

Unit:1 Basics of Editing

The ideal principle, which governs editing, is: ‘never overestimate the public’s knowledge and never underestimate the public’s intelligence’. In a news organization, editing plays a vital role. A news story is written by hurried reporters, and is rough-edged like raw diamond. Hence, the copy is polished and honed by a team of editors.

Thus, editing is done to achieve a balance of news between that originating within the organization and that pouring in from outside. Sorting out and sifting also helps induce parity between the well-written articles and those written by the inexperienced reporters. In the process, the unwanted matter gets weeded out. Only the newsworthy stories are finally selected. These are checked and rechecked for grammar, syntax, facts, figures, and sense and also clarified for betterment, and are condensed for economy of space.

Objectives of Editing:

1. **Striving for focus and accuracy:** Accuracy is one of the chief corners of the editing stage. News reports have the professional and ethical responsibility to include in their research and writing process the checking of facts, which includes the correct spelling and pronunciation of names, the factual details of a story, and any basis upon which conclusions are drawn. Multiple checks for accuracy are the norm. All careful, responsible writers should do the same. The reliability of the finished text depends upon accuracy in the researching and writing process.
2. **Fact Checking:** The internet has increased access to sources for checking facts. Unfortunately, the internet has also increased access to dubious sources. Debates about the academic credibility and trustworthiness of sources to which the public can contribute will probably continue as expanding internet access changes the rules by which sources are evaluated. Ready access, speed, and the look of authenticity typical;y influence public use and acceptance of available resources, as the proliferation of medical, legal, and other specialty web sites attest. One can even watch surgical operations online. Who is to say what is real and what is staged? Most internet users are savvy enough to avoid entering credit card information on unfamiliar and unverified websites. The “buyers beware” admonition is just as applicable to those who would use the web indiscriminately to find factual information.

3. **Maintaining Objectivity:** Inaccurate information can also be dispersed by well-meaning sources. For example, a distraught mother who claims that her incarcerated son is an innocent victim of a federal law might have reached that erroneous conclusion as a result of her own emotional investment in her son's case, as opposed to the facts of the case. To maintain objectivity, one can report the mother's perspective as her factual, though undocumented, point of view, while also reporting the contents of the actual arrest warrant or any other claims communicated by the arresting authority.
4. **Staying on Track:** Maintaining the focus of a piece of writing is another important element of the editing stage. Writers are notoriously protective of their work. Crafting a text can be a painful, time consuming process. After investing so much time and effort, it is very difficult for some writers to recognize and delete tangential sentences or passages-particularly if they are well-crafted or contain brilliant ideas. Writers can also be blinded to generalizations that do not adequately cover the specifics of a topic. In short, taking on an editor's role often conflicts with the writer's emotional and intellectual investment in the writing process. For that reason, it is common for many writers to distance themselves from the text before editing it, or to ask someone else to read the text as a dispassionate editor.

Principles of Editing:

The principles of Good News Editing:

- Accuracy
- Attribution
- Balance and Fairness
- Brevity
- Clarity
- Readability
- Human interest and
- Sharp observation

Accuracy:

The sub editor should be obsessed with accuracy because one mistake can destroy the reputation of a newspaper or magazine, and it takes just fraction of a second to make one. Checking and crosschecking names, figures and verifying facts are of utmost importance.

Attribution:

Always attribute the news to the source so that readers can judge its credibility. “A highly placed Defense Personnel, Finance Ministry Sources”. Etc. are attributions that help readers to arrive at their own conclusions, while steering clear of the suspicion that the reporter is giving his own version of the story.

Balance and Fairness:

Balance and fairness form the foundation of good editing. Balance is giving both sides of the picture, while fairness is not taking sides. It also means not providing support to political parties, institutions, communities or individuals, etc., through the columns of the newspaper. It is the attribute of a professional reporter and the duty of a sub editor to implement it.

Brevity:

Brevity is a great virtue in journalism appreciated by readers and editors alike. It is telling a story, as it should be, without beating around the bush. It saves time and space and wins applause when consummated to perfection.

Clarity:

Clarity is the ability to think clearly and translate it into paper—a quality that can take one to the higher echelons of media hierarchy. Readability has a bearing on sentence length and simple and forthright manner of expression.

Readability:

The average length of a sentence should not exceed 18 words, which is standard. It is not easy to read a sentence with more than 18 words. Beyond 25 words the sentence would be very difficult to read, though some accomplished authors have far exceeded the standard and yet remained readable because of their craftsmanship. But beginners are advised to stay out of long-winding and complicated sentence constructions. The best way is to write news stories using simple words, short and simple sentences.

Human Interest:

Using a style that arouses human interest is what the craft of editing is all about. Sub editors should see the events from the readers’ point of view and the news stories keeping the reader ever in mind along with his hopes, fears and aspirations. The sub editor should identify himself with the proverbial common man who does not exist but represents the silent majority whom the journalist is duty-bound to defend and protect.

Editorial Policy

Writing editorials is one of the most important, high-profile and controversy-ridden responsibilities of The Channels editors. College leaders—from students and faculty to key administrators—read editorials to see what the best, brightest and most informed students advocate on pressing campus issues. The editorial writer has tremendous power to influence opinion and policy, a power that brings with it awesome responsibility.

In general, an editorial is a strongly worded opinion column that seeks to persuade or enlighten. The editorial writer should thoroughly research and understand all sides of an issue, then develop this background into a well-supported and argued opinion. Even when disagreeing, the editorial writer should strive for a tone that is courteous and fair.

Editorial topics and positions are developed by consensus of the editorial board. The editorial writer may be written by an individual team, but the writer or writers always speak for the board majority. Editorials are unsigned.

The following guidelines should be considered in the development of editorials:

Types of editorials

- Persuasive—meant to influence readers or policy makers, to urge them to take a particular stand.
- Explanatory or Analysis—still opinion, but mostly casts new light on ongoing issue. Localization of state or federal issue good example of this.
- Obituary—laudatory in nature. Commentary on person leaving public service is similar type.
- Endorsement—in political races.

Goals of editorials

- To make people think
- To influence policy makers, to sway a pending decision by government agency.
- To localize issues for readers, to bring it home for them and give it relevance.

Structure

- Editorials are written in a simple, direct and persuasive language. Generally they should run about 12". Longer editorials must be approved by the editorial board.

- The editorial opens with power and closes with purpose. Begin with a premise or strongly worded opinion then wrap up with a conclusion that restates the premise. If the reader has to wonder about or search for the editorial writer's opinion, then the piece is not a success.
- In the body, provide facts, information and statistics to support your premise. You may pull broadly from past news stories. Provide facts, supporting material. The facts (evidence) should be as complete as possible in the space allowed. Avoid repeating arguments in the body, even if using different language.
- The strongest editorials acknowledge the opposing viewpoint, then use sound reason to refute it. No issue is black and white, and the informed editorial writer will note the merit of the opposition's views.
- Finish with a conclusion that restates the premise. When the editorial includes criticism, the writer should provide a solution or a plea for reader action.

Other guidelines

- Editorials should be based on campus developments that already have been reported in the news column of The Channels. To do otherwise makes the editorial column the vehicle of reporting, and that is not its function; its function is analysis, comment, and opinion. An editorial may, when odd publication dates require it, appear simultaneously with a news story on which it comments.
- Remember who you are writing for and explain everything. Make sure you briefly restate the issues you are opining about. Expect that readers know nothing about the issue.
- Strive to show how the editorial subject will directly affects the reader.
- As with all good writing, avoid overgeneralizations and assumptions. Follow same rules as reporting when it comes to libel and use of language. Be careful. Always take the high road. No personal attacks or mean-spirited attacks.
- A cartoon should be assigned to illustrate the theme of the editorial.
- Editorials should include praise as commonly as attack or criticism.
- Beforehand, someone should ask: "Who will the editorial hurt?" or "Who will protest vigorously?" Ponder the responses and be prepared to face the consequences.

Role of the Editor

- Providing guidelines to authors for preparing and submitting manuscripts.
- Providing a clear statement of the Journal's policies on authorship criteria.
- Treating all authors with fairness, courtesy, objectivity, honesty, and transparency.

