

Shortcuts to Journalism: The Basics of Print, Online and Broadcast Reporting

Due Diligence for Journalists. The Right Subject. Looking for Story Ideas. Discovering New Angles with Mind Mapping. Topics in Community Journalism. Research. Storytelling. Security for Journalists: Working as a Journalist in Conflict and Crisis Zones. The News Story. The News Feature. The Analysis. The Commentary / Editorial. The Profile. The Feature Story. The Interview. The Story Proposal. The Radio News Story. The Voicer with Audio. The Telephone Interview for Radio Broadcast. The Radio Lead-In. The Radio News Reader. The Two-Way Interview. TV News. The TV Report. The TV Commentary / Analysis. The TV Talk Show. The TV Presenter. The TV Stand-Up. The TV Interview. The TV Lead-In. Closing Remarks for Presenters. The Two-Way Interview. Writing for the Internet. Mobile Journalism: Photography / How to Take Good-Quality Pictures with a Smart Phone. Mobile Journalism: Videos / How to Make Broadcast-Quality Video with a Smart Phone. Mobile Journalism: Audio / How to Make Radio-Quality Broadcasts with a Smart Phone. Social Media for Journalists. Research Using Social Media on the Internet. Journalist Support Networks. Media Capacity Building and Training. Journalism Fellowships. Journalism Awards. Information Sources. Style Guides. Foreword Matthew Green, Reuters Special Correspondent. Published by **Media in Cooperation & Transition MICT**

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Foreword

A cursor blinks in the corner of an empty screen. Somewhere in the tangle of handwriting scrawled across the pages of your notebook are all the quotes and facts you need. Newsroom coffee doesn't help, nor does the ping of e-mails or the constantly bleeping phone. As the deadline edges closer, and the distractions multiply, the right words stubbornly refuse to appear.

Deep down, journalists know they have the best job in the world. Sometimes it feels like the hardest. This handbook provides the tools for rapidly distilling the chaotic reality of news events into crisp stories that editors will love and readers relish. Above all, the aim is to tell the story in a way that will feel authentic to the protagonists in the dramas you document. It's their lives, but your story. You decide how it's told.

Some of the people who read this manual may work on front-lines in conflicts; others strive to illuminate the murkier mechanics of politics or business.

Technology means the boundaries between reporters, photographers and cameramen are dissolving, no matter what we cover. The common thread is the thrill of discovery, the privilege of forever learning, and that incomparable moment when a story you've been slaving over finally seems to click.

When adrenaline is pumping, it is easy to lose sight of the risks, and this book offers advice on staying safe. There was a framed letter on the wall of a Reuters bureau where I worked in Nairobi, Kenya, that stated "No story is worth death or injury" – words that should adorn every newsroom. The tips in the following pages are guidelines; listen to your intuition, and to locals. Don't linger in a risky place in the hope of finding that perfect, sum-it-all-up quote. That's when things go wrong.

Up until a few years ago, you could be confident that people in a remote area would never read a word of what you had written about them. Social media has exploded that complacency. Harness this magical tool to enable culture-hopping conversations that would once been inconceivable. Yet beware the echo chamber: web chatter can yield insights, but the cacophony of voices can also drown out facts or distort perspectives.

Your greatest ally is a scuffed pair of shoes. It's often necessary to file stories based on expert opinion, but nothing beats getting out on the ground. A veteran Reuters reporter summed up the greatest adage of journalism with disarming simplicity: "Talk to the people." It's good to feel lost, it means you are learning. Persist, and all of a sudden you'll stumble upon the thread that will lead you, and your readers or viewers, through the maze.

The best reporters have an insomnia-inducing horror of getting it wrong. Mistakes can feel excruciating. (I once filed a breathless story announcing a plane crash that was instantly flashed on television screens around the world. Seconds later it turned out to be a drill.) Do not grieve too long; errors are your strictest teachers.

For all the emphasis on speed, accuracy and balance, the core value of journalism will always be curiosity. We all want our by-lines on the front page, or our face on TV, and that's how it should be. But the richest rewards of the job ripen slowly. Nothing can beat the inner glow that arises from realising you have deepened your understanding of a story, and gained the confidence to tell it well. This book is full of sign posts. Good luck.

Matthew Green, Reuters Special Correspondent

Dear Readers,

This publication – *Shortcuts to Journalism: The Basics of Print, Online and Broadcast Reporting* – will do exactly as its name suggests: when basic questions about journalism come up, this handbook, written and produced exclusively for correspondents working for Media in Transition and Cooperation (MICT), is here to help.

Whether those questions arise on the road, on the job, in the newsroom, or in the classroom, this handbook has answers to questions about the basics of print, online and broadcast journalism. And the answers are clear, brief and precise, so you can find the help you need quickly and easily.

Shortcuts to Journalism isn't just for journalists – it's also helpful for non-journalists. It covers the most useful basics: What is a news report? What are the most important characteristics of a television interview? How can a journalist best use a smart phone? The book also comes in handy for professionals wishing to freshen up or consolidate their knowledge of widely accepted professional standards: What language does a news story use? What are the best techniques for conducting a successful interview? What should I watch out for if I'm filming a broadcast item on my smart phone?

To ensure that this quick and easy handbook really does remain quick and easy, no subject takes up more than a few pages.

Each subject is covered with a summation of the basics, as well as any special topics a journalist needs to consider. At the end of each summary, a checklist brings all of the most important points together.

Of course, this handbook won't magically write, or broadcast, the news of the future. Journalists must still take initiative. But it should help answer the questions that every journalist has had to ask at one time or another.

The Editors

Due Diligence for Journalists

What is due diligence for journalists?

In legal and business terms, the phrase “doing due diligence” means that in professional matters, all reasonable steps have been taken to avoid harming others or breaking laws. In journalism, this means that the journalist has done everything possible to ensure the information he or she is presenting is accurate and is presented in a reasonable and balanced manner. In other words, the journalist is acting professionally and ethically.

The contents of the work should be factual, well researched, and represented accurately. It should be balanced and backed up by facts, sources, and quotes. The journalist maintains a professional distance; he or she is a trained observer. The main facts in any journalistic work should be supported by more than one source.

If reports or observations are not supported by reputable sources or remain unconfirmed by more than one source, this must be made clear within the work. Journalistic work should not be influenced by the journalist’s personal interests or the agendas of others.

The content of journalistic work shouldn’t be deliberately contentious; it shouldn’t set out to spark or exacerbate conflicts.

When the subject is contentious, then the opinions of all sides in the conflict should be represented fairly.

A journalist protects sources, particularly when the source has provided information that could endanger them physically or psychologically. Additionally, if a source has requested anonymity and the journalist has agreed, the journalist should not renege on that agreement without first consulting the source.

A journalist should only use relevant information within the work he or she produces, that is, the facts, pictures, and quotes that are important to the story. If it is not relevant to the piece, the journalist should protect the source’s privacy. As a rule, a journalist does not work “under cover.” A journalist names the media organization for which he or she is working, the angle of the story, and the goal of any particular interview.

A journalist should try to make the work as original as possible. A journalist should not copy, word for word, any other documents, stories, or research.



Checklist:

- 1 Is the journalistic work balanced? Does it give all sides a fair hearing?
- 2 Is there content that might cause prejudice or further inflame conflicts?
- 3 Is there content that has been taken out of context or that might be misinterpreted?
- 4 Is there content in it that is irrelevant to the journalistic work or that doesn’t provide any meaningful information?
- 5 Have the sources of the key positions been identified?
- 6 Has the journalist maintained a professional distance, as an observer?
- 7 Has the journalist been careful to avoid personal interests, favors, or other people’s agendas?
- 8 Has the journalist protected the sources? In particular, has he or she protected sources that must remain anonymous? Does the work contain any information that might make the identity of anonymous sources obvious?
- 9 If the sources have remained anonymous, is it clear to the reader why they won’t give their real names? Is it a reasonable cause?
- 10 Did the journalist make clear who he or she was while gathering information? Has it been made clear to all sources that they were being interviewed by the media?

The Right Subject

1 / How to choose a subject?

The subject should be of relevance to the community in which the journalist is working. It may be related to politics, economics, or social and cultural events – all of which have an impact on members of the community. This may be at a local level. Or it may be a whole country that is affected. A journalist will be most interested in new developments within a broad subject category; for example, the broader subject might be “education.” Within that area, the latest news might include budget cuts for schools on the national level. Or at the local level, it might involve the opening of a new school or the appointment of a new principal. Each form of media will cover the news and the subject differently. For example, broadcast media requires pictures; radio requires recorded interviews. Newspapers may require information on the latest developments. If the journalist is working for a magazine, where the information will not always be published immediately, he or she must cover the developments in a different way. It is also important to consider the audience. A journalist working for the national evening news watched by millions of people will cover developments differently from the journalist working for a community newspaper, which will usually only be read by several thousand people. When a journalist is choosing which developments within any subject category to cover, it is important to consider the medium for which he or she is working.

2 / What is an appropriate topic for coverage?

A topic should be related to everyday events in the political, social, or cultural realm. The topic covered should reach the public at the right time in the right place. The choice of topics is often determined by the type of media for which the journalist is working.



Checklist:

- 1 Is information on the subject current?
- 2 Does the subject have political relevance?
- 3 Is the topic relevant to the audience and is its relevance made clear to them?
- 4 Is the topic being covered in the right media or forum?
- 5 Can the information be published or broadcast in the right place at the right time?
- 6 Is the reporting balanced? Will there be further developments?

Looking for Story Ideas

1 / Where does one find suitable subjects for a story?

A lot of story ideas arise from current events – for example, a vote in parliament, cultural events, accidents, disasters, etc. Journalists will research those events and present them to the public in an informative, focused, and appropriate way.

At the same time, a journalist might report on topics other than current events. And it is part of the journalist's job to come up with fresh story ideas and new angles on topics that may not currently be in the public eye.

2 / To do this, a journalist should:

Keep up-to-date with what's going on around him or her, in social, political, and cultural arenas, and analyze and ask questions about what's going on.

Keep a diary of official dates – a council meeting, for example – and be aware of what happens on those dates even if this is not the topic of their current work. Cultivate contacts who can provide information. Keep the names and contact details of individuals who might be helpful in current and future research. This is known as keeping a “contacts book.”

Pay attention to reports in all kinds of other media – often there's a story waiting to be told or unanswered questions in other reports that the journalist could work on further.

Be open to other people in their own personal lives and communities. Listen to what people are feeling, thinking, saying, arguing about; what moves them, what they're planning. There may be a story in it, and it's also a good way of getting an idea of public sentiment.

Be curious. If a journalist has questions about certain topics or wants to know more about something, he or she should follow up. There could be a story in it.



Checklist: Where will I find story ideas?

- 1 In reports in every kind of media.
- 2 In press releases and on the websites of political parties, institutions, groups, and organizations.
- 3 At press conferences.
- 4 At trade fairs or other meetings.
- 5 Through my contacts book.
- 6 Online or on blogs.
- 7 In my own daily life.

Discovering New Angles with Mind Mapping

1/ Why use the mind mapping technique?

People are most often interested in something new.

