

Broadcast

Foundations of Journalism

Emerson College

Spring 2013

Broadcast

- Broadcast can refer to radio or TV.
 - Often, it will mean TV and radio will be referred to as radio.
- Print stories can be adapted for broadcast, but stories written for print will not work “as is” on air.

Broadcast

- Broadcast writing will be:
 - More conversational
 - Write it out
 - Shorter sentences
 - Fewer numbers
 - Present tense
 - Attribution first
 - Nontraditional ledes (Often, not always)
 - Shorter stories
 - Snappers

Conversational

- Don't be overly casual.
 - No slang
- Think about how you would speak/tell the story to someone.

Write it out

- Write out phonetic spellings.
 - Example:
 - La Jolla = La Hoya
 - Gimenez = Him-En-Ez
 - Loshe = Low-Shh
 - Worchester = Woos-ter
 - Don't go overboard.

Write it out

- Write out most abbreviations.
 - Senator Kerry - not Sen. Kerry
 - Poway, California - not Poway, Calif.
 - Minot, North Dakota - not Minot, N.D.
 - Main Street - not Main St

Write it out

- Write out acronyms
 - AAA -> Triple A
 - NAACP -> N-Double-A-C-P
 - N-F-L
 - No need to write out acronyms that are read as “words.”
 - NASA

Write it out

- Write out numbers over 1,000

Shorter Sentences

- People don't talk in long clauses. Hence, don't write broadcast news using them.
- One idea per sentence.
- Active sentences.

Shorter Sentences

- Avoid long interjections and clauses in the middle of sentences.
- Details may need to be sacrificed for conciseness.
 - News judgment

Fewer Numbers

- Numbers are hard for people to visualize.
 - Limit them substantially in broadcast news.

Numbers

- Write out zero to eleven.
- Numerals 12 to 999.
- Always write out thousands, millions, billions, etc.
- Write out and hyphenate large numbers according to above rules.
 - ONE-THOUSAND-400

Numbers

- Degrees should be written out.
 - Third, Fourth
- Write out “point” and “percent”
- Write out dollars and cents and hyphenate.
 - Five-dollars
 - 27-cents

Ages

- Are placed in front of the person referenced.
- Are written out and hyphenated according to the numbers rule.
 - 22-year-old man
 - Seven-year-old girl

Present Tense

- Broadcast news is happening “now.”
 - Use present tense to convey timeliness.
 - Says, is, believes, etc.
- However, make sure that things that have happened are indicated as being over.
- Example:
 - “A Cambridge fire **KILLS** four people.”
 - When will they be dead?

Attribution

- You need to set up
 - who is talking before they speak
 - source of info before you cite/source them
- Presenting info in a logical order

Ledes

- Need to catch listeners/viewers attention immediately.
- Non-traditional ledes are more common with broadcast hard news stories than in print.
 - Zingers (as long as appropriate) can work well

Ledes

- If a story does not lend itself to a non-traditional lede, straightforward is acceptable.
 - Choose the most newsworthy part(s) of 5Ws & H to lead.
- Not going to get 5 Ws (and H) in lede
 - But it does need to be in your story. (News judgment)

Shorter Stories

- Broadcast stories will be a few minutes at most. Often less than a minute.
- Print stories are usually a few hundred words.
- Will not use inverted pyramid.
- News judgment is essential.
 - What makes the cut?
 - What don't people hear?

Snappers

- In broadcast, your conclusion should be strong.
 - End with a snap.
 - Support the lede.
 - Mention another side.
 - What happens next.
 - Leaves people remember the story.
 - Not necessarily the case with print.

More

- Sparingly using quotes in your script.
 - Avoid quotes with “I” or “We”
- You still need to be neutral.

More

- Limit use of pronouns (it, he, they). Instead use the term the pronoun references.
 - This is even more important in broadcast than it is in print.
 - Your listener can't go back to see what/whom the pronoun is referencing.

Avoid Redundancy

- Just like with print quotes and transitions, actualities and voiceovers and sound bites should not be redundant.

Format

- All CAPS.
 - Not firm, but most outlets use only caps.
- When you will be using audio sound bite or video package that is noted in the script.

Radio Reporting

- Radio audio needs to be compelling
- Two varieties of taped radio audio:
 - Actualities
 - Voicers

Radio Reporting

- Actualities: Actual voice of the newsmaker can be heard.
 - Usually 10-25 seconds
 - Will be recorded either live or via phoner
 - Think of it as a quote in print
 - Lead-in is required to set up

Radio Reporting

- Lead-in: Introduces/sets up an actuality (Read by the journalist)
 - What are the basic facts of the story?
 - Who is speaking in the actuality?
 - Is there more your audience needs to know?

Radio Reporting

- Write out: Concludes the story (Read by the journalist)
 - Again mentions the newsmaker who was speaking.
- Ambient sound: Background sounds which are present in a scene or location

Radio Reporting

- Voicer: The reporter's own voice is heard from the scene of a news event.
 - May contain detailed description
 - Usually just give analysis or explanation of the event.
 - 20-50 seconds
 - Need lead-ins
 - Don't usually need write-outs

TV Reporting

- Working with visuals as well as audio.
 - Get shots on video that cover (illustrate) the subject the reporter will discuss in narration.
 - Visuals and narration must coordinate.
 - Timing needs to be exact

TV Reporting

- Stand-up: Video of the reporter speaking directly into the camera.
 - Usually at the end.
- Live shot: Reporter speaking directly into the camera live.

TV Reporting

- B-roll: Supplemental footage inserted as a cutaway to help tell the story.
- Voiceover: Script read by the reporter over video.
 - Usually 15-30 seconds