- Establishing and defining policies on conflicts of interest for *all* involved in the publication process, including editors, staff (e.g., editorial and sales), authors, and reviewers.
- Protecting the confidentiality of every author's work.
- Establishing a system for effective and rapid peer review.
- Making editorial decisions with reasonable speed and communicating them in a clear and constructive manner.
- Being vigilant in avoiding the possibility of editors and/or referees delaying a manuscript for suspect reasons.
- Establishing clear guidelines for authors regarding acceptable practices for sharing experimental materials and information, particularly those required to replicate the research, before and after publication.
- Establishing a procedure for reconsidering editorial decisions.
- Describing, implementing, and regularly reviewing policies for handling ethical issues and allegations or findings of misconduct by authors and anyone involved in the peer review process.
- Informing authors of solicited manuscripts that the submission will be evaluated according to the journal's standard procedures or outlining the decision-making process if it differs from those procedures.
- Developing mechanisms, in cooperation with the publisher, to ensure timely publication of accepted manuscripts.
- Clearly communicating all other editorial policies and standards.

Role of the News Editor

The News Editor is one of the most important persons who plan a daily newspaper. His role in any newspaper office-whether it be weekly or daily-is all pervading. To a national newspaper an active, intelligent and enterprising news editor is the vital spark which energises its news coverage and outlook.

He is responsible for a steady and continuous inflow of up-to-the-minute news into newspaper office. Although most of the news supplied is a mechanical process covered by daily routine, but like all machinery of news gathering, the news editor is responsible for watching its smooth functioning. The news editor keeps a careful eye on the routine side of his news collection as well as on the other side of his work or the news desk which calls for more imaginative emulation.

Function of the News Editor

An ideal news editor manages to get all the obvious stories into his paper with a good proportion of them as exclusives. While the selection of obvious stories is important, greater importance is attached to the original ones produced by his team of correspondents.

The number of words received on the teleprinter in a newspaper is so large that if each word were to be printed, the newspaper will have to run into hundreds of pages each morning.

The news editor is called upon to use his discretion, discrimination and imagination in reading the public mind and select the stories which have real news value and can be called important by his readers- quite a large number to be allotted a "splash" position on the main news pages according to the subject matter or field of activity they are concerned with.

All this has to be done with an alertness to ensure that the kind of stories readers seek shall be found in his newspaper.

There are some fundamental stories which no newspaper can afford to miss as they go into all the daily newspapers without exception. While they are important and have to be included, there are others called exclusive which only an alert news editor can discover from the large ocean of copy that has been pouring into the office during the day.

An intelligent news editor has to make a judicious follow-up of a seemingly promising paragraph or sometimes even make further enquiry before finalising the story and give it the perfect shape he wants.

Exclusive Stories of News Editor

The news editor gets good satisfaction from the stories which are exclusive to his own newspaper. If he can manage to get into every issue a dozen or more minor stories with good news value but exclusive, he feels elated.

The news editor is also responsible for final scrutiny of important news stories submitted by different correspondents, feature writers and outside correspondents. He gives special attention to the facts and figures included in the write-ups and wherever he is in doubt, he takes pains to check-up their accuracy from the authentic source.

Any slip on his part can land the newspaper into trouble. Hence good newspapers have highly experienced and intelligent news editors.

Organizing Ability of News Editor

The hurry and scurry of daily routine makes heavy demands upon the organizing ability of the news editor and his decisions, especially when time is short yet there has to be accuracy. The exigencies of the case may sometimes mean even deputing different correspondents to different parts of the country to piece together the links of a promising story.

There are certain qualities that the News Editor must possess. He must have an infinite amount of patience and a keen interest in news of all kind. He must have a good general educational background with a fair amount of historical, political and economic knowledge. He must try to keep himself abreast and informed on every important development in the work-a-day world.

He must enjoy reading the newspapers, the weeklies, and the magazines. He must not think that he can keep normal working hours, for it is truer of the News Editor than of anybody else that he is always on duty whether at home or in the office.

He must be a good mixer, he must be on the lookout for news all the time, he must learn to scan the newspaper, and-perhaps the most important asset of all-he must be able to retain his sense of humour however depressing the situation may be.

Daily Routine of News Editor

His working day begins early. Once he gets to his office there is so much to be one that he has little time to examine thoroughly his own paper and those of rival managements.

Therefore, he must begin his reading with his early morning cup of tea and continue it on the way so that when he gets to his desk he has a fair idea of the contents of the morning papers. His assistant will have arrived earlier and will have prepared a list of his papers, exclusive news items and a more depressing list, that of the stories which the paper has missed.

He will probably regard the 'scoops' as in the natural order of things, but he will certainly want to hold an inquest on the news which has been missed, primarily to satisfy himself that there is not a fault in the paper's methods of news gathering which needs to be eradicated.

Having dealt with the past he must immediately concern himself with the future and launch his plan of campaign for the next issue. Probably his first task will be to decide whether there is anything in any of the papers which needs to be followed up.

Next he must mark the diary and assign the reporters to attend meetings which ought to be specially covered and not left to the news agencies.

He must also allot men to the news stories which have cropped up and to enquiries which may not produce immediate results but which may be the preliminary step towards a first-class article a few days later. But he must watch his man-power closely. He must not fritter it away and he must not be left in the position that if later in the morning big news comes in, the reporters' room is empty.

It is certainly not false economy to have one or two reporters sitting idle; if they are wise they will spend their free time in reading newspapers, books, or periodicals which can always be borrowed from the office library.

It is the great thrill of the News Editor's life that he can never guess when the big news will break. One News Editor certainly will never forget the moment when a pale-faced messenger tore an item off the tape machine and put on his desk the first news of the death of Lal Bahadur Shastri. Or another moment when, as he sat quietly in his armchair, the telephone rang in the late evening and he was informed that his paper's Patna correspondent had been kidnapped.

Morning News Conference of News Editor

Assuming that the morning is a norm's one the News Editor, having allotted the reporters their assignments turns his attention to the preparations for the morning news conference, for which he is primarily responsible.

This is generally attended by the Editor or one of his assistants, the Junior Editors and their assistants, the picture editor, the cartographer, a representative of the City Department, and a man from the circulating department which should always be kept in close touch with the news as it arises.

This conference is usually of an informal character when ideas on the day's news and on space requirements are freely exchanged in preparation for the more important conference which will be held in the late afternoon.

The News Editor also remains in communication with many of the special writers, who do much of their work away from the office, and with the heads of other departments. He goes through the 'marked papers' in which the contributions from correspondents are brought to his notice. That is why it is held that the News Editor should not stick to his desk all the time, because good contacts are necessary for the maintenance of a first class news service. For that reason, most of the News Editors of the national newspapers are given an entertainment allowance and most of it is spent at the luncheon table.

Role of Chief Sub Editor

Press sub-editors, or subs, check the written text of newspapers, magazines or websites before it is published. They are responsible for ensuring the correct grammar, spelling, house style and tone of the published work.

Sub editors make sure that the copy is factually correct and that it suits the target market. They also lay out the story on the page, write headings and captions, and may be involved with overall page design.

Like other journalism roles, sub-editing is demanding and requires constant attention to detail in a fast-paced working environment.

Responsibilities

To be a good sub editor, you must be an all-rounder: you need to know media law, have a keen eye for detail and be able to put a story together with speed and style.

Depending on the nature of employment and the extent to which production and layout work falls within the sub-editor's remit, your tasks will typically involve the following:

- editing copy, written by reporters or features writers, to remove spelling mistakes and grammatical errors
- rewriting material so that it flows or reads better and adheres to the house style of a particular publication
- ensuring that a story fits a particular word count by cutting or expanding material as necessary
- writing headlines that capture the essence of the story or are clever or amusing
- writing standfirsts or 'sells' (brief introductions, which sum up the story underneath the headline)
- liaising with reporters, journalists and editors
- checking facts and stories to ensure they are accurate, adhere to copyright laws, are not libelous or go against the publication's policy
- cropping photos and deciding where to use them for best effect and writing picture captions
- proofreading complete pages produced by other sub-editors using the main basic proofing symbols
- working to a page plan to ensure that the right stories appear in the correct place on each page
- laying out pages and, depending on the nature of the role, playing a part in page design
- manipulating on-screen copy using appropriate desktop publishing software, such as Quark Express, InDesign and Photoshop
- keeping up to date with sector issues, e.g. by reading related publications

- Adapting all these skills for a publication's website.