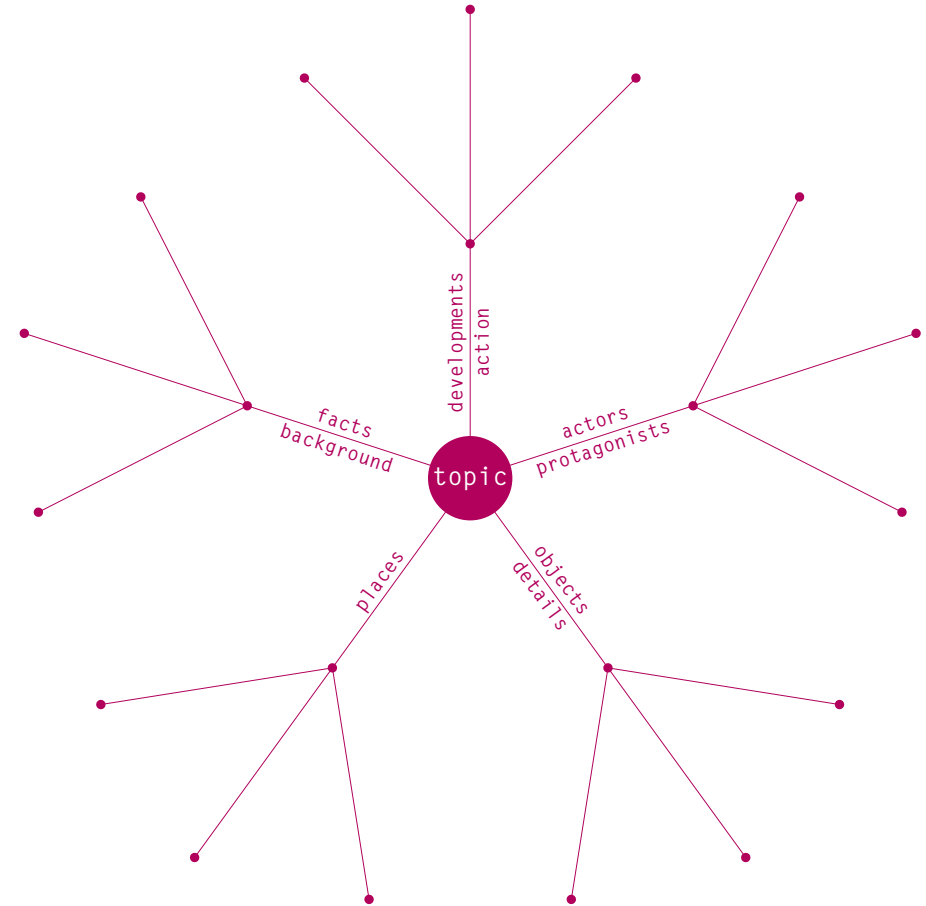
However, when it comes to topics that have been reported on many times before, it is not always easy to find something new to interest one's audience or readers. This might include subjects like unemployment, the energy crisis, or the homeless. Other examples include dates or anniversaries that come around each year, such as Christmas or other holidays, or national celebrations. In these cases, mind mapping can help journalists and editors come up with new and more interesting angles on a much-reported subject.

2/ What is mind mapping?

Mind mapping encourages free association on a subject. In particular, it attempts to come up with associations that might make for a good story by simply encouraging the journalist to think of anything and everything around a number of key words or catchphrases.

With time and a little patience, mind mappers who focus on a subject – an interesting protagonist, for example – will eventually come up with new ideas around that subject – for example, the environment in which the protagonist works.

Mind mapping helps uncover surprising new viewpoints and different perspectives on a theme.



Topics in Community Journalism

What is good community journalism?

People are interested in topics when they recognize that the issues being discussed have something to do with their everyday lives. Larger topics must therefore be “broken down” for community media organizations, to make the subject relevant and interesting to a local audience.

This technique is particularly important for community media.

And almost every topic with global or national relevance has some aspect that relates to the local community.

For instance, when a new tax law comes into effect for the nation, then a local journalist can research how it affects local people on a community level.

If there is a national medical emergency, such as a flu epidemic, the journalist can find out how local doctors and hospitals plan to deal with it.

If the federal budget for education is cut, then an interview with the head of the local school might be interesting to the community.

If a national football championship is about to be played, then a story about a local club that recruits and trains young players with a view to helping them into the big leagues might be interesting to the community.



Checklist:

- 1 What kind of effect will this national or global news have on local people or local institutions or groups? Will it have an impact on the region?
- 2 Is there a community member who can address this topic expertly and talk about what the effects of the news or events might be in the region? (For example, a local teacher talks about the effects of cuts in education.)
- 3 Is it possible to take the national or global topic and use it to start a local discussion? (For example, a local football club and its junior coaching.)

Research

1 / What is research?

Research helps a journalist verify the information he or she has gathered. Research makes it possible to decide whether that information is true and correct. It helps the journalist make balanced judgments as an observer and to get the complete story. Research may make it possible for the journalist – and therefore his or her audience – to access information that might not yet be readily available in a public forum.

Research is absolutely necessary: the journalist needs to be certain to have gathered information from every angle in order to fulfill professional duties diligently.

Researching every aspect of a topic means that the journalist comes to his or her own conclusions independently – rather than being a mouthpiece for interest groups or individuals with their own agendas.

Research must be supported by the media in which the reports appear, whether that be broadcast, print, or online. Media organizations should support and develop research.

2 / Before researching

When new information reaches the newsroom:

1. *Check the relevance:* Is this information important enough to be called “news” and to warrant further research?
2. *Check the sources:* Is the source of this information trustworthy? What are the source’s sources, so to speak? Did the source observe this incident personally? Or did he or she hear it from someone else? Did the source have this experience personally? How did the information become known to him or her? And if it was not a personal experience, then who is the first source?
3. *Ask:* Is this source a neutral one? Is the source an expert? How is the source related to the topic of research?

3 / Fact-checking the research: questions to ask

Is this information true and correct? Is everything there? Are the five W’s and one H questions answered? (see page 26)
Does the information make sense? Is it logical? Is there a clear chain of events, or causality? Does this information seem like it could be true?

4 / Procedures for research

1. *Collect all the potential information* that’s already been published on the topic – for example, from libraries, data banks, the Internet, and professional or industry publications.
2. *Ask questions:* conduct interviews with witnesses, victims, experts, critics, and other protagonists. It is best to speak to more neutral individuals first – for instance, experts on the topic. Later you can speak to less neutral individuals – say, witnesses or protagonists with an agenda. Once you have the general, neutral information it becomes easier to critically assess what you are being told by other, more biased interviews. It also makes it easier to pose difficult questions to the non-neutral interviewees. When conducting interviews, it’s best to stick to a well-defined topic or angle.
3. *Personal observations or research on-site:* the journalist’s own experiences can be a valuable part of research and also give the journalist the opportunity to add color and character to the writing.

Checklist:

- 1 Is this new information relevant? Does it come from trusted sources? Are the facts correct and does the information seem logical and make sense?
- 2 Does the new information warrant further research?
- 3 Is the procedure for research being followed as closely as possible?
- 4 Has enough research been done, using information that’s already been published, to get a broad overview of the subject and to conduct knowledgeable interviews?
- 5 Have all relevant individuals – witnesses, experts, victims, critics – been interviewed?
- 6 Have the neutral interviewees been spoken with first so that hard questions can be asked of others later?
- 7 Have all sources been double-checked for accuracy and trustworthiness?
- 8 Has the most important information been verified by at least two sources? Has the journalist maintained the professional distance of a trained observer?
- 9 Would the information be enhanced by the journalist’s own experiences on-site? Could the journalist’s own experiences be useful for storytelling?

Storytelling

1 / What is storytelling?

The word storytelling refers to an ancient skill: telling stories in such a way that people want to hear them.

In journalism, storytelling packages information in a way that will allow the audience to understand and remember it better. The audience does this best when stories are told in a colourful way or with some elements of narrative style.

2 / How does storytelling work?

We tell stories to others every day. We listen to stories every day, too. And we can learn from this. In fact, we already know what makes a good story.

We enjoy stories ...

... that introduce us to new and exciting topics (did you know ...?, did you hear about ...?).

... that tell us about people with whom we identify.

... that evoke an emotional response.

... that take us to interesting places.

... that have a common theme running through them.

... that are exciting right through to their conclusion.

... that conjure up pictures in our heads that allow us to experience what the storyteller is experiencing.

... that are well told.

3 / What should be considered when telling a story?

A good story has:

A clear focus and knows what it's talking about.

At least one hero or heroine.

A setting – a place or an environment.

A common theme, with an exciting introduction, one or more high points, and a well-rounded ending.

A clear evolution, drama, and good timing.

Lively, descriptive language.

A storyteller who is present.

4 / Which media formats use storytelling techniques?

Print, radio, TV, and online journalism: mainly for feature-style stories like portraits, features, and background features.



Checklist:

- 1 What story am I telling my audience? Is there a focal point that could make the story particularly compelling? If I have to, could I sum up the story in three or four sentences? Am I certain about the story I am telling?
- 2 Are there some characters involved in this topic that would make for a particularly good story? Will my audience trust these characters? How do I draw them in and make them curious?
- 3 Are there particular places that support my storytelling, places that add atmosphere and life to my story?
- 4 How will I start my story? Are there scenes, thoughts, or people that will make it clear what I am talking about without giving away too much of the story? How do I keep my audience interested throughout the whole story? Are there instances of conflict or complication, moments where there's change or maybe something funny that will help me do that? And which moments, questions, or facts should I keep until the story's ending?
- 5 What sort of story structure would work best? Should the story be told chronologically, or should it switch between various moments and facts?
- 6 Is the language in my story lively? Does it bring to mind pictures and places? Does it avoid the less lively language of the traditional news story? Is the pace of my storytelling fast enough to keep people interested? Am I arousing the audience's emotions?
- 7 Can my audience tell that it's my story, because of the distinctive way I am telling it?

Security for Journalists: Working as a Journalist in Conflict and Crisis Zones

Journalists working in conflict or crisis zones may find themselves in dangerous situations. This is particularly true for reporters or photojournalists who find themselves reporting from the front lines of any conflict or at the flash point in a crisis. In conflict zones, these individuals' equipment – particularly camera gear or microphones – or their constant presence may mean that they themselves become targets.

No matter how important the story, it is essential to make personal security, and the security of all those involved in the journalist's work, a priority.

Checklist:

- 1 Keep documents that prove your identity and the fact that you're a journalist with you at all times. It can also be useful to carry things like a vaccination card and your blood type.
- 2 Plan carefully for reporting in the field, and do lots of research beforehand. The journalist or team shouldn't be there for any longer than necessary. Cameras or any other equipment should be able to be put to use as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- 3 Never forget your mobile phone and always take extra, fully charged batteries with you. Essential telephone numbers should be noted on paper and carried separately in case the mobile device is somehow lost.
- 4 Take different routes each time you are on the move, and alter your timetable. Don't display regular patterns.



- 5 Pay attention to the social, religious, and cultural customs of the location. Bear these in mind in terms of your own behavior and that of others – for instance, when photographing women on the street in a strictly Islamic country.
- 6 Clothing should allow you to blend in. It should not look like it comes from the military, nor should your equipment. This may make you a target.
- 7 Any vehicles should be carefully checked before undertaking a trip into a conflict area – gasoline, spare keys, battery, spare tires, and so forth.
- 8 Before leaving, think carefully about the various scenarios that might occur and how you might react to them. For example, “What if this demonstration I am reporting on turns violent? What if security officers arrest me? What if I lose my telephone or my ID?”
- 9 Maintain regular contact with a home base. Check in regularly with either the media organization you are working for or with a group of other journalists. Avoid working by yourself if possible.
- 10 Organizations like Reporters Without Borders recommend completing a first aid course.

When reporting from demonstrations or protests

- 1 Should tear gas be used, close the car windows. If you are out of the vehicle, keep hands away from your eyes and don't move into the wind. Contact lenses and eye makeup can worsen the effects of tear gas. Any first aid kit should contain masks for tear gas.
- 2 If the protest is pre-planned, it is helpful to check the route and surrounding area first. Work out where the demonstrators will be and where security forces may be, as well as possible escape routes.
- 3 Find out if the demonstrators will use weapons or projectiles such as bottles or stones. Be on the lookout for these. It is also useful to think about what kinds of equipment security forces might be carrying: tear gas, rubber bullets, water cannons?
- 4 It is best to carry a small set of first aid equipment as well as a protective vest, a helmet, and a gas mask.
- 5 Never stand between the police and demonstrators with your back to one side or the other.

The News Story

1 / What is a news story?

A news story is a short, accurate report about an event, whether that is a political, social, sporting or business event.

A news story's main function is to inform.

A news story does not contain the writer's opinion.

The key qualities of a news story are: accuracy, brevity, clarity.

2 / How is a news story constructed?

The most important information about the event is found at the top of the story.

Further significant information then follows on, in as logical a sequence as possible.

The least important information is found at the bottom of the story.

Should the story need to be shortened, it can easily be cut from the bottom without the loss of vital information.

3 / What information is found in a news story?

A complete news story contains answers to the five W's and one H

What?

Who?

Where?

When?

Why?

How?

Not all of the answers may be available from the same place, at the same time. But if the five W's cannot be answered, then the news story is incomplete.

4 / How long is a news story?

Generally between 200 and 500 words long.

5 / How is a news story written?

The terms used are as objective and accurate as possible.

The story is made up of shorter sentences and uses shorter words where possible.

The story avoids being overly descriptive or complex.

The story avoids foreign words and abbreviations.



Checklist:

- 1 Is the news in the story up-to-date? Does it tell the reader something new?
- 2 Is the most important, new information at the beginning of the story? Would the reader get the most important facts from the first few sentences?
- 3 Does the story answer the five W's and one H ?
- 4 Could the reader understand what was going on, without having to read any other stories or articles?
- 5 Does the story inform the reader as to who all the people in the story are and what their relevance is? Have all abbreviations been explained? Have locations been put into context?
- 6 Is the story accurate and neutral?
- 7 Does the story contain too many irrelevant details?
- 8 Is the story too long?

