

JRN 2201 final exam notes 7/20/14

Sections

- About 85-95 misc questions
- About 10 vocabulary words
- About 10 questions on current events
- ... That's 105-115 questions, roughly.
- Then a story to write based on a prepared set of facts

=====

Criteria for newsworthiness (aka news values)

See p. 19 of IR.

TIPCUP:

- Timeliness
- Impact
- Proximity
- Conflict
- Unusualness
- Prominence

What constitutes conflict?

- Overcoming obstacles
- Bringing out the real issues that bother people
- Narrative: Tell some real stories that mean something to people. Let people describe their experiences that led to their conclusions — not just make comments. Write for the five senses, and give details.

Importance of the audience in making news judgments

- Proximity, in particular

Closed Stylebook (possibly):

- When not to use the state name after the name of a city
- Commas before & after state names and years
- People's titles
- College majors
- Dates
- Times
- Street addresses
- Punctuation and attribution of quotations

--Other news values influence it.

Under prominence: when to name someone in a lede (delayed ~~attribution~~ or not?)

identification

What a lede must do

- Suck 'em in.
- Give 'em a clue.
- Start with strong words.
- Don't waste words.

Lede must:

- Be specific.
- Be based on something new that's in your story.
- Tell 'em something they didn't already know.

Don't "bury" your lede.

How many words in a lede

Differences between the lede and the headline

- Verb tense
- Articles

— You must go to the BEST source. The most convenient source is not usually the best source.
You must not be timid about approaching strangers.

You can't write a news story until you've done your interviewing and research.

What's a "live" source?

— Be smart about approaching people and following up. Use phone, feet, email, text ...
Sell yourself and your story.

— Be persistent until you get in touch.

Reporter's opinion in a news story (not at the beginning, not at the end, not anywhere)

— Be resourceful: "If Mama says no, ask Grandma."

What constitutes opinion

--A value judgment -- saying something is good or bad

— It's not a good news story until it tells people something useful that they didn't already know — something that you learned from your research, something not previously published.

--An unsupported factual allegation or assumption ("Everybody knows ...")

What's attribution?

--Who said something, OR

--Where the reporter got her information

Quotations

--What they are

--Where to place

--How to attribute ("said," not "says"; not "stated"; no loaded words; no mind reading)

--How to punctuate (commas & periods, multiple paragraphs)

--Commas and periods _____ go inside quotation marks.

--Why and when to use quotes (human voice, credibility, interest, color; alternate quotes & narrative/paraphrases)

--Don't be content with drive-by quotes. Ask people to explain by describing their experiences — telling stories. ("The Mockingbird Next Door" contains drive-by quotes from Harper Lee, such as the comment that her sister Alice practices law "sweetly, quietly and lethally.")

--Follow the links on the "Course Schedule" page, Weeks 2 and 4. (I might give you a question where you're required to write the correct answer.)

Levels of attribution (aka ground rules, p. 81 of IR)

--On the record

--On background

--On deep background

--Off the record

What's a dateline?

--Where the information from a story was obtained (see "dateline

selection" in the AP Stylebook)

How do you capitalize and punctuate a dateline?

--All caps

--Long dash

AP style

--Know the basics; don't get bogged down looking up everything.

--Open-Stylebook for most of exam (use Stylebook and/or Harrower page)

--When to use state names and when not (datelines and text)

--Usage of an apostrophe (teachers union)

--Capitalization (especially of a college major and a title)

Recent changes in AP style

--website (but Web page)

--iPad

--Twitter

--tweet

--backyard

--email

--underway

--dumpster

--spelling out state names in most cases

Punctuation & grammar, especially usage of commas

--Independent vs. dependent clauses

--Comma splices

--Dangling modifiers

--Rarely use semicolons (more often in lists than between clauses)

--Singular-plural mismatch

--Subject-verb agreement:

Computers are my hobby.

My hobby is computers.

"Media" is plural, as in:

"Sarah Palin said the media are biased."

Number styles

--Usual rule: Spell out everything smaller than 10.

--25,000 but 25 million

--Exceptions include ages, dimensions (heights) and weights

--Money (\$25 million, not \$25 million dollars)

--new: numerals for all distances and dimensions

When to use hyphens

--8-year-old boy

--a boy who's 8 years old

Word usage

--between ... and (not between ... to)

--from ... to

--either ... or

--neither ... nor

--that & which

That, who, whom

10 ways to lower your grade

Preparing copy on a computer

--Don't use the tab key

--Do indent

(You'll be expected to do this correctly when you write your story for the exam.)

How to identify people in a story

--Students: name, class rank, major, hometown

--Nonstudents: city of residence, maybe occupation — whatever is relevant to the story

--Age (need date of birth)

--The general idea is that you need to give enough information to make clear why the person's information or opinion matters in the story.

--How to punctuate Jr., Sr., etc.

Story organization (p. 50 of "Inside Reporting")

--Inverted pyramid

--Kabob or focus or WSJ (lede, nut graf, body, kicker)

--Martini glass (aka hourglass -- often used for sports stories)

What's a nut graf/paragraph (p. 48, among others of IR)

By my definition, you always need one; it's either ...

--the lede, or

--one of the paragraphs 2-4

Headline is usually based on the nut graf.

Transitional words & double meanings

--While

--Then

--However (how to punctuate; "but" is better)

Sentences per paragraph

3-5 lines

Perils of adjectives & adverbs

--Vague

--Opinion

Need for description and details

--In a lede

--In the story

Objective vs. nonobjective statements

--Is it attributed? Then it's objective.

--Is it a well-enough known fact that attribution isn't required?
Then it's objective.

--Is it an observation of fact? Then it's objective. (Maegan was laughing and joking on her video.)

--Is it an opinion? Then it's nonobjective. (Maegan looked happy on her video.)

--Does it contain a loaded word (arrested for murder)? Then it's nonobjective.

--Is the attribution a loaded word like "claimed"? Then it's not objective.

Covering meetings & speeches

--Lead with the most newsworthy thing that was said or done — not with the fact that somebody held a meeting.

--Substance, not mechanics

--You don't have to report everything that happens or is discussed.

--Put the newsworthy things first; don't write chronologically.

Differences between killing and legal words

--Homicide

--Murder

--Manslaughter

Percentage increases

Percentage points

Types of stories

- Sidebar
- Brite

Sports section of Stylebook

- Sun Belt Conference

Law and ethics (Chapter 7)

- Libel
- Privacy
- Copyright (& plagiarism)

Online reporting (Chapter 8)

- How stories get updated online (new stuff at the top)
- Blogging
- Chunks, subheads, bullets, lists
- Links
- Elements of a tweet
 - headline
 - link
 - hashtag
 - username
- Aggregation (pros & cons)
- Using social media

Broadcast journalism (Chapter 9)

- Differences between writing for print/Internet and writing for broadcast (pp. 180-181)
- Radio & TV jargon (pp. 182 & 184)

Public relations (Chapter 10)

- Different loyalties for PR people and journalists
- Difference between a news release and a news story

--10 tips for writing better news releases (p. 195)

--Components of a typical news release (p. 194)

--Whether or not you should lie

What we've learned about Alabama media

—AL.com

—Montgomery Advertiser

Generally, you're responsible for ...

--Anything that you were assigned to read

--Anything we discussed in class

--Anything I marked on your papers

=====

Re final story to write:

--It's a city hall situation involving a criminal investigation. In a lot of ways, it's similar to the situation involving pastor Scruschy that we wrote about in the practice exercise.

--You'll need to make judgments on what you can use and what you can't.

--There are certain facts that you can report; others aren't well-enough pinned down. Consider:

>Sources: credible? official?

>What people say is the reason isn't always the real reason.

You report what they say, but you also report the circumstances.

>Sometimes tips can point you in the right direction, even if you can't put the info in the story.

>Some facts are put into the information sheet just to distract you. Some are placed there to help you judge sources' credibility.

--You can report what people do and say. You can't read their minds, so you don't know their motives. But you can report on circumstances that might help readers judge whether their real motives are what they said they are.

--Official public records are good sources. You can use whatever info they contain if you properly attribute it.

--Some things are safe to report because they're not defamatory. They may inform the situation.

--Just concentrate on the main story. Don't get distracted by subjects that might make a different story. If the mayor holds a press conference, this one story doesn't have to touch on everything he says.

--Ask yourself:

>What do you think is really going on here?

>What will your readers suspect is going on?

>What actual evidence can you report that will shed light on the facts and those suspicions?

Be aware of two of the oldest excuses in the book:

>I'm resigning to spend more time with my family.

>I'm resigning for health reasons.