Career prospects

- The most junior post for a sub-editor is that of copy sub, which is simply dealing with the written text. Being given greater responsibility for page design and layout is the next step up.
- The sub-editing role provides an excellent opportunity to gain an insight into all aspects of journalism, with exposure to writing, design and production skills.
- Sub-editors with experience often get the opportunity to write features, especially if they have been working on a specific section, such as sport, the arts, business or finance. This is valuable experience for anyone aiming towards a career in writing. Sub-editors could also move into a full-time design and production role.
- In some instances the role of the sub-editor is changing. A few newspapers have decided to eliminate this layer of the editorial process as a cost-cutting exercise and instead reporters are expected to write their copy directly onto the page, sub it themselves and write their own headlines.
- There are also changes with where sub-editing is carried out, with a greater degree of flexibility being offered in many cases. Sometimes it is outsourced to freelancers living miles from the rest of the publication, even abroad, or it may be carried out by employed staff working from different locations, outside of the main office.
- The print industry is in a state of flux, and journalism for the web is a growth area. Here, the sub-editor's ease with technical issues and good writing ability are a useful combination.
- Magazines and small newspapers have less clear-cut definitions between journalists, sub-editors and production editors, so a move to a smaller publication can be very useful to develop a real breadth of experience.
- Many of the larger newspaper groups own titles all over the country and one way to gain promotion is to apply for more senior posts within your own newspaper group.
- Like other journalists, sub-editors can find employment as press officers for companies or working with public relations (PR) agencies, writing the kind of copy that is likely to be accepted by other media.
- A willingness to relocate and work for different companies can help to advance your development and broaden your career prospects. The ability to maintain industry contacts and respond quickly to new opportunities is very useful.

Role of Sub Editors

Editing is the most challenging fact of journalism. A good editors needs creative skills, command over the language, ideas to improve the copy, and correct judgment about how much importance should be given for a particular news item. The copy of the report has been improved by the sub-editor and is therefore easier to read and understand. Sub-editor is all about quality control in print journalism. The role varies depending on whether you are working in print, online or broadcast media. It is says that reporter write the paper (story), sub-editor make it.

EDITOR

Editor is a special post for a journalist. A person who edits a copy of a story is called an editor. An editor supervises the reporters and improves his reports for publication. An editor also plans about what to report, how to cover and the relative importance to be given to each story. Every newspaper will have a set of editors, like reporters. All editors are not of the same category. In a newspaper, the top post is that of a Chief Editor. Modern newspapers have editors for every section. The sports editor looks after sports news. The feature editor looks after the features section. Picture editors are in charge of photographers. Like that business editors look after business news etc.

SUB-EDITOR

Sub-editor is a person who collects reports from reporters and prepares the report to publish or broadcast. He also corrects and checks articles in a newspaper before they are printed. A big newspaper or magazine would employ several news/feature/sports editors assign work and edit a reporter/writers material for accuracy, content, grammar, and style.

QUALITIES OF A SUB-EDITOR

It is customary to describe desired qualities of a sub-editor separately. To be a good sub-editor one's must be an all-rounder. The qualities that must be present in a sub-editor are listed below:

NEWS SENSE

News sense is the basic quality of newsmen. News sense is essential for a sub-editor. He has to have news sense or nose for news to distinguish news from non-news. He is the first reader of a reporter's copy and if the reporter has made a mistake he has to correct it. A bad copy may have the most important element of the story buried in the fourth paragraph. It will be left to the sub-editor's nose for news to bring that to the first paragraph. He should be able to compare various news values and decide where to begin his story and should not miss important details.

CLARITY

A sub-editor should have clarity of mind and expression. A person who is confused himself cannot tell a story to others. Only clarity of mind is not enough unless it is accompanied by clarity of expression. Without clarity of expression clarity of mind has no meaning. Sub-editor is the judge of clarity of the copy a good subeditor will never allow a copy escape him unless the meaning is crystal clear. He has every right to make life miserable for a reporter who is not clear and does not write in simple language.

ALERTNESS

A sub-editor should always be alert while dealing with his subjects. Many major news breaks in the past were possible because of alertness of reporters. Scoops don't walk into newspaper offices alert reporters catch them in air and pursue. A sub-editor has to be alert while working on news-desk. Lack of alertness of a sub-editor can be seen by readers in the morning for he will be leaving or introducing mistakes for everybody to see.

SPEED

A person who cannot work fast cannot be a good sub-editor. A sub-editor has to work with speed. He cannot sit with a copy for long. He has to do swiftly whatever is required of him for a lot more copy is waiting for him. He should think fast, decide fast and write or type fast for he has to meet deadlines or may have to go to another assignment. A slow sub-editor is a curse at the news desk and is treated with contempt. Some people are misfits in the profession.

CURIOSITY

Sub-editors should have an insatiable curiosity. This characteristic will keep on improving a sub-editor for with every passing day a curious subeditor will have a better background to do his job the next day. Reporters and sub-editors should read as much as possible to constantly improve their awareness level.

BI-FOCAL MINDED

Sub-editor must be a bi-focal mind. By bi-focal mind we mean that a person observe a fact in two ways one from very close and other far from sight. It means that the sub-editor should have the ability to catch any mistake in a story.

When he take a copy of a story firstly he follow the visible mistakes, this is called very near mistake. For example, 'Chapy Nobabgonj is the capital of mango in Bangladesh' here contain spelling mistake, the correct spelling is 'Chapai Nawabgonj'.

The second mistake is ‘The largest mangoes hut sits in Shivganj district’. Here Shivganj is not a district, it is a sub-district of Chapai Nawabgonj. The sub-editors should ability to face this type of mistake. In general sense this is called bi-focal mind.

SKEPTICISM

It is another necessary quality which a subeditor should cultivate. He should not take anything for granted. He should have an unwavering posture of doubt until faced with undeniable proof. Reporters should be more vigilant for many forces constantly try to use them, and through them their paper. Many people try to plant on reporters a wrong story for their own ends. Sub-editors should also be careful for some clever politicians, public relations men and product advertisers keep on trying to take them for a ride. They should not fail to check even reporters, copy for such foul play.

OBJECTIVITY

Sub-editor should aim at objectivity while dealing with a story. They should not allow their personal bias or ideas to creep into a story. They should not take sides but try to cover all the different viewpoints to achieve balance in the story.

ACCURACY

A sub-editor should strive for accuracy. He should check and re-check his facts till he is satisfied that he has them accurate. The role of a sub-editor is to check for accuracy. It is particularly important when background is involved. In the case of dates and names the reporter may rely on his memory but the sub-editor must check them from reference material available in the newspaper office. When there is a doubt he should leave it out—this is the golden rule of journalism. It is better not to say a thing than to say it wrong.

PUNCTUALITY

It is a good habit. It is always better to be punctual and then wait than reach late and ask others—a rival may misinform you or hide some important information. At the desk too punctuality pays. If a sub-editor is punctual he will be treated with respect by his co-workers. If he is late he will irritate them and spoil the working atmosphere. Besides he may have to face the problem of backlog of copy which he will have to clear under the pressure of deadline.

VAST KNOWLEDGE

All other things being equal reporters need additional qualities to deal effectively with all sorts of people they meet in the field. Sub-editors should have better command over language as they improve what reporters write. An intelligent envisioning of the future

helps newsmen in general. The quality helps them in identifying processes and people who will be important in future. The sub-editors should keep up-date information and vast knowledge about home and abroad. Keep up to date with sector issues, by reading related publications. Adapt all these skills for a publication's website.

CREDIBILITY

A report should be credible. Before writing or editing, the sub-editor should crosscheck the facts and figures. Mistakes can creep in when work is done in haste. It is always better to revise the copy before sending to publish or broadcast. If the story can be improved, it should be rewritten.

IMAGINATION

This basic mental faculty helps reporters in writing better stories that retain the reader's interest. For a sub-editor this creative faculty is very useful as he can add sparkle to somebody else copy and make it lively. Besides, imaginative headlines attract the reader and improve the quality of a newspaper.

TACTFULNESS

A sub-editor should be tactful. He should have the ability to handle sensitive people and situations gracefully without causing hurt or angry feelings. He should be considerate of others and should be careful not to embarrass, upset or offend them. He should have an understanding of human behavior and emotions. This will help him in developing contacts that are so essential for news gathering & writing.

SELF-DISCIPLINE

One can achieve a degree of proficiency in sub-editing or reporting by systematic effort and self-control. In this sense self-discipline suggests dedication and firm commitment. It helps in journalism as in any other field.

CALMNESS

Sub-editors often work in trying circumstances. They have to remain calm and composed in most exciting and tragic circumstances. In many situations they have to be calm—devoid of hysterical actions or utterances and apply appropriate mental and physical effort to write or edit the story. Reporters and sub-editors are human beings. They have emotions but they have to stifle them in the face of disturbing influences—they have to develop resistance to excitability. Sub-editors should develop a temperament to work under pressure of deadlines. They should not lose their cool if they are behind the clock for calm mind can work faster.