The News Feature

1 / What is a news feature?

A news feature is based on current events – the news – but it goes into more detail than a simple news story.

A news feature provides concise information about a current political, cultural, social, sporting or business topic.

A news feature is about providing further information.

It does not judge or comment.

2 / How is a news feature constructed?

The most important, and most current, information is found in the first paragraph of a news feature. The five W's are answered at the top of the story (see News Story for more on the five W's).

The rest of the news feature goes into more detail on each of the five W's. The most important, and most current, information is at the top of the news feature.

3 / What information does a news feature contain?

More detailed facts: dates, statistics and other facts can be included.

Quotes: A news feature may include more interviews or more quotes than a news story. The interviewees are free to make judgments and comment. The journalist is not.

Live action / eyewitness accounts: A news feature may include information about a situation, or scene, that the journalist observed.

In practice, a news feature often contains a mixture of the above.

4 / How long is a news feature?

A news feature can be anywhere between 500 and 1,500 words long.

In general, they are shorter than more detailed features on less current topics but longer than a simple news report.

5 / How is a news feature written?

The language of the news feature is concise and objective.

The story is made up of shorter sentences and uses shorter words where possible.

The story avoids being overly descriptive or complex.

The story avoids foreign words and abbreviations.



Checklist:

- 1 Is the information in the news feature as up-to-date as possible? Does the news feature contain something new and relevant to any reader interested in the topic?
- 2 Are the five W's answered within the first few paragraphs?
- 3 Does the body of the story go into the five W's and the one H in more detail?
- 4 Have the most important questions been answered first?
- 5 Could the reader understand what was going on, without having to read any other stories or articles?
- 6 Does the story inform the reader as to who all the people in the story are and what their relevance is? Have all abbreviations been explained? Have locations been put into context?
- 7 Is the story accurate and neutral?

The Analysis

1 / What is an analysis?

An analysis is based on a news story but it is more analytical. It differs from backgrounders or other kinds of feature stories in that, rather than exposing facts and investigating or telling a story, its main aim is to explain.

An analysis explains why something happened. In order to explain, expert opinions may be sought and a certain argument or line of thinking may be detailed. However, this is not an editorial, a commentary or pure opinion. The interviewees / experts are free to make judgments and comment. The journalist is not. Any analysis or line of argument must be backed up by research and objective facts and figures.

2 / How is an analysis constructed?

Firstly an analysis must make mention of the original news story upon which it is based.

New facts and opinions will be organised as they are in a news feature (see The News Feature, page 28).

An analysis may introduce protagonists, interviewees or experts who have a particular connection to the subject matter and who are able to enlighten the reader with their informed opinions.

3 / How long is an analysis?

A short analysis, appearing beside a news story for instance, may be around 200 words long. A longer analysis could be as long as a short news feature (between 500 and 1,000 words).

4 / How is an analysis written?

In general, the language is neutral and concise. Occasionally the language can be more relaxed, as in feature writing. The reader should be able to base his or her opinion on an analysis.



Checklist:

- 1 Is the research based on facts and / or expert opinions – organised in a way that the events appear to the reader in a new light?
- 2 Is the research based on facts and / or expert opinions – organised in a logical and easily comprehensible manner?
- 3 Is the reader able to understand all the information in the analysis; is all the relevant background information in the analysis too?

The Commentary / Editorial

1 / What is a commentary / editorial?

In a commentary / editorial the author argues a certain opinion or viewpoint. The commentary / editorial contains all of the information that led the author to come to this opinion. A commentary / editorial convinces the reader about this viewpoint through a well explained and informed argument.

2 / How is a commentary / editorial constructed?

Firstly a commentator or editorialist must inform the reader about which issue he or she is writing. A commentator or editorialist must provide facts, information and arguments that led him or her to this point of view about the issue. The commentator or editorialist is the well-informed party in this situation and must share the information he or she has with the reader. Having done all this, they will then draw their final conclusion. Generally, commentaries and editorials follow three steps: What is this commentary about? This includes the 5 W's and one H from news reporting: where, what, who, when, why and how. Why is the author critical? Why is the author praising something? How were the author's opinions formed? What background information does the author have? As an expert on the topic, or as an informed writer, what does the author know? What conclusion does the author draw? It could be anything from providing a different perspective, an alternative solution to a problem, detailing ongoing concerns, posing unresolved questions or making a strong condemnation.

3 / How long is a commentary / editorial?

Generally an editorial is between 300 and 800 words long. An editorial should be relatively short.

4 / How should a commentary / editorial be presented?

It must look different from other reports so that readers can immediately recognise that it is an opinion, rather than fact. This can be done through varying font, headlines, special pages, disclaimers or other signifiers.

5 / How is a commentary / editorial written?

The style in which an editorial is written can go from ironic or humorous to polemical and combative – but the style in which it is written must suit the topic and argument. If the style does not suit the subject matter, readers won't take it seriously.



Checklist:

- 1 What point is being made? What conclusion is being drawn?
- 2 Is all the information that is required to support the conclusion contained in the commentary?
- 3 Is it immediately clear to readers which topic is being discussed?
- 4 Does the argument and the supporting information lead to a good understanding of the conclusion?
- 5 Is the tone of commentary suited to the argument and topic under discussion?

The Profile

1 / What is a profile?

A profile describes a person or organisation of interest to readers. A profile uses all of the writer's skills to paint a lifelike portrait in words of the individual or organisation being profiled. A profile does not make a direct judgment on the subject. Readers draw their own conclusions about the profile's subject through the details and quotes the writer has chosen to include. A profile shows rather than tells.

2 / How is a profile constructed?

A profile uses various styles of storytelling. A popular approach is cinematic in nature, using both close-ups and wide angle shots. The written "close-up" gives details of the subject or the scene. The "wide angle shot" talks about facts, background, history and other information. The two styles – "close-up" and "wide angle" – are used alternately. The interest and storytelling tension should be evenly maintained throughout the whole profile. A profile cannot be shortened from the bottom of the story.

3 / What kinds of profiles are there?

A profile of a person.
A profile of a city or place.
A profile of an institution or organisation.

Even if the profile is not about an individual person, the human aspects and interaction should still be emphasised and detailed. Otherwise the profile gets dull (see "Storytelling," page 22).

4 / How long is a profile?

So that a profile fulfils its brief properly, it should be at least around 800 to 1,000 words long. A shorter profile could be around 500 words long but then it would contain more straightforward information about the subject. A shorter profile is useful when the subject is part of current news and there is little time for research or interviews.

5 / How is a profile written?

There are fairly broad guidelines for the language a profile uses. These are as follows. The profile should use descriptive language that appeals to all five senses. The profile shows; it doesn't tell. The profile should try to achieve a unique style. While the profile includes telling details about the subject, the details should not be random but should be consistent with, or important to, the story being told.

Checklist:

- 1 Is there a central question the profile piece should be answering about the subject?
- 2 Which details about the subject are really meaningful?
- 3 Are there friends, enemies, colleagues or other relevant opinions that could be included in this profile?
- 4 Have the ideas of "close-up" and "wide angle" been well woven together in the profile?
- 5 Does the portrait maintain storytelling tension through to the end?

The Feature Story

1 / What is a feature?

A feature is a longer story about political, cultural, social, sporting or business topics.

There are many different types of feature stories.

A feature is not a commentary. It informs and does not make overt judgments. But it can be written in a compelling or lively way that stimulates the reader's imagination.

Readers draw their own conclusions about the feature's subject matter because of the interviews, details, scenes and quotes the writer has chosen to include. A feature shows rather than tells.

2 / How is a feature constructed?

There are many ways to write a feature.

Often a feature will switch between lively scenes from real life and factual information.

The facts are there to explain the scenes. They are organised according to the scenes.

The most interesting scenes and facts should be evenly spread throughout the whole feature story.

A feature cannot be shortened from the bottom of the story.

3 / What kinds of features are there?

There are many different types of feature stories, from eyewitness accounts, where the journalist tells what it was like to be somewhere in the same way that a documentary film would, to longer, well-researched investigative features that go into depth about a subject and that may include analysis, background of all kinds and more than a dozen interviews.

Some examples of features:

News features

News backgrounders or analysis

Trend or cultural features

Eyewitness accounts

Investigative features

Literary features

Profiles

In practice, the various formats often overlap. For example, a news feature will often include the same kind of information as a profile, particularly when the feature focuses on one main protagonist or interviewee. And a profile will often include some of the same information a feature may have – for instance, the scene in which the profile's subject meets the journalist may be explained or described.

4 / How long is a feature story?

A feature is best at a minimum of around 1,000 words. Some features are much longer though, with magazines publishing anything between 4,000 and even 10,000 words on one subject.

5 / How is a feature written?

There are no hard and fast rules about the language used in a feature, only some general guidelines.

The language should be convincing and vivid.

The language should show and not tell (or judge).

The language should have a style unique to the writer and the story.

Checklist:

- 1 Is there a location (or several) that sets the scene for this topic?
- 2 Are there protagonists who provide a central focus for this topic?
- 3 Are the protagonists presenting different sides of the story? Are their stories sufficiently different from one another, so as to provide a complete picture of what is happening?
- 4 Is there a thread, or central theme, that runs through the entire feature story?
- 5 Are the facts and scenes well combined? Are they logical in the way they connect to one another?
- 6 Does the beginning of the feature make the reader want to know more? Does the end of the feature feel like a good, rounded conclusion, with connections to the central theme?

The Interview

1 / What is an interview?

An interview reproduces an encounter between the journalist and an interview subject, or interviewee, whose opinions and expertise relating to a certain topic are of interest to readers.

During an interview, information about the person's life, his or her opinions or his or her expertise are elicited. The journalist, or interviewer, acts on behalf of the readers, asking questions.

The journalist's own opinions are not relevant during the interview.

2 / What kinds of interviews are there?

On a certain topic or event: where experts or knowledgeable individuals are asked to provide information about that topic or event.

For opinions and analysis: where experts or knowledgeable individuals give their opinions on, or analysis of, certain topics or events. These opinions and analyses may come in for critical scrutiny by the interviewer.

On a more personal basis: where the interviewer questions persons who are of interest because of who they are, whether that relates to current affairs, their field of expertise, their talents or for other reasons.

In practice, the boundaries between the various interview formats are often blurred.

3 / What sorts of questions does an interview involve?

Questions that elicit longer answers. Avoid questions that could be answered with a simple "yes" or "no."

Questions that the audience might have wanted to pose themselves. Avoid questions that could result in bluster or babble from the interviewee.

Questions that maintain a distance between interviewer and interviewee. Avoid questions that the interviewee might praise, or enjoy being asked. Remain critical.

4 / How is an interview constructed?

An interview may be introduced by a short explanatory paragraph, in which the reader is introduced to the interviewee and brought up-to-date with any major topic being discussed.

An interview should have a clear topic, which will have been written about in the introductory paragraphs.

An interview may begin with any thought-provoking or interesting question.

An interview keeps the reader interested until the end.

An interview is like any conversation. The questions and answers relate to one another meaningfully. Rather than just working down a list of questions, an interviewer should be thinking about the answers he or she hears. Other questions may follow from unexpected or interesting answers and the interviewer should be ready to ask these, too.

Questions shouldn't be longer than three or four lines and answers shouldn't be longer than 10 to 15 lines.

5 / How is an interview conducted / written up?

Depending on what kind of interview is being conducted, the language used could be anything from casual and conversational to professional and understood by experts only.

Even if the interviewer understands the jargon used by experts, this needs to be "translated" for the layman. Technical terms, jargon and abbreviations must be explained.

Try and retain the unique figures of speech or characteristic flavour of the way an interviewee speaks.

Checklist:

- 1 Is the general topic suitably covered by an interview? Or would it be better to use some other story format – for instance, a profile or a feature that includes the interview? In a profile or a feature, it's possible to add more information and more journalistic observations.
- 2 Does the reader understand why this interview is taking place and who the interviewee is?
- 3 As the interview progresses, is the reader being adequately informed about the background and motivation behind questions being asked? What about the answers?
- 4 Will the reader be able to understand any technical language, jargon or expert opinions?
- 5 Has any unnecessary information, verbosity and general, uninformative chatter been removed from the finished interview?
- 6 Were all the relevant, important questions answered? Do the answers correspond to the questions and make sense?
- 7 Is it clear who authorised the interview, and when?

The Story Proposal

1 / Why do we need a story proposal?

The story proposal is a vital part of communication between the journalist and the editor. It will determine whether or not the editor wants the journalist to work on the story.

Formulating a story proposal also forces a journalist to clarify his or her idea and to define exactly what it is he or she wants to write about and how it will be done.

