" Solution: If you want to know my background, ask me, "What's your background"?

2. When explaining to a friend that you are born in Canada and your parents are from somewhere else, you are introduced to people by your friend explaining that you're from where your parents are from. Solution: LISTEN TO ME!!!!!

3.Being approached by someone new, speaking to them and standing dumbly as they exclaim in surprise,

"Wow, you speak good English!!" Solution: Correct your grammar, it's 'you speak English well."

4. Hey, I know I'm Canadian and know I don't need to prove that to anyone. I do hope however, that those who have trouble deciphering, who "Canada" is, open their eyes and rethink their opinions. We have a beautiful country that would never be the same without its diversity.

CRITIQUES OF ARTICLE BY PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS

- Nicely done. I was thrown off a bit by the numbered comments at the end of the article. Also, the numbered comments did not really explain the "plight" (i.e. condition or state) of Canadians with immigrant parents, rather it was sort of a list of rules for these people and the people who come into contact with them. So while "plight" is used correctly at the beginning of the article, it is confusing when used again at the end. I think the article would have been better ended before the list.

- This is one of the best arguments for multicultural Canadianism I have read by any author of any age. Well done. I do hope -- as a journalism prof and journalist -- that you will follow your talent and become a writer/journalist.

- Excellent article! The only area where perhaps would have helped your marks was if you had a link or sources cited after the article. However, aside from that, good work! You found your voice, spoke from your heart, and asked the question, what is a Canadian really? A very good read. Good effort! Good writing style

SAMPLE ARTICLE

Title: **COD FARMING holds promise on the Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland**
Genre: NEWS

When Eugene Caines and Henry Rumbolt head out to take care of the farm, they carry feed that consists of herring, mackerel, caplin or squid and travel there aboard a boat. That's because they have a different kind of farm - a cod farm.

Late July, 2000, the two residents from Port Saunders on the Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland decided to attempt something new. They contacted the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture and made the necessary arrangements. Then they captured and towed cod from Sammy's Brook, just past Spirity's Cove, NF in a net towards Keppel Island, near Port Saunders, NF. When the fish were safe in Keppel's Harbour they were weighed and moved to a new secured farming cage, all 15,000 pounds.

In November or December the fish will be starved for two weeks, to remove unwanted stomach content, and harvested. Afterwards Caines and Rumbolt will be looking for the best price offered and selling. Eugene Caines, who gets up early to prepare the cod's food, along with partner Henry Rumbolt, had this to say, "This is the first year for me and it's very work extensive, but it has great potential." He also added, "One task is catching the fish and the other is keeping and maintaining them."

When Caines and Rumbolt started in July,2000, they fed the cod 100 pounds every second day. Later in the year, as the cod grew, their food increased to 500 pounds. Now the cod consume close to 600 pounds every second day. As the weight of the cod fish increase so does the feed, which can be expensive, but the men are optimistic that the sale of the fish will be successful.

The cod farm cage is 20 feet deep and approximately 35 feet by 40 feet wide. It is made of a soft, knot-less net which is safe for the fish to swim in. Cages similar to this can be found throughout the province of Newfoundland & Labrador in places such as Rocky Harbour and Bonne Bay.

Stan Butt who has a cod farm in Rocky Harbour on the Northern Peninsula hopes to have doubled his 20,000 pounds to 40, 000 pounds. Butt has had his cod since June and is in the process of finding a buyer now. The cod fish are suppose to be kept approximately 100 days which means the cod in Rocky Harbour are ready to sell.

When asked if he felt the growth of cod fish held promise he said, "Yes. Other farmers in last three years have doubled every year."

That's what all the farmers are hoping to achieve, double the cod's weight and sell for higher prices. With the aid of cod farmers from the Northern Peninsula, others from the rest of the province hope to raise half of a million cod fish for the market and help develop new ideas for a struggling cod fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador.

CRITIQUES OF ARTICLE BY PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS

- Very well done. Watch your punctuation.

- This is a terrific story, from the lead right down to the closing and the way it looks ahead. Other than fixing up a few commas here and there, there isn't much that would need to be done to have this appear in a newspaper going out to the general public. The specific details are great and the voices of the "farmers" really add reality to the piece. VERY well done!

- Excellent job! Both a relevant and interesting article.

SAMPLE ARTICLE

Title: **Canadian or Quebecker? Student Exchange Builds Perspective**
Genre: NEWS

Have you ever wondered what it's like to live in a different country? Would the roads and signs look different? Would the people there speak a different language than you? What makes a country a country? Audrey Poulin of St-Georges, Quebec thinks she knows.

Audrey was born in St-Georges, Quebec and until this past spring, she spent her entire life there. To her, Quebec is and always will be a separate country. "We are very different from the rest of Canada," she comments, "and we are the only province that speaks French." Her perceptions, of course, were all based on what she had been taught and heard, as she had never seen any of the rest of Canada.

This past spring, Audrey Poulin journeyed beyond her familiar home. Audrey was given the opportunity to experience the rest of Canada, to see what other Canadians are like. Along with her thirteen classmates from the Polyvalente St-Georges, she participated in an exchange with Manitoba students. Organized by teachers Ms. Lori Neufeld and Mr. Rene Maheux, the exchange began with the visit of thirteen students from Garden Valley Collegiate in Winkler to the Polyvalente St-Georges.

In the second stage of the exchange, the Polyvalente students came to Manitoba on April 2nd. They visited museums, colonies, shopping malls, and schools hoping to experience and realize what the rest of Canada - particularly Manitoba - was like. "Manitoba it's very conservative and all the people are proud to be a Canadian," states Audrey. "We are more proud to be a Quebecker than a Canadian." Audrey was surprised that in Manitoba, the school even played the Canadian anthem prior to morning announcements.

Generally speaking, Audrey says, the people in Quebec like to be referred to as Quebeckers rather than as Canadians. If they had the choice of the two "countries" most Quebec residents would choose to live in Quebec, even if they didn't agree with separating from Canada. "We want to keep the French language and we want to keep the French roots,"Audrey explains. "We are proud of the generations before us." To her, it's not so much about being a part of Canada as it is being a part of Quebec.

When Audrey came out to Manitoba, she learned a lot. "I learned more about another culture and got to know people who think differently," she says. "After this exchange I know I want to travel again."

Some of Audrey's first impressions when she came to Manitoba support her belief that Quebec is a separate country. She found that the Manitoba landscape - at least in the southern part of the province - is very different from what she has known. It is flat, while in Quebec there are many mountains and valleys. Another difference Audrey noticed was that it appeared as if the people in Manitoba were more religious than those in Quebec, because of the different beliefs.

Audrey found one of the major distinctions between Quebec and Manitoba was the language. In Quebec, French is the primary language; in southern Manitoba, it is second language for most people who speak it.

Manitobans also seem to be more restrained and confined, in terms of rules.

In Quebec "you have the freedom to do what you want to do," Audrey declares. These observations, of course, don't hold true for all of Canada, but they definitely helped Audrey prove her point that Quebec is different from the rest of Canada.

A brief visit to a different province, though, has not yet convinced Audrey that Quebec is a part of Canada or that Canada might shape her primary identity. Asked whether she thinks of herself as a Quebecker or a Canadian, she responds: "I'm a Quebecker, because I identify better with Quebec than with the remainder of Canada."

AUDIO STORY (audio file provided)- School Radio Show: Interview with exchange student Audrey Poulin of St-Georges, Quebec.

CUE: Audrey Poulin, a student at Polyvalente St-Georges in Quebec, made her first visit to another province in (DATE: e.g. mid-March). Audrey traveled to Manitoba as part of a Government of Canada exchange program, aiming to develop her English skills and to meet people who think differently from those in native province.

AUDREY: "I learned more about the English language and I think I am better at my English now then before. After this exchange I have decided I want to travel again because you can learn so much about another culture or different way of thinking than you can in any books."

CUE: The exchange helped to open Audrey's eyes to the world around her and to realize what different parts of Canada are like.
AUDREY: "One of the big differences between Manitoba and Quebec is that the landscape is very flat there, whereas here there are many mountains and valleys. I also think that the people in Manitoba are more religious than where I come from. Their church is more interesting. You can actually sing! "

CUE: Audrey feels that Manitoba was very conservative in comparison to Quebec. She finds the people in Manitoba are proud to be Canadian, whereas in Quebec, people are more proud of being from Quebec than Canada.
AUDREY: "We are very different from the rest of Canada and we think differently. We are also more proud to be from Quebec than a part of Canada because we are proud of the generations before us."

OUTWORDS: Audrey still identifies better with Quebec than the rest of Canada and she believes her views will never change. She will remain a separatist forever.

CRITIQUES OF ARTICLE BY PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS

- Wonderful! This is a very well-written news item. Excellent work.

- Excellent article. By choosing to focus on one student rather than the exchange itself, you've written a fascinating account of a student encountering the differences in culture. Good work.

- Well done. Good job on your audio report.

SAMPLE ARTICLE

Title: **Size Matters**
Genre: OPINION

It's funny. Fashion models are either too skinny, too fat, or not fat enough. Confused? Consider the plus-size model. She's robust, confident, and most of all — realistic.

So why is she being criticized? Well, just like the ever popular waif model, the plus-size gal has pressure to conform to the standards of the industry, standards that completely defeat the purpose of her presence to begin with.

Let's clarify. The average fashion model is approximately 5'8" – 6' and under 120 lbs. She is tall, skinny, and often gaunt in appearance. This is the industry standard. The plus-size model is between 5'8" – 6' and ranges from size 12 –16. On occasion she is a size 10 or 18 but this is very rare. She must also be "proportionate." A model must also project an hourglass figure. Again, models must conform to a particular size.

While the creation of the plus-size model is a huge step in the right direction towards breaking down size barriers, it seems hypocritical of the fashion world. Plus-size models were intended to stop discrimination of larger women. And they have every right. But where are all the male plus models? I'm pretty sure there are a few ahem... big-boned men out there that would like to see how the latest fashions would look on them.
Furthermore, the fashion world is leaving out another vital market in their equation — the average sized person. Now I know that everyone is different, and there is no real average size. But I'm talking about real people. Healthy, active individuals who may be lean and muscular, or a little soft and flabby around the edges. Why can't the industry project the image of the average person? The people who are actually buying the clothes.

But that would be too easy. Then who would young girls aspire to look like as young women? And who would young women starve for in order to compare to their "peers." It's bad enough that they've invented a size 0. Size 0? What a crafty little way of making women feel inferior.

The female sex has long been preoccupied with fitting into the right image, but has society gone too far? Think back to the Marilyn Monroe days when being a size 14 was O.K. and gasp!! Even sexy. Beauty has many shapes and sizes. Perhaps someday the fashion industry will realize this and address the issue properly. Only then can we put an end to the idiocy of trying to conform to unrealistic role models and be happy the way we are.

CRITIQUES OF ARTICLE BY PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS

- Nicely done. The illustration sums up the article well. Could be stronger by using more interviews/quotes.

- This is a strong argument and makes a good point about how even plus-size models are forced into a rigid standard -- and the Size 0 point is a clever way to drive home the point of impossible goals! The one point I'd make is to be careful when comparing things -- you need to give the readers all the info they need to understand the point. If you say the thin models are all under 120 lbs and the plus-size ones are dress sizes 12-16...I don't get the full idea of how they compare, unless I already speak fluent Women's Clothes! Compare via weights OR dress sizes, not a mix.

SAMPLE ARTICLE

Title: **Alanis Morissette: Under Rug Swept**
Genre: ENTERTAINMENT

“Under Rug Swept” is the 3rd studio album under Alanis Morissette's belt and again she manages to serve up the same quality of deep sultry lyrics while invoking thought, inspiration and even controversy. This time around, Morissette takes on new responsibilities as producer as well as writing the lyrics to “Under Rug Swept”. After four years of waiting for new material, this album is arguably one of the best in the Alanis Morissette collection and delivers for fans.

As opposed to “Supposed Former Infatuation Junkie”, Morissette has moved from spiritual slow paced lyrics back to the raw and harder edged song writing she's been known for from her “Jagged Little Pill” release. Given that she is in a different emotional place than she was four years ago, it still possesses the ability of capturing the listener with the words in the songs.

In tracks such as ‘21 Things I Want In a Lover’ and ‘So Unsexy’ shows the raw and unconstrained song writing that she is best known for. She reveals herself emotionally in lyrical content and lets audience in to her life, to almost feel part of it. For an artist to be so open and sincere with their fans, it just goes to show their authenticity and inventiveness. The unrestrained approach to the songs will be much appreciated by true fans.

‘That Particular Time’ is one of the slow ballads of “Under Rug Swept” that carries away the listener by the pure emotion of the song about a not so wanted break up. There are also the tracks that are reminiscent of “Jagged Little Pill” such as ‘Narcissus’ which has a punchy beat that has her asking ‘why, why, why&#133'. Just as catchy as ‘Precious Illusions’ which will most likely be a follow-up to ‘Hands Clean’.

The entire album is an emotional roller coaster of life accounts that keep the audience listening intensely to the lyrics as well as the song itself. If you bought “Jagged Little Pill” and liked "Supposed Former Infatuation Junkie", “Under Rug Swept” will most likely be stuck on "repeat" in your CD player. In an industry now that is so keen on what makes the big bucks and sacrificing artistic integrity, this album is here to prove that true artists still do exist.

LINK: http://www.alanismorissette.net

CRITIQUES OF ARTICLE BY PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS

- Good descriptions of music! I haven't heard this album, but the article leaves me with a good idea of how it sounds.

- Makes me want to go out and buy the CD!

- Excellent CD review! Provides good information to the reader, especially to fans of Alanis Morrissette of what they can expect if they pick up this latest offering from her. Interesting link you chose too....not something that her record company put together, but a fan site. It was interesting navigating around it. Nice choice!

CHAPTER 5

INTERNET RESOURCES

Check out SNN's Investigate Section
http://www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/newsroom_investigate.html
for additional resource links.

JOURNALISM RESOURCES

SchoolNet News Network website	http://www.snn-rdr.ca/snn/
The Navy Journalist	http://www.tpub.com/journalist/index.htm
Journalist's Toolbox	http://www.journaliststoolbox.com
Poynter Organization	http://www.poynter.org
No Train - No Gain.Org	http://www.notrain-nogain.org
NewsLab	http://www.newslab.org/about-1.htm
CNN Student Bureau	http://www.turnerlearning.com/sb
NewsHour Extra	http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/teachers
U.S. News Classroom	http://www.usnewsclassroom.com
High School Publishing.com	http://www.highschoolpublishing.com
Writers Resource Centre	http://www.poewar.com
Journalism Education Association	http://www.jea.org/resources/curriculum/curriculum.html
Ask Yourself These 33 Questions	http://www.medill.nwu.edu/faculty/roth/Fall2000/33questions.html
Newsroom Resources	http://www.rtndf.org/resources/highschool.shtml
Assoc. for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication	http://www.aejmc.org
Quill and Scroll Society	http://www.uiowa.edu/%7Equill-sc/index.html
For Journalism Teachers Only	http://www.jteacher.com
newsplace.org,,Northern Illinois Univ.	http://www3.niu.edu/newsplace/j-skills.html
CNN Student News Teacher Resources	http://fyi.cnn.com/fyi/teachers
Highschooljournalism.org	http://my.highschooljournalism.org
JournalismNet	http://www.journalismnet.com
Power Reporting	http://powerreporting.com
BBC Radio News Style Guide	http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/radio_newsroom
IRE's Beat Source Guide	http://www.ire.org/resourcecenter/initial-search-beat.html
Power Reporting Resources	http://powerreporting.com/category/Reference_shelf/Archives
Teaching Radio Skills	http://www.radiosite.ca/training/teaching.html
Short Course of Video Production	http://www.shortcourses.com/video/index.htm

COMMERCIAL MEDIA PUBLICATIONS ONLINE

SchoolNet News Network website	http://www.snn-rdr.ca/snn
Canadian Newspapers	http://www.journalismnet.com/papers/canada.htm
Newspapers: Western Canada	http://www.journalismnet.com/papers/westcanada.htm
Major United States Newspapers	http://www.referencedesk.org/newspaper.html
NewsLink	http://newslink.org
Globe and Mail	http://www.globeandmail.com
The National Post	http://www.nationalpost.com
CNEWS (Canadian Online Explorer)	http://www.canoe.ca/CNEWS/home.html
Montreal Gazette	http://www.canada.com/montreal/montrealgazette
Toronto Star	http://www.thestar.com
New York Times	http://www.nytimes.com
San Jose Mercury	http://www.bayarea.com/mld/mercurynews
Time Magazine	http://www.time.com/time/magazine/current
Newspaper Archives on the Web	http://www.ibiblio.org/slanews/internet/archives.html
Non-US Newspaper Archives	http://www.ibiblio.org/slanews/internet/ForArchives.html
Electronic Text Archives	http://www.lib.lsu.edu/epubs/texts.html
Media UK	http://www.mediauk.com

BROADCASTERS

CBC	http://www.cbc.ca
BBC	http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/index.shtml
CBS	http://www.cbsnews.com/sections/home/main100.shtml
CNN	http://www.cnn.com
ABC	http://abcnews.go.com
NBC	http://www.msnbc.com