FEARLESSNESS AND FRANKNESS

These qualities help sub-editor in asking unpleasant questions and taking risks to find out truth. Nobody gives a story on a platter. He will have to probe, question, authenticate and exercise his power of deduction to write a good story.

DILIGENCE

Sub-editors should be diligent. Their jobs require painstaking exertion of intense care and effort, alertness and dedication to the task and wary watchfulness. They have to make extremely fine distinctions while writing or editing copy a sub-editor should insist on perfection and should lose his job for he can make or impair the newspaper. These qualities are basically qualities of good and efficient human beings. Good and efficient human being makes good and efficient sub-editors and reporters.

INTEGRITY

It is a virtue in itself and implies undeviating honesty and strict adherence to a stern code of ethics. This human quality is important for journalists. It is more important for reporters for they are more exposed to temptation as compared to sub-editors.

FUNCTIONS OF A SUB-EDITOR

Sub editing is a practice that involves correcting any mistakes in an article and enforcing efficiency. Like other journalism roles, sub-editing is demanding and requires constant attention to detail within a fast-paced working environment. Sub-editors work on national and local newspapers, magazines and online publications. The functions that must be done by sub-editors are listed below:

In general the sub-editors perform the following three functions in which almost all the sub-editors functions are included.

COPY EDIT AND DEVELOPMENT

Sub-editor edits copy, written by reporters or features writers, to remove spelling mistakes and grammatical errors then construct a develop story. The reporter's job is to write the story as quickly as possible with all the facts and figures. In their hurry, they may not be in a position to polish the language. So the first job of a sub editor is to see that the report is in good language and there are no mistakes. There can be spelling mistakes, mistakes in sentence construction, grammar and factual mistakes. If the sub editor finds a portion of the report ambiguous or incorrect or doubtful he has to cross check it with the reporter. Edit reports and press releases.

WRITE A HEADLINE

The sub editor then has to find a good headline for the story and writing headlines that capture the essence of the story or are clever or amusing. The headline should be sharp, attractive, crisp and convey the spirit of the story. The headline should compel the reader to stop and read the whole story.

While writing the headline, a sub editor should know the space available for the story, whether it is one column, two columns or three etc. The headline should fit within that column. While writing the heading, it should fit into the mood of the story. A sarcastic headline for a hard story will look odd. Similarly a hard-line headline will spoil the spirit of a humorous piece. The headline should also be suggestive. It should never be a full sentence.

FOLLOW IN HOUSE POLICY

Sub-editors are responsible for overseeing the content, accuracy, layout and design of newspaper and magazine articles and making sure that they are in keeping with house style. Every media house has its own policy and ethics. The media house contains and maintains their own goals, rules, and regulation. Every media follows their several news, advertisement, and page makeup policy. They oriented by their own policy. So the sub-editor should follow and fulfill the in house policy.

Without these three functions there are various significant jobs that are perform by sub-editors are remarks below:-

PAGE MAKEUP/LAYOUT OF PAGES

Page layout or page make up is an art. Each newspaper has a different layout though all have eight columns in each page. Types or fonts used by newspapers also differ from paper to paper. Every sub editor has to learn the typefaces available in the paper and the layout pattern adopted. Preparing the page of the newspaper is called page making. Earlier sub editors used to do it on dummy pages. Now a day they are doing it on the computer screen.

Picture editing also involves placing the picture in the correct position in the page. It is part of the page layout. Usually in the front page, only very important news pictures will find a place. He must have noticed from this that the headlines are not of uniform type. The type, or font, of the letters in each headline differs according to the length and width of the column. A sub editor should also know about the font sizes available. Each paper

has its fonts and types. Ensuring that, stories are the right length and correctly placed on pages.

USE PICTURE PHOTOGRAPH OR GRAPH

The sub editor now has to see if there is a possibility for including photographs along with the news item. Pictures or graphs can improve the visual quality of a report. Photography is an integral part of the media.

Whether a newspaper or news weekly or news channel or a news portal, photography is essential to give it the visual impact, effect and authenticity. It is said that a good picture is worth a thousand words. Sometimes one picture is enough to explain the mood of a situation or an event.

WRITE CAPTION

When you see a photo in the newspaper you look for what is written under it. This writing under a photo is called the catchword or caption. When photographers file photos, it is the job of the sub editor to write the appropriate caption. Cropping photos and deciding where to use them for best effect, and writing picture captions. A good caption can improve the impact of the picture.

CONDENSATION

Condensation is a task that the sub editor has to do. Reporters generally file lengthy stories. Only the sub editor will be able to know about the availability of space in the newspaper. If the full story written by a correspondent will not squeeze into the space available, it is the job of the sub editor to condense it by rewriting or editing. If one word can substitute for a number of words that definitely should be done.

RE-WRITE NEWS STORY

Rewriting material needs that it flows or reads better and adheres to the house style of a particular publication. Ensuring that, a story fits a particular word count by cutting or expanding materials as necessary. Checking facts and stories to ensure they are accurate, adhere to copyright laws, are not libelous or go against the publication's policy. Working to a page, plan to ensure that the right stories appear in the correct place on each page. If the sub-editor find any mistakes in a reporters copy he should correct the copy. If he think that the story needs to add some information or develop the story then he should re-write the story.

VALUE ADDED

The next job of the sub editor is to value add the report. If some background material has to be added, he has to collect it from the library and improve the story. For example, if a report is filed on a train accident killing ten people, the sub editor can improve the story by collecting information about other major train accidents that happened recently.

GIVE A BYLINE

Another important decision an editor has to take is about giving a byline or credit to the story. Normally bylines are not given for particular stories. But if a reporter files an exclusive story then it should appear with his byline or name so that he gets individual credit for the story. The decision of giving a byline to a reporter for a particular story is taken by the news editor. But a sub editor who edits the story can always suggest to the news editor about giving that story a byline.

PROOF READING

Proofreading complete pages produced by other sub-editors using the main basic proofing symbols. Checking facts and stories to ensure they are accurate, adhere to copyright laws, are not libelous or go against the publication's policy. When a news ready to go for publication the sub-editor should check the spelling, grammar, punctuation and so on.

TRANSLATE THE STORY

Translation a copy is a vital job for the sub-editor. To translate the news story is a significant function of a sub-editor. There are many news sources, news agencies and institutions around the world from where the news media collect information to publish or broadcast. This type of information usually written in English. Besides this the press note, press releases are almost publish in English. The sub-editor needs to translate these types of information for the readers benefit.

CONCLUSION

Editing is a process by which a report is read, corrected, modified, value added, polished, improved and made better for publication. Condensation is also part of editing. The editor also decides whether photographs or other images or graphs should be used along with the report

Sub-editors are journalists or designers responsible for overseeing the content, accuracy, layout and design of newspaper and magazine articles and making sure that they are in keeping with house style. Now we can say that, the sub-editors are responsible to the

house performing various functions. Besides sub-editors should cultivate some qualities that, make him for the competitive media world.

Unit:2 Process of Editing

The main consideration in editing is to tell the story in the fewest words possible. Condensation is essential because there is more material than can be used. The second consideration is clarity, which is obtained by avoiding intricate sentence structure and by using familiar words. The third consideration is forceful expression. The sub-editor must constantly seek the most effective way to express the ideas of the story. The fourth consideration is respect for accuracy. It means looking out for small factual errors, which disfigure an otherwise good story.

Editing involves more than making sure words are spelled correctly, language is used properly, punctuation is in the right places and spelling is accurate. These, however, are important details that separate a polished publication from a sloppy one. As gatekeepers of a publication, editors must have a clear idea about what the mission is. So part of editing involves being missionaries and a part also involves being ambassadors of ideas.

It is with experience that the best ideas most often come from the bottom up, not from the top down. So editors should be encouraging writers to pursue their own story ideas. This is done with prompting, nudging, cajoling, pushing--whatever works.

Editing requires good listening. The writer should be heard first, and then the editor responds. The conversation process enriches stories, because two heads are better than one. Conversation should be taking place when the idea is first being formulated; it should take place during and after the reporting phase; it should take place before the story is written and it should take place after the editor has fully processed the story. At each stage the editor should bear in mind that it is the reporter's story on the one hand, but it also is the reader's story. It is not the editor's story. Story ideas are similar to loaves of bread. All of the elements need to be brought together and kneaded. Then the dough is popped into the oven until it rises and is ready to eat. The punctuation has an important function in a story. Its function is to help guide the reader through the sentence or paragraph in a way that will make the wording more understandable.