2 / From idea to published story

Just because you have a story idea does not mean you have a story.

Firstly, every story needs an angle, or focus. Coming up with an angle forces the journalist to think about how to approach the topic. In some ways, it's good to think of this as a: "So what, why should we care?" question. The answer to that question is: the angle, or focus of the story.

The rest of the story and the kind of information that is required then develops from the chosen angle, or focus of the story.

Example:

The major topic: agriculture

The angle / focus: A small agricultural business breeding new varieties of vegetable.

The story: A small agricultural business is breeding new varieties of broccoli and the new broccoli can feed six families, which suggests that the journalist could then talk to the business owners, some of the people that eat the broccoli, store owners that sell the broccoli and possibly experts in agriculture and nutrition.



Checklist:

The best story proposals consist of several short, succinct paragraphs that briefly explain what the story is about and how it will be researched and written. The following information should be included:

- 1 The story explained in three or four short sentences.
- 2 Check whether this topic has been written about before in the relevant media and if so, how?
- 3 What is new or different about this story?
- 4 Why could this story interest people?
- 5 What research will be done and who will be interviewed?
- 6 What sort of story format best suits this idea?
- 7 How long will it take to write and research this story?
- 8 How many words does it seem the story idea will need?
- 9 Will the journalist need the editor's support in some way, such as a commissioning letter or letters of recommendation?

The Radio News Story

1 / What is a radio news story?

A radio news story is a short, accurate, factual report about an event, whether a political, social, sporting, or business event.

A radio news story's main function is to inform.

A radio news story does not contain an opinion or commentary.

A radio news story can be simply read by a news reader or it can include audio clips, such as statements from interviewees or reporters; it can also include recordings of activities made at the site of the news incident.

2 / How is a radio news story constructed?

A radio news story is similar to all other forms of news media, in that the most important information comes first.

Following the most important and current information come sources, background information, and other developments – these proceed from most important to least important. The least important information comes at the end.

3 / What information is included in a radio news story?

A complete news story contains answers to the five W's and one H:

What?
Who?
Where?
When?
Why?
How?

Not all of the answers may be available from the same place, at the same time. But if the first four W's cannot be answered, then the news story is incomplete.

4 / How long is a radio news story?

A standard radio news story is made up of around five sentences and is around 20 to 25 seconds long.

5 / What language should be used for a radio news story?

Short and simple sentences.

Objective and brief.

Avoids opinion and comment

Avoids too many figures, measurements, dates, or other numbers.

Avoids technical or specialist terms, or uses them sparingly.

Avoids copying directly from news agency reports, as often the language used by agencies is not suitable for broadcast news.

6 / How is a radio news story presented?

On some radio stations, the news is presented by specially trained news readers who are not necessarily journalists.

The news item uses neutral language and is presented in a calm and slow manner. It is important that the news reader's own opinions are not hinted at by the way the news reader speaks while presenting the news item.

The news item is more important than the presenter. This is important especially when it comes to reporting on disasters or other news items that evoke sympathy; the presenter shouldn't show emotion.



Checklist:

- 1 Is the news up-to-date and relevant?
- 2 Is the latest, most important news to be found within the first lines?
- 3 Is the news reliable and well researched? Have the facts been checked?
- 4 Has the news item been written and presented in a neutral way?
- 5 Is the news item short?
- 6 Is the news item being presented in the right context, within the wider radio broadcast?

The Voicer with Audio

The radio report, or voicer, with audio is an informative bulletin about current affairs. It does not give an opinion. The reporter speaks during the report – providing the voice-over. The addition of various pieces of recorded material (known as audio clips, cuts, or sound bites) makes the report more lively, authentic, and interesting. These can be statements from interviewees, statements made at press conferences, or other recorded material.

1 / What are the different kinds of voicers with audio?

News bulletin / breaking news: These items cover current events as they happen. For example, accidents, political affairs, disasters, war zones.
Magazine-style item: Tends to have more background information and lighter subject matter; also allows reporters and presenters more freedom and creativity.
Backgrounder: Reveals the background to an event. For example, it could provide the background to a pre-planned report (see below).
Reportage / radio feature: This item is more detailed. It is made livelier by the inclusion of more than just the facts. It may also contain impressions and observations. The reporter is usually on-site. Reportage doesn't necessarily have the usual "straight" news tone. It may tell a story and allow the atmosphere of the event to come through.
Pre-planned report: In which the reporter goes to cover something that is known to be happening – such as elections, government meetings, or press conferences.

2 / How is a radio report put together?

A radio report is introduced by the presenter in the studio. The topic is briefly outlined, and the author of the piece is usually named. The author / reporter provides their own voice-over and the report follows a logical course, informing listeners about the topic and linking to various pieces of audio (also known as cuts, clips, or sound bites). The questions that the reporter has asked to obtain the audio clips are not usually heard. The name and job of the person providing the audio clip must be mentioned. It is also important to make sure that audio clips are complete sentences – they shouldn't sound as though they have come from a longer interview. They should be easy to understand and should sound complete.

3 / How long is a radio report?

The length of a radio report is dependent on the form, content, and format of the item. However, most are usually between 1:00 and 3:30 minutes.

4 / What sort of language do radio reports use?

Generally, the pre-planned report, the backgrounder, and breaking news use clear and simple speech and present the facts. Magazine-style reports and documentaries can be more creative and are made lively through the skill of the author or reporter.

Checklist:

- 1 Which form suits the subject matter best? Be careful not to mix the various different styles of radio reports haphazardly.
- 2 Is the radio report still current – or should there be opening or closing remarks made to update the item?
- 3 Has the topic been thoroughly researched?
- 4 Have all the audio clips been identified (with name and function, etc.)?
- 5 Are the audio clips the right length and do they sound complete?
- 6 Are all of the audio clips relevant to the topic?

The Telephone Interview for Radio Broadcast

1 / What is a telephone interview for radio?

The telephone interview is a quick way of getting information and news across on the radio. It is used both for current affairs broadcasts and for less formal broadcasts. A telephone interview is not very different from a face-to-face interview. It can be recorded and edited. It can also be conducted live.

2 / What kinds of interviews are there?

Interviews about current events: obtain information and explain news events.
Interviews with opinion-makers: obtain the opinion of the interviewee and examine it critically.
Interviews with persons of interest: obtain information from interesting individuals – this can be entertaining or emotional.
 In practice, these various formats often intersect.

3 / Special properties of a telephone interview:

It is obviously not possible to interpret non-verbal communication or body language when doing an interview over the phone. This is why the interviewer should try to control where the interview is going.

4 / How does one prepare for a telephone interview?

The interview topic is to be defined by the journalist – that is, he or she decides what information is needed. It is important to research the topic and/or the interviewee thoroughly. Thorough research will lead to good suggestions for questions to be asked. The topic of the interview should be relevant to listeners.

5 / How is a telephone interview constructed?

It begins with a lead-in, during which the interviewee is introduced, including name and function. Most of the interview consists of questions and answers, and it finishes with closing remarks. A good interviewer is flexible, reacting to the answers and coming up with critical questions without losing sight of the ultimate goal.

6 / How does the interviewer work?

The questions should be short and to the point. By posing questions that ask for specific information or answers – such as “yes” or “no” – the interviewer should get concrete, verifiable answers. If the questions are more open-ended, the interviewee is likely to answer in greater detail. A good interview contains a mixture of both kinds of questions.

7 / The interviewee

Is the interviewee the right person to answer the questions?
 Is the interviewee the person with the responsibilities?
 Does the interviewee have an agenda to push? For instance, politicians and businesspeople often have a point they try and get across regardless of what questions are being asked.

8 / How does the interviewer speak?

The interviewer uses normal language and speech. He should not be competing with the interviewee for air time.

9 / How long is an interview?

The length of an interview depends on the kind of broadcast and format. A standard radio interview lasts between 1:30 and 3:30 minutes.

Checklist:

- 1 Is the topic well defined and is it relevant to the listeners? What is the ultimate goal of the interview?
- 2 Is the interviewee the right person to answer these questions?
- 3 Has the interviewee's name and function been properly introduced?
- 4 Have the questions been thoroughly researched?
- 5 Does the lead-in introduce the topic in an easy-to-understand and interesting way? What about the closing remarks?
- 6 Will the interview follow a dramatic arc of some kind?
- 7 Is the interviewer well aware of the interviewee's agenda, if there is one?

The Radio Lead-In

1 / What is a lead-in?

A lead-in, preview, or introduction (also known as an intro) introduces the listeners to the broadcast item they are about to hear – whether this is a news report, interview, bulletin, or longer report.

The lead-in contains important information that listeners will need in order to understand the broadcast item to follow. A lead-in arouses the listener's interest and curiosity.

A lead-in avoids too many facts and figures. Instead, it focuses on the essence of the broadcast item to follow.

2 / How are lead-ins constructed?

A radio lead-in consists of three parts. The “ear catcher” should arouse the interest and curiosity of the listener. Then there is an introduction that broadly addresses the topic that the following report will cover; this part of the lead-in will also connect the radio presenter to the report and the rest of the radio program.

There are several approaches one can take to writing the lead-in. It could be written in a news style and stick to the facts. But if the broadcast item to follow is more conversational or casual, then the lead-in can be more creative – for example, it could contain metaphors, examples, comments, questions, or interesting contradictions. The presenter uses basic storytelling principles and can be freer in how they introduce the item.

However, the content of the lead-in should always have relevance and appeal for the listeners and it should not double up on any of the information in the actual broadcast item.

3 / How long is a lead-in?

The length of the introduction relates to the length of the broadcast item to follow. A short piece of broadcast news requires a short introduction. On average, a lead-in might be between 15 and 25 seconds long.

4 / How is a lead-in put together?

The presenter uses the same language as his or her viewers to ensure that they understand and become interested; the presenter uses short, simple phrases and avoids using complex language or sentence structures. Statistics, numbers, and lengthy dates should only be used in a lead-in when they are essential.

A good rule to go by is: concrete and detailed before abstract or generic. The more hard facts there are in the lead-in, the better the viewer will understand it.

5 / Presenting the lead-in

The presenter tells the listeners what's happening and really speaks to them, on a semi-personal basis. This establishes a connection between the presenter and the listener and arouses the listener's interest.

The listener should not feel as though an introduction is being read; it should be “told.”



Checklist:

- 1 Does the lead-in introduce the upcoming broadcast item in an appropriate way?
- 2 Is the lead-in relevant and interesting to the listener?
- 3 Does the lead-in arouse curiosity? Does it contain necessary and relevant information?
- 4 Is anything in the lead-in repeated in the broadcast item? If so, avoid this.
- 5 Is the lead-in the right length?
- 6 Are the opening remarks formulated so they are easy for listeners to understand?
- 7 Is the lead-in “told” rather than read?

The Radio News Reader

1 / What is a radio news reader?

A radio news reader presents viewers with information. The news reader may also add elements of entertainment and give the radio broadcast personality. As such, the radio news reader is the “voice” of the show, and people identify that person with the program.

A radio news reader introduces topics, bridges the various broadcast items, interviews guests, and reacts quickly to current events. The style in which the news is read depends on the radio program’s format.

In modern news shows, the news reader is usually also a radio journalist. And often radio journalists will read their own reports, or “voice” them.

2 / How does a reader / voicer speak / present?

A news reader uses natural and clear language. He or she avoids complex phrasing, abstract themes, and technical jargon. A good rule to go by is: concrete and detailed before abstract or generic. The more hard facts there are, the better.

News readers should focus on the essentials and avoid unnecessary extras, and try to keep the story simple and logical. They must also remember that they are on the radio: listeners cannot see what they may have seen, and therefore, verbal descriptions are necessary.

3 / What points should be remembered during news reading / voicers?

A news reader has a good voice for radio, with a pleasant, natural way of speaking that makes listeners trust what he or she is saying.

A news reader reaches listeners best when speaking naturally, clearly, and in a personable way. It should sound as though the news reader is telling listeners a story, rather than just reading from a page.

The news reader speaks directly to the listeners rather than giving a lecture. It depends on the radio program’s format or the news item, but if the news reader seems approachable and natural, it can help to connect with listeners.

4 / How long does a news reader speak for?

The length any presenter speaks for depends on the context and format as well as the broadcast item they are presenting. Basically, it is important to maintain brevity and to ensure that whatever is said relates to the content of the broadcast item. Less is more.

During a standard broadcast, with music and words, a program’s presenter may speak for between 10 and 15 percent of the total time. If the program is a news broadcast or talk show, the presenter obviously speaks more.



Checklist:

- 1 Is what the presenter says relevant to the listeners?
- 2 Is the presenter’s speech factual? Does the news reader provide appropriate descriptions to the listeners?
- 3 Is the news reader telling a story rather than reading something?
- 4 Is the news reader speaking in a natural and personal way?
- 5 Are the news reader’s speeches the appropriate length?

The Two-Way Interview

1 / What is a two-way on the radio?

During a two-way, a studio-based news reader is connected to an interviewee or a reporter in a different place, usually via telephone or by satellite. The two-way, also known as a Q-and-A (short for “question and answer”), can be recorded before a broadcast, or it can be live.

The guest can be a reporter elsewhere, a foreign correspondent, or an expert or analyst. The guest will either be in another TV studio in a different location or on-site at a news event.

Two-ways are the best way of establishing that the reporter is on-site. They are very common in broadcast journalism.

Two-ways can also be used in less formal, more entertainment-oriented radio broadcasts.

2 / How is a two-way constructed?

A two-way is introduced by the news reader or presenter. The studio-based presenter or interviewer introduces the topic and the interviewee, with his or her full name, position, and location. Often the interviewee is not greeted in any lengthy way. More often, the presenter simply begins asking questions, or the reporter begins to speak.

If the interview is between a news reader and a reporter, potential questions will have been discussed before the two-way takes place.

The two-way usually ends when the news reader briefly thanks the interviewee for his or her time.

3 / What sort of information does a two-way contain?

If the two-way is between a news reader and a reporter, then the reporter is most often on the site of an actual news event. The reporter tells listeners what’s happening there and gives an overview of current events as objectively as possible, without giving any opinions.

The reporter prepares a brief introduction and sums up events on-site.

The reporter usually speaks in a non-scripted or off-the-cuff manner, which gives the two-way authenticity.

4 / How long is a two-way?

The length of a two-way depends on the topic and format. Most are between 1:30 and 3:30 minutes long.



Checklist:

- 1 Has the connection been thoroughly checked? Is it up and running and safe?
- 2 Has the interviewee / reporter been briefed? Will there be questions or will the reporter simply introduce him- or herself?
- 3 Have the questions been well prepared and discussed beforehand?
- 4 Are the introductory details – the name, role, and location of the interviewee – correct?
- 5 Does everyone know how long the two-way will be?
- 6 If the two-way was recorded earlier, do the concluding remarks contain relevant details?

TV News

1 / What is a TV news item?

A TV news story is a short, accurate, factual report about an event, whether it is a political, social, sporting or business event.

A news story's main function is to inform.

A news story does not contain the writer's opinion.

A TV news story can be read by a presenter and be accompanied by related pictures or it can be a filmed news item with a voice-over from a reporter.

2 / How is a TV news item constructed?

A TV news item is similar to all other forms of news media, in that the most important information comes first.

Following the most important and current information come sources, background information and other developments – these proceed from most important to least important. The least important information comes at the end.

As a news item is broadcast it is accompanied by relevant pictures or visuals. It is important that the words and pictures match and that they don't give different messages.

3 / What information is found in a news story?

A complete news story contains answers to the five W's and one H

What?

Who?

Where?

When?

Why?

How?

Not all of the answers may be available from the same place, at the same time. But if the questions cannot be answered, then the news story is incomplete.

4 / How long is a news item?

The length of a news item depends on the format and the content.

Usually a news item is not longer than 20 to 25 seconds, particularly if it does not include background information or analysis.

5 / The language of a news item:

Short and simple sentences.

Objective and brief.

Avoids being overly descriptive or complex.

Avoids too many figures, measurements, dates or other numbers.

Avoids technical or specialist terms, or uses them sparingly.

Avoids copying directly from news agency reports as often the language used by agencies is not suitable for broadcast news.

6 / How is a news item presented?

The news item is introduced by a presenter using neutral and suitable language. It is important that the presenter's own opinions are not hinted at by the way the presenter speaks or by the way he or she acts while presenting the news item.

The news item is more important than the presenter. This is especially important when it comes to reporting on disasters or other news that evokes sympathy; the presenter shouldn't show emotion.

The presenter's clothing should also be "impartial" and adhere to the widely accepted standards of professional or business clothing. Unusual or eye-catching clothing draws the viewer's attention away from the news item.

Checklist:

- 1 Is the news up-to-date and relevant?
- 2 Is the latest, most important news to be found within the first lines?
- 3 Is the news reliable and well researched; have the facts been checked?
- 4 Has the news item been written and presented in a neutral way?
- 5 Is the news item short?
- 6 Is the news item being presented in the right context, within the wider news broadcast?

The TV Report

1 / What is a TV report?

A televised news item gives viewers information on current affairs through the use of a short film about the events in question. A TV report can tell viewers about current affairs. It can also give further information on the background of news events and further explanations as well as impart the opinions and experiences of other people in the form of pictures, sounds and words.

2 / What are the different varieties of TV reports?

News bulletin / Breaking news: Where the item covers current events as they happen, some of which may be spontaneous events. For example, accidents, political affairs, disasters, war zones.

Magazine-style item: Tends towards more background information and towards lighter subject matter; also allows reporters and presenters more freedom and creativity.

Backgrounder: Reveals the background to an event.

Documentary / Reportage: This item is more detailed. It is based on more than just the facts, and also focuses on observations and experiences. The reporter is on site but may not be seen on camera.

Pre-planned report: Where the reporter goes to cover something that is known to be happening, such as elections, government meetings or press conferences.

3 / What does a TV report contain?

Different forms follow different rules:

Breaking news, current events and pre-planned reports present the most important information first, on film. Backgrounders, magazine-style pieces and documentaries present the information in a more creative way.

4 / How long is a TV report?

The length of a TV report is dependent on the form, content and format of the broadcast. But some general guidelines follow:

Pre-planned report: 1 to 3 minutes.

Backgrounder: 1:30 to 3:30 minutes.

Breaking news: 1 to 3 minutes.

Magazine-style: 2 to 5 minutes.

Documentary / Reportage: 4 to 45 minutes.

5 / What sort of language do TV reports use?

Again it depends on the kind of TV report. Generally, the pre-planned report, the backgrounder and breaking news use clear and simple speech and present the facts.

Magazine-style reports and documentaries can be more creative, although of course, it is important to ensure that the viewer will still be able to grasp the themes of the latter easily.



Checklist:

- 1 Which form best suits the subject matter?
- 2 Be careful not to mix the various different styles of TV report haphazardly.
- 3 Is the TV report complete, or should there be opening or closing remarks made to update the item?
- 4 Has the topic been thoroughly researched?

The TV Commentary / Analysis

1 / What is a TV commentary or analysis?

A TV commentary is a broadcast item in which the author analyses current events – for instance, an event, negotiations, meetings or statements – and concludes that analysis by making a clear point or expressing an opinion. The point or opinion has been reached as the result of a logical argument and facts.

2 / How is a TV commentary / analysis constructed?

The commentary is usually made as part of a series of other broadcast items. The commentary requires a lead-in, whereby the commentator and the topic are introduced. The viewers are reminded of the nature of the item – a commentary – as the piece proceeds. For instance the graphics may say something like: “A commentary by...”

A commentary is most often made by commentators working inside a studio. The author’s statements have a direct connection to current events. Before an analysis or comment is made, the viewers will have been made aware of the facts of the matter by a previous broadcast item, most often a news item. During the analysis, the commentator takes the actual news, brings new information to bear, shows connections and reactions and comes up with a solid conclusion.

3 / How long is a TV commentary / analysis?

The length of a TV commentary depends on the format and context. Most often they are between 0:50 seconds and 1:30 minutes long.

4 / How is a TV commentary / analysis presented?

The presenter uses simple and easily comprehensible language. While commentators should mostly avoid irony (in case viewers do not understand it) a commentator can use elements like exaggeration, rhetorical questions, provocative facts, illustrations, metaphors and comparisons. All of these make a commentary more lively and interesting.



Checklist:

- 1 Has the topic of the commentary been adequately explained beforehand?
- 2 Is it clear to viewers that the broadcast item is a commentary and not a news bulletin?
- 3 Has the commentator been adequately introduced?
- 4 Is the commentator’s conclusion based on a well grounded and well explained argument?
- 5 Has simple and comprehensible language been used in presenting the commentary or analysis?

The TV Talk Show

1 / What is a TV talk show?

A TV talk show is a program that involves one or more guests and a moderator. Topics can be political, social, sporting or business-related. The guests, who have knowledge or experience related to the topic, are the main attraction.

2 / What kinds of guests does a TV talk show include?

The choice of guests on a talk show is very important. The success or failure of any talk show depends very much on that choice, the guests' qualifications and their interactions.

A guest should have expert knowledge or interesting experiences related to the topic under discussion and they should also present well on screen. There is always the danger that talk show guests will only push their own agenda during the talk show (for example, politicians, business owners) and the careful choice of guests can mitigate this.

When there is more than one guest it is also important to ensure that the guests hold differing viewpoints. While all the guests should be given equal time to speak, this means that rather than simply agreeing with one another, they will challenge one another and encourage debate. This makes the talk show dynamic and adds dramatic tension.

3 / What is the difference between a TV talk show and a TV interview?

A talk show is longer than an interview and has a different format. An interview has a more tightly controlled format while in a talk show guests are more free to say what they wish. Guests can make statements, tell personal stories and assess situations.

A talk show also includes more chances for follow-up questions. The host or moderator shows their personality but tries to remain relatively neutral, simply allowing the guests to speak in turn. The goal is a lively discussion among the guests.

4 / How is a TV talk show constructed?

A talk show begins with a lead-in by the moderator or presenter, who introduces the topic and the guests (name and role or function) to viewers.

Guest introductions may include brief and general information about where they stand on the issue under discussion. The moderator keeps the talk show running smoothly with their questions and keeps it going according to a pre-planned dramatic arc, as much as possible.



Checklist:

- 1 Is the topic being discussed relevant and up-to-date?
- 2 Is the topic meaningful and is it interesting enough to work as a talk show topic?
- 3 Does it have enough angles and aspects to keep people talking?
- 4 Have the guests been carefully selected?
- 5 Do they all have different viewpoints on the topic? And is the moderator aware of where each guest stands?

The TV Presenter

1 / What is a TV presenter?

A TV presenter (or newsreader) presents viewers with information. The presenter may also add elements of entertainment and give the TV news broadcast personality. As such, the TV presenter is the “face” of the show and people identify that person with the program.

A TV presenter introduces topics, bridges the various broadcast items, interviews guests and reacts quickly to current events.

2 / How does a TV presenter speak / present?

A presenter uses natural and clear language. He or she avoids complex phrasing, abstract themes and technical jargon.

A good rule to go by is: concrete and detailed before abstract or generic.

The more definite, hard facts there are, the better.

A presenter reaches the audience best when he or she is authentic, natural and personal.

The news he or she is presenting should not be read – rather it should be “told,” like a story.

The first look every presenter takes on a show belongs to his or her audience.

By this, we mean that the first sentence the presenter says has to be made while looking directly at the camera lens. Only after doing this may the presenter look back down at his or her notes, if he or she is using them.

A TV camera can sometimes work like a magnifying glass. A presenter must be aware of this.

3 / How long does a presenter speak?

The length of time any presenter speaks depends on the context and format as well as the broadcast item being presented. It is important to maintain brevity and to ensure that whatever is said relates to the content of the broadcast item.

4 / How does a presenter look?

The appearance of a presenter depends on the type of program he or she is fronting. In many cases it would be better to dress more formally than to look too casual, particularly as the presenter is a representative of the program. Of course, there are some shows, like children’s shows or music broadcasts, that have a different dress code.



Checklist:

- 1 Is what the presenter says relevant to the viewers?
- 2 Is the presenter’s speech factual?
- 3 Is the presenter telling a story rather than reading something?
- 4 Is the presenter reaching his or her audience with his or her personality and authentic manner?
- 5 Is the presenter aware of how to behave in front of a camera? Is his or her appearance appropriate?
- 6 Are the presenter’s speeches the appropriate length?

basics
print
radio
TV
online
service

The TV Stand-Up

1 / What is a stand-up?

A stand-up occurs when a reporter presents the broadcast item in the place where it is happening. A stand-up is often part of a larger broadcast item; it can occur at the beginning, end or middle of a report. A stand-up can also make for a whole broadcast item or report in and of itself. A stand-up can be filmed before the item is broadcast or it can be filmed live. Stand-ups are a regular part of most news broadcasts.

2 / When is a stand-up used?

