

Journalism 101

The Most Basic Basics

Foundations of Journalism
Emerson College
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Journalism Basics

- Journalistic writing differs from academic writing.
- In journalism, it is not about using a lot of big words and flowery language to impress people. Journalism should be easy to read and follow.
- Longer does not automatically equal better.
- Most newspapers are written at a high-school reading level.

Grade Level and Circulation of Current Periodicals

Periodical	Grade Level	Circulation
Los Angeles Times	12	1,292,274
Boston Globe	12	707,813
National Enquirer	12	2,760,000
New Yorker	10	1,900,000
New York Times	10	1,680,583
Washington Post	10	1,007,487
USA Today	10	2,665,815
TV Guide	9	13,200,000
Time	9	4,114,137
Reader's Digest	9	12,212,040

Source: Impact Information, 2005.

Terminology

- Lede – the introduction of a story. The first few grafs. This is what sets a story up and pulls readers in. Sometimes, written “lead.”
- Graf – paragraph.
- Copy – the written text of a story.
- Source - where the information comes from - person, report, other article, etc.

Terminology

- Nut graf – the graf or grafes that sum up what the purpose of the story is. Why it's being told. What the information the writer is trying to convey.
 - Essential part of every news story.
 - Every story you right needs to have a nut graf

Some Journalism Basics

- Do not miss deadline. Ever. **Ever.** **EVER.**
- Always check spelling of names, teams, places, etc. Then check them again.
- With the invention of spell check, there's no excuse for having words spelled wrong.
- Never trust your memory for facts. Confirm that information. Double-check everything.
- Clean copy will make you an editor's favorite writer.

Some Journalism Basics

- Always turn in something.
- You must adhere to word count/story length needs.
- Communication is key. If something comes up, contact your editor/producer.
 - In the case of this class, that person is me.