Revision

Editorial changes, normally made in ink for the printer, are better made clearly in pencil on the typescript if the writer is going to see the changes. A reasonably legible photocopy

can then be sent to the author for checking and revision process. The editor can draw attention to doubtful points with a marginal note.

Structural Reorganization

Reorganizing a whole write up, argument or section ought to be the writer's responsibility, but the editor must have good reasons for asking for major reorganization, and they should suggest how it should be done.

Expansion

If a step in the argument is missing, or if further experimental evidence is needed, only the writer can supply the missing material.

Shortening

Shortening an article to a given length may be done by the author but is often better done in the editorial office. If the writer is asked to do the work the editor must indicate how it might be done, which sections, paragraphs, tables or illustrations could be deleted, which part could be condensed, and which marginally relevant theme might be cut out.

The Title

A title that conveys the main subject or the message in a few words as possible is easy retrieval. Since editors know more about the use of titles in information retrieval than most writers, editors should have a major say in re-titling stories where necessary.

Spellings

The difference between American and British spelling produce problems in these days of international journals largely in English. If the editor, publisher or printer cannot accept inconsistency between articles, the editor or copy-editor should change the spelling, where necessary, to whichever version is more common in the country of publication.

Guidelines for rewriting, revising and some basic principles of editing:

1. Give the main points of the news in the first paragraph
2. Tell the story in headline and use a verb to give it vigor
3. Check names, titles, facts, figures, dates, and address where ever slightest doubt exists. The sub-editor know the reference book which will clear the doubt
4. Both sides of the story in a dispute must be given
5. Use short sentences and short paragraphs
6. Repeat names in court cases rather than refer to them as accused, witness, etc

7. Indicate correctness of doubtful spelling by saying 'correct' within brackets
8. Beware of foreign names
9. Define long, unfamiliar words, especially scientific and medical terms
10. Do not begin sentences with words like 'despite' or 'because'
11. Do not use vague phrases like a 'serious charge' or a 'certain offence'
12. Reporters to give a rather artificial flow to the story 'meanwhile' often use the word. Cut it out
13. Use concrete words, words that make the reader see, hear, smell or taste. Test the story for concrete images and visual word pictures
14. Be careful about pronouns. The misuse of the relative pronoun and punctuation are the most common grammatical errors in the news stories.
15. Editorializing any trace of personal opinion or a value judgment should be eliminated from the copy unless it is a feature or news analysis

Detecting & Correcting Errors

This also has happened to everyone, and it's important to nip the situation in the bud. Often errors are mistakenly introduced in the rapid line-editing process, when copy is being shifted and rearranged. Occasionally errors are introduced by an editor who, to put it plainly, thinks he or she knows better, and changes or includes a fact without looking it up. **A headline writer might put a wrong fact in the story headline, and of course many readers will think it's the mistake of the person whose byline is on the text.**

In these cases where the editors were clearly in the wrong, resist the urge to get upset. **Calmly bring the error to your immediate supervisor's attention as soon as possible.** If the story is online, this version can be quickly fixed. If the error is such that it requires a printed correction from the publication, this should indicate that it the error was one of editing and not the reporter's mistake.

It is important to take story changes in stride and be judicious about when to raise a fuss. (Good times to take the issue up with your editor could be when facts or the general story meaning are changed, when especially good or exclusive parts were taken out, when an important source is cut out of the story, or when the writer's voice in an opinion column is altered.) Look on the editing process as a collaborative effort and learn when to pick your battles.

Correcting Copy for Good Taste Mistakes tend to be inevitable when you're producing an edition every night, often on a limited staff, and there are always readers who are more than happy to overlook what you've done right and let you know what you've done wrong.

But grammar errors and misspelled headlines aside, mistakes within copy such as wrong quotes or misidentifications can call the very credibility of a publication into question.

The allegation of error may be made directly to the reporter or to an editor, who will then judge whether the newspaper did indeed err and what kind of a correction is warranted. The correction is usually printed in the next edition, and is usually worded positively, clarifying the true facts instead of starkly highlighting the newspaper's fault. Example: "Joe Smith, director of the local food bank featured in Wednesday's editions, is 56 years old."

Online journalism offers not only wider readership, but also the opportunity to correct errors even faster.

Online publications and blogs alike should always be committed to reporting the truth, and when an error is brought to the site editor's attention it should be dealt with promptly. If not, questions about the site's credibility can easily spread like wildfire across the Web, threatening the time and effort that pro or citizen journalists took to build the site up.

How to remedy the situation depends on:

- **Pre-established correction rules for the site:**

Is the wrong item simply fixed, or is there a notation that alerts readers who might have seen the piece earlier that there was an error in copy?

- **How bad was the error?** If it's your fault, best to bite the bullet and admit so right out of the gate. Find out how you erred (trusting a bad source, taking bad notes, etc.) and devise how you can prevent such a mistake from happening again (i.e. backing up your notes with an audio recording).

- **How steamed is the person affected by the copy error?**

If they, or someone completely unrelated to the story, simply advises you of a copy mistake, quickly fix it and move on. If the error is so bad as to incite controversy, call a subject's reputation into question or make the subject hopping mad, converse as politely as possible with the subject, apologize for misquoting or misrepresenting him or her (or whatever the error may be) and publish a correction. Acting swiftly and accepting responsibility works wonders in defusing a potentially ugly situation.

Editing for Language and style

Sub-editor has no business to change a writer's style. But they have every obligation to insist that the copy be correct in spelling, grammar and punctuation. Most copy can be tightened. Even if only a few words in a paragraph are removed the total saving in space will be considerable. Some stories, notably from the news agencies, can be trimmed sharply but the sub-editor should not over edit. Indiscreet butchering of local copy is a sure way to damage morale in the reporter's room. An ear for language is as important as an eye for grammar. Careful reading of copy and application of the blue pencil will enable the sub-editor to dig out unclear or nonsensical expressions.

The greatest danger to the news columns of the newspaper of today is the proliferation of jargon, which has virtually made it impossible for the common reader to follow many of the important and significant stories. Jargon has been defined as the use of circumlocution instead of short, straight speech and the choice of vague, abstract nouns rather than concrete ones. Jargon is terminology that relates to a specific activity, profession or group. Much like slang it develops as a kind of shorthand, to quickly express ideas that are frequently discussed between members of a group.

Newspaper readers develop a habit of reading between the lines, tending to read a story fully or partially or to misinterpret its meaning. This happens in most cases because the story is poorly organized, poorly written and lacking in facts. In every story the characters must be identified, the authority for the news must be given and statements must often be qualified early in the story and accurately.

Journalists have developed a style and language which is peculiarly their own and which is called 'journalese', it is not always elegant or grammatical and very often it fails to communicate to the readers. Journalese results from the efforts of the non-literary mind to discover alternatives for the obvious where none is necessary and is best avoided by the frank acceptance of even a hard worn phrase when it expresses what you want to say.

The modern practice of editing is to avoid cluttering copy with too much punctuation. Punctuation has only one function: to make the story easier to read by indicating where the pauses would be if it were read aloud. A good practice for the sub-editor will be to be generous with full stops for short sentences, which means greater readability. The well-constructed sentences need little in the way of punctuation. But wherever punctuation is necessary it should be used with care for misplacement or omission of even a comma can alter the meaning of a sentence. Punctuation marks bring clarity and better readability. At the same time, too much will clutter the sentence.

The use of the word 'that' is another bugbear of editing. Indian editors often dispense with this word where it is very vital and failure to use it is ungrammatical. But it can be dispensed with in sentences like: 'he said (that) he was going to work when the accident

took place'. For the editor there can be only one rule: let it depend on how the sentence sounds.

Again the use of the words 'former' and 'latter' is very common in Indian newspapers while reporting interviews or speeches. The professional advice is that they should not find a place in a newspaper. They make the reader's eyes move up and down to identify the persons indicated by these words and this causes irritation.

Figures can cause confusion. They must be spelt out from one to nine and given in figures from 10 upwards. Where numbers are adjacent to another numbers as in '18 34-seated buses', one of the numbers should be spelt out. It is better to avoid this construction if possible. Dates of month except for historical or well-used phrases are set in figures. For example, the sixteenth of July (denoting a historic event) not July 16.

Good taste in newspaper stories depends entirely on the prevailing conventions of a society. There is something, which newspapers do not mention or carry in their columns but the list of such items is shrinking day by day. Ultimately it is up to individual newspapers to decide what is proper and what is not proper.

Editing should also pay minute attention to words in the story in order to improve its quality and appeal. Technical terms should be explained in simple words so that the readers can honestly understand them. Preference should be given to familiar words than to the unfamiliar ones. Editing should make the story simpler and make the language live where it is dead. While doing so, one should still retain the vital facts and ensure accuracy. While using foreign expressions, the editor should be sure of their spelling, use and meaning.

The basic building blocks of journalism are words. The editor should respect the words, and follow the way these are arranged and strung together. Any misplacement of words could twist the meaning. Hence, attention is paid to punctuation marks, grammar and syntax. All these are important in the sentence construction.

Language and Style basics

The importance of language

Your main task as a journalist is to help people understand what is happening around them; in their village, in their country and in the world. Most readers or listeners will not have your knowledge of language, so you must simplify it for them. You should be able to examine the most complicated issues and events then translate them into language which your audience can understand. If you fail in this, people will stop buying your newspaper or tuning in to your radio or television station. You will be failing in your job.

For many journalists today, English is the main language used for newspapers or magazines, radio, television or the Internet. This book is written in English, so these chapters concentrate on the English language. It is worth remembering, however, that even a language as common as English is not exactly the same all over the world. There are differences between, for example, UK English and American English. There are often also differences in the way English is written or spoken within individual countries. It may sometimes be difficult to decide what is correct in the English used in your country. Language is developing all the time, and your country may not yet have a well-established set of rules for English. If this is so, you should use the form which is accepted as correct by the most literate educated people in your country. Above all, use words and grammar which are most easily understood by your readers or listeners.

Although you are reading this in English, you may do a lot of writing in other languages. Many of the general points we make about writing style will apply to these other languages. Learn the general points and try to apply them to your own language or languages.

You may get some guidance on such things as sentence length, punctuation or word usage from your organisation's style books. These are books which lay down rules for language you must follow in your particular paper or broadcasting station. You should ask your editor or chief of staff for a copy of your organisation's style book. Unfortunately, many small or new organisations do not have their own style book. In these chapters, we try to give you some general guidelines for language use and writing style. Use this advice to create your own style guide. For more details on how to keep and use a style guide, see *Chapter 15: Newsroom books*.

Short, sharp, clear sentences

Whether you write for newspapers, broadcasting or the Internet, you should always aim for words and sentences which provide the maximum amount of understanding with the minimum risk of confusion. This generally means keeping words and sentences short and simple. You can use long words, but you must be sure they are doing their job properly. In *Chapter 5: Writing the intro, the golden rules*, we said that many words are like fat and lazy people sitting back without paddles in a canoe. Remember, there is no room in your sentences for fat and lazy words. If words do not add to understanding, throw them overboard.

Sentence length

There is no single rule about the length of sentences in news writing, but you should set yourself a target for the maximum number of words you use. We suggest that you never use more than 20 words in any sentence, except in special circumstances. If you follow this rule, your sentences will be simpler, there will be less room for error and you will make a more efficient use of words.

An alternative way of judging the best length for your sentences is to count the number of ideas or concepts you expect your reader or listener to understand. Compare these two examples of the same story. Notice how version A tries to pack all the ideas into one sentence, whereas version B splits them into three separate sentences:

Story A

Four aircraft passengers, the pilot and three people travelling in a car were killed when a twin-engined Beechcraft Baron aircraft hit an electric power line and crashed near Nadi airport this week.

Story B

Eight people died when an aircraft crashed near Nadi airport this week.

The pilot and four passengers died when their twin-engined Beechcraft Baron hit a power line. The plane then crashed into a car on a road near the airport, killing three more people.

Notice that, although Story B is 12 words longer than Story A, it is split into three sentences. None of the sentences in Story B is longer than 20 words. Get someone to read both stories out loud to you, and you will quickly see that Story B is easier to understand.

The reason is simple. Story A contains six separate ideas for the reader or listener to understand at one time:

1. the people in the plane;
2. the people in the car;
3. the type of plane;
4. the cause of the crash;
5. the location of the crash;
6. the time of the crash.

Story B, by comparison, has fewer ideas in each sentence. The first sentence has just four simple ideas:

1. the total number of dead;
2. a simple description of the type of plane;
3. where it crashed;
4. when it crashed.

The second sentence tells us:

1. how many died in the plane;
2. the exact type of plane;
3. the exact cause of the crash.

The third sentence tells us:

1. how the people in the car died;
2. where the car was;
3. how many died in the car.

You may argue that Story B, as well as being longer, gives a total of ten ideas to understand. However, many of those ideas are not separate. They relate to details in the preceding sentence. Linking ideas and repeating details often helps understanding. More important, those ten ideas are not thrown at our audience in one breath. The full stop at the end of each sentence (which comes as a pause on radio and television) allows the reader or listener time to digest one set of facts before moving on to new details.

We recommend that you try to limit each sentence to **no more than three separate ideas**. You can occasionally use four ideas per sentence, as long as those ideas are not complicated. We fitted four ideas into the intro of Story B above because two of the ideas - the time and place - are very simple and easy for the reader to understand.

Look back at the example of the Fiji cyclone in *Chapter 6* to see how we changed an even bigger mass of confusing detail into easily digestible sentences.

Lively language

The words you use will help to make your story easy to understand. Long words are not bad in themselves, if they are the only words available to explain a particular meaning accurately. However, the English language is large and varied so there are usually shorter alternatives which do the job just as well as long words.

Many young journalists think that they have to use the whole of their vocabulary when writing even the simplest news story. You may wish to show off your knowledge of the

language, but remember that your knowledge is not what matters. The vocabulary of your reader or listener is more important.

Some journalists also believe that they can only add drama or depth to a story by adding words. We get sentences like:

The man ran *swiftly* across the street to help the *defenceless* boy who was being *brutally* beaten.

Take out the adjectives and adverbs in italics. They are unnecessary and only slow the sentence down. The word *swiftly* is unnecessary because people do not usually run slowly. The boy is obviously *defenceless*, otherwise he would not be being beaten. And the word *brutally* is unnecessary, as most beatings are brutal. The sentence is now much livelier and sharper:

The man ran across the street to help the boy who was being beaten.

The most effective way to add drama to a sentence is to choose the verbs carefully. For example, try changing the verb “ran” to “strolled”, “walked”, “flew” or “thundered”. See how they alter the whole picture of what happened. We do not suggest that you change verbs simply to add drama. Every word must accurately describe what happened. But it is better to choose the correct verb than to add unnecessary adjectives and adverbs. The use of a variety of verbs is most common in sports reporting, where we read of players kicking, shooting, powering or rocketing the ball into the net.

Using new words

Many careless writers introduce new words without thinking how they will be understood by ordinary people. Sometimes they change nouns into verbs, in order to make sentences shorter. The danger with this is that the resultant verb is often less precise than the original phrase and is less readily understood by people. Avoid using verbs such as:

To author (use *to write*)

To hospitalise (use *to admit to hospital* or *to be in hospital*)

To parent (use *to be a parent* or *to act like a parent*)

You must be very careful about introducing new words which your readers or listeners might not understand. This is especially important if the word is in their second language. Stay with familiar words.

However, if you cannot avoid using a new word, you must follow it immediately with an explanation. For example, many English language newspapers and broadcasters use the Russian word *glasnost* quite freely when speaking of the changes in the Soviet Union. When they first began to use it, they needed to explain that *glasnost* means "the opening up of a society which has previously been rigidly controlled".

There are also times when new words or usages have been readily accepted by society before the media decide to use them. It would be foolish, for example, to fight against the use of *farewell* as a verb in the South Pacific. People often speak of `farewelling a friend'.

Sentence structure

It is not enough to write short sentences using simple words. You also have to construct your sentences in such a way that the ideas are easy to understand. You can do it by using the active voice.

You will remember that the sentence "the man hit the table" is in the active voice (where the man is the hitter). The sentence "the table was hit by the man" is in the passive voice. Wherever possible, write in the active voice. That is the way most people speak. People do not say "the bus was missed by me", they say "I missed the bus".

However, there are times when you cannot avoid using the passive voice. This is particularly so when it is not clear who is responsible for the action or when the subject of the sentence is unimportant or unclear. For example we would write:

Three children have been admitted to hospital with suspected food poisoning. (Passive voice)

It would be wrong to use either of the following versions, the first because it is not clear who admitted them (was it a doctor or a nurse?), the second because we are not sure that it was food poisoning:

Someone admitted three children to hospital with suspected food poisoning.

OR

Food poisoning put three children in hospital.

Other factors which can make sentences too complicated for your reader or listener to understand include:

Subordinate clauses

You should avoid starting a sentence with a subordinate clauses. Subordinate clauses usually begin with words such as "while...", "as...", "although...", "even though...", "because ..." and "despite...". They are separate phrases within a sentence which help to put the main part of the sentence in context. In the following example of bad sentence construction, the subordinate clause is in italics:

BAD

Although there has been a 20 percent increase in murders this year, the Prime Minister has vowed not to bring back hanging.

The main point of the sentence is that the Prime Minister has said he will not bring back hanging. The subordinate clause sets this promise in the context of the rising crime rate. In the example above, putting the subordinate clause at the beginning of the sentence may confuse your readers or listeners. They expect to hear the main facts first. Rewrite the sentence as follows:

BETTER:

The Prime Minister has vowed not to bring back hanging, despite a 20 percent increase in murders this year.

And and but

Even simple joining words like *and* and *but* can cause confusion if they are not used wisely. These words are called **conjunctions** because they join things together. The word *and* is quite acceptable when used to join together two words or phrases:

The man *and* the woman had two daughters *and* a son.

However, it should not be used to join together long lists of ideas which can quite easily be split into separate sentences. In the two examples which follow, the first version is confused by using *and* and *but*. By splitting it into separate sentences we do not alter the meaning, we simply make it easier to understand, for reasons we discussed in the section on sentence length:

RIGHT:

Import duty on meat and

WRONG:

vegetables will be reduced by ten percent.

The special subsidy for rice exporters will be increased by five percent. These changes will come into effect after the next budget.

Duty on imported meat and vegetables will be reduced by ten percent and the special subsidy for rice exporters will be increased by five percent but these changes will not come into effect until after the next budget.

Paired negatives

Paired or double negatives in English are not only bad grammar ("he has not got no pawpaw"), they usually create confusion, especially in the spoken word. Although logically paired negatives simply cancel each other out, many people do not use them in this way. Many other languages have totally different rules about paired negatives, and even some British dialects use the paired negative to add stress to a negative idea.

For example, the sentence "He was happy" is easy to understand. So is the sentence "He was unhappy". But what do you understand by "He was not unhappy". Was he happy or unhappy? Do you see the confusion? Make it a rule: avoid paired negatives.

Objectivity

Your language must not only be easily understood, it must be fair. You should not use words which give a biased view of a person, an event or a situation.

Many words develop special, biased meanings because of the way they are commonly used in a community. In some cases, you cannot avoid using such words. Take care that the words you use reflect the meaning in the community and not your own opinions. In particular, you should be careful about using words which describe disputes or conflicts. In these cases, each side to the dispute may choose to use the words which reflect well on them and badly on their opponents. As a journalist, you should try to steer the middle course.

The most obvious cases of bias are introduced by the use of adjectives and adverbs. A protester's *peaceful* resistance may seem like *violent* obstruction to a policeman on duty. An injured person waiting for an ambulance may think it arrived *slowly* when the ambulance driver believes he drove *fast*.

Verbs too can be loaded with bias. The same protester who *lobbed* a stone at a police van may be seen by the men inside to have *hurled* it at them. A boss sees his workers go on *strike*, the workers may say they *withdraw their labour*. Words like *sack*, *retrench* and *make redundant* describe similar situations in which people lose their jobs, but they mean quite different things to the bosses and workers involved. Some American companies even speak of *letting workers go*, even though the workers themselves have no choice.

Nouns can also express bias. A building can be a *house* to a poor person, yet seem like a *shack* to the rich observer. It may seem to be in a *suburb* to its owner, and in a *slum* to the rich man. And who is *rich*? If you have \$100 you will be *rich* to a beggar, but *poor* to a millionaire.

It is impossible to list all the words which may contain bias. You must look at each word individually and ask yourself if it is fair and accurate.

Quotes

You are on safer ground when you use words in quotes. That way the reader can judge the bias through the eyes of the person you quote. (In radio or television, it is better to use a recording of people speaking the actual words, called actuality.) In the following example, look at the difference between these two sentences describing the same crime. Notice how the magistrate and the accused see the crime in opposite ways:

The magistrate said: "These were mean and despicable thefts, carried out against a defenceless family for no good reason."

The accused said: "I never robbed anyone. I just took from the rich people and gave it back to the poor."

Do not pass judgment. Give the words in quotes and let your readers or listeners judge for themselves.

An added advantage of using quotes is that you can use much livelier language - the words the people themselves used. We talked about this in detail in *Chapters 8 and 9* on quotes and attribution.

TO SUMMARISE:

You must keep your language clear and simple so that your readers or listeners can understand.

Sentences should be short - no longer than 20 words or three concepts (ideas).

Sentence structure should be simple; it is best to write in the active voice.

Explain any new words whenever you use them.

Editorial Process:

The editing process takes place in several steps and involves reading the same text several times, each time with a different focus.

Step A must be done first. Step F is best done last. The others can be done in whatever order you find most productive. Some editors find it better to clean up all the details first and then look at the big picture; others prefer to address the big-picture issues first and then going back to fix the details.

- **Step A: Read the text**
Read it all the way through without editing. The goal is to get an idea of what the text is about, what it involves, where it's going and so on.
- **Step B: Fine-toothed comb**
Fix the typos, fix the punctuation, fix usage and grammar mistakes, make sure everything follows style.
- **Step C: Big picture**
Make sure the structure of the text makes sense. Is the information in the right order? Does it flow from one idea to the next easily and smoothly? Is everything clearly explained? Are there unanswered questions? Is any information missing?
- **Step D: Fact-checking**
Check everything. Verify names and titles. Check dates and locations. Do the math. Check summaries of reports, data or research against the original information. Check all sources.
- **Step E: Revise**
"Revise" is a broad term that covers several tasks such as removing redundancies, trimming wordy text, possibly trimming for length and making sure that none of the other editing has introduced gaps in the story or errors. The revision stage might come after the fact-checking stage; once the writer has answered any open questions and filled in any gaps in the story, some paragraphs might need updating.

- **Step F: Display type**

Many editors also write display type — headlines, headers, photo captions, summaries. It's best to do this once the text is ready for publication, and no more significant changes are anticipated.

Unit 3: Editing an article

Tips on editing an article:

1. Cut long sentences in two

Many long sentences are grammatically correct. But long sentences often contain several ideas, so they can easily lose the reader's focus because they don't provide a break, leading readers to get stuck or lose interest, and perhaps the reader might get bored and go watch TV instead.

If you spot a comma-heavy sentence, try to give each idea its own sentence.

2. Axe the adverbs (a.k.a. -ly words)

Adverbs weaken your copy because these excess words are not truly descriptive. Rather than saying the girl runs quickly, say she sprints. Instead of describing the cat as walking slowly, say he creeps or tiptoes. The screen door didn't shut noisily, it banged shut.

Find a more powerful verb to replace the weak verb + weak -ly adverb combo.

3. Stick to one voice

Sometimes it's necessary to use both first and second person, but that can be jarring for readers. For example, you might start your introduction talking about yourself, then switch halfway through the piece and start addressing the reader. Try to stick to "I" voice or "you" voice throughout one piece of writing.

And if you must switch, start with one and finish with the other. Don't move back and forth between the two. Your readers will get lost.

4. Remove extra punctuation

A powerful hyphen here and a thought-provoking semicolon there can be effective. But a piece of writing littered with all sorts of punctuation — parentheses, colons, ellipses, etc. — doesn't flow well.

Oftentimes, you can eliminate these extra pieces of punctuation with commas or by ending a sentence and starting a new one — and that makes your writing that much stronger.

5. Replace negative with positive

Instead of saying what something isn't, say what it is. “You don't want to make these mistakes in your writing” could be better stated as “You want to avoid these mistakes in your writing.” It's more straightforward.

If you find negative statements in your writing that contain don't, shouldn't, can't or another such word, find a way to rewrite them without the “not.” That will probably mean you need to find a more powerful verb.

6. Replace stuffy words with simple ones

Some people think jargon makes their writing sound smart, but you know better. Good writing does not confuse readers. If they need to grab a dictionary to finish a sentence, your writing has room for improvement.

To get your point across, use words people are familiar with. The English language has thousands of words. You can certainly find a shorter or more common word in your thesaurus than a jargony one.

7. Remove redundancies

You don't need to say the exact same thing with two words. Did you catch the redundant words in that sentence? Here's a better version: you don't need to say the same thing with two words.

Sometimes sneaky redundancies are separated by an “and.” If you say your sentences are straightforward and to-the-point, they are neither. You don't need both words. Your sentences are straightforward. Or, your sentences are to-the-point.

8. Reduce prepositions

Though prepositions (of, in, to, for, etc.) are helpful little words, they make sentences more lengthy because they cannot stand alone. Prepositions need lots of friends. By cutting the preposition and the words that follow, you can cut three, four or even five words. Sometimes a prepositional phrase can be replaced with just one more direct word, or cut completely.

An easy way to cut prepositions is to look for opportunities to make something possessive. The car of your neighbor is really just your neighbor's car.

9. Cut “in order to”

You never need it. If you're going to the kitchen in order to make a sandwich... Your sentence could be tighter. Because you're really going to the kitchen to make a sandwich.

That “in order to” makes it take a millisecond longer to arrive at the meaty part of the sentence, which means your story is dragging more than it needs to.

10. Don't use “start to”

Did you start to walk the dog, or did you walk the dog? Is the car starting to roll down the hill, or is it rolling down the hill? “Start to” is a more difficult phrase to deal with than “in order to,” because sometimes you do need it. But more likely than not, you don't

Rather than making “start” the active verb, use the verb that's actually more active — like walking or rolling — to tell your story.

11. Nix “that”

In about five percent of your sentences (total guess from the grammar police), “that” makes your idea easier to understand. In the other 95 percent, get rid of it! “I decided that journalism was a good career for me” reads better as “I decided journalism was a good career for me.”

12. Replace “thing” with a better word

Usually when we write “thing” or “things,” it's because we were too lazy to think of a better word. In everyday life, we may ask for “that thing over there,” but in your writing, calling anything a “thing” does not help your reader. Try to replace all “thing” or “things” with a more descriptive word.

13. Try really hard to spot instances of “very” and “really”

This is a very difficult one to remember. “This is a difficult one to remember.” Because really, how much is that “very” helping you get your point across?

It doesn't make the task sound more difficult. Same thing with “really.” It's not a “really” difficult tip to remember. It's simply a difficult tip to remember.

14. Make your verbs stronger

“Make” is sometimes used in the same way as “start to,” in place of what could be a stronger verb.

15. Ditch the passive voice

Using the passive voice isn't really wrong. But whenever you have the chances to make your writing clearer, you should — and avoiding the passive voice is one of those instances.

16. Refer to people as “who” not “that”

John is the guy who always forgets his shoes, not the guy that always forgets his shoes. It's easy to make this mistake because that has become acceptable in everyday conversations. But it's more noticeable when it's written down.

17. Avoid “currently”

“Currently” is virtually always redundant. Don't write: “Tom Jones is currently a communications director.” If Tom Jones is anything, he's that at that moment; you don't need “currently” to clarify. Just get rid of it.

18. Eliminate “there is” or “there are” at the beginning of sentences

This is often a symptom of lazy writing. There are lots of better, more interesting ways to start sentences. Oops. See how easy it is to make this mistake? Instead of starting a sentence with “there is,” try turning the phrase around to include a verb or start with you.

For example, replace the sentence above with “Start your sentences in a more interesting way.” If your copy includes a lot of phrases that begin with “there is” or “there are,” put some time into rewriting most of them.

19. Match up your bullet points

Bullet points are a popular and effective way to organize complex ideas. Just make sure your bullets correspond to one another.

Too often, writers mix and match mistakes with what you should do or make transition to should halfway through the post — which only confuses the reader.

If your piece is called 3 Career Mistakes You Don't Want to Make, here's a bullet point that works:

- Forgetting to tailor your resume each time you apply for a job

Here's one that doesn't work (because it's not actually a mistake — the writer inadvertently switched to what you should do):

- Make sure you tailor your resume

Often you can turn any idea into a tip by adding a verb. For example: “Remember that sitting on your head helps you write better.” Make your bullet points consistent and your writing will read more smoothly.

20. Use contractions

Which sounds more personable: I am heading to the market that is close to my house, or I'm heading to the market that's close to my house? Contractions make your writing sound friendlier, like you're (not you are) a real person. And that makes it easier to connect with readers.

Contractions can also make your post easier to read and comprehend. So go out of your way to include them in your posts! Your editor will thank you.

21. Steer clear of the ing trap

“We were starting to ...” or “She was skiing toward ...” Whenever you see an ing in your copy, think twice about whether you need it — because you probably don't.

Instead, get rid of were or was, then eliminate that ing and replace it with past tense: “We started to ...” or “She skied toward ...” Pruning excessive “ings” makes your writing clearer and easier to read.

22. Check your commas with that and which

When used as a descriptor, the word “which” takes a comma. But the word “that” doesn't. For example: “We went to the house that collapsed yesterday” or “We went to the house, which collapsed yesterday.” Confused about when to use “that” vs. “which?”

23. Replace “over” with “more than” for numbers

Over 200 people did not like your Facebook page — more than 200 people did. Of course, everyone will know what you mean if you use “over.” But using “more than” is one of those little details that will help your writing shine.

24. Hyphenate modifiers

Whenever you modify a noun with more than one word, you need a hyphen. Lots of people don't follow this rule, so it's a great way to show you actually walk the walk. That means you need a hyphen if you're writing about full-time work.

But you don't need one if you're working full time. Got it? The exception: No need to **hyphenate modifiers** that end in "ly." Those are OK on their own. So your newly hired employee doesn't need that hyphen.

25. Identify your tells

No matter how good of a writer you are, when you sit down to write a first draft, you have a tendency to spit out sentences in a certain way or use certain words. The more familiar you become with editing your own copy, the more quickly you should be able to pick up on your tells. And, the more ruthless you can be to eliminate them from your writing.

Example:

Original submission:

Tuberculous gumma is a rare form of cutaneous tuberculosis. Occurring following haematogenous dissemination, during lowered resistance in the body. Tubercular gumma is characterised by either multiple abscess or ulcers on extremities. We hereby report 2 cases of tuberculous gumma in immunocompetent cases. The first case was a 29-year-old housewife, with multiple subcutaneous nodules, soft to form abscess on the dorsum of feet, over a period of 6-7 months. The second case was a 9-year-old boy, who developed multiple non-healing ulcers with exuberant granulation tissue on it, on the dorsum of right foot & face for 5 months. Both these cases had positive Mantoux test, raised ESR. None of them were detected to have any other focus of tuberculosis. Responded to antitubercular therapy. To the best of our knowledge only 3 cases of tuberculous gumma have been reported in literature till date and only one has been reported from India, though there are large studies with large groups of patients. [2-6] We came across two cases of tuberculous gumma, over the span of 2-3 months and in immunocompetent patients.

Editing using track changes

(Tuberculous gumma) is a ~~real~~ rare form of cutaneous tuberculosis that ~~o~~ occurs as a result of following haematogenous dissemination ~~(of mycobacteria)~~ in an infected person with a ~~de~~ lowered body resistance ~~in the body~~. Tubercular ~~gumma~~ This variant of cutaneous tuberculosis is characterised by either multiple abscesses or ulcers on the extremities. Herein, ~~w~~ We hereby report ~~2~~ two cases of tuberculous gumma in ~~an~~ immunocompetent ~~cases~~ patients. The first case ~~(was is)~~ that of a 29-year-old house-wife who developed ~~with~~ multiple subcutaneous nodules, which later softened to form abscesses, on the dorsum of her feet, over a period of 6-7 months. |

The second case ~~was is~~ that of a 9-year-old boy, who developed multiple non-healing ulcers with exuberant granulation tissue ~~on it~~, on the dorsum of his right foot ~~& and on his face~~ for during 5 months. Both ~~these cases~~ had a positive Mantoux test ~~and raised erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR) values~~. None of them were detected to ~~had any~~ other focus of tuberculosis was detected, and both patients ~~r~~ Responded well to antitubercular therapy. ~~(To the best of our knowledge, so far only three cases of tuberculous gumma have been reported in the literature. Among these cases, only till date and only one has been reported from India, despite the fact that though there are large number of studies with large groups of patients have been conducted in this country. [2-6])~~ We encountered ~~came across~~ two cases of tuberculous gumma, in immunocompetent patients over the span of 2-3 months ~~and in immuno-competent patients.~~ |

Comment [hk1]: Add alternate names ("metastatic tuberculous abscess" and "metastatic tuberculous ulcer") here or in the Introduction: "Tuberculous gumma, also known as ..., is a rare form ..."

Generally, the correct place for this is the Introduction. However, here it would require that the Introduction section is modified (see comment #16 below).

Comment [hk2]: Edited to specify what is disseminated.

Comment [hk3]: General statements are written in present tense.

Comment [hk4]: Generally, it is recommended that the term of an abbreviation is spelled out at the first occurrence.

Readers of manuscripts may be patