



THE JOURNO'S JOB

JOURNALISTS bring us the news. They write news reports, commentary and features stories for newspapers, magazines, electronic media, radio and television. To gather information for their story they ask questions such as why something happened, how it happened, how the situation affects people and how it is being resolved. They must make sure they have the correct facts and give both sides of the story. They gather this information in a variety of ways, through research, public records, interviews, tips, press releases and witnessing events.

Journalists perform a range of tasks depending on their workplace, experience and area of specialisation.

► **A columnist** writes a regular segment on a particular interest for example fashion, sport, gardening.

► **A feature writer** writes detailed stories on a specific topic.

► **A news reporter reports** on day to day routine, news events covering the who, what, where, when, why and how.

► **A sub-editor** reads and corrects written material so it's free from errors and conforms to the style and format of the publication. They write the headlines and arrange the layout of photographs.

► **The editor** assigns reporters and photographers to stories, decides on the content of the publication and writes an editorial column.

► **A public relations/media officer** plans, develops and writes communications to present a company or organisation to the public.

NOTE

NEWS stories aren't just about things that have happened. They need to be newsworthy. This means the story needs to be interesting enough to make people want to read it. Most newspaper articles fall into two categories.

► News articles cover the basics of current events by answering the 5

Ws and H questions.

► Feature articles are longer and more in-depth covering one subject or topic from many angles. They are typically more creative and entertaining.

HOW TO

WRITING a news story takes practice and not everyone is an expert, but if you follow these steps you should be able to create effective news items.

► Choose a news event that is important or interesting for others to know about.

► Research the topic. Be sure to choose more than one source for information to make sure it is correct.

► Start the story with a good lead – a sentence that grabs the reader's attention and makes them want to read on.

► Give the details of the event using the 'inverted pyramid' format.

► Include one or two quotes from people interviewed.

► Be objective – no personal opinions.

► Write in the third person (he, she, they and it).

► Be accurate – make sure everything written is true and people's names are spelt correctly.

► Round off the article by writing a conclusion that sums up the story.



THE PYRAMID

THIS inverted pyramid illustrates how information should be arranged or presented within the text of the news story.

INTRODUCTION

Usually no longer than 25 words. Summarises main points and introduces key points. Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

SUPPORTING FACTS

More details and quotes from sources.

LESSER FACTS

LET'S TALK

"NEWS is entertainment and entertainment is news."

The line between the two has become increasingly blurred with all forms of media often using entertainment as newsworthy stories. For example an online news publication ran an article and photos of students at a party that were obtained via Facebook. The issue was that the students were participating in underage drinking and the article and photos were used as grounds for suspending the students from school.

Is this justifiable? Did the media cross the line? Do you think the publication should have published the story and pictures? Where is the line when it comes to publishing stories and photographs of people obtained from outside sources?

Have your say. Send us your thoughts. Email nie@apnap.com.au

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

1. Find the following in the newspaper:-

► A news story and a feature story

► A by-line – the name of the reporter, noted at the beginning of the article, who wrote the story

► An editorial – written in first person ("I").

2. Select a news story from the paper.

Highlight the who, what, when, where, why and how.

Have these aspects all been covered in the article?

3. Choose your favourite headline.

Why do you like it? Does it suggest what the story will be about?

NEXT WEEK: GET ACTIVE