Foreign correspondents often use a stand-up to indicate the situation on-site in that place and to show that they're on location, in another country. A stand-up can be used to replace moving pictures that are essential to the story but that were not captured by the camera. For example, if the pictures are not so interesting, such as a town council meeting. Or when pictures were not possible, such as proceedings in a courtroom, or when the event was in the past. A stand-up is one of the quickest ways a TV journalist can produce a broadcast item and it is commonly used when covering breaking news.

3 / What does a live stand-up consist of?

During a stand-up a reporter tells of the current situation in the place where he or she is and any developments in the news there. As part of the reporter's observations on-site, he or she may also assess the current situation without directly showing it and without editorialising. The report is made without notes; this indicates the authenticity of the on-site report.

4 / How is a live stand-up presented?

The reporter is on-site, speaks directly to the camera and thereby, directly to the viewers. The location of the stand-up is chosen as a place that best represents what the reporter is talking about. The reporter speaks to the viewers in a lively, descriptive way about contemporary events. The stand-up report may be introduced by the presenter in the studio (lead-in) and the presenter also makes closing remarks. The reporter and cameraman are connected to the producers and presenters in the studio by communication devices – often in-ear-monitoring.

5 / How long is a stand-up?

The length of a stand-up is dependent on the topic and context. When the stand-up is part of another broadcast item, it is rarely longer than 20 seconds. When the stand-up makes for the whole of a broadcast item, it is obviously longer and this length is dependent on the item.



Checklist:

- 1 **If the stand-up is being used as a broadcast item on its own, then it is introduced and concluded by a presenter in the studio.**
- 2 **The stand-up talks directly to the camera in a place with relevance to the broadcast item.**
- 3 **The stand-up is done without notes and its length depends on how the stand-up is being used (either part of a larger report or on its own).**
- 4 **The reporter assesses the developing situation as a result of his or her observations on-site.**

The TV Interview

1 / What is a TV interview?

A TV interview is an interview that is broadcast on television, with the aim of providing information to viewers.

2 / What kinds of interviews are there?

Interviews about current events: obtain information and explain news events.

Interviews with opinion-makers: obtain the opinion of the interviewee and examine it critically.

Interviews with persons of interest: obtain information from interesting individuals – this can be entertaining or emotional.

In practice, these various formats often intersect.

3 / How does one prepare for a TV interview?

The interview topic is to be defined by the journalist. The topic should not be too general. It is important to research the topic and/or the interviewee thoroughly beforehand. Thorough research will lead to good suggestions for questions to be asked.

The topic of the interview should be relevant to listeners.

4 / How is a TV interview constructed?

An interview begins with an introduction, or lead-in, during which time the interviewee is introduced; this includes his or her name and function. Most of the interview consists of questions and answers. The interview is finished with closing remarks or a wrap-up.

A good interviewer is flexible, reacting to the answers and coming up with critical questions that follow on from answers, all without losing sight of the ultimate goal or angle of the interview.

5 / How does the interviewer work?

Good preparation and research will dictate the nature of the questions.

The questions should be short and to the point.

By posing questions that ask for specific information or answers – such as “yes” or “no,” the interviewer should get concrete, verifiable answers. If the questions are more open-ended, the interviewee is likely to answer in greater detail.

A good interview contains a mixture of both kinds of questions.

6 / The interviewee

Is the interviewee the right person to answer the questions? Is the interviewee the person with the responsibilities or simply answering questions on behalf of others? Does the interviewee have an agenda to push?

7 / How does the interviewer speak?

The interviewer uses normal language and speech. He or she should not be competing with the interviewee for airtime – this tends to be at the expense of the viewer and detracts from how easy the interview is to understand. The interviewer should also be able to explain any jargon or any complex, insider-style information to the viewers.

8 / How long is an interview?

The length of an interview depends on the kind of broadcast and format. A standard TV interview lasts between 2:30 and 4:30 minutes.



Checklist:

- 1 Is the topic well-defined and does it have relevance to the listeners? What is the ultimate goal of the interview?
- 2 Is the interviewee the right person to answer these questions?
- 3 Has the interviewee's name and function been properly introduced?
- 4 Have the questions been thoroughly researched?
- 5 Does the lead-in introduce the topic in an easy-to-understand and interesting way? What about the closing remarks?
- 6 Has special attention been placed on the first and last questions, which are particularly important?
- 7 Will the interview follow a dramatic arc of some kind?
- 8 Is the interviewer well aware of the interviewee's own agenda, if there is one?
- 9 Have any relevant technical details been explained or agreed upon (such as timing, connections) before the interview begins?

The TV Lead-In

1 / What is a lead-in?

A lead-in, or introduction (also known as an intro) introduces the viewers to the broadcast item they are about to see, whether this is a news report, interview, stand-up or documentary. The lead-in contains important information the viewers will need in order to understand the broadcast item to follow. A lead-in arouses the viewer's interest and curiosity. A lead-in avoids too many facts and figures. Instead, it focuses on the essence of the broadcast item to follow.

2 / How are lead-ins constructed?

Lead-ins can come in many shapes and formats depending on the context and content of the broadcast item. A lead-in can be very news-oriented, limiting itself to facts. But if the broadcast item to follow is more conversational or casual then the lead-in can be more creative. For example, a lead-in could contain metaphors, examples, comments, questions or interesting contradictions. The presenter uses basic storytelling principles and can be freer in how he or she introduces the item. However, the content of the lead-in should always have relevance and appeal for the viewers.

3 / How long is a lead-in?

The length of the introduction relates to the length of the broadcast item to follow. A short piece of broadcast news requires a short introduction. On average, opening remarks might be between 15 and 25 seconds long.

4 / How is a lead-in put together?

The presenter uses the same language as his or her viewers to ensure that they understand and become interested. The presenter uses short, simple phrases and avoids using complex language or sentence structures. Statistics, numbers and lengthy dates should only be used in a lead-in when they are essential. A good rule to go by is: concrete and detailed before abstract or generic. The more defined, hard facts there are in the lead-in, the better the viewer will understand it.

5 / Presenting the lead-in

The first sentence belongs to the camera. By this, we mean that the first sentence the presenter says has to be made while looking directly at the camera lens. Only after doing this may the presenter look back down at his or her notes, if he or she is using them. The last sentence of the lead-in also belongs to the camera. An introduction is not read, it must be "told." In this way, a lead-in becomes more convincing and intriguing to the viewers.



Checklist:

- 1 Does the lead-in introduce the upcoming broadcast item in an appropriate way?
- 2 Is the lead-in relevant and interesting to the viewer?
- 3 Does the lead-in arouse curiosity? Does it contain necessary and relevant information?
- 4 Is anything repeated in both the broadcast item and in the lead-in? If so, avoid this.
- 5 Is the lead-in the right length?
- 6 Are the closing remarks formulated so they are easy for viewers to understand?
- 7 The first and last sentence of the lead-in belong to the camera.
- 8 Lead-ins are not read, they are "told."

Closing Remarks for Presenters

1 / What is a closing remark?

Closing remarks come directly after a TV report and are made by the presenter. The closing remarks are used to update the latest information or give further details, or they can be used as an element that leads smoothly onto the next broadcast item.

2 / What do closing remarks contain?

Breaking news and other changes to the news item don't always make it into the actual broadcast item. New information, reactions and further developments are then related by the TV presenter after the item has been shown. The contents of closing remarks must be carefully chosen to make sure that the information therein is relevant and doesn't repeat what has already been broadcast.

The closing remarks also allow the presenter to provide viewers with further information should they be interested in going deeper into the subject – for example, the homepage of the news broadcaster.

The closing remarks can be used to name the reporters who produced the broadcast item.

The closing remarks can serve as a device that the presenter uses to move onto the next broadcast item.

3 / How are closing remarks made?

The presenter uses the same language as his or her viewers to ensure the best comprehension possible.

The presenter uses short, simple phrases and avoids using complex language or sentence structures.

4 / How long are closing remarks?

This depends on what information the closing remarks need to contain. However, it shouldn't be longer than the introduction to the broadcast item.

5 / Presenting closing remarks

The first sentence belongs to the camera. By this, we mean that the first sentence the presenter says directly after the broadcast item has to be made looking directly at the camera lens. Only after doing this may the presenter look back down at his or her notes.



Checklist:

- 1 **Is the content of the closing remarks relevant?**
- 2 **Do the closing remarks help the viewers, either by providing further information or by acting as a device to bridge broadcast items?**
- 3 **Is anything repeated in both the broadcast item and in the closing remarks? If so, avoid this.**
- 4 **Are the closing remarks the right length?**
- 5 **Are the closing remarks formulated so that they are easy for viewers to understand?**
- 6 **The first sentence of the closing remarks belongs to the camera.**

The Two-Way Interview

1 / What is a two-way?

During a two-way a studio-based presenter is connected to an interviewee in a different place, by both sound and camera. The studio-based presenter interviews his or guest remotely, either by telephone or by direct audiovisual link via the studio.

The guest can be a reporter elsewhere, a foreign correspondent or an expert or analyst. The guest will either be in another TV studio in a different location or on-site at a news event.

Two-ways are very common in news broadcasting.

2 / How is a two-way constructed?

A two-way is introduced with a lead-in. The studio-based presenter or interviewer introduces the topic and the interviewee, with their full name, position and location. Often the interviewee is not greeted in any lengthy way. More often the presenter simply begins asking questions.

Before the two-way takes place, the interviewee will have been prepared by a producer – for example, the interviewee has been told to face the camera (and thereby the viewers) directly when answering questions.

The two-way is usually ended when the presenter briefly thanks the interviewee for his or her time.

If the two-way has been pre-recorded it is common to let the viewers know this somehow. This is especially relevant when the two-way concerns breaking or rapidly developing news; the situation may have changed since the two-way was done.

3 / How does one prepare for a two-way?

The interviewee is prepared for the interview by the producer or the interviewer. The interviewee is made aware of technical details – for instance, that they must face the camera to give their answers and how long the interview should take.

The presenter doesn't tend to give the interviewee too much of an idea about what kinds of questions will be asked – this is in order to keep the interview fresh and authentic.

The interview questions should be short and to the point.

4 / How long is a two-way?

The length of a two-way depends on the topic and format. Most are between 1:30 and 2:30 minutes long.



Checklist:

- 1 Has the connection been thoroughly checked? Is it up and running and safe?
- 2 Has the interviewee been briefed? Is everyone aware of exactly how long this two-way will be?
- 3 Have the questions been prepared?
- 4 Are the introductory details – the name, role and location of the interviewee – correct?
- 5 Do the concluding remarks contain relevant details about the two-way if it was pre-recorded, as well as further information if the item involves breaking news?

Writing for the Internet

1 / Is there a writing style that's better for online?

Every kind of journalism and every kind of writing style can be found online. That includes news writing, feature writing, interviews, and so forth. There is no distinctive style of writing particular to the Internet. Writing on the Internet follows the same rules as writing for any other journalistic medium. However, there are several things worth noting. On the Internet, headlines, subheads, and teasers play a more important role. They have to entice the viewer to click on the story and read more. They must also contain several key words, or tag words, so that the article can be found by search engines. Here are some tips for headlines, teasers, and the story itself.

2 / The headline

The headline sums up the article topic.
 The headline is short.
 The headline is never boring.
 The headline is easy to understand.
 The headline might use relevant catchwords.
 The headline does not use long phrases.

3 / The teaser

The teaser entices readers into the story.
 The teaser gives an idea of the story's angle.
 The teaser makes the reader curious.
 The teaser begins the story and brings the reader in.

4 / The story

Broadly speaking, an online story can be analyzed in the following four ways:

Information: Is the story easy to understand and clear?

Optics: Is the text easy to read? Are there subheads and paragraphs?

Quality: Is the most important information at the top? Is the story precise and to the point? Are there links to further information within the story?

Feeling: Did I enjoy reading the story? Did the story entertain or inform me, or both?

5 / Search engine optimization

In order to make a story easier to find on the Internet, it should contain the following elements:

A headline

Subheadings

Links to further information

Important catchwords and key phrases

Pictures with captions



Checklist:

- 1 Is the most important information at the top? Have the five W's and one H been answered? Have catchwords been used? (see page 26)
- 2 Keep it simple: is the text short and easy to read, and does it use active language?
- 3 The movie in the reader's head: does the text tell a story?
- 4 Who is the target audience? Think about them and what they might want.
- 5 Has this story been optimized for search engines?
- 6 Is the information current? Online articles are never finished – check that the information is completely up-to-date.
- 7 Have online opportunities been taken up – for instance, linking to other information, linking to social media?

Mobile Journalism: Photography

How to take good- quality pictures with a smart phone

1 / What is mobile journalism?

