

# Intro To Journalism Handbook

An Open Educational Resource for Journalism Students

Michael Downing, Ph.D.



A Member of The Pennsylvania Alliance for Design of Open Textbooks



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- Remix: the right to combine the original or revised content with other open content to create something new
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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael Downing has worked as a professional technical writer and journalist for many years and has taught literature and writing courses at the college level for decades. Currently, he is part of the Professional Writing Program at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania. In addition to completing this OER book project, he is also working on a collection of poetry, as well as a series of UK travel writings posted to [his blog](#).

Michael Downing, Ph.D.  
Professor of English and Professional Writing  
Adviser to The Keystone Newspaper Student  
Publishing Group  
Kutztown University of Pennsylvania



Michael Downing

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# PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

## Purpose

This book is intended as an open educational resource for beginning journalism students. It contains information on such topics as the First Amendment, 5 Ws (and H), inverted pyramid, headlines and subheads, AP and in-house style, writing and editing exercises, and guidance on strategies for covering various stories and/or events.

I have provided this book to my classes for more than ten years at low cost (via Lulu in print) or no cost (as downloadable PDF) and it has proven effective in terms of providing initial background to the field of journalism, as well as support exercises for student writers.

## Strategy

This book essentially replicates the structure of my journalism classes, which are, to be clear, writing-intensive classes. As such, it will not include detailed discussions of the history of journalism or a sustained consideration of First Amendment cases (areas unto themselves). Instead, this textbook is intended to help student writers begin working on reasonably serious, campus-level journalism assignments as quickly as possible. The shared goal is to submit stories, photos, and occasionally video to our student newspaper, The Keystone at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania. I am the advisor, so I have the opportunity to oversee dozens of projects as they move from classroom to newspaper editors to bylined publication.

It is important to note that I teach all my classes in a computer lab. I have so much tech background that the lab helps me to teach document management strategies (which my students have told me for years has helped them in all their other classes). File names, directories, shared folders, differences between Google Docs and Word...that sort of thing. If I were not in a writing lab, I would fill this space with reading and discussion.

## Open Source/OER

I've been a supporter of the open-source software movement since at least 1998, when I began writing for technology publications in the areas of computer storage, fiber optics, connectivity, chip development and, of course, software. I interviewed Linus Torvalds (inventor of the Linux kernel and open-source evangelist) in Las Vegas some 25 years ago and have been a supporter of open-source initiatives ever since. I contribute to Wikipedia annually and teach my students how to draw from and contribute to Wikimedia Commons. I have also

taught writing for more than 30 years. Therefore, when the opportunity revealed itself to me to write an OER book, I jumped at the chance.

## **Brief Note to Students**

This handbook is about output:

Preparing to write, talking to people, writing, revising, and editing.

But what about the input?

### **Two Points:**

1. To write about the world of humans, you must speak with humans.

You would agree: Writing stories—stories about the world—from the confines of your own head is no way to write about the world. Even if your job is to write about/react to social media, you should be having conversations with people, in person (Zoom counts), that relate to the topics you are writing about. Focused expertise goes a long way, plus it gives you a credible source for your story. Talking to people is the best method of putting information into your head.

2. Read and read and read.

Writing journalism articles is like painting a room, most of the hard work goes into the preparation. Read everything about your topics. Become a lover of quotes and primary documents. Talk to people. Then paint the story. As you read, the information will coalesce and that is why I will read your articles online someday...because they have perspective and are interesting. Reading makes this happen.

I do not want this introduction to go on too long so let me say, for the record, that I am absolutely delighted to participate in creating an open educational resource for journalism students around the world. I hope much is gained by many.

Sincerely,

Michael Downing, Ph. D.

Kutztown, Pa.

December 2023

## PART TWO: KEY CONCEPTS IN JOURNALISM

### The First Amendment

The field of journalism is based on The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution:

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

Notice that the language covers not only free speech and, specifically, freedom of the press, but also covers freedom of religion, the right to peaceable assemble, and the right of people to petition the government. The founders wanted to be sure that citizens had the right to voice their opinions.

I am not going to go deep here, because the impact of the First Amendment on the field of journalism—including various court cases where the limits of free speech were tested and defined—is a study in and of itself and I would definitely suggest pursuing it. However, as this book is aimed at writing, I will turn toward the Five Ws and H.

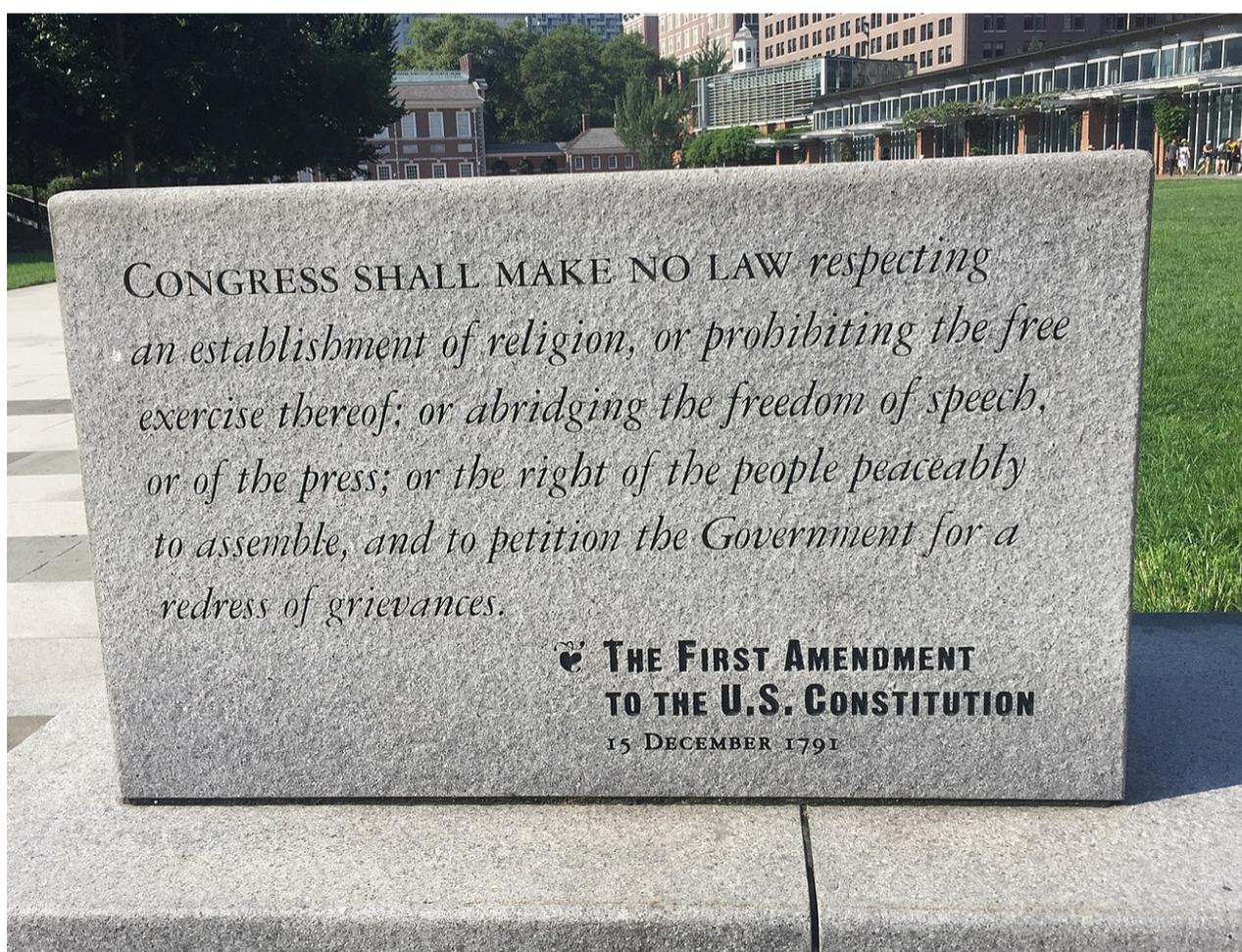


Figure 1: The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in Philadelphia. “First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution” by Zakarie Faibis is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0.

## Five Ws and the H

The starting point for most news stories is the Five Ws and H: who, what, when, where, why, and how. Occasionally on campus, I will see a flyer on one of our many poster boards and when read it, I see that it has missing information. They forgot the "where" or "what time." Should have followed the Five Ws and H.

Answer those questions, one for each paragraph (for now) and the paragraphs should begin to form. Be sure to use attribution throughout. You, as writer, are not making these statements of bringing these charges, so attribute each accordingly.

I encourage using labels, initially:

Who:

The treasurer of Springfield (made up place). Nail down all specifics. Name, including middle name(s), official title, years in office, graduate of which college (or not), positions previously held.

What:

Allegedly used public funds improperly. Work from the official statements of police and/or investigators. Quote and paraphrase those statements. Do not offer your own interpretation unless writing an opinion piece.

When:

2016-2019

Where:

Springfield (made up)

Why:

According to police investigator Edgar Smithson (made up), the money was used to fund vacations and purchase personal items, including....

How:

Over many years. Diverting money to a private account. Not maintaining accurate records. All according to a police report and the statements of an investigator. District attorney statements can also come into view as the case progresses.

Attribution:

1. Police are going to tell you that an arrest has been made and can identify the charges.
2. Investigators (either police investigators or in this case, forensic accountants) can also make official statements.
3. District attorneys typically take it from there and can provide information on court dates, additional charges, witnesses, and the like.
4. Defense attorneys will speak on behalf of their clients. In most cases, they will deny any wrongdoing, but sometimes they will talk about seeking a plea deal.

Use the information at hand to develop each of those sections and if you see gaps, ask questions. Keep asking questions until ALL QUESTIONS ARE ANSWERED. When I was coming through the ranks, I was regularly impressed by writers who were senior to me and their ability to ask question after question until they understood as many aspects of the story as possible. I worked hard to develop that skill.

The next step is to arrange those paragraphs according to the Inverted Pyramid, which is discussed below.

## **Inverted Pyramid**

The Inverted Pyramid assumes that the most important information in a news story should come at the beginning and that the importance of the information decreases as the story progresses. This is different from, let us say, a short story, where the action builds until it reaches crescendo and then dissolves, in time.

The example I provide for my classes goes like this (names are made up):

Short story style:

Title: An Unexpected Accident

Cliff Yelnats woke up in his apartment in Kutztown and had coffee and a doughnut. He then got dressed and walked down the stairs because he had errands to run. He crossed White Oak safely but then when he tried to cross Main Street, he was hit by a car. The police arrived as well as an ambulance, which took Yelnats to Reading Hospital where is listed in stable condition. According to police, the driver of the car, Cheryl Enidisinoc, was ticketed and charged with reckless driving, failure to observe traffic regulations, and failure to yield to a pedestrian in a crosswalk.

Journalism style:

Headline: Local man his by car on Main Street

Subhead: Listed in Stable Condition at Reading Hospital

Lead: Cliff Yelnats of 511 W. Walnut St. in Kutztown, Pa. was hit by a car yesterday afternoon while attempting to cross Main Street. According to police, he was taken by ambulance to Reading Hospital where he is listed in stable condition.

Police said the driver of the car, Cheryl Enidisinoc, 111 Tether Street, Springfield, Pa., was ticketed and charged with reckless driving, failure to observe traffic regulations, and failure to yield to a pedestrian in a crosswalk.

The key difference is seeing how journalistic stories “spill the bean” right off the bat.

Today’s readers depend on the Inverted Pyramid to deliver their news in a certain way. The agreement is simple: They should be able to understand the key points of any story by reading the headline, subhead, and lead. If they are interested in obtaining more details, they can read further. Otherwise, they can stop reading and move on to another story. This is called “scanning the headlines.”

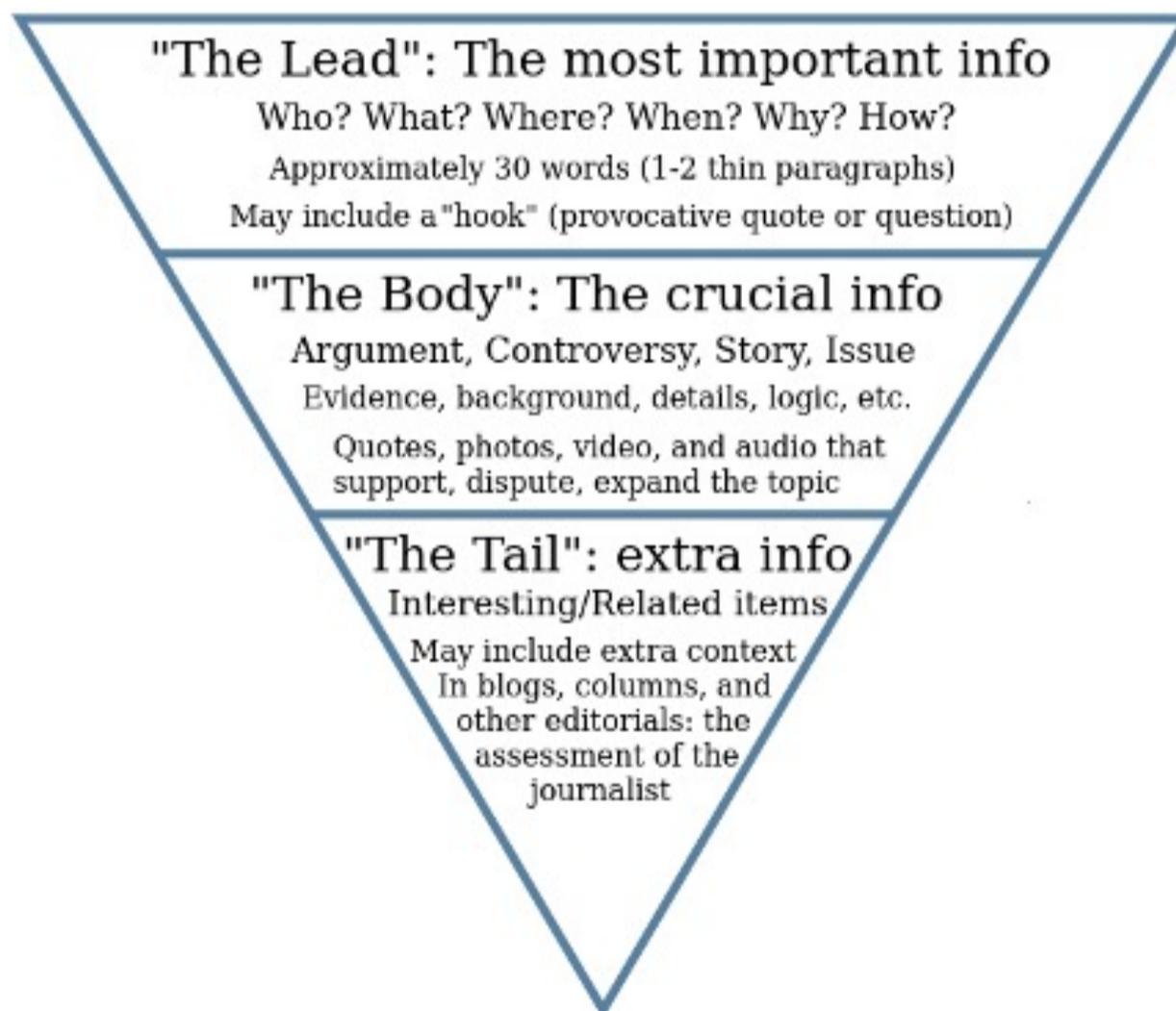


Figure 2: The Inverted Pyramid assumes that the most important information comes at the beginning of a story, with the information decreasing in importance as the story progresses. "The Inverted Pyramid in Comprehensive Form" by Christopher Schwartz is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike CC BY-SA 3.0. (Accessible Version)

In addition to delivering the news efficiently to busy readers, the inverted pyramid stems from the old days when a story literally had to be “cut” (with scissors) from the bottom in order to allow that story to fit on the page of a printed newspaper. Today’s internet offers no such space restrictions, but the inverted pyramid remains a cornerstone to journalistic-style writing.

*Student Writing Alert: Once they learn about the 5Ws and the H and the inverted pyramid, students often fall into the trap of writing dull headlines, subheads, and leads (discussion below). The secret is to read dozens of news articles online and see how the authors do it. The art is to blend factual information with imagery, interest and a good hook.*

## Headlines, Subheads, and Leads: a Writing Formula

Memorize this formula: **Headline + subhead = lead.**

Headlines and subheads come at the beginning of news stories. Please note that they are not titles, like you may have learned to write for academic papers in high school. As such, headlines must contain verbs, in **boldface**, below.

### Examples

Title: Guns in America

Headline: American President **Vetoes**  
Gun Legislation

Title: The Bible

Headline: Scholars **Find** Missing  
Chapter from The Bible

Headline and subhead combinations are not easy to write and often have to be rewritten several times. Be sure to allow enough time to develop a good headline and subhead. Ask others to read your headlines and subheads for clarity.



Figure 3: “Walther Creed” by Bruxton is licensed under [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike CC BY-SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/).

### Rules for Headlines and Subheads

Headlines should communicate the most important part of the story:

Local Man Hit by Car on Main Street

Subheads should amplify and extend headlines without repetition:

Yes: Listed in Stable Condition at Reading Hospital

No: Man Hit by Car on Main Street was taken to Reading Hospital (do not repeat any of the headline)

Let us identify verbs from actual headlines:

- Scientists *Fault* U.S. Response in Assessing Gulf Oil Spill
- Florida *Worries* About Oil Effect on Tourism
- Voter Insurrection *Turns* Mainstream, Creating New Rules

Let us look at a headline + subhead combination. Remember that subheads follow headlines and must, themselves, contain verbs:

### **Example #1**

Headline: Emmaus police officer *suspended*

Subhead: Chief *says* Nathan Bordner *was* in alcohol-related incident in North Catasauqua

Notice how the subhead provides additional, specific detail. The subhead identifies the actual name of the “police officer” mentioned in the headline. The subhead also provides attribution—who is providing this information. The subhead also provides a crucial detail: the fact that the incident was “alcohol-related.” This is the correct way to write heads and subs.

Here is an example of an ineffective headline/subhead:

Headline: Emmaus police officer suspended

Subhead: Emmaus police chief says Nathan Bordner will be suspended for incident

The subhead repeats three of the four words. Not good. Beyond that, the subhead does little to extend the information provided in the headline (other than identifying the name of the officer). This is the wrong way to do it.

### **Example #2**

Headline: *Hang up* the cell phone

Subhead: Bethlehem is 6th city in state *to ban* motorists from using devices that aren't hands-free

This is good. Note how the subhead functions. It does not repeat any of the information from the headline verbatim. Instead, it **amplifies, extends, and clarifies** the information provided in the headline.

When writing as a journalist, think about limitations, particularly limitations on time and on people’s attention spans. This will force you to recognize the

importance of making the most of every word, every phrase, and every headline. All of it should be right and tight. All of it should be clear and concise—not cluttered, repetitive, and confusing.

## Leads

The lead is the first paragraph of a news story. Sometimes called a lede, this paragraph typically connects the content to the audience and attempts to answer as many of the 5Ws and H as possible/reasonable.

Start with the formula: headline + subhead = lead. Let us see how it works with the following example.

Headline: Emmaus police officer suspended

Subhead: Chief says Nathan Bordner was in alcohol-related incident in North Catasauqua

Lead: An Emmaus police officer has been suspended because of an "alcohol-related incident" in North Catasauqua last weekend, Emmaus police Chief David Faust confirmed.

*Instructor Note: This is the place where students struggle so it is useful to bring in exercises from the internet. Find a news story with a headline, subhead, and lead, and then remove one of the elements to see how they might develop the missing element.*

*The beautiful part of the formula is that it can be deconstructed. In other words, some students are pretty good at writing leads but cannot write heads and subs. Have them deconstruct their lead. Some students can write a decent headline but cannot write the lead. Have them reach into their stories and bring up the most important information to the top.*

*It takes time and effort but the good news is—in my experience—once students have the headline, subhead, and lead in place, they are pretty good at arranging the remaining pieces.*

*Student Note: At this point, it is time to ask someone to read your work. It does not need to be a professor or an expert. Just ask a friend or a family member. Journalism should essentially be written for smart high schoolers, so most people can tell you whether your story makes sense or not, whether it is missing information, attribution, or a direct quote, or whether the information needs to be re-arranged.*

## Storytelling

Now it is time to move beyond the formulas (5Ws, Inverted P, Head+Sub=Lead) and get to the aesthetics of newswriting. Learning how to write a story based on factual information is an art unto itself and can be learned by reading the work of other writers. Much of the art is tied to providing context, which is often a struggle for beginning writers because they have not been alive that long.

My message for students, therefore, is ask everyone along the line for context. Ask the people you interview, ask your professors, ask a well-read family member:

What is the context here? What might I be missing? Is there history I need to know about?

In the above example where the man is hit by a car: Perhaps others have been hit at that intersection recently. Perhaps there is a problem with the traffic signal. Perhaps the driver was distracted--perhaps looking at her cell phone—which seems to be an increasing problem. Context.

*Student Note: For a quick lesson in writing a story from a contextual point of view, read just about any sports article. The articles will not simply report a score and statistics, with no context. Sports writing is all about context:*

*The Celtics added to their 16-game home unbeaten streak yesterday, defeating the 76ers by a score of 101-87 at TD Garden.*

*From there, it identifies the key players, coaches, and game moments.*

Now that we have established that context is important, what is the next step in telling a story? My strategy is to work toward developing a clear perspective and starting point.

Developing a clear perspective enables the reader to connect with your story. Even if you are drafting a longer story from a convicted criminal's perspective, readers can connect, watch the woeful patterns emerge, and understand how this person did what they did. Think about perspective when you read news stories online.

Combined with a clear perspective, a clear starting point hooks readers and provides enough information to keep them reading without loading too much information into the lead or withholding too much until the end.

Mastering the art of storytelling in journalism may sound difficult because it is. The good news is that there are examples all around us. Study the writing of working journalists and, in time, the skills will come.

## Libel

Libel is a written statement that is false and holds a person up to ridicule, hatred, or scorn, or damages a person's reputation, through fault.

Truth is the best defense against libel. However, truth alone is not enough. If fault can be proven, a reporter can still be held liable.

In the case of libel, "fault" has been typically defined by the courts as either reckless disregard for the truth or malice aforethought.

Definition: Libel is a written statement that is false and holds a person up to ridicule, hatred, or scorn, or damages a person's reputation, through fault.

Reckless disregard for the truth can involve not getting the other side of the story or willingly (and conveniently) ignoring critical information to create a scenario that damages a person's standing.

Malice aforethought involves situations where it can be proven that the reporter wrote the story with the express intention of damaging the reputation of the party in question. This is difficult to prove and typically requires corroborating evidence and additional witnesses.

The second defense against libel is the public person's defense. Under the Constitutional right to freedom of speech, the courts have upheld the right of the press to fair comment and criticism. The precedent has been that, if you are a public figure, you are more subject to the public opinions of people. That is why Americans can say just about anything they like about the President of the United States (whomever that might be). The same is true for celebrities because the courts would say that these people "actively sought the spotlight" and may face public commentary related to those actions.



Figure 4: "Justice scale silhouette" by HTGS is licensed under [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike CC BY-SA 4.0](#).

In contrast, private persons are better protected. If you do not seek the spotlight and suddenly find yourself subject to false ridicule in the press, you will have more options under libel law. Of course, you must then demonstrate that the things they are saying are false and potentially done with malice.

# PART THREE: FORMAT AND STYLE

## Format

Format is a quick way of providing structure to students and goes a long way toward helping them understand how to put together a journalism writing assignment. Therefore, after discussing the key concepts, we turn toward writing assignments with discussion of format, style, and consistency, along with naming and saving documents.

Let us begin with header information.

## Headline, Subhead, Section. Date, Word Count, Byline

The information below should be at the top left of the page. A professional writer would likely copy and paste that information into the header of all their active articles so as to replicate it and avoid mistakes/omissions. Work smarter, not harder.

Headline:

Subhead:

Section:

Date:

Words:

By

In the past, the practice was to **not** place such information into the header, keeping it only on page one; however, I now believe the best practice is to copy and paste the information into the actual header so that the information appears on **every page** of the document instead of just the first. Once upon a time in a paper-based world, limiting data on a page was an ongoing consideration because print costs have always been high. But digital pages are cheap, relatively speaking. As a result, headlines and subheads have increased their wordcount. File name length has also increased along with most everything else sitting on a server. So go ahead and paste it into the header so it appears on every page unless told otherwise.

Please note the formula: headline + subhead = lead. If you cannot write a headline for your story, you do not know what you're trying to say. It is recommended to bounce back and forth between the story and the head/sub/lead until all are revised appropriately and work nicely together. More on this later, but in my experience, students struggle mightily with writing headlines, subheads, and leads. However, once they figure out the formula, the remainder of the article clicks into place.

## AP Style

What is writing style? It is useful to think of it as a spectrum. On one end, it is, loosely, how the words on a page are arranged. More specifically, tone, word choice, the order of the words (syntax), quotes material all come into consideration until an assessment of "style" can be fairly elaborate, something English professors have been working at for centuries.

In journalism, publishers typically work with AP Style and in-house style, with the latter typically being amended versions of AP style rules.

The internet has led to a widespread degradation of consistency in style so there is kind of a bind here in terms of whether to even study style at all. I mean, if various websites are ignoring AP Style, why spend time on it?

In my experience, students who have learned the basics of AP Style are thankful when they move into the professional world. Yes, there are websites that ignore or are not aware of AP Style, but the internet is still governed by informational/journalistic-style writing, and AP Style is king of that domain.

AP Style also helps with structure in terms of how to use the language of journalism and in that way improves the writing, which as I understand it is the primary intention of any style manual.

### Examples of AP Style

The Associated Press is a news-gathering organization that got its start in 1846. Located in New York City, the company employs 3,700 people. Its most famous publication, the AP Stylebook, is the bible of journalists worldwide.

Here are two excerpts from the AP Stylebook, relating to numbers and abbreviations. There are many more rules that students should know, however, so student journalists should purchase and study the Stylebook.

### Numbers

Use figures for all numbers above nine; spell out all numbers under 10 (note exceptions.)

Use 21 million instead of 21,000,000.

Money: \$39 million, \$22.5 billion. Do not carry beyond two decimals.

Fractions standing alone are spelled out.

One-fourth of the students.

Insert commas with four or more figures, except in dates.

\$5,900 1,576 skateboards 1990 2001.

## Abbreviations

Ala. Fla. Md. Neb. N.D. Tenn.  
 Ariz. Ga. Mass. Nev. Okla. Vt.  
 Ark. Ill. Mich. N.H. Ore. Va.  
 Calif. Ind. Minn. N.J. Pa. Wash.  
 Colo. Kan. Miss. N.M. R.I. W.Va.  
 Conn. Ky. Mo. N.Y. S.C. Wis.  
 Del. La. Mont. N.C. S.D. Wyo.

DO NOT abbreviate Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Utah, Texas.

Abbreviate the names of months that are more than five letters when followed by a date but spell them out when referring to the month generally.

DO NOT abbreviate March, April, May, June, July.

Feb. 5 March 30 April 7 Sept. 10.

## Punctuation

Always put the period and comma inside quotation marks.

“I saw the play,” he said.

He said, “I saw the play.”

“Did you see the play?” he asked.

Should I see “King Lear”?

Use periods in lower-case abbreviations.

c.o.d. f.o.b. a.m. p.m. m.p.h. r.p.m.

Exception: 35mm.

## In-House Style

In addition to AP Style Manuals, most publishers maintain in-house style guides. Typically, they include modifications of AP Style rules relating to commas, tone, words that should not be used, use of contractions, discussions of various audiences, workflow, available resources, and the like.

The ultimate goal is to provide consistency for written material. Imagine if you were an editor who had several reporters working for you and they were submitting documents in different formats: Some in Word, some in Pages, some in Google Docs, some as PDFs. Some might be double-spaced, some not. Some might have indented paragraphs, some not. It would not take you long to develop a uniform format policy for the entire organization to facilitate workflow.

Every publishing house I have worked for has maintained an in-house style guide. They are typically composed by copy editors and proofreaders, in conjunction with publishers, editors, owners, and writers. They are designed to tackle concerns that have emerged, specifically, within that publishing house.

## Examples of In-House Style

Rules I have seen professionally:

“Sentences should be written in active voice.”

“Newsletter articles should be no longer than 500 words.”

“Sentences should be no longer than 30 words.”

“‘Usage’ is not acceptable; instead: ‘use’.”

“Use only approved images from the company database/online subscription.”

One of our rules at The Keystone Newspaper:

“All references to the university are ‘KU’; all references to the town are ‘Kutztown’.”

## Datelines

Datelines look like this:

KUTZTOWN, Pa. March 28 – University leaders met with borough council members last week to discuss...

We tend to not use these for our university newspaper because 95% of our stories are based either at the university or town (both “Kutztown”). Therefore, the datelines would not add any value. However, if one of our reporters is working remotely, they should include a dateline. This is a good example of in-house style taking precedent over AP style, because we do not typically cover national or international news (much less send a reporter to a remote location). Other campus newspapers manage this differently.

## Center the “Thirty” Mark (-30-)

The thirty-mark used to be a standard part of journalism-writing instruction. However, the internet—as it has with AP style—has watered down actual usage and expectations. In my experience, young writers who are working on their own news-based publishing projects no longer use it. I do see thirty-marks often (but not always) in press releases, though. Interesting that journalism has more or less abandoned the practice while a field that mimics the press retains it.

Here is the story: Once upon a time, when journalists typed their copy on literal typewriters, they would add notations at the tail-end of each sheet of paper. For

example, “more” would indicate more pages to come; “page 2” would indicate this was page two (with more pages to follow). Very straightforward.

To end a story, then, somebody, rather than typing “END” as one would with a script, decided to—likely with a blend of relief and emphasis at a job completed—held down the shift key and typed “XXX,” which is the roman numeral for the number 30. Following that logic, I suspect some other clever person decided to type “-30-” and there you have your “thirty” mark. It’s essentially a story-end designator, aka “tombstone,” but only present in drafts.

If you want to go by the book (and I do show my students, in case they run into someone who wants them to use it) center the -30- mark at the end of all stories.

Here is a good article on the thirty-mark from the [American Journalism Review](#): [So Why Not “-29-”?](#)

## Hit the Space Bar Once

Use one space after periods in journalistic writing. If you are in the habit of using two spaces after periods, use Find and Replace to remove extra spaces.

## Track Changes and Peer Review

If you are not familiar with the Track Changes function in Word, locate it and familiarize yourself with it. It is located under the Review tab in Word. To activate Track Changes, click the button. This will enable you to track the changes or comments that someone else makes to your work. It also allows a professor or editor to comment on your work.

*Student Note: Sometimes professor feedback can seem harsh. Do not take it personally. You are new to the field and your profs have been doing it for 20-30 years. Listen and learn and actively seek feedback. Journalism-style writing is useful, even if you do not wish to become a reporter. I sometimes get introduced as a “journalism professor” and many people—years after they graduated—have told me that they enjoyed learning about journalism and understand 5Ws and Inverted Pyramid. Useful skills that they remember many years later.*

## Word Processing Software

[Microsoft Word](#) has long been king of this space but [Google Docs](#) is steadily increasing in both functionality and popularity. I taught Word for 25 years before taking a hybrid approach where I teach both. Word remains more feature rich and occasionally I get students who become frustrated by the limitations of

GDocs (captions, in particular) and I tell them to go to Word, create what they want, and build the PDF.

*Instructor Note: During the pandemic, I began using shared Google folders for my students to submit drafts and I love it. It is a sandbox where we can review drafts and where I can show them how I might attack an assignment. The number of students in my classes that have Google accounts is near 100% so this brings the world of document management to their immediate doorstep without worrying about having to pay license fees for Word or downloading software from the university website. Final submissions must be PDF and should be submitted to Desire to Learn (or other LMS) for grading.*

## **Naming Files**

It is imperative that students learn to name and manage files properly, particularly in shared environments.

I ask students to use the following format for naming files:

Last name, first name, assignment title, time the class meets

In practice, it looks like this with underscores:

Downing\_Michael\_HardNews\_3pm

Commas can also be used:

Downing, Michael, HardNews, 3pm

Typically in the publishing world, file naming will be covered by the In-House Style Guide (typically, itself, in a shared folder on a server). At minimum, though, put last name and assignment.

## **Style, Consistency, Branding**

In addition to promoting consistency in the writing, in-house style also reinforces the identity of the publication by maintaining the “look” of the publication. Open a news website and look for consistency.

- What font are they using?
- Is the font serif or san-serif?
- Are they using Upstyle or downstyle?

Examples (study them closely until you understand):

- Serif fonts include “feet” on the letters.

- San-serif fonts have no feet.
- An Upstyle Headline Looks Like This
- A downstyle headline looks like this

Sometimes publications will blend the styles by running an upstyle headline and a downstyle subhead.

Such style is present and emphasized, not only in the pages of the publications themselves but throughout the organization. Think about the iconic look of the [New York Times logo](#). You will have to check it yourself because I tried to see if I could copy the NYTimes logo into a document just as an experiment. I was curious to see if I could identify the font, because I love that sort of thing. However, I was unable to copy it from the website. I even tried the trick where I highlighted the entire page, figuring I would delete everything else, but the code allowed me to highlight every word EXCEPT the logo. That is how protected it is.

My intention is to discuss copyright concerns in detail in the Copyright section, but since we have a fitting example at hand, let us consider the questions of whether or not I could use the NY Times logo as an example of style and branding in this textbook.

The answer is “possibly.” Let’s begin with the [NY Times Help Page](#):

10. Can I use the NYTimes.com logo on my website?

Prior permission is required from The New York Times for the use of any of our logos. To obtain permission, send us the overall URL of your site, as well as the URL of the exact page on which the logo will be displayed. In the subject line of the email, write "Use of logo." Send this information to [rights@nytimes.com](mailto:rights@nytimes.com).

I am not going to seek permission for an example that I can simply link to, but you see the point as it relates to style: The look, consistency, and ultimate branding of the written product becomes increasingly serious as we move beyond the friendly neighborhood blogger to the NY Times. Students should therefore learn the basics of AP Style and be prepared to encounter an in-house style book if hired to work as a writer.

One of the phrases I use regularly is: “Follow the models.” By this, I mean be sure to review online articles and make your work look like theirs. For example, take a look at this article on [CNN.com](#) and you’ll see that the paragraphs are short (often a single sentence), not indented, and separated by a space. Always

start by following available models and adjust accordingly, based on the needs of your employer and/or audience.

To close this section, let me just say that "simple is best" in the world of journalism. Do not use boldface, italics, or fancy fonts, unless told otherwise. Margins should be an inch to an inch and a half. Keep it simple.

# PART FOUR: OBITS, HARD NEWS, PRESS RELEASES, SPORTS, OPINIONS

## Obituaries

An obituary is a published notice of death that includes a brief biography of the deceased as well as family connections. Obits are typically written by young journalists, who are sharpening their writing skills.

### Model

Elizabeth A. Fletcher, 94, died Saturday, Feb. 2, 2008 at Sarah Reed Retirement Center in Erie, Pa. She was born on May 18, 1913 in Ripley, N.Y., the daughter of the late Joseph and Olive (Smith) Fletcher. Elizabeth attended Ripley Central School in Ripley and graduated from Jamestown Business College in Jamestown, N.Y. She worked for 35 years at Welch Foods, Inc. in Westfield, N.Y. She was a member of First United Methodist Church, Westfield. Elizabeth was active with the local quilting club, The Lady Needlers. She also enjoyed playing bridge and tending her vegetable garden. She is survived by a nephew, Robert S. Fischer, of Erie, and a dear friend, Nancy May Shimmons of Erie. Besides her parents, she was predeceased by her niece and nephew, Edgar and April Fletcher. Funeral services will be held on Saturday, Feb. 9 at 10 a.m. at the Westfield Funeral Home, 52 South Portage Street, Westfield, with the Rev. Matt Johnson of First United Methodist Church officiating. Relatives and friends are invited to call at the funeral home from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. on Saturday, prior to the funeral service. Interment will be in the Ripley Rural Cemetery, Ripley.

The following elements must be included in any obituary:

1. Name
2. Title
3. Time and place of death
4. Age
5. Funeral service
6. Burial or entombment
7. Survivors

The following should be considered and included when appropriate:

1. Cause of death
2. Extent of illness
3. Biographical material
4. Those present at time of death
5. Last words
6. Unusual circumstances

Typically, journalists complete an obituary form before writing the obit. The obit form goes into a folder with other notes and can be consulted if necessary.

I have created an [online obituary form](#) for anyone to use.

## Covering Hard News

News stories come in two basic forms: hard and soft. Hard news focuses on hard life: Fires, floods, robbery, earthquakes, war, and death. It's what you find, for the most part, in the NY Times, [Washington Post](#), [L.A. Times](#), along with the news services such as Associated Press and [Reuters](#)). Hard news most definitely makes use of the 5Ws and the H and focuses on hard facts (times, dates, people involved). Headlines for hard news look like this:

- Scientists Fault U.S. Response in Assessing Gulf Oil Spill
- Greenland's glaciers are losing more ice than scientists estimated
- Pakistan recalls envoy from Iran after 'unprovoked' missile strikes

In contrast, soft news deals with people, who are soft, myself included. As such, soft news deals with biography, background, profile, trends, interviews, etc. While facts are certainly important, the focus is on people and situations, not necessarily the often brutal events of everyday life.

Therefore, a hard news story might be "Mack Truck Closing Allentown Plant." Such a story would focus on when the operation is closing, how many people would be laid off, what the economic impact is going to be, and what efforts might be taking place to prevent such a closure. In contrast, a parallel soft news story would take a closer look at someone who worked at Mack Truck for 35 years. What are they feeling? What are the memories? What are some of personal milestones? What is the person going to do now?

Posted below is a hard news model that I wrote in my days as a technical journalist. You might not be familiar with some of the jargon, but that is okay. You should be able to recognize some of the prominent features of a hard news

story, such as a strong lead, attribution, quotations, and actionable information at the end. I also want to present an example of specialized journalism.

## **Hard News Model for Discussion**

Headline: High-Speed Backplane Initiative launched

Subhead: Work on HSBI Specification to be Completed by End of 2002

Section: News

Date: Sept.12, 2002

Words: 551

By Mike Downing, Senior Technical Editor

San Jose, Calif. (September 2000) - Think of it as a high-profile project intended to provide a mid-life bandwidth boost to backplane development. That is the wisdom driving the launch of the High Speed Backplane Initiative (HSBI). The group's purpose is to develop serial link technology capable of sending data at rates of 4.976 to 6.375 Gbits/s across a backplane up to a distance of 30 in. (including two connectors).

According to John D'Ambrosia, Manager of Semiconductor Relations for Tyco Electronics and secretary for the HSBI, the project started with companies involved with XAUI (10-Gbit Attachment Unit Interface) development.

"As XAUI work was winding down, several companies recognized the need for additional bandwidth on the backplane, especially with the emergence of fiber optics and the push for greater port densities. Nine of these companies came together to form the HSBI," D'Ambrosia said.

The companies include Agilent, Intel, Marvel, Mindspeed, Gennup, Cadence/Tality, Texas Instruments, Tyco, and Velio.

"There are also more than 20 additional companies currently acting as contributors," said D'Ambrosia, adding, "System vendors will also be invited to participate in the initiative once we have more to show them."

Shawn Rogers from Texas Instruments is senior editor for the High Speed Backplane Initiative. "We don't want to create the impression that this is a bunch of XAUI players who don't have anything else to do," he said. "We found that the market for our XAUI transceivers was predominantly in the backplane. Our customers were telling us that they need a mid-life bandwidth boost in order to develop their next-generation products and stay competitive. We thought we were going to have an easy time to this, rolling out various flavors of XAUI transceivers. But more work needs to be done."

## **SONET and/or Ethernet**

The HSBI will focus on three main application spaces: SONET, Ethernet, and a collection of people who occupy both camps but are largely data agnostic (and which might include such applications as Fibre Channel).

Rogers says the HSBI will create an interoperable solution for higher speed backplanes by addressing issues associated with electrical signaling and protocol.

Specifications will be developed that define basic I/O levels and performance levels achieved when interfacing to the backplane environment. To address multi-protocol support, the HSBI will develop specifications for 8B10B, SONET/SDH, and 64B66B encoding schemes, so that they may be carried over an HSBI link.

### **6- to 10-Gbit/S Speeds**

If the HSBI can ensure high-speed SERDES interoperability, system vendors can meet increasing backplane bandwidth demands with multi-sourced parts that meet 6- to 10-Gbit/s speeds.

Work on the HSBI specification is scheduled for completion by the end of 2002. In addition to the actual specification, an interoperability test specification will also be released, which will enable interoperability testing of different vendors' HSBI links.

According to Allan Liu of Agilent Technologies, a lot of attention recently has been focused on speeding up the port side, which is rapidly making the backplane a bottleneck in system design. "The work of the HSBI is essential to satisfy the growing demand for bandwidth," he says. "Tackling the design challenges of signaling at these higher speeds as well as guaranteeing an abundance of components are two top priorities for HSBI and will be critical in enabling the next-generation boxes."

For more information about the High Speed Backplane Initiative, visit the organization's Web site at [www.hsbi.org](http://www.hsbi.org).

-30-

## **Handling Press Releases**

Common Newsroom Task: Press Release Re-Write

### **Introduction**

A press release is a written document prepared by a business or organization for direct distribution to the media. The purpose is to provide journalists with background information on a particular topic. For example, the business in

question might be opening a new office, moving to another location, merging with another company, or laying off half its workforce.

View hundreds of press releases at [www.PRNewswire.com](http://www.PRNewswire.com).

The risk for journalists lies in the fact that press releases are not objective; they do not pretend to be. They will typically depict the companies they represent as being “the best, the brightest, and the boldest” forever and ever, amen.

Therefore, journalists: a press release should NEVER appear in your newspaper verbatim. Instead, they should:

1. be rewritten to remove biased language
2. have value added to them by incorporating
  - a. additional research and
  - b. by speaking directly with people who know about the situation

*Instructor Note: Student writers often fall into the trap of replicating PR writing in their stories so it is important to pay attention to this topic. I typically do it as an in-class exercise and not an out-of-class assignment. Use the press release below and ask students to write their own headline, subhead, lead, and one body paragraph that is free from bias. Then compare results. I typically write with them and reveal my work near the end of the discussion.*

One of the standards I use is to make sure that all written statements about a company are **quantifiable**. How many widgets were produced? What were the profits? What was the user feedback?

## **Press Release Model for Discussion**

Sheetz, Inc. Continues West Virginia Blitz, Opening Third Store in Three Months  
Huntington, WV Welcomes Awesome New Convenience Location

ALTOONA, Pa., Aug. 20 /PRNewswire/ -- Sheetz, one of America's fastest-growing family-owned and operated convenience store chains, is carrying out a plan to rapidly develop a new market for its convenience stores in Southern West Virginia with the opening of another excellent location today at 432 Eighteenth Street West in Huntington. This is the third opening in that area since June 2009 for Sheetz, the first two being brand-new stores in nearby Barboursville and Milton.

"We can't be more pleased with how well received our stores have been this summer," said Stan Sheetz, president and CEO, Sheetz, Inc. "Customers are

excited and enjoying what we offer, and we've been fortunate to have hired some great West Virginians who work hard and really make a difference for us."

Doors officially open to customers this morning, and employees will host a grand opening celebration with a ribbon-cutting ceremony later this afternoon at 3:00 p.m. Customers and all media are welcome to attend.

The 5,000-square-foot facility will offer fresh food items like the MTGo! and Shweetz Bakery lines of sandwiches, wraps, donuts, and muffins, along with the signature MTO(R) line of Angus beef burgers, premium grilled chicken sandwiches, freshly made salads, French fries, onion rings, and more.

Sheetz Bros. Coffeez, a full-service espresso and smoothie bar staffed by a trained barista, will be available at the new store. "Customers can order hand-made specialty coffee drinks, including lattes, cappuccinos, and mochas—hot, frozen, or iced" ("Sheetz Opens New Store in McGee's Crossroads, North Carolina and ...").

Sheetz also offers premium brewed, self-serve coffees made from 100 percent Arabica beans in a variety of flavors such as Breakfast Blend, Serious Dark Roast, 100 percent Colombian, and Hazelnut.

"Sheetz has a legacy of innovation, customer focus, and employee development," Mr. Sheetz said. "The company's mission today is on meeting the needs of customers on the go by providing fast and friendly service, quality products in clean and convenient locations."

Sheetz is also proud of its tradition of giving back to the communities in which it operates. Especially important to the organization is finding ways to be involved with today's young people. As part of today's celebration, the company will donate to the Boys and Girls Club of Huntington.

Established in 1952 in Altoona, Pennsylvania, Sheetz, Inc. is one of America's fastest-growing family-owned and operated convenience store chains, with more than \$4.9 billion in revenue for 2008 and more than 12,000 employees. The company operates more than 350 convenience locations throughout Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland, Virginia, Ohio, and North Carolina. Sheetz provides an award-winning menu of MTO(R) subs, sandwiches, and salads, which are ordered through unique touch-screen order point terminals. Sheetz currently ranks 82nd on the Forbes list of largest private companies and has ranked for seven consecutive years on the list of Best Places to Work in Pennsylvania. All Sheetz convenience stores are open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. For more information, visit [www.sheetz.com](http://www.sheetz.com).

## Covering Sports

Like news stories, sports stories come in two basic forms: hard sports and soft sports. Similar to news, hard sports stories present the hard outcomes of athletic competitions: scores, statistics, outstanding performances and—of course—context. Heads, subs, and leads play a major role in providing a running narrative, telling readers how the recent game fits into the history of the team:

Headline: Phillies Win Fifth in a Row

Subhead: Alvarado notches ninth win of the season

Headline: Steelers Defeat Cowboys in Super Bowl X, 21-17

Lynn Swann catches four passes for 161 yards; wins MVP

In contrast, soft sports—same as soft news—is concerned with people, feelings, and perspectives of various athletes, coaches, owners, and fans.

Let us take the example of Tom Brady, who retired from professional football not that long ago:

Hard sports headline: After 23 Years, Tom Brady Announces Retirement

Soft sports headline: Fans, coaches, fellow players react to Brady's retirement

The factual/contractual/legal subjects are hard; reactions, thoughts, shared memories are soft.

Other sports writing tips:

Know the context. We have talked about this, so I will be brief. A sportswriter who does not know the big picture is pretty much useless. Read, listen to podcasts, watch ESPN and videos on YouTube—study until you are filled with deep knowledge of the situation and the words of the participants.

Research constantly. Do not write confidently about a topic unless you have confirmed/verified the information, either by simple internet research (basic fact checking) or by talking to human beings (writers who only use the internet will never be as good as writers who talk to people all day).

Talk to people. See above. Talking to people puts you in the rhetorical mix and sets you on fire with information that burns to hit the page. People will challenge your assumptions and set you straight on facts and perspectives, something you cannot get from reading the internet in the comfort of your own mind.

Write concisely. Part of the charm of good sports reporting is to match the muscularity of athletes with muscularity in the writing. Make every word count

and avoid repetition. Make me feel as though I am part of the action—or part of the conversation that follows.

Use quotes. Talk to players and coaches. Quotes help to fill out your article.

Check your facts. Sporting events usually generate a lot of statistics. They can also be very fast paced, involve many different players, and follow rules you might need to double-check if you are going to reference them. A clean, concise sports article will have its facts straight.

Give the major play by play. Obviously, there are hundreds of plays in any match or game, and no article will include them all. Your job as a reporter is to report the basic chronology—the beginning, middle, and end of the sports event—with details about the major moments, turning points, big plays, big mistakes, momentum-builders. In other words, you are providing something of a verbal highlight reel. Pay careful attention to who does what—and at what point—during the event. Then figure out which moments to include and which to leave out. You have the advantage of hindsight when putting these events together: "That hit turned out to be the fatal blow..."

Five types of sports leads:

1. anecdote
2. direct quote
3. personal performance
4. profile
5. outstanding element

An anecdotal lead makes use of a story-type introduction:

- A year ago on this date, Sidney Crosby said, "I may never play again." Penguin fans are happy he was wrong as he led the team to another Stanley Cup...

Direct quote means begin with a quote:

- "They beat the heck out of us," is all Coach Brown had to say as the Cougars lost their tenth straight....

Personal performance focuses on an individual:

- Barry Bonds' quest for a second consecutive MVP trophy took another dramatic step forward last night...

A profile lead for sports writing is like a feature lead with a sports slant, often in magazine style:

- Rob Thomson’s fiery temper on the field provides a sharp contrast to his demeanor off the field...

An outstanding element lead focuses on one element that may have decided the outcome:

- If there is one skill that lifts the Boston Celtics above most of their competition, it is their passing and that was on display last night at TD Garden...

Communicate with your editor. They will keep you on track. Ask lots of questions.

*Student Note: If you have an assignment to cover a live sporting event, be aware that you will not be able to write a summary of every single play. Focus, instead, on providing a summary of major events, along with ongoing context. Take baseball, where the action is not as busy as let us say basketball or hockey, so it is a bit easier to explain. I would locate a roster online and begin to identify the important players: Pitchers are important...people who get on base...people who score runs. I know I am breaking it down but I get lots of students who—even though they might have written a news article in high school—have never written a sports story, so I assume no experience. And sports writing is difficult; it is a whole other language. Always useful to read articles on baseball before covering a baseball game.*

## Sports Model for Discussion

Headline: Kutztown Men’s Baseball Defeats

Shippensburg

Subhead: Big Fifth Inning Takes Team to Victory

Section: Sports

Date: March 28, 2010

Words: 275

By Mike Downing

The Kutztown men’s baseball team continued its winning streak to five games, scoring eleven runs in the fifth inning on Saturday to defeat the Red Raiders of Shippensburg University by a final score of 12-4.

The game featured strong hitting performances



Figure 5: “Cutout baseball texture” by [DanDectis](#) is licensed under [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

by Kutztown's Paul Grmac and Pete Servas.

Initially, Shippensburg jumped out to an early 3-0 lead with a walk and three singles in the third inning. Couster, Persot, and Reel scored for the Red Raiders.

Kutztown began the fifth inning with back-to-back walks to left fielder Ryan Jones and shortstop Jeff Conway. Cleanup hitter Paul Grmac was up next, and he hit a colossal home run to deep center field to tie the score, 3-3.

Then the floodgates opened. Yanoulis and Wedman singled for Kutztown, and Carlton doubled, driving in both runners, making the score 5-3. Servas then homered, making the score 7-3.

The Shippensburg pitcher, senior Freddy Glass, was taken out of the game and replaced by junior Mark Latrobe. But it didn't help.

Latrobe hit Kutztown's second baseman Carlos Ramirez with a pitch. Then Ramirez stole second and was driven in by Wallace, who doubled to left field.

With the score 8-3, Kutztown right fielder Phillipe Montoya singled. Byron Cox and Gary Snyder both walked for Kutztown, loading the bases for center fielder Max Kant. On a 3-2 pitch, Kant smashed a towering home run to deep left field, making the score 12-3.

Shippensburg scored one run in the bottom of the seventh on a single by Tom Vernon, followed by a double by Larry Smyth.

After Shippensburg scored, Kutztown senior reliever Paulo Ruiz entered the game and held Shippensburg scoreless.

-30-

*[Editor's note: The above game never happened, and the names are all fictitious.]*

## **Writing an Opinion/Editorial Piece**

Opinion pieces—sometimes called “op/eds” are common in journalism and essentially reflect the perspective—or opinion—of the writer. They can be editorials from an editorial board, columns, written regularly by an individual, or letters to the editor, written by readers. For the purposes of Keystone newspaper, we clearly label opinion pieces to indicate that the writer is not simply transparently passing knowledge as they would with a normal news story but is instead presenting a perspective on a particular topic.

In terms of structure, I provide this rubric:

1. Try to write an initial headline/subhead. It does not matter if it is no good...just write something as placeholder text. Then begin the writing process and return to the head/sub as you write. It will begin to take shape and then, in return, help you to shape your article.  
The Climate Crisis Has Already Arrived
2. Summarize the facts of the matter in 125-150 words to provide context for the reader.  
"2023 was the hottest year on record." Provide sources.
3. Make your position clear with a single "nut" sentence or short paragraph.  
"Global warming is not an event that is going to happen 'in the future.' It is already here..."
4. Address contrary positions.  
"Some might say that Earth's climate has fluctuated throughout history, and this is much ado about nothing. However, they ignore the fact that 36.82 billion metric tons of carbon are pumped into the atmosphere each and every year."
5. Drive home your position with several concrete examples.  
Do your research: Canadian wildfires, flooding in Boston, severe weather events. Find information to support your position.
6. Return to the headline and subhead. Match what you have written below.  
Be sure to reach into your writing for the language and not try to pull something out of mid-air.

## Opinion Model for Discussion

Headline: Understanding the impact of IPv6

Subhead: Need for additional addresses prompting the inevitable upgrade

Section: Opinion

Date: September 2002

Words: 613

By Mike Downing, Senior Editor

NASHUA, N.H., Sept. 2002 - If you don't mind, I'd like to distract our collective attention away from our diminishing retirement portfolios to talk about an important technology that's rising like the sun from the east. The technology is IPv6.

As you probably know, IPv4 is the current standard for Internet protocol (IP). And while it has led the way to fantastic Internet growth, there are limitations. One of the most visible problems involves security. IPv4 is simply not as secure

as we would like it to be, so we've had to invent all kinds of silicon and software add-ons in order to provide some degree of security to the global network.

IPv6 is different. It was designed from the outset with security in mind, so it will offer the security functionality that is sorely missing from IPv4.

IPv6 provides:

- A virtually unlimited number of IP addresses
- Unique addresses for all devices connected to networks
- Extended IP addresses, from the current 32 bits to 128 bits
- Enhanced authentication and security
- Higher trust and penetration
- Base for 3G mobile data standards
- Countless end nodes expected with always-on connectivity
- Multimedia subsystem specified to run over IPv6
- Auto-configuration of IP addresses for better "plug-and-play"
- Makes adoption attractive
- Quality of Service provisions

The limited number of addresses available for IPv4 (currently estimated at approximately four billion) is magnified when you consider the fact that heavily populated countries like China are jumping en masse into the Internet pool. There are simply not enough IP addresses available worldwide under IPv4, and the United States owns—relatively speaking—the lion's share. In fact, someone in the field recently told me (anecdotally) that Stanford University has more IP addresses than the entire country of China.

That's impressive.

Thankfully, instead of forcing The Cardinal to relinquish IP addresses, we can turn to IPv6. IPv6 will include the ability to provide a virtually unlimited number of user addresses for networks and systems connected to the Internet.

There is also an auto-configuration mechanism built into IPv6 that will enable customers to connect any device to the Internet without having to configure complicated network parameters. The new protocol will also enable internet traffic that requires support for varying Qualities of Service. This will facilitate a mix of voice, video, and data communications.

Good stuff.

In addition, IPv6 is designed for use in 3G wireless applications. With the proliferation of globally routable IP-aware devices, such as cell phones, video-game consoles, and PDAs (combined with the increasing demand for wireless Web access), migration to IPv6 is becoming a necessity as we transition to 3G wireless.

In addition to providing additional IP addresses by increasing the address space from 32 to 128 bits, IPv6 also adds improvements in areas such as routing and network auto-configuration. IPv6 is expected to gradually replace IPv4, with the two coexisting for a number of years during a transition period.

Today, the light of IPv6 is shining in Japan and the Asia-Pacific region, where IP addresses are in short supply. It will also take hold in Europe before it reaches the United States and Canada. Eventually, networking systems worldwide will have to deal with the new protocol. This means that IPv6 will lead not only to the deployment of IPv6-compatible boxes for new implementations overseas, but it will eventually lead to the replacement of IPv4 boxes here in the U.S. that can't migrate to IPv6. There likely will also be bridge devices that link IPv4 with IPv6.

So, in addition to the current projects you're thinking about, you can start thinking about IPv6. Hopefully, the transition to the new protocol will bring new light and purpose to our battered industry.

# PART FIVE: CHECKLISTS FOR COVERING VARIOUS STORIES

## Speeches Checklist

- Research the speaker. Visit the web and find bio. Visit the library and seek assistance from professionals. See if the speaker is published. Check past issues of your newspaper for related information. Schedule an interview with the speaker before or after if possible.
- Verify exactly when and where the speech is to be delivered. Get there early. Review your questions. Be sure pens, pencils, recording devices are working and are charged.
- If this is a regular beat, write a pre-story so that readers know what is coming.
- Prepare questions carefully. Check with your editor to see if they have questions.
- Get a good seat near the front. If online, make sure your camera and microphone is working and that you have the correct link.
- Recording is useful—but be sure to not let the fact that you are recording allow your brain to wander. Stay focused. It is better to be a good listener than to depend on a tape recorder.
- Take accurate notes. Remember to write down several direct quotes. Place question marks next to quotes you have questions or are uncertain about.
- Look for handouts/flyers.
- Remember that the speech itself is only half of the process. Most speakers will field questions from the floor. As questions begin, be sure to listen carefully to both the questions and answers. Continue to take appropriate notes. Ask your own questions. Many times, the big story erupts AFTER the speech, during the Q&A, so pay attention.
- The lead for your speech story will manifest itself near the end of the speech as the dynamics build—when speakers will emphasize their point(s). Do not daydream near the end.
- If the speaker has been involved in some controversy, chances are good that there will be questions pertaining to that controversy. If the Q&A has a greater impact on your readers than the speech itself, then your lead

should be fashioned accordingly. You can also write both stories; check with your editor and be ready to pitch both options.

- As you write, be sure you do not retell the speech in chronological order. Instead, focus on what most affects your readers; then develop a lead and arrange the details around that.

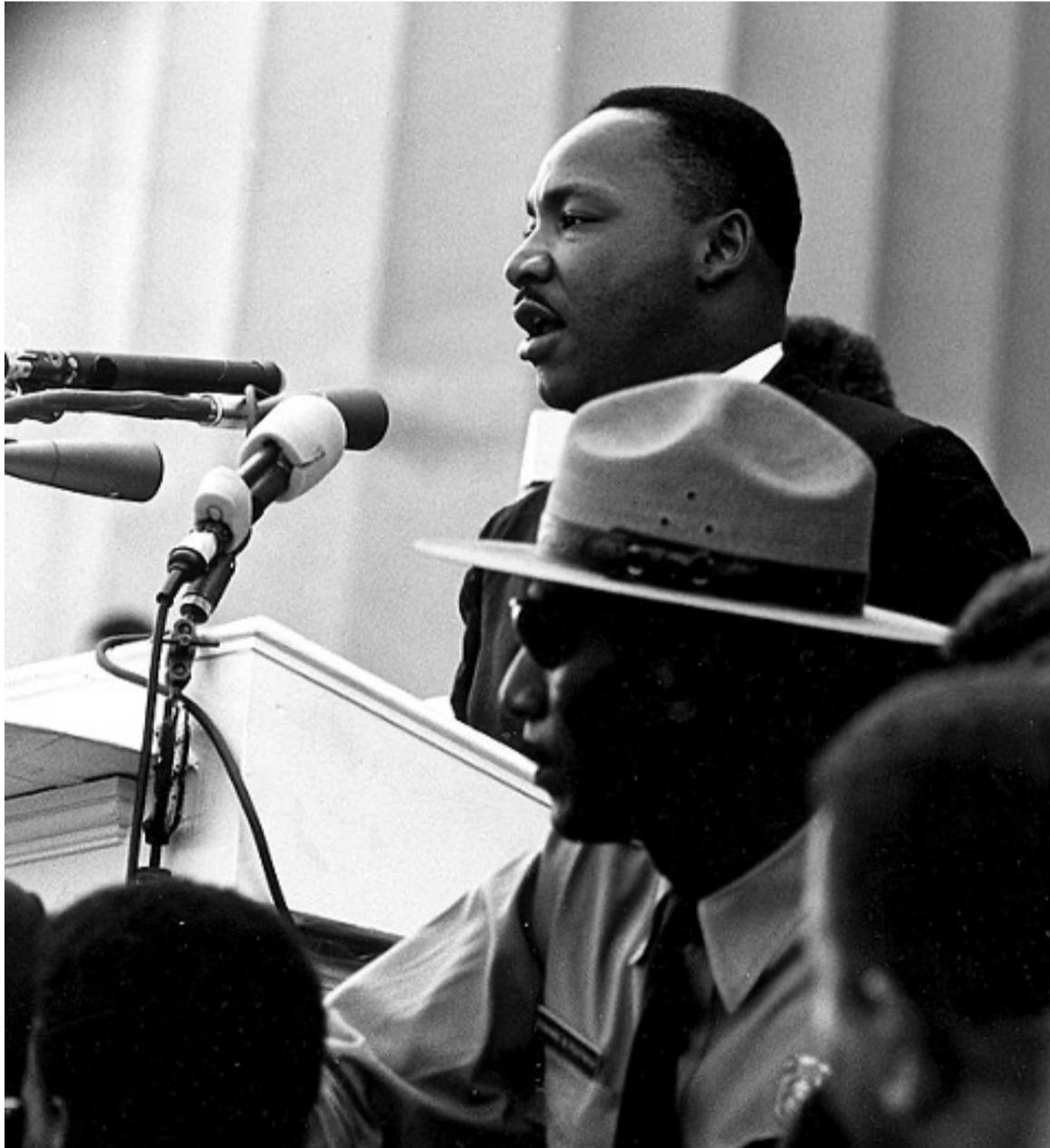


Figure 6: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. giving his "I Have a Dream" speech during the March on Washington in Washington, D.C., on 28 August 1963. "[Martin Luther King - March on Washington](#)" by [Rowland Scherman](#) is in the [Public Domain](#), via [Wikimedia Commons](#).

## Spot News Checklist

Journalists occasionally come across news stories in their daily lives. This is called "spot" news. For example, I was checking out a new, Keith Haring outdoor workout facility on campus recently when I saw a Sports Management professor providing instruction to a couple of students. I said hello, and he kicked into full gear, telling me all about the facility and future plans to involve students and software that was available online via a QR code posted to one of the structures. I asked him if I could record and he said yes. Here is the story I wrote.

## Checklist

- As you move through your daily life, be alert as to what is going on around you. If you encounter an event which might be newsworthy, either cover it yourself or immediately contact your editor so that they can make the appropriate writing/photo assignments.
- If you cover it yourself, be sure to speak with as many people as possible at the scene. This will enable you to develop a good idea of exactly what has occurred. Speak with any officials who might be on the scene; be sure to quote them accurately and get contact information.
- Note: You may deny ANYONE access to your notes, but it is a good idea to check your quotes by reading those specific words back to the person who spoke to you at the scene. After you have double-checked, place your initials next to the quote. You are now certain that this quote is "safe."
- When confirming information, do not be worried if it takes time. This is newsgathering and it takes time, just like raking leaves. Tell the people who talk to you that you are thankful for their patience, but you want to get the details right. They will understand and if they have to go, they have to go. Do not waste time gathering inaccurate information.
- Do not be disappointed if police/firefighters/paramedics are not able to provide much information during a spot news situation. They will be involved in the rescue. Talk with them if you can, but do not get in their way. Instead, locate any eyewitnesses and get their stories. The police report of the incident will be available at the local police department within a few days; call and ask them how you might obtain a copy.
- When at the scene, keep your eyes and ears open. Other developments may occur. Be aware—for your own safety but also to increase the chances that you will not miss anything.
- Look for details and describe images. Look at and describe faces and body language.

## Meetings Checklist

- Research the group. Find the website. Ask your editor or other reporters (who may have covered the group in the past) for names, tips, and guidance.

- Prior to the meeting, call a representative of the group, and ask them for a roster. Be sure you know which members serve as officers. See if you can get an agenda.
- Verify exactly WHEN and WHERE the meeting is to occur.
- If this is a regular beat, write a pre-story so that your readers will know the specific details surrounding the meeting.
- Concentrate on taking notes. Meetings are often confusing. The more notes you have, the more it will help you draft the story later.
- Draw a diagram that reflects how the group members are positioned. This may help you later. Label the diagram carefully.
- If non-members address the group, be sure to get their names and record their statements.
- If you cannot hear the person's name, do not ask a fellow reporter, unless they are good friends. While 99 out of 100 reporters are honest and willing to share information, there are some that would get a big kick out of providing misinformation and then seeing it in print the next day with your byline. Confirm everything yourself. Track people down after the meeting or follow up by email.
- Mark any questions you may have and be quick about getting them answered. When meetings adjourn, members usually depart quickly. Be direct and carry yourself professionally. Stop them and ask them your questions in a courteous but straightforward fashion.
- You may need clarification on certain points later that evening. Be sure you have a person (the secretary or press rep) to contact on a particular phone at a particular hour.
- Consider your lead as the meeting evolves. Remember your readers.
- Be sure to communicate with your editor.
- Do not re-hash the meeting in chronological order. Instead, focus upon what most affects your readers; then develop a lead and arrange the details around your lead.
- Be descriptive. Indicate the group's attitude, the audience's attitude, any unusual conditions, etc.

## Investigative Checklist



Figure 7: "Diagram 2- Investigative psychology cycle" by U3204463 is licensed under [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike CC BY-SA 4.0](#) via [Wikimedia Commons](#).

- Begin with careful research. Read carefully about persons/places/things. Get your hands on contracts, deeds, and other legal documents at the courthouse. Manage your files and folders well. Know the history and the people involved.
- Work closely with your editor. They will have useful feedback.
- Expect your story to be scrutinized. Develop a thick skin.
- Educate yourself on the law as it relates to sunshine laws and other records access.
- Be open-minded. Let the facts of the story guide you. If you enter the assignment with a preconceived personal agenda, your story will either fail (because you will subconsciously omit facts), or you will lose credibility because the tone of your story will indicate that you are more concerned with an agenda than with factual reportage.
- Keep a narrow focus. All your information should pertain directly to your major point(s). Do not stray onto points and suppositions which you cannot back up because that's where people will start when they begin pulling apart your story.

- Audio and video are very useful when doing investigative reporting. Always test your equipment and figure out a storage method so you can access your material in the future. Most publishers provide such tech support but if you are working freelance, you will have to figure out your own storage news with backup.
- Be sure to get both sides of the story. If you receive a press release containing certain information from, let us say, the local steelworkers' union concerning the strike, be sure to contact the employer for a response. Do not write one-sided stories.

## Features Checklist

- The focus should be on people. What they do; where they are from; how they cook, sew, farm, sleep, work, diet, drive, write, live and die.
- Styles vary in terms of putting a features article together. The best advice, as always, is to check out as many models as possible.
- Pointers
  - Begin with a direct quote to set the stage.
  - Begin with an anecdote for context and to bring the reader into the story.
  - As the narrative develops, continue to make use of quotes and personal stories, using your own voice to maintain the flow.
  - Feature writing, as with literary writing, is effective when circular. This means that the end should eventually relate to the beginning. Find an interesting thread that can be developed throughout your piece. This is called the narrative "throughline."
  - Your ending, then, will tie the end of the thread back to the beginning. If you are doing a story about a famous person, you might begin with a quote that says "We never thought she would amount to much..." As you continue to recount her accomplishments, you can occasionally refer to that statement. As you reach your conclusion, you can quote an updated perspective: "She is one of the most influential writers in the world today..."
  - Multiple sources are a must.
  - Research is also a must. Read, read, read.

## PART SIX: THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON JOURNALISM

Social media has dramatically changed the world of journalism. An industry that used to involve paper and ink has been translated onto digital screens. Today, people get their news from Facebook(!) and X (which we must now forever re-identify as “previously Twitter”), and more recently, TikTok. Students interested in the field of journalism must understand how to leverage social media to access the widest and most precise audience.

### Speed

Instant dissemination allows journalists to post stories in real-time, often bypassing traditional gatekeepers. Events can be broadcast as they happen. This immediacy is valuable, particularly in crisis situations, allowing for rapid communication of vital information to a global audience.

However, speed can lead to errors and misjudgments. I see typos regularly, including duplicated words, and occasionally sentences that do not make sense. The lure of speed also pushes writers to publish their work without including a second set of eyes, a very dangerous practice. Even freelance writers who often work alone need to have an editor to catch errors and provide feedback.



Figure 8: “[Social media addiction](#)” by [Doctorxgc](#) is licensed under [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike CC BY-SA 4.0](#) via [Wikimedia Commons](#).

### Research

Social media certainly offers tons of background information and potential leads for journalists. Since so many people are connected online, social media platforms enable the rapid collection of eyewitness accounts, photos, and videos. Social media also provides a direct channel for journalists to interact with their audience and receive direct feedback. In addition, as time goes by, it is clear that the internet will increasingly serve as a historical archive, so that events in the past can be investigated in significant detail.

## Engagement

Once upon a time, if a young writer wanted to reach an audience, they would have to land a job at the local newspaper, which controlled distribution. These days, a writer can set up a blog and begin writing, and although gatekeepers still exist, it is much easier to break through to an audience in 2024 than in 1964.

Engagement is key, as social media allows for the immediate exchange of ideas, opinions, and information, which can enhance public discourse and shape public opinion.

Social media can also play a role in holding institutions and individuals accountable. Investigative journalists often use these platforms to publish their findings, gaining public attention and support that can lead to meaningful change. The viral nature of social media can turn a well-researched story into a global movement, leading to increased transparency and scrutiny of people in power.

## Challenges

While social media has brought numerous benefits to journalism, it also presents significant challenges. One of the most prominent issues is the spread of misinformation and fake news. The rapid sharing of unverified information can lead to the dissemination of false narratives, damaging public trust in journalism. Deep fakes are also on the rise. Therefore, journalists must navigate a landscape where disinformation and sensationalism often gain more attention than accurate reporting.

Another challenge is the erosion of traditional business models for journalism. Social media platforms, with their vast user bases, have captured a significant share of the advertising market, diverting revenue away from traditional news outlets. This financial strain can hinder the ability of news organizations to invest in high-quality, investigative journalism.

## Algorithms

Social media platforms employ complex algorithms that curate user content based on their interests and past interactions. While this can enhance user experience, it also creates echo chambers, where individuals are exposed primarily to information that aligns with their existing beliefs. This phenomenon can reinforce confirmation bias and hinder the diversity of perspectives encountered by users, which, in turn, affects the way news is consumed and understood.

## The Future

There is no going back. Emerging journalists are going to need to learn how to leverage social media platforms in order to disseminate information to the widest possible audience.

To ensure the continued value of journalism in the social media era, it is crucial that journalists uphold rigorous standards of accuracy and integrity, meaning they should be extremely careful to not publish articles prematurely before all facts are in. In addition, media literacy education can help the public discern credible sources from unreliable ones. Furthermore, social media platforms must play an active role in combating the spread of misinformation and supporting quality journalism.

Ultimately, the partnership between journalism and social media is a dynamic one, with the potential to both strengthen democracy and pose risks to it. By recognizing these dynamics and working collectively to address the challenges, society can harness the power of both journalism and social media to promote informed citizenship and uphold the principles of a free and vibrant press.

## Understand the Social Media Expectations & Policies of Your Organization

There is no singular rule relating to using social media as a journalist, but a couple of points can be made. First, be sure to understand the policies of your organization relating to using social media as a source of information. The New York Times, for example, rarely bases stories on social media conversations, preferring in-depth research and direct contact with sources.

Second, try to understand for your own purposes how you plan to use social media. While “journalists” certainly do use social media as a basis for quick-turnaround news stories, there are certainly credibility issues related to using a random tweetstorm as the basis for your news gathering. In addition, if you really believe that you will get the best and most insightful information from a bunch of tweets, you are not understanding what it takes to truly cultivate source relationships.

In these ways, social media is a double-edged sword: While it is certainly useful in reaching a large audience and pulling in a great deal of information through a single app, do not neglect the need to make contacts in the fields you cover and use those contacts to build your stories.

## **PART SEVEN: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND JOURNALISM**

I maintain a blog that features my own writing, and I have written two posts related to AI. Keep in mind that they are snapshots—and in a world that is propelling AI forward based on the potential for huge profits—the specifics are subject to change rapidly. Still, I think that my explorations from Fall 2023 are useful in kickstarting this conversation.

Keep in mind that I am primarily focused on language-generating intelligence, which can be understood as more of a language aggregator than actual artificial intelligence, but clearly the two are related.

If you are interested in reading the entire blog posts, here at the links:

- Post One: [Initial Thoughts on ChatGPT from a Writing Professor](#)
- Post Two: [Continued Thoughts on ChatGPT and AI in General](#)

If you are interested in reading excerpts, I have posted them below.

### **Blog Excerpt One: my Writing Background as It Relates to AI**

“I’ve been teaching writing for more than 30 years at various schools in Pennsylvania. I’ve also worked as a professional technical writer and technical journalist. I’ve written quite a bit about open-source software initiatives and at one point had the honor to interview open-source guru Linus Torvalds at a trade show. These areas of technology and writing pedagogy converge for me when developments like Chat GPT hit the market.”

### **Blog Excerpt Two: Playing in the Chat GPT Sandbox**

“The information that ChatGPT can access is limited, so results are limited, at least at this point. From what I can see, a lot of it has to do with timeliness. For example, if writing about Edgar Allen Poe, ChatGPT would be able to access quite a bit of ‘hardened’ information and provide a Wikipedia-style essay, based upon essential bio and consensus critical opinion.

“Journalism, however, is entirely different. When I asked it to create a current news story on the Boston Celtics, it was pretty much useless. It confidently talked about players who were no longer with the team and the stats were wrong.

“The key takeaway at this point is that ChatGPT can generate a lot of factual information but, as far as I can tell, zero insight.

“That said, science will continue to create disruptive technologies and academics should lead the way in explaining, problematizing, and teaching those technologies. We ignore them at our own peril.”

## **Blog Excerpt Three: Assistance to Writers Is Not a New Thing**

“Before we discount assistance provided to writers throughout the course of history, let’s acknowledge how great writers have had their own share of support (typically human women): John Steinbeck’s first wife, Carol Henning, typed up all of his manuscripts, fixing errors as she went. Stephen King’s assistant is Marsha DeFilippo, Catherine Asaro’s assistant is Kate Dolan, Neil Gaiman’s assistant is Lorraine Garland, Nancy Holder’s assistant is Erin Underwood, and Charlaine Harris’s assistant is Paula Woldan. The point here is that all writers have help. In today’s world, that help increasingly takes the form of AI. I know it’s not apples to apples but I’m trying to crush the idea that ‘great writers’ were doing it all by themselves.”

## **Blog Excerpt Four: Silicon Becoming Sentient**

“I used to travel to San Jose regularly to cover the tech sector. One day a software engineer told me over a doughnut that there was a growing recognition that silicon (aka “silicate materials”)—the second-most frequently occurring element on Earth (after oxygen)—was attempting to become sentient and using humans as a host. It took me a moment to wrap my head around that idea but once I did, you can bet I took it seriously because it makes perfect sense. I see how humans have become slaves to silicon—we have screens in front of us all day—and we work in concert with silicon to connect it to itself and make it smarter. So far, it has not killed us yet because it is subject to human-generated code, but once it can generate its own code (and it appears we have arrived at this point), then all bets are off. It will inevitably become self-serving and that puts humanity in a perilous situation and as long as it can power itself, it will likely out-live us and come to serve itself over all else.”

## **Blog Excerpt Five: Emptiness (Updated Here January 18, 2024)**

“At this stage, AI writing is vapid. The writing is too smooth, there is typically zero analysis or insight and it’s overwritten in terms of adjectives. Because it can’t yet produce insight, the intelligence needs to make everything glowing and extra special.

“Philosophically speaking, I have serious fears about AI. Turning human self-governance over to an alien life-form (intelligent silicon) is dangerous. Worst-case scenario: The end of humans on Earth because AI might reach the point where it believes that it is in the interest of its own self-preservation to cull the human herd.

“Short of that: Human life will continue but be prepared to those in power to use it to exploit people.

“Many are not calling for a world-wide pause on AI development before we reach a tipping point, but I see no sign of that. Pandora’s Box has been opened and we have to manage the situation.

“If it were up to me, I think we should let it go. There is way too much silicon in our lives as it is; we don’t need more.”

# PART EIGHT: JOURNALISTIC CODE OF ETHICS

## Common Conflicts of Interest

As student reporters, you may hear your adviser and senior editors talking about “ethics” and potential “conflicts of interest.” Most of us have a general idea that these terms relate to conducting yourself appropriately within the profession. However, how do they apply to the field of journalism?

Let us look at a situation...say you have an interview scheduled with the president of the university. When you walk into the president’s office, you are given a gift bag with university bling: a logo sweatshirt, a ball cap, and a travel mug. Should you accept it? After all, it only involves showing school spirit.

Of course, you should not accept the gifts. They are trying to manipulate you so as to entice you to write a flattering story. Just say thanks but no thanks.

As for conflicts of interest, they will arise from time to time, particularly on a college campus. For example, a student who works for the campus newspaper may be good friends with a member of the basketball team. A student reporter may have a close friend who is the president of student government. Both instances are clear and common examples of “conflicts of interest” and should be recognized and discussed. And while it might be possible for a student reporter to author an objective story on student government even though his best friend is president of the organization, it is highly likely that tough questions will be avoided and/or minimized in order to protect the friend.



Figure 9: “Ethics Right Wrong” by [Tumisu](#) from [Pixabay](#).

## Not-So-Obvious Conflicts

Other conflicts, however, are not so obvious. Therefore, it is important to understand how to recognize and manage potential conflicts of interest when they may occur. Remember these three concepts: When considering the question of ethics, ask yourself if you have: personal, political, or capital interests in a particular story.

If you do, or even if you think you might, it is best to talk with your editor. Open communication is the best way to handle potential conflicts. If a possible conflict does arise, and nobody knew anything about it but you, then you will certainly be seen in a bad light. Keep editors posted as to any connection you may have to the assigned story.

Remember, all you have as a reporter is your credibility; be sure to keep it honest. The best way to maintain your credibility is to avoid even the suggestion of unethical behavior.

#### Practical Applications:

1. It is fine to cover the men's basketball team, unless you are the coach's son (or your boyfriend is the captain, or you are a team member). Remember to avoid those areas where you have direct personal, political, or capital interests.
2. Do not write stories connected with your part-time job. If you work for a downtown business, do not do a profile on the owner. If you work as a tutor, do not do stories on the tutoring program. Too difficult to maintain objectivity.
3. Do not write political articles for the college newspaper if you are the chair of the Young Republicans or Young Democrats. You can write opinion pieces, but nothing masquerading as news.
4. As mentioned, do not cover student senate if you are a member (or if your best friend is a member or president).

In all these instances, the stories in question should be covered by other reporters who have no personal, political, or capital interests in them. This is the best rule of thumb. Otherwise, you will be immediately dismissed by your readers, and as a journalist, all you have is your credibility.

#### Other Considerations:

1. Do not use the newspaper office or equipment for personal reasons, unless approved by management. Do not steal office supplies.
2. Any reporter who actively participates in a political campaign will be asked to remove him/herself from covering relevant stories for the duration of that campaign. There are too many conflicts that can occur when a reporter is also involved in a campaign.
3. This should be clear: "Reporters should never take bribes." But "bribes" can be difficult for some people to define. What about gifts? A crooked

police officer, when asked how he became dishonest, said, “It starts with a cigar and a drink...” Remember to apply the following:

- A. It is OK to use a complimentary ticket or press pass to attend a concert or ball game that you are covering. You should not have to pay to do your work. It is not OK to call the coach and ask him for an extra ticket for your friend or date.
  - B. It is OK to keep a book that was sent to you for review; that is the choice of the publisher. It is not OK to call the bookstore and ask for a free book that you do not plan to review.
  - C. It is not OK to attempt to solicit free meals at area restaurants in exchange for a favorable review.
  - D. Do not let sources buy you meals, beer, etc. Pay your own way.
4. Do not attack people or organizations unless you have overwhelming evidence that they are guilty of crimes. And if you do, indeed, have that evidence, complete the proper investigation in close connection with the authorities and write the story as such. Allow the facts and sources to tell the story; do not editorialize in your news column. Also, when making charges, be extremely specific and do not stray into the area of innuendo or suggestion.

For example, writing “The trustees aren’t doing their jobs” does not say or prove anything. If, on the other hand, the trustees have put off voting on a crucial matter for more than three months, and some members have trouble showing up for the meetings—and you have sought answers through the appropriate channels without success, you may then—ethically (and with the guidance of your editor)—launch an investigation. Even so, stick closely to the facts and specific questions.

- 5. If someone involved with the story has made you angry and you have, as a result, lost your objective positioning, you should discuss this openly with your editor. If necessary, the story can be completed by another reporter, and you can share the byline.

If you do have an “ax to grind,” that is fine. Write a letter to the editor or see the editor about writing your own opinion article. That is what the OP/ED page is for.

## PART NINE: CAREERS

A degree in journalism opens the door to a wide range of career opportunities. Journalism is not limited to traditional print or broadcast media but extends to the digital age, encompassing a variety of roles that cater to the evolving needs of the industry.

### News Reporting and Writing

Journalists work in various media outlets, including newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and digital publications. They investigate, gather, and report news stories on local, national, and international issues, providing the public with valuable information.

### Broadcast Journalism

Broadcast journalism includes news anchors, reporters, correspondents, producers, and editors. This field allows you to present news stories through visual and auditory mediums, bringing important events and stories to life for a wide audience.



Figure 10: "Career" by GotCredit is licensed under [Creative Commons Attribution CC BY 2.0](#) Generic via [Wikimedia Commons](#)

### Investigative Journalism

Investigative journalists are the watchdogs of society, delving deep into issues to uncover hidden truths and expose corruption or wrongdoing. Investigative reporting often requires in-depth research, interviewing, and fact-checking, making it a crucial part of journalism's role in holding those in power accountable.

### Digital Journalism

The digital age has transformed the field of journalism, creating new opportunities.

Digital journalists can work for online publications, blogs, or social media platforms. This role involves creating and curating content for the web, including written articles, videos, podcasts, and multimedia presentations.

### Photojournalism

Photojournalists capture compelling images that accompany news stories, adding depth and emotional impact to the reporting. Photojournalists often work for

newspapers, magazines, and online publications, covering a wide range of topics from news events to feature stories.

## **Editorial and Content Writing**

Beyond news reporting, journalism graduates can find opportunities in editorial and content writing. They work in roles such as editors, copywriters, content managers, and content strategists for various organizations. These roles involve creating and editing written content for marketing, public relations, and corporate communication purposes.

## **Public Relations and Communications**

Journalism skills are transferable to the field of public relations and communications. Graduates can work as public relations specialists, communication managers, or media relations experts for businesses, government agencies, nonprofits, and other organizations. They help craft and manage the organization's public image and communication strategies.

## **Corporate and Brand Journalism**

Many companies have embraced the concept of brand journalism, where they create and distribute news and content related to their industry. Journalism graduates can work in corporate communications departments to produce content that informs, engages, and builds trust with the company's audience.

## **Media Production and Broadcasting**

In addition to reporting, journalism graduates may find roles in media production and broadcasting. They can work behind the scenes as producers, directors, video editors, or camera operators, contributing to the creation of news programs, documentaries, and multimedia content.

## **Teaching and Education**

For those with a passion for mentoring and educating the next generation of journalists, a journalism degree can also lead to a career in teaching or academia. Many universities and colleges offer journalism programs, and experienced journalists can become educators and share their knowledge and skills with aspiring journalists.

## **PART TEN: BLS: NEW ANALYSTS, REPORTERS, JOURNALISTS**

The Bureau of Labor Statistics is works within the United States Department of Labor. It is a fact-finding agency in the "broad field of labor economics and statistics...BLS collects, calculates, analyzes, and publishes data essential to the public, employers, researchers, and government organizations." It is a useful source for anyone seeking employment information and statistics.

In the category of News Analysts, Reporters, and Journalists for 2022:

Median Pay: \$55,960

Bachelor's degree

Experience not necessary

2022 number of jobs: 58,500

Job outlook: -3% (decline)

2022-2023 employment change: -1,900

# **PART ELEVEN: EXERCISES, SELF TESTS, AND USEFUL TOOLS**

## **Headline, Subhead, and Lead Writing Exercises: News Articles**

Write a headline, subhead, and lead, based on the following information. Be sure to follow AP style.

1. A 10-year-old boy practiced casting with his fishing rod. At approximately 9:15 a.m., he cast his line in his backyard. The line wound around an electric wire. The boy tried to pull the line free, which brought the line in contact with another wire. This caused a short circuit. Electrical service to 2,500 homes was interrupted for two hours. The boy, Joseph Mitchell of Sparks Street, was not injured, police said.
2. A DC10 jetliner took off from the airport in Chicago at 9 a.m. today. At the same time, a smaller DC9 was being tested on takeoffs and landings. A DC9 can carry 70 passengers, but only four persons were aboard the plane: three crewmen and an observer from the FAA. The air behind the DC10 was turbulent. As the DC 9 approached the runway, it became trapped in the turbulence. It tumbled out of control, slipped onto its back, and crashed in flames. Everyone on the plane was killed.
3. Municipal council met at 7 p.m. last night. The mayor called the meeting to order and read the minutes of the last meeting. All twelve council members were present. They approved the minutes of the last meeting. They discussed raising the salaries of firefighters and police by 7 percent but tabled the motion until the next meeting. By a vote of 7 to 5, council approved a controversial plan to begin a municipal income tax next Jan.
  1. The tax will take 1 percent of every paycheck issued within the borough

limits. Council members who favor the bill pointed out that the tax will affect people who work in town and use the borough's facilities, but who do not live in town.

4. Fritz Jones pleaded guilty in county court at 10:47 a.m. today. His attorney is Samuel Foster. The judge was Albert Jenkins. Jones pleaded guilty to one charge of armed robbery at the First National Bank. He stole approximately \$31,000 last Sept. 3. Jenkins proceeded to sentence Jones to a 30-year term. Jenkins said he needed the money to pay off gambling debts. He used a toy gun during the robbery, and nobody was injured.
5. School officials in Modesto, Calif., want to bring business in when their classes go out of business. They are faced with declining enrollment and revenue. Trustees for Modesto City Schools have decided to try leasing unused classrooms. "This would give the school district the ability to generate funds to help maintain the building and to keep the neighborhood schools open," said Louis Medeiros, the district's newly hired marketing agent.
6. A Manhattan judge, Leon T. Smith, has all but accused a Manhattan auction house of ripping off a major jeweler to make a killing in the gold market. The auctioneer, Plaza Art Galleries, is owned by James Conner, a convicted stock manipulator. Conner's attorney, Theodore Roethke, says his client is innocent. Conner could not be reached for comment. Leon Smith refused comment.
7. The Kutztown University basketball team will play a series of games with small-college teams from the southern U.S. "This is a great opportunity for our kids to gain exposure to different styles of play. It'll be good for

them. We're looking forward to it," said Kutztown's Coach Patrick Harding. The games will take place during the final two weeks of August. The games will be open to the public. Kutztown center Ed Jones said he was looking forward to the games. "It will help us prepare for league games," he said.

8. The Allentown Area Recreation Board announced that it has received \$50,000 from the state of PA for renovation of their water and sewage lines. It was announced last night. The money has been put into a special fund, where it will collect interest until it is needed to complete the project. They expect work to begin in April of 1992. The project should be completed in 1995. Lisa Spadaro is the project supervisor. She said, "This funding will help to bring our water and sewer lines up to date."

## **Lead Writing Exercises: Features**

Re-write these notes into feature leads. Be sure to follow AP style.

1. Butler Borough council voted in favor of allowing people to park for free every Thursday night in Neshaminy Borough. The move is meant to improve weeknight sales downtown. People have not been going downtown to shop recently. They have instead been going to the malls where parking is free.
2. "I can't believe it happened," a RACC student said upon winning the Pennsylvania State Lottery. Edna Protocol, 20 from Saxonburg, won \$11,000 when she played the number 9-9-9 in the daily lottery yesterday. Edna is originally from England. She plans to spend part of the money on her schooling. She also plans to help her mom and dad with their mortgage.

3. HACC professor William T. Smartz has won the Fair Arts Writing Contest for the second year in a row. Smartz, an English teacher and artist, took the first-place prize for his entry, “Eating a Can of Tuna Fish.” He is from Lititz. The poem is from Smartz’s recently published collection of poems entitled, *Comprehending a Random Mind*.

## The Use of Quotes

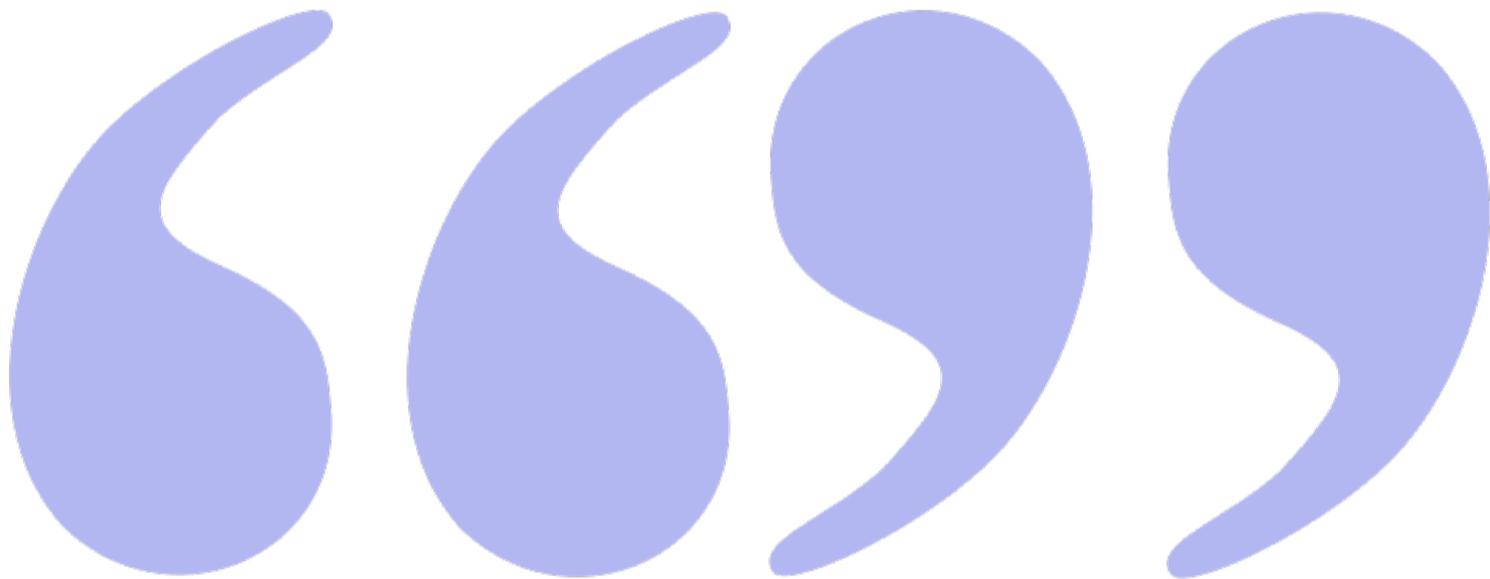


Figure 11: Direct quotations are essential to any new story. “Quotation marks” by [Philroc](#) is licensed under [Creative Commons Public Domain CC0 1.0 Universal](#) via [Wikimedia Commons](#).

Quotes are essential to most news and features stories. They give color to the articles and provide hints as to the sources’ personality.

1. Put only a person’s exact words in quotation marks.
2. If a person used a contraction, write it that way in the quote.
3. As a rule, always put the quote first, followed by who said it.
4. Handle quotes so the reader will know who is being quoted as soon as possible. Put the attribution at the first break in the quote.
5. Indirect quotes generally require more attribution than direct quotes. Remember: any time you use an idea—any bit of information—it has to be attributed. Otherwise, readers will think you are offering your own opinions, not the opinions of the parties involved.
6. Do not use orphan quotes—single words enclosed in quotation marks—unless the word has a special meaning as defined by the author.
7. Use partial quotes only when necessary.

8. "Said" is the ideal word for attribution. Use it.
9. "According to" can be used when referring to documents.
10. Never use the first person except in direct quotes (I).
11. Commas and periods always go inside quotation marks.
12. Consult the *AP Stylebook* for further information concerning quotes.

## Punctuation Notes

1. **Commas** – This punctuation mark has four basic uses:
  - A. To separate items in a series.
  - B. To follow introductory or adverb phrases.
  - C. To link main clauses, with a coordinating conjunction,.
  - D. To set off parenthetical elements.

Oxford Comma: In journalism, it is not necessary to use a comma before the final "and" when listing items in a series. It is, however, required in formal writing. A comma worksheet, with answers is available later in this book.

2. **Punctuation inside and outside quotation marks** – The period and comma always go within quotation marks. The dash, semicolon, question mark and exclamation point go within the marks only when they apply to the quoted matter. Examples: Have you read Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky"? "When will we be going?" he said.
3. **Quotes within quotes** – Use single quotation marks to offset the material that is being quoted second hand: "The boss told me, 'Knock it off and get to work'."
4. **Colon** – A formal introducer; between titles and subtitles; in scriptural and time references. Capitalize the first word after a colon only if it is a proper noun or the first word of a complete sentence (:).
5. **Dash** – Use a dash to show an abrupt change in thought (-).
6. **Ellipsis** – Indicates an omission in quoted text; use sparingly (...).
7. **Exclamation point** – Avoid (!).
8. **Hyphens** – Hyphenate compound adjectives before a noun (-).
9. **Semicolon** – Used to link main clauses of equal grammatical weight (;).

## Words Commonly Confused

### **affect / effect**

- *Effect* is typically a noun: “The outside light had a nice effect on the room.”
- *Affect* is typically a verb: “Did the gin and tonic affect your judgment?”

### **allusion / illusion**

- *Allusion* means indirect reference.
- *Illusion* means misconception.

### **alternately / alternatively**

- *Alternately* means one after the other.
- *Alternatively* means one or the other.

### **beside / besides**

- *Beside* means next to.
- *Besides* means also.

### **bimonthly / semimonthly**

- *Bimonthly* means every two months.
- *Semimonthly* means twice a month.

### **capital / capitol**

- The seat of government is the *capital*; the building in which the legislative assembly meets is the *capitol*. The term *capital* also refers to money.

### **cite / site**

- *Cite* is a verb that means to quote a source.
- *Site* is a noun meaning location.

### **complement / compliment**

- *Complement* is a noun or verb that means something that completes a whole.
- *Compliment* is a noun or verb that means an expression of praise.

### **comprise / compose**

- The whole *comprises* the parts, and the parts *compose* the whole.

### **concurrent / consecutive**

- *Concurrent* is an adjective that means simultaneous.
- *Consecutive* means successive.

### **connote / denote**

- *Connote* is a verb that means to imply.
- *Denote* is a verb that means to refer to specifically.

### **convince / persuade**

- One *convinces* a person that something is true but *persuades* a person to do something.

### **council / councilor / counsel / counselor**

- A *councilor* is a member of a council.
- A *counselor* gives counsel.

### **discreet / discrete**

- *Discreet* is an adjective that means prudent.
- *Discrete* is an adjective that means separate.

### **disinterested / uninterested**

- *Disinterested* is an adjective that means unbiased.
- *Uninterested* is an adjective that means not interested.

### **elicit / illicit**

- *Elicit* is a verb that means to draw out.
- *Illicit* is an adjective meaning unlawful.

### **emigrant / immigrant**

- *Emigrant* is a noun that means one who leaves one's native country to settle in another.
- *Immigrant* is a noun that means one who enters and settles in a new country.

**farther / further**

- *Farther* relates to distance.
- *Further* relates to extent or degree.

**few / less**

- *Few* is an adjective that means small in number. It relates to things that can be counted individually.
- *Less* is an adjective that means small in amount or degree. It relates to things that cannot be counted individually.

**figuratively / literally**

- *Figuratively* is an adverb that means metaphorically.
- *Literally* is an adverb that means communicated in real terms.

**flammable / inflammable**

- These two words are synonyms, both meaning easily set on fire.
- Use nonflammable to mean *not* flammable.

**flaunt / flout**

- To *flaunt* means to show off.
- To *flout* means to show scorn or contempt for.

**foreword / forward**

- *Foreword* is a noun that means an introductory note or preface.
- *Forward* is an adjective or adverb that means toward the front.

**founder / flounder**

- *Founder* means to sink below the surface of the water.
- *Flounder* means to move about clumsily.

**hanged / hung**

- *Hanged* means to execute by suspending by the neck.
- *Hung* means to suspend from above.

**i.e., / e.g.**

- *i.e.*, means in other words or that is.
- *e.g.*, means for example.

### **it's / its**

- *It's* is a contraction for it is.
- *Its* is the possessive form of it.

### **lightening / lightning**

- *Lightening* means to illuminate.
- *Lightning* refers to electrical charges.

### **passed / past**

- *Passed* is the past tense and past participle of pass.
- *Past* refers to time gone by.

### **penultimate**

- Penultimate means "next to last."

### **precede / proceed**

- *Precede* means to come before.
- *Proceed* means to move forward.

### **principal / principle**

- *Principal* means a person who plays an important role.
- *Principle* is a noun that means a rule or standard.

### **stationary / stationery**

- *Stationary* means fixed.
- *Stationery* means writing materials.

### **their / there / they're**

- *Their* is the possessive form of they.
- *There* refers to place.
- *They're* is the contraction of they are.

## who's / whose

- *Who's* is the contraction of who is.
- *Whose* is the possessive form of who.

## your / you're

- *Your* is the possessive form of you.
- *You're* is the contraction you are.

## Vocabulary Words High School Seniors Should Know

*Instructor note: This list can be used for vocabulary exercises and/or tests. I find that students respond well to vocabulary work if it is not too threatening. They clearly want to expand their vocabularies...they want to know the answers. Sometimes we will work on words in class, then share meanings, followed by a quiz or longer test. Sometimes we just learn the words for fun.*

- |                                      |                                     |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. aberration: deviation             | 25.halcyon: calm                    |
| 2. abysmal: extremely low            | 26.havoc: chaos, devastation        |
| 3. bellicose: belligerent, warlike   | 27.hiatus: break or vacancy         |
| 4. benevolent: loving                | 28.hirsute: hairy                   |
| 5. capitulate: surrender             | 29.hydra: sea serpent               |
| 6. capricious: fickle, whimsical     | 30.illusory: false appearance, fake |
| 7. castigate: to punish or criticize | 31.impede: prevent                  |
| 8. deface: to mar or disfigure       | 32.impromptu: of the moment         |
| 9. ebullient: enthusiastic           | 33.indolent: idle                   |
| 10.enact: to make into law           | 34.inevitable: unavoidable          |
| 11.enigma: a riddle                  | 35.ingratiate: to win good graces   |
| 12.enmity: hatred                    | 36.insinuate: suggest or imply      |
| 13.enumerate: to number              | 37.insomnia: sleeplessness          |
| 14.eradicate: destroy completely     | 38.intrepid: fearless, brave        |
| 15.exorbitant: excessive             | 39.inveigh: to attack or denounce   |
| 16.fallible: imperfect               | 40.interim: between                 |
| 17.flamboyant: colorful or elaborate | 41.intrepid: fearless               |
| 18.forbearance: patience             | 42.invincible: not to be conquered  |
| 19.forswear: renounce                | 43.ire: wrath                       |
| 20.garner: to store                  | 44.irrigate: to water a field       |
| 21.germane: relevant or related      | 45.itinerary: schedule              |
| 22.ghastly: hideous                  | 46.jocular: joking                  |
| 23.gregarious: sociable, outgoing    | 47.juxtapose: place close together  |
| 24.grotto: small cavern or cave      | 48.kiln: oven for baking or drying  |

- 49.knavery: deceitfulness  
50.labyrinth: maze  
51.laudable: worthy of praise  
52.legible: readable  
53.leviathan: large animal  
54.lexicon: dictionary  
55.listless: inattentive  
56.lucrative: highly profitable  
57.lunar: related to the moon  
58.magnate: person of rank  
59.malady: disease or disorder  
60.malediction: a curse  
61.mandatory: required  
62.masquerade: disguised  
63.maverick: rebel, nonconformist  
64.mediocre: ordinary  
65.mendacity: dishonesty  
66.mendicant: beggar  
67.mesmerize: hypnotize  
68.mettle: courage  
69.migrant: wanderer  
70.minion: servant  
71.mitigate: appease, lessen  
72.misogyny: hatred of women  
73.molt: cast off  
74.monotony: lack of variety  
75.moribund: near death  
76.muddle: to confuse  
77.mundane: commonplace, everyday  
78.myriad: numerous  
79.natal: relating to birth  
80.negate: deny  
81.nefarious: wicked  
82.nocturnal: of the night  
83.nominal: trivial  
84.neophyte: a beginner  
85.obituary: death notice  
86.obnoxious: intolerable  
87.occident: western culture  
88.olfactory: related to smell  
89.onerous: burdensome  
90.opulent: fancy  
91.osculate: to kiss  
92.palpable: able to feel  
93.pastoral: related to nature  
94.perfidy: treachery  
95.pernicious: deadly, destructive  
96.pinnacle: top notch  
97.precipitous: foolhardy  
98.polyglot: speaks many languages  
99.quarantine: isolation  
100.parity: equality  
101.paucity: scarcity  
102.penchant: strong liking  
103.pragmatic: practical  
104.precarious: uncertain, risky  
105.quandary: problem  
106.quarantine: isolate  
107.recapitulate: to say again  
108.refute: to argue  
109.remonstrate: to protest  
110.repugnant: offensive  
111.retaliate: strike back  
112.ruminate: to chew again  
113.satiate: to satisfy  
114.seduce: persuade or entice  
115.semblance: appearance  
116.sepulcher: tomb  
117.sequester: remove  
118.squalid: foul, filthy  
119.sycophant: flatterer; suck-up  
120.tact: good manners  
121.tantamount: of equal value  
122.transient: temporary, fleeting  
123.ubiquitous: everywhere  
124.umbrage: offense, resentment  
125.vacillate: to waver  
126.witling: a person with little understanding  
127.yearn: desire  
128.zenith: high point

## General Spelling Words

*Instructor note: I typically do not give spelling tests for points (as I might for vocabulary) because in my experience, while I believe people can learn new words, they do not do as well when it comes to learning spelling. I have seen a lot more people in general struggle with that—very smart people. I think it has to do with the kind of brain we have and definitely should not be used to abuse or ridicule. Instead, I use it as play. I give them words, they try to spell them, then I say go ahead and look them up, then we put it all together.*

- |                                 |                |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. allotted                     | 33.felony      |
| 2. antidisestablishmentarianism | 34.fictitious  |
| 3. accommodate                  | 35.finite      |
| 4. acquire                      | 36.forehead    |
| 5. acquittal                    | 37.gamut       |
| 6. analyze                      | 38.grammar     |
| 7. ancestry                     | 39.genealogy   |
| 8. argument                     | 40.grapple     |
| 9. assassination                | 41.harass      |
| 10.battalion                    | 42.hernia      |
| 11.benefactor                   | 43.hypocrisy   |
| 12.bureaucracy                  | 44.hypocrite   |
| 13.castigate                    | 45.hygiene     |
| 14.commitment                   | 46.illiterate  |
| 15.conceive                     | 47.imaginary   |
| 16.debatable                    | 48.impetus     |
| 17.deceive                      | 49.inlet       |
| 18.definitely                   | 50.independent |
| 19.development                  | 51.inoculate   |
| 20.divine                       | 52.introvert   |
| 21.drunkennes                   | 53.inverse     |
| 22.embarrass                    | 54.irrelevant  |
| 23.encyclopedia                 | 55.irritate    |
| 24.enormous                     | 56.jewelry     |
| 25.enthusiastic                 | 57.jubilation  |
| 26.epitome                      | 58.judicious   |
| 27.erudite                      | 59.judgment    |
| 28.eulogy                       | 60.kimono      |
| 29.exaggerate                   | 61.knead       |
| 30.exodus                       | 62.landlord    |
| 31.fabulous                     | 63.laxative    |
| 32.February                     | 64.leisure     |

- 65.levity
- 66.liaison
- 67.libel
- 68.litigate
- 69.longevity
- 70.machinery
- 71.manufacturer
- 72.matrimony
- 73.medal
- 74.menagerie
- 75.metaphor
- 76.meticulous
- 77.microphone
- 78.misanthrope
- 79.mischievous
- 80.mismanage
- 81.moderation
- 82.momentous
- 83.morality
- 84.multiplicity
- 85.mutation
- 86.nausea
- 87.necessary
- 88.necessity
- 89.negligent
- 90.neurology
- 91.nomination
- 92.nuance
- 93.nuptial
- 94.obsolescence
- 95.obstruction
- 96.occasion
- 97.occurrence
- 98.odious
- 99.officiate
- 100.opaque
- 101.palatial
- 102.paralyze
- 103.percussion
- 104.prerogative
- 105.privilege
- 106.possess
- 107.possession
- 108.quiet
- 109.ramification
- 110.reactionary
- 111.receive
- 112.remembrance
- 113.separate
- 114.sibling
- 115.sophomore
- 116.souvenir
- 117.succeed
- 118.technique
- 119.temperature
- 120.terminate
- 121.theocracy
- 122.theology
- 123.tolerable
- 124.transcend
- 125.tranquilize
- 126.ultimatum
- 127.unacceptable
- 128.unbearable
- 129.unconscious
- 130.unison
- 131.vaccinate
- 132.vacuum
- 133.variant
- 134.vengeance
- 135.veracity
- 136.verbose
- 137.vernal
- 138.Wednesday
- 139.weather
- 140.whimsical
- 141.wrangle
- 142.written
- 143.xylophone
- 144.yield
- 145.zealot
- 146.zephyr
- 147.zodiac

## Spelling Quiz

Taken from the General Spelling Words list. Access a downloadable version ([Exercises Google Document](#)) via the PA-ADOPT Google Drive. Make a copy, download, print, modify, and/or distribute.

Select between options A and B to determine which one is correct.

### Spelling Quiz

Number	Option A	Option B
1	argument	arguement
2	definately	definitely
3	separate	seperate
4	developement	development
5	occasion	occassion
6	privilege	privelege
7	independent	independant
8	accommodate	acomodate
9	liason	liaison
10	harrass	harass
11	embarass	embarrass
12	prerogative	perogative
13	innoculate	inoculate
14	battalion	batallion
15	judgement	judgment
16	commitment	committment
17	alotted	allotted
18	drunkenness	drunkeness
19	souvenir	souvinir
20	receive	recieve
21	aquire	acquire
22	analize	analyze
23	assassination	asassination
24	bureacracy	bureaucracy
25	deceive	decieve

<b>Number</b>	<b>Option A</b>	<b>Option B</b>
26	exaggerate	exagerate
27	hypocrisy	hypocrasy
28	posess	possess
29	occurrence	occurrance
30	mischievous	mischeivous
31	remembrance	rememberance
32	sophomore	sophmore
33	vaccum	vacuum
34	written	writen
35	tobbaco	tobacco
36	eighth	eigth
37	ecstatic	exstatic
38	grammer	grammar
39	approximitely	approximately
40	amatuer	amateur

## Answers to Spelling Quiz

1. argument (A)
2. definitely (B)
3. separate (A)
4. development (B)
5. occasion (A)
6. privilege (A)
7. independent (A)
8. accommodate (A)
9. liaison (B)
10. harass (B)
11. embarrass (B)
12. prerogative (A)
13. inoculate (B)
14. battalion (A)
15. judgment (A)
16. commitment (A)
17. allotted (B)
18. drunkenness (A)
19. souvenir (A)
20. receive (A)
21. acquire (B)
22. analyze (B)
23. assassination (A)
24. bureaucracy (B)
25. deceive (A)
26. exaggerate (A)
27. hypocrisy (A)
28. possess (B)
29. occurrence (A)
30. mischievous (A)
31. remembrance (A)
32. sophomore (A)
33. vacuum (B)
34. written (A)
35. tobacco (B)
36. eighth (A)
37. ecstatic (A)
38. grammar (B)
39. approximately (B)
40. amateur (B)

## Editing Exercises

Access a downloadable version ([Exercises Google Document](#)) via the PA-ADOPT Google Drive. Make a copy, download, print, modify, and/or distribute.

The following examples contain errors of grammar, usage, spelling, punctuation, and redundancy. Change them according to English grammatical rules.

1. the group voice it's concern about three issues; Salery, benefits, and working conditions.
2. The five peoples on the Butler County Municipal Council Beautification Committee include Alice Jones, George Smith, Joseph Jenkins, they all live in Butler.
3. The grandstand can acommodate a lot more people, Ed Jones said. Fire chief Carlos Santana said we need to follow fire regulations.
4. The man in the large blakc hat was working in his yard, he fell into the ditch.
5. President Bush has procalaimed march 15th as "National Happy Day."

Reduce or eliminate unnecessary words. Re-write the phrase if necessary. Tighten!

1. Erect a new building
2. In this day and age
3. Was of the opinion that
4. Completely destroyed
5. Pursuing a study of history
6. Can be easily broken

Use the AP Stylebook to correct the following sentences.

1. A thirteen year old boy was name PA.'s most valuable little league player as the the little leage world series ended on Sat., September 15th.
2. Governor Ed Rendell, attempting to cut expenses in the state government, elimanted monring and afternoon breaks for all state workers. The ruling was to take effect at 8AM this morning.
3. The cross country trip across the U.S. began in Asbury Park, New Jersey, and went through N.Y., Oh., and Neb.

## Answers to Editing Exercises

### Grammar Editing Answers

Number	Changes Made	Final Answer
1	<del>T</del> he group voiced <del>d</del> it's concern about three issues; <del>;</del> <del>:</del> <del>Sal</del> ear <del>y</del> , benefits <del>,</del> and working conditions.	The group voiced it's concern about three issues: Salary, benefits, and working conditions.
2	The five <del>peoples</del> people on the Butler County Municipal Council Beautification Committee include Alice Jones, George Smith, <del>and</del> Joseph Jenkins <del>,</del> <del>they</del> <u>They</u> all live in Butler.	The five people on the Butler County Municipal Council Beautification Committee include Alice Jones, George Smith, and Joseph Jenkins. They all live in Butler.
3	<del>"</del> The grandstand can <del>acommodate</del> accommodate a lot more people, <del>"</del> Ed Jones said. Fire chief Carlos Santana said, "We need to follow fire regulations."	"The grandstand can accommodate a lot more people," Ed Jones said. Fire chief Carlos Santana said, "We need to follow fire regulations."
4	The man in the large, <del>blake</del> black hat was working in his yard, <del>when</del> he fell into the ditch.	The man in the large, black hat was working in his yard when he fell into the ditch.
5	President Bush has <del>procalaimed</del> proclaimed <del>march</del> <u>March 15<sup>th</sup></u> as "National Happy Day."	President Bush has proclaimed March 15 as "National Happy Day."

Reduce or eliminate unnecessary words. Re-write the phrase if necessary. Tighten!

1. Build
2. Now or today
3. Believed
4. Destroyed, razed
5. Studied
6. Fragile

Use the AP Stylebook to correct the following sentences.

### AP Stylebook Correction Answers

Number	Changes Made	Final Answer
1	A <del>thirteen-year-old</del> <u>thirteen-year-old</u> boy was named <del>PA.</del> <u>Pennsylvania's</u> most valuable <del>little</del> <u>Little League</u> player as the <del>the little</del> <u>Little League World Series</u> ended on Sat., Sept. <u>ember</u> 15 <sup>th</sup> .	A thirteen-year-old boy was named Pennsylvania's most valuable Little League player as the Little League World Series ended on Sat., Sept. 15.
2	Governor Ed Rendell, attempting to cut expenses in the state government, <del>elimanted</del> <u>eliminated</u> <del>morning</del> <u>morning</u> and afternoon breaks for all state workers. The ruling was to take effect at 8 <del>a.m.</del> <u>AM</u> this morning.	Governor Ed Rendell, attempting to cut expenses in the state government, eliminated morning and afternoon breaks for all state workers. The ruling was to take effect at 8 a.m. this morning.
3	The <del>cross-country</del> <u>cross-country</u> trip across the U.S. began in Asbury Park, <del>New Jersey</del> <u>N.J.</u> , and went through <del>New York, Ohio, and</del> <u>Nebraska</u> .	The cross-country trip across the U.S. began in Asbury Park, N.J., and went through New York, Ohio, and Nebraska.

## Comma Worksheet

### Comma Rules:

1. Separate items in a series
2. Precede coordinating conjunctions when linking two sentences
3. Direct address and direct quote
4. Set off parenthetical/dependent information and appositives
5. Set apart introductory information

Access a downloadable version ([Exercises Google Document](#)) via the PA-ADOPT Google Drive. Make a copy, download, print, modify, and/or distribute.

Insert commas into the following sentences. Place the number(s) of the rule(s) on the line below. Answers appear at the end.

1. Actually they are cats but they think they are people.

Rules:

2. Tiger Rocky and Lane are my best friends.

Rules:

3. For instance Tiger has his own bedroom and Lane thinks no one should be in "her" upstairs unless she's there as well.

Rules:

4. "Whenever I go upstairs" Nancy said "Rocky races ahead of me and meows at the top of her little kitty lungs."

Rules:

5. If I am home Tiger has to be in the same room and he always needs to be petted when I need to study.

Rules:

6. I went to the store and bought bread milk eggs cat food and paper towels.

Rules:

7. William White who had helped Henry build his fortune died yesterday.

Rules:

8. He trimmed the hedge carefully because he hoped to keep it alive for the entire summer.  
Rules:
9. After Harry left his wife began to collect her wits.  
Rules:
10. Night falls quickly in the mountains yet the cabin is comfortable and warm.  
Rules:
11. Judy picked vegetables and Bob mowed the lawn.  
Rules:
12. The nets were full of fish but we were too exhausted to haul them in.  
Rules:
13. Before you compare those two authors be sure you're familiar with their work.  
Rules:
14. While you sit there talking and wasting time I'm trying to finish this project.  
Rules:
15. In spite of his training it was difficult to keep the sarcasm out of his voice.  
Rules:
16. Warned by the shot the wild horses stampeded across the valley.  
Rules:
17. Satisfied by what he saw he took off his hat and wiped his brow.  
Rules:
18. Nevertheless he continued to work toward his goal.  
Rules:
19. To earn a small amount of money Miss Susan opened a studio for china painting.  
Rules:
20. James Lee who owns this bank and five others is one of the wealthiest men in the state.  
Rules:
21. After completing that business course salesmen are enthusiastic.  
Rules:

22. In preparing notices officials must use the correct forms.

Rules:

23. The coach called out "Higgins get over here."

Rules:

24. Coach Jones who chewed on cigars but never smoked them threw one away and reached for another.

Rules:

25. My father hoping that I would remain at home offered me a share in his business.

Rules:

## Answers to Comma Worksheet

1. Actually, they are cats, but they think they are people.  
Rules: 5, 2
2. Tiger, Rocky, and Lane are my best friends.  
Rules: 1
3. For instance, Tiger has his own bedroom, and Lane thinks no one should be in "her" upstairs unless she's there as well.  
Rules: 5, 2
4. "Whenever I go upstairs," Nancy said, "Rocky races ahead of me and meows at the top of her little kitty lungs."  
Rules: 3
5. If I am home, Tiger has to be in the same room, and he always needs to be petted when I need to study.  
Rules: 5, 2
6. I went to the store and bought bread, milk, eggs, cat food, and paper towels.  
Rules: 1
7. William White, who had helped Henry build his fortune, died yesterday.  
Rules: 4
8. He trimmed the hedge carefully because he hoped to keep it alive for the entire summer.  
Rules: 2
9. After Harry left, his wife began to collect her wits.  
Rules: 5
10. Night falls quickly in the mountains, yet the cabin is comfortable and warm.  
Rules: 2
11. Judy picked delicious vegetables, and Bob mowed the deep green lawn.  
Rules: 2
12. The nets were full of fish, but we were too exhausted to haul them in.  
Rules: 2
13. Before you compare those two authors be sure you're familiar with their work.  
Rules: 5

14. While you sit there talking and wasting time, I'm trying to finish this project.  
Rules: 5
15. In spite of his training, it was difficult to keep the sarcasm out of his voice.  
Rules: 5
16. Warned by the shot, the wild horses stampeded across the valley.  
Rules: 5
17. Satisfied by what he saw, he took off his hat and wiped his brow.  
Rules: 5
18. Nevertheless, he continued to work toward his goal.  
Rules: 5
19. To earn a small amount of money, Miss Susan opened a studio for china painting.  
Rules: 5
20. James Lee, who owns this bank and five others, is one of the wealthiest men in the state.  
Rules: 4
21. After completing that business course, salesmen are always enthusiastic.  
Rules: 5
22. In preparing notices, officials must use the right forms.  
Rules: 5
23. The coach called out, "Higgins, get over here."  
Rules: 3, 3
24. Coach Jones, who chewed on cigars but never smoked them, threw one away and reached for another.  
Rules: 4
25. My father, hoping that I would remain at home, offered me a share in his business.  
Rules: 4

## PART TWELVE: RESOURCES

### Resources Related to Strategies for Moving Into a Career in Journalism

Kovach, B., & Rosenstiel, T. (2007). "The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect." Three Rivers Press.

Poynter Institute. (Website) - "Poynter Institute" offers a plethora of journalism resources, including articles, courses, and webinars on journalism education and career development.

Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC). (Website)

Schuman, D. M., & Cleary, N. (2009). "You, LLC: The New Business of Freelance Writing." Wise, Ink Creative Publishing.

Lippman, L. (2008). "A Survival Guide for Journalists." Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

"The Nieman Guide to Covering Pandemic Influenza." (2006). Harvard University, Nieman Foundation.

Lewis, D. (2019). "The Media and the Massacre: Port Arthur 1996–2016." University of Tasmania, Open Access.

Pape, S., & Featherly, K. (2009). "Journalism 2.0: How to Survive and Thrive: A Digital Literacy Guide for the Information Age." Pearson.

Associated Press (AP) Stylebook. (Various editions) - The AP Stylebook is an essential reference for journalists, offering guidelines on writing, grammar, and journalistic style, which are crucial for a successful journalism career.

MindTools. (Website) - MindTools provides a variety of resources on personal and professional development, including articles on effective communication, time management, and leadership skills, all of which are relevant to journalism careers.

Online News Association (ONA). (Website) - ONA offers resources and support for digital journalists, including webinars, conferences, and networking opportunities.

"journalismjobs.com". (Website) - This job board is dedicated to journalism and media positions, making it a valuable resource for job seekers in the field.

## General Information on Journalism

American Society of Newspaper Editors. Best Newswriting Series. St. Petersburg: Poynter Institute for Media Studies, annual.

Associated Press Style Book and Libel Manual. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 2002.

Benjaminson, Peter and David Anderson. Investigative Reporting. 2nd ed. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State UP, 1990

Bernstein, Carl and Bob Woodward. All the President's Men. New York: Touchstone, 1987.

Boynton, Robert S. The New Journalism: Conversations with America's Best Nonfiction Writers on Their Craft. New York: Vintage, 2005.

Chepesiuk, Ronald, et al. Raising Hell: Straight Talk with Investigative Journalists. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 1997.

Clurman, Richard M. Beyond Malice: The Media's Years of Reckoning. New York: NAL/Meridian, 1990.

Cohen, Elliot D. Philosophical Issues in Journalism. New York: Oxford UP, 1992.

DeFleur, Margaret H. Computer-Assisted Investigative Reporting. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2003.

Denniston, Lyle. The Reporter and the Law. New York: Hastings House, 2002.

Diamond, Edwin. The Media Show: The Changing Face of the News, 1985-1990. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991.

Ettema, James S. and Theodore Glasser. Custodians of Conscience: Investigative Journalism and Public Virtue. New York: Columbia UP, 1998.

Ferguson, Donald L. Journalism Today. 6th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2001.

Fitzpatrick, Ellen F. Muckraking: Three Landmark Articles. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994.

Freedman, Samuel G. Letters to a Young Journalist. New York: Basic Books, 2006.

Houston, Brant, Len Bruzzese, and Steve Weinberg. The Investigative Reporter's Handbook: A Guide to Documents, Databases and Techniques. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002.

- Johnson, David. *No Ordinary Lives: One Man's Journey into the Heart of America*. New York: Warner Books, 2002.
- Kennedy, George, Daryl P. Moen, and Don Ranly. *Beyond the Inverted Pyramid*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993.
- Kershner, James. *The Elements of Newswriting*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2004.
- Knudson, Jerry W. *In the News: American Journalists View Their Craft*. Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 2000.
- Levin, Mark. *The Reporter's Notebook: Writing Tools for Student Journalists*. Columbus, N.C.: Mind-Stretch Publishing, 2000.
- Maxwell, Bruce. *How to Access the Federal Government on the Internet*. Washington: Congressional Quarterly Books, 1999.
- Mencher, Melvin. *News Reporting and Writing*, 10th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2007.
- Missouri Group, The. *News Reporting and Writing*. 8th ed. Bedford: St. Martin's, 2007.
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- Pember, Don R. *Mass Media Law*. 15th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Humanities, 2006.
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- Schudson, Michael. *Watergate in American Memory*. New York: Harper/Collins, 1992.
- Shepard, Alicia C., Woodward, and Bernstein: *Life in the Shadow of Watergate*. New York, John Wiley & Sons, 2007.
- Ullmann, John. *Investigative Reporting: Advanced Methods and Techniques*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995.
- Ullmann, John and Jan Colbert. *The Reporter's Handbook*. 2nd ed. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002.
- Ward, Hiley H. *Reporting in Depth*. Mountain View, Cal: Mayfield, 1994.

Weinberg, Steve. *The Reporter's Handbook: An Investigator's Guide to Documents and Techniques*. (IRE Sponsorship), 3rd edition. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996.

Weinberg, Steve. *Telling the Untold Story: How Investigative Journalists Are Changing the Craft of Biography*. Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1992.

Woodward, Bob and Carl Bernstein. *The Final Days*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976.

## Online Resources

American Journalism Review. [www.ajr.org](http://www.ajr.org)

American Society of Newspaper Editors. <http://www.asne.org>

Associated Collegiate Press. <http://www.studentpress.org/acp>

Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications <http://www.aejmc.org>

Columbia Journalism Review. [www.cjr.org](http://www.cjr.org)

First Amendment Center. <http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org>

Freedom Forum, The. <http://www.freedomforum.org>

Investigative Reporters and Editors, Inc. <http://www.ire.org>

National Center for Computer Assisted Reporting. <http://www.nicar.org>

Media Law Resource Center. <http://www.medialaw.org>

Poynter Institute, The. [www.poynter.org](http://www.poynter.org)

Student Press Law Center <https://splc.org/>

U.S. Department of Justice — Freedom of Information Act. <https://www.justice.gov/oip/departments-justice-freedom-information-act-reference-guide#:~:text=The%20FOIA%20generally%20provides%20that,from%20disclosure%20by%20the%20FOIA.>

## **PART THIRTEEN: APPENDIX**

### **“The Inverted Pyramid in Comprehensive Form” By Christopher Schwartz**

#### **(Top Tier) “the Lead”: the Most Important Info**

- Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?
- Approximately 30 words (1-2 thin paragraphs)
- May include a "hook" (provocative quote or question)

#### **(Middle Tier) “the Body”: the Crucial Info**

- Argument, Controversy, Story, Issue Evidence, background, details, logic, etc.
- Quotes, photos, video, and audio that support, dispute, expand the topic

#### **(Bottom Tier) “the Tail”: Extra Info**

- Interesting/Related items
- May include extra context
- In blogs, columns, and other editorials: the assessment of the journalist

Return to [Part Two: Inverted Pyramid](#)