Mobile reporting has dramatically changed the face of journalism. Almost all smart phones now have both a camera and a microphone that allow the recording of sound and visuals to a standard suitable for broadcasting. It is not just journalists who are benefiting from the opportunities that smart phones give them – ordinary people are also able to record high-resolution pictures and sound and offer them for broadcasting. In 2008 it was Qatar-based television station Al Jazeera that began to give smart phones not only to their staff journalists but also to so-called citizen journalists in a variety of Arab states. In particular, they gave the phones to people in crisis zones that were more difficult for journalists to reach. Those individuals were able to post pictures, videos, and other information online. This is how the formerly rigid boundary between media producers (trained journalists) and media consumers (citizen journalists) has become blurred.

2 / Mobile journalism: photography

It is not only the ever increasing quality of the cameras built into modern smart phones that makes their images more suitable for publication. It is also the fact that, with the help of the right software applications, pictures can be edited on the phone itself and published over the Internet. Mobile phone photography is best used in cases where the report must be filed quickly and even published immediately. It can also be useful in places where a photographer with a camera may draw unwelcome attention.

3 / Using your smart phone to record pictures

Any visual material produced on a smart phone requires the following steps:

1. *Recording*: the phone is in a stable position and the user carefully chooses the subject of the picture, taking perspective and composition into consideration. The user takes as many pictures as possible.
2. *Editing*: contrast, light levels, and cropping can all be done on the phone using dedicated software applications such as the free Photoshop Express or an application like Snapseed.
3. *Sending or broadcasting*: there are a variety of options. Pictures can be sent by MMS (Multimedia Messaging Service) or via e-mail. It is also possible to use a variety of mobile picture publishing services like Instagram, or blog services like Tumblr, to post the pictures online quickly.

4 / Points to consider

Try, if possible, to avoid using the digital zoom on a camera phone as it greatly decreases picture quality. If you want to get closer to a subject, move toward it with your phone. Also try to avoid using the phone camera's flash function, as this often results in an unnatural or badly lit picture.

Checklist:

- 1 Are battery levels good and is there enough room on the phone's memory card?
- 2 Is the camera set to take pictures at its highest definition / best quality?
- 3 What do I want to photograph? Have I considered perspective and composition?
- 4 Do I know the name of the person I am photographing? Do I have the spelling of his or her name? Do I have their permission to take a picture? These things are important if the picture is to be published later.
- 5 Does the picture tell a story? Does it arouse curiosity?

Mobile Journalism: Videos

How to make broadcast-quality video with a smart phone

In early 2012, a reporter from Al Jazeera sent footage he had filmed secretly in Syria back to the studio, and this material was some of the first ever to be used as part of a televised documentary. Later in 2012, a BBC reporter took things a step further by broadcasting an interview from a flooded British bowling club live, using an iPhone and the software application Dejero Live+. The satellite trucks usually used by the TV channel for live coverage couldn't get to the site due to heavy rain – but the reporter with an iPhone could.

1 / Using your smart phone to record video

Check whether you can download onto your smart phone one of several software applications that will allow you to either edit video or live stream it. These include applications like iMovie, ReelDirector, and Splice for the former and applications like Bambuser, Qik, Ustream and Dejero Live+ for the latter.

Check whether you can use an external microphone or whether there might be external lenses you can get to improve the quality of your video.

Recording: the phone can be used for recording interviews; use an external microphone to improve sound quality. Additional software applications, such as Filmic Pro for the iPhone, can be used to measure volume levels.

Editing: depending on your phone's capabilities and the kind of software you have available (for instance, iMovie, ReelDirector, Slice), it is possible to edit or crop footage on your phone and make it part of a longer broadcast item.

Sending or broadcasting: send the recording via cable or wireless Internet to another device (such as your computer) or broadcast it directly online, using web services such as YouTube or Vimeo.

2 / Potential video formats

A short lead-in or introduction: hold the camera steady and, using a “front camera” function, look directly into the lens. Tell viewers what is happening on-site. Before you record the footage, plan what you will say to introduce the piece and what you will say to conclude the piece.

A short camera pan: move the camera slowly and steadily from left to right (or vice versa) and film the scene around you. Be sure to start with a strong image or focal point and move to a strong focal point to finish. Be sure to hold the camera steady and move it on a slow, continuous arc.

A short passage: start with a strong and interesting focal point and then move a few meters holding the camera and filming all the while. Keep moving until you reach a final focal point, the one you chose before you began to film. This passage can be used for a short introduction, for example.

3 / Live streaming

Certain applications and services allow users to stream video live onto the Internet using their mobile phones. These include Bambuser, Ustream, Qik, and Dejero. To use them, you usually need to install the corresponding software application on your phone and register with the service. This is usually free. If you are planning to live stream video, consider taking an extra battery or an external charger. The quality of your live stream will also be significantly better if you're streaming using wireless Internet on-site.

Checklist:

- 1 Are battery levels good and is there enough room on the phone's memory card? Battery is particularly important as video requires a lot of battery power.
- 2 While filming, put your phone into flight mode – otherwise a phone call could interrupt your filming.
- 3 Choose a good angle to film from and, when editing, a meaningful excerpt from the footage.
- 4 Do your best to keep the picture from shaking – with a tripod, for example.
- 5 Avoid using the digital zoom on a camera phone, as it decreases picture quality.
- 6 Keep an eye on the environment. For example, wind can ruin your sound recording.
- 7 Record a few seconds of silence at either end of the recording.

Mobile Journalism: Audio

How to make radio-quality broadcasts with a smart phone

Reporters at the UK's BBC broadcasting service were among the first to use smart phones to record material suitable for broadcast. BBC reporter Natalia Antelava won the 2012 Foreign Press Association award for a radio report recorded almost entirely on her iPhone. And BBC reporter Nick Garnett has used smart phone software called Luci Live to report in studio quality from the scene of news events; during riots in Manchester, while other news crews were being chased away, he managed to escape notice and report live by talking into his phone.

Modern smart phones are well equipped for this kind of activity. They have internal microphone and headphone jacks that allow external equipment to be attached so that audio quality is improved. Various software applications even offer the reporter the option of editing, or otherwise working on, the recorded material on the phone itself, and then publishing it immediately.

1 / Using your smart phone to record sound

First check if your phone already has software that enables audio recording. Could you install other software on the phone? For example, software such as iSaidWhat and Hindenburg are good for recording short audio clips and then sending them. Software like Hokusai allows the user to edit and work with several tracks.

Also check if it is possible to attach an external microphone to your smart phone. Any broadcast material produced on a smart phone requires the following steps:

1. *Recording*: in an environment that might detract from your recording – such as a windy situation, or where there is a lot of background noise – use an external microphone and the appropriate software.

2. *Editing*: depending on your phone's capabilities, you can cut or otherwise edit the recordings you have made on your phone.

3. *Sending or broadcasting*: send the recording via Bluetooth, cable, or wireless Internet to another device (such as your computer), or broadcast it directly online, using web services such as Soundcloud.

2 / Potential audio format

The kinds of recordings you might make while on the road include:

A short introduction

A short interview

Recordings from an eyewitness

Today it is possible to use a smart phone equipped with the right software to compile a complete audio report – from speaking into the telephone, to mixing audio clips or interviews, to editing it and sending it for broadcast through the Internet.

Checklist:

- 1 The telephone's microphone is pointed in the direction of the source that's being recorded.
- 2 The telephone's microphone is not pointed into the wind.
- 3 Audio levels have been checked before recording.
- 4 A short test is done on the device before recording.
- 5 The microphone is close to the person speaking.
- 6 Background noises have been muted as much as possible.
- 7 Headphones have been used to check the quality of the recording.
- 8 For best results, record a few seconds of silence at either end of the recording.

Social Media for Journalists

1 / Why social media?

Social media websites like Twitter and Facebook have changed the way journalism works today.

The border between media producers and their traditional audience has blurred, and instead of a hierarchical relationship, the relationship is now more equal, with more communication and interactivity between the two. But social media is good for more than just this new dialogue. It is also changing both the way that journalists can communicate and the way they do research.

2 / As a journalist, how can I use social media?

Social media can be very useful when there is breaking news. New information can be found quickly on social media. Twitter is an excellent source – especially when people who are on the site of breaking news post information about what is happening right then and there. Often they are quicker than reporters.

Social media allows a journalist to bring together a variety of sources they trust to provide information on a chosen subject. This allows the journalist to keep up-to-date with his or her chosen subject and check sources regularly, mostly free of charge.

Social media allows a journalist to quickly and easily ask for information or opinions from a group of friends, acquaintances, or followers online. This is also known as crowdsourcing.

Social media helps journalists publish farther afield than in traditional media, and can also assist them in finding new story ideas.

3 / The five W's and one H

In the context of social media, with its many different information streams, it can be useful to apply the classic five W's and one H questions that every news story must answer.

What will add value to my story?

Who has written, filmed, recorded, or commented on this topic?

Where is the part of my piece that makes the reader sit up and take notice?

When will my audience read this story? And on which device?

Why should Internet users want to interact with my work; why would they comment on it or want to share my story with others?

How do I extract meaningful data from the online flow of information? And how do I verify the sources?

4 / Social media guidelines

As the use of social media in journalism has become more popular, some basic codes of behavior have become accepted. These include: “Think first, then post,” “Don’t tell any secrets,” and “Be good.”



Checklist:

- 1 **Be credible.**
- 2 **Add value.**
- 3 **Be relevant and current.**
- 4 **Publish regularly.**
- 5 **Be authentic.**
- 6 **Answer commentators.**
- 7 **Enter into dialogue.**

Research Using Social Media on the Internet

A lot of new information – pictures, writing and audio – comes through the various new forms of social media such as Facebook and Twitter. However, when using online social media to research a topic, it is always important to remember that the information sources are usually private citizens whose information has not been put through any system of journalistic checks and balances, and who are not required to provide high-quality information, as journalists are.

Two main principles should guide any research on online social media. These are “From Outside In” and “Deep, Not Wide.”

“From Outside In” is starting on the outside of any subject, meaning you must first check the information with neutral and trusted sources outside of social networks. Only then is it appropriate to start researching on social media – for example, interviewing those involved or even those responsible.

“Deep, Not Wide” refers to the fact that it’s possible to get sidetracked when researching topics on social media – there is so much information available that it is important to remain focused.

1 / Ask these questions when deciding whether you can trust information you found using online social media:

Is this information too good to be true?

Could the sources be fake?

Does the source publish regularly and often?

Has this picture or video clearly been tampered with or obviously edited?

2 / Ask these questions with regard to context when deciding whether you can trust information you found on social media:

How long has this account existed?

What connections (Facebook friends, Twitter followers, etc.) does this account have?

Who were the first connections? Who were the first followers?

Who has talked about this account? Are they trustworthy?

Can I contact the owner of this account personally?

Are there other online pages that will provide further information about this account?

3 / Ask these questions about technical details when deciding whether you can trust information you found on social media:

What does the website’s address look like? Is the address ending trustworthy (for example, a .com or .org, rather than something unknown)?

Can I use the Who Is tool (whois.domaintools.com) to find out who registered this website?

Can I use the Wayback Machine (archive.org/web/) to find older versions of this website?



Checklist:

- 1 What exactly is it that I want to research?
- 2 Who is communicating with whom? And why?
- 3 Is this source trustworthy?
- 4 Are there other sources I can investigate?
- 5 Can I contact this source directly?
- 6 How can I verify this source?
- 7 Can I rule out technological manipulations (such as editing, Photoshopping)?

Journalist Support Networks

The following organizations defend and promote press freedoms, independent media and democratic pluralism. They are often working in areas where journalists' lives are endangered or where, simply by reporting independently, a journalist is at risk of arrest or detention.

Each of these organizations focuses on certain areas. For example, some make themselves available to journalists needing legal advice or judicial defence, others organise workshops that help journalists stay safe in conflict areas. Others monitor press freedoms around the world, publicize any violations and mobilize against them.

The US-based Committee to Protect Journalists' Journalist Assistance Program helps journalists with a combination of financial and non-financial assistance. For example, they have established an emergency fund for journalists in danger or need and may also help with resettlement of journalists who need to emigrate. The International Federation of Journalists' Safety Fund serves a similar purpose.

Meanwhile, the International News Safety Institute, supported by a network of media organizations, provides basic safety training to journalists, with workshops on subjects like how to stay as safe as possible in a conflict zone or what to do in a hostage situation. They also promote media-military understanding and give guidance on best safety practices to media organizations.

In the courtroom, journalists may turn to the UK-based Media Legal Defence Initiative, an organisation that helps journalists and independent media outlets defend their legal rights. They provide direct assistance and also work with partners around the world to ensure that journalists are getting the best legal defence and know their rights.

Meanwhile Reporters Without Borders – possibly one of the best known media support organizations – alerts the worldwide community to violations of press freedom and also supports journalists who have been arrested or who are in danger. Recently this organization has also started to focus on freedom of digital media too. The International Freedom of Expression Exchange performs a similar role. Increasingly, there are also a number of non-profit, non-governmental organizations that focus on investigative journalism. This kind of journalism often requires a lot of long-term research and funding; it is becoming increasingly difficult for established media to pay for this kind of thing. This is why a number of not-for-profit organizations are taking on the task. They often also train reporters in investigative journalism.

Based in Amman, the organization Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism promotes investigative journalism in Arabic-speaking newsrooms. The organization produces reports and also organizes training. The UK-based Bureau of Investigative Journalism, an independent not-for-profit organization, is similar in that it is a not-for-profit producer of investigative stories. And there is also the US-based ProPublica, an independent, non-profit newsroom that specializes in investigative journalism in the public interest – in past years, work by ProPublica has won a Pulitzer Prize.

Meanwhile the Global Investigative Journalism Network is an umbrella network composed of over 70 of these kinds of media support organizations from around the world.

Besides these kinds of groups there are also organizations that support journalism in certain subcategories. For example, the World Federation of Science Journalists dedicates itself to helping journalists communicate scientific knowledge in the best possible and most practical way. One of their most recent projects is called SjCOOP – or Science journalism COOPERation – and is aimed at assisting those covering scientific subjects in Africa and the Arab world.

1 Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (ARIJ)

Web: www.arij.net

Contact: www.arij.net/en/contact

2 Bureau of Investigative Journalism

Web: www.thebureauinvestigates.com

Contact: +44 778 661 5675, e-mail: info@thebureauinvestigates.com

3 Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)

Web: www.cpj.org

Contact: +1 212 465 1004; e-mail: info@cpj.org

4 Global Investigative Journalism Network

Web: www.gijn.org

Contact: www.gijn.org/contact/

5 International Federation of Journalists

Web: www.ifj.org

Contact: +32 2 235 2202, e-mail: efj@ifj.org

6 International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX)

Web: www.ifex.org

Contact: +1 416 515 9622, e-mail: ifex@ifex.org

- 7 **International News Safety Institute**
 Web: www.newssafety.org
 Contact: +44 7766 814274, e-mail: info@newssafety.org
- 8 **International Press Institute (IPI)**
 Web: www.freemedia.at
 Contact: + 43 1 512 9011, e-mail: ipi@freemedia.at
- 9 **Media Legal Defence Initiative**
 Web: www.mediadefence.org
 Contact: +44 207 324 4760, e-mail: info@mediadefence.org
- 10 **ProPublica**
 Web: www.propublica.org
 Contact: +1 212 514 5250, e-mail: info@propublica.org
- 11 **Reporters Without Borders**
 Web: www.rsf.org
 Contact: +216 71 24 7678, e-mail: tunisie@rsf.org

Media Capacity Building and Training

Besides organizations that support and protect working journalists and media organizations, there are also a wide number of organizations who focus more on capacity building for independent, local media and on journalism training. Often these organizations are also working in conflict and post-conflict areas – for example, in a country where a dictatorship has been toppled and where, up until now, the only media has been sponsored by said dictator. That means that up until then local media has not been providing citizens with accurate information. This kind of situation will see old media disintegrate and new networks and media organizations springing up, but these new networks usually require guidance, training and assistance. These organizations also help provide safety training for journalists, assisting with publishing in a non-threatening environment or with advice or mentorship.

In the age of citizen and online journalism, many of them are also increasingly working to enhance digital media in conflict and post-conflict zones.

Most of these organisations work in cooperation with local partners. They often organize workshops or seminars and may also be called in as consultants by local media organizations. They may even work as consultants with governments on, for instance, the formulation of new media laws. Although they tend to look alike on a superficial level, each organization has a different focus. Some are more likely to run courses – these range from informal ones for citizen journalists or bloggers to formal seminars run in conjunction with universities or other institutes of study. And, as current events move on, the various bodies may work more frequently in some regions than in others. The best way to research all of this is to check their websites for information on their latest projects.

- 1 **BBC Media Action**
 Web: www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/
 Contact: +44 20 7580 4468, e-mail: www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/contact
- 2 **Deutsche Welle Academy**
 Web: www.dw.de/dw-akademie/media-development/s-12120
 Contact: +49 30 4646 8501, e-mail: dw-akademie@dw.de
- 3 **Free Press Unlimited**
 Web: www.freepressunlimited.org
 Contact: +31 20 800 0400, e-mail: info@freepressunlimited.org
- 4 **Institute for War and Peace Reporting**
 Web: www.iwpr.net
 Contact: +44 20 7831 1030, e-mail: see contact page on website.
- 5 **International Center for Journalists**
 Web: www.icfj.org
 Contact: +1 202 737 3700, e-mail: editor@icfj.org
- 6 **International Media Support**
 Web: www.i-m-s.dk
 Contact: +45 8832 7000, e-mail: ims@i-m-s.dk
- 7 **Internews**
 Web: www.internews.org
 Contact: +1 707 826 2030, e-mail: info@internews.org

8 IREX
 Web: www.irex.org
 Contact: +1 202 628 8188, e-mail: IREX@IREX.org

9 Jordan Media Institute
 Web: www.jmi.edu.jo
 Contact: +962 6 571 3304, e-mail: info@jmi.edu.jo

10 Media Academy Iraq (MAI)
 Web: www.mediaacademy-iraq.org
 Contact: +964 6622 53128, e-mail: contact@mediaacademy-iraq.org

11 Radio Nederland Training Centre
 Web: www.rntc.nl
 Contact: +31 35 672 4501, e-mail: info@rntc.nl

12 Thomson Foundation
 Web: www.thomsonfoundation.org
 Contact: +44 203 440 2440, e-mail: see contact page on website.

13 TrustMedia
 Web: www.trust.org
 Contact: +44 20 7542 7015, e-mail: see contact page on website.

14 Media in Cooperation and Transition
 Web: www.mict-international.org
 Contact: +49 (0) 30 484 93 02 0, email: see contact page on website.

Journalism Fellowships

These offer journalists at various stages of their careers everything from the opportunity to work or report from elsewhere to undertaking special training, or they may assist with funding for special media projects. Some of the initiatives or fellowships are regular, occurring one or more times every year. Others are dependent on funding and may only happen sporadically. To find out more, it is best to visit the website of the institution

involved to research this and other issues like eligibility and closing dates for applications.

Please note that these are just a few examples of the kinds of fellowships available to international journalists; it's well worth researching the subject for a more comprehensive list of opportunities.

1 The Goethe Institute
 Germany, regularly offers journalism training courses for reporters from the Middle East.
 Web: www.goethe.de; visit the Culture and Development section.
 Contact: +972 229 8192 2102, director@ramallah.goethe.org

2 International Journalists' Programmes
 This German-funded programme offers younger journalists from around the world, including the Middle East, the chance to take part in an exchange with German reporters. They work from Germany, while the Germans go to the Middle East.
 Web: www.ijp.org
 Contact: +49 40 1805 7118, e-mail: info@ijp.org

3 Knight Journalism Fellowships
 These are fellowships at Stanford University in the USA that invite journalists to the US for 10 months and offer separate programs for journalists focusing in digital media.
 Web: knight.stanford.edu*
 Contact: +1 650 723 4937, e-mail: info@kf.stanford.edu

4 Reuters Institute Fellowships
 Based in Oxford, in the UK, the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism offers a variety of fellowships to journalists working in the Middle East.
 Web: reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk*; visit the Fellowships section.
 Contact: +44 1865 611 080, e-mail: reuters.institute@politics.ox.ac.uk

**Online addresses without a "www" in front should be used like that.*

Journalism Awards

Every year, international organizations award prizes for outstanding journalism around the world. Some occur annually and have done for decades; others are less frequent. It is possible to enter some; others are chosen by committees.

For more information, it is best to research the websites mentioned. Once again, please note that these are just a few examples of the kinds of awards available to international and Arabic-speaking journalists; it's well worth researching the subject for a more comprehensive list of opportunities.

1 Arab Journalism Awards

The Arab Journalism Awards are based in the United Arab Emirates and entries are accepted from all Arab countries.
Web: www.arabjournalismaward.ae

2 Agahi Awards

This award, launched in Pakistan in 2011 to encourage excellence in local journalism, promotes responsible and balanced reporting there.
Web: www.agahiawards.com

3 ARIJ Awards

These are awards distributed by the Middle Eastern media network, Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism.
Web: www.arij.net – see awards section.

4 CPJ Press Freedom Awards

A committee from the US-based Committee to Protect Journalists chooses the award winners based on exemplary courageous reporting.
Web: www.cpj.org – see awards section.

5 Lorenzo Natali Prize

This is a prize awarded to international journalists by the European Commission working in conjunction with Reporters Without Borders.
Web: www.lorenzonaliprize.eu

6 Online Journalism Awards

These awards are run by the US-based Online News Association, a network for online media, and include a prize for non-English reporting.
Web: www.journalists.org/awards/

7 Inquirer Award

The UK-based media development consultancy, the Thomson Foundation, runs the Inquirer Award and it is open to journalists in Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Bangladesh. The stories must be aimed at an Arabic audience.
Web: www.thomsonfoundation.org

8 UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize

Chosen by an independent jury, the prize is awarded to a person or organization anywhere in the world that has made an outstanding contribution to the defence of, or promotion of, press freedom.
Web: www.unesco.org – see Communication and Information themes.

Information Sources

The following are a handful of reliable sources of national data. Of course, as you will read in this handbook, it is always best to cross check statistics and data and to ensure that it is the most up-to-date available – even if it does come from reliable sources such as those listed here.

1 The International Monetary Fund

The IMF is an organization of around 188 countries, working together to facilitate international trade and financial stability. Their website has useful and regularly updated data on many kinds of economic issues. It's possible to search these by country or to extrapolate global trends.
Web: www.imf.org

2 Eu4journalists

This website, funded by the European Commission, has information and news about the member states of the European Union and its governing bodies.
Web: www.eu4journalists.eu

- basics
- 3 UNESCO Institute for Statistics
This branch of UNESCO offers statistical data around subjects like population, health, education and culture with information from around 200 countries. It also allows journalists to compare countries.
Web: www.uis.unesco.org
 - 4 World Factbook
Information in the World Factbook is the result of decades of intelligence gathering by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the US. There is information on everything from population to geography and it is also possible to compare countries.
Web: www.cia.gov – see Publications in the Library section.
 - 5 World Bank
As part of its job in finance and development, the US-based World Bank gathers information in the countries in which it works. Its data section contains information about topics like poverty levels, the availability of drinking water and the development of small to medium sized business in a nation.
Web: data.worldbank.org*

*Online addresses without a “www” in front should be used like that.

Style Guides

Every publication has its own style guide. What is meant by “style”? The way that certain words are regularly written or used. A publication tries to ensure that certain words or phrases are always used the same way. For example, whether a publication uses American or English spelling. Or the way in which a publication prefers its journalists to write numbers: is it 10? Or ten? Is it cooperation? Or does co-operation have a dash? Professional publications have editors that ensure that everything they print conforms to a uniform, standard style. But a journalist should always do his or her best to learn and stick to the style guide, especially if he or she is on staff. While each publication has its own style, some of the most common style guides used by English-language journalists around the world can also be found online.

- 1 Associated Press
One of the most popular style guides used by American journalists; however, it must be purchased.
Web: www.apstylebook.com
- 2 The BBC
The venerable British Broadcasting Corporation provides a set of guidelines for news writing. Their style guide is available as a PDF; it is not available from the BBC themselves but a simple Internet search (on www.google.com) should locate it. The BBC also provides an excellent set of editorial, safety and ethical guidelines. Web: www.bbc.co.uk/editorialguidelines
In Arabic:
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/academy/collegeofjournalism/arabic/language>
- 3 Reuters
The international news agency has published its Journalism Handbook online; this includes information on ethics and a code of conduct as well as a detailed style guide. Web: handbook.reuters.com*
- 4 British newspapers *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph*, as well as the British magazine *The Economist*, also publish their style guides online.
Web: www.guardian.co.uk/styleguide, www.telegraph.co.uk/topics/about-us/style-book, www.economist.com/styleguide/introduction

Unofficial Arabic guides:

- 5 Al Hayat
<http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/PDF/ARB%20AR%20Style%20Guide%20-%20AlHayat.pdf>
- 6 Elaph
<http://www.alraeed.net/training/uploads/files/pdf2010-7/ktabt%20a%20a.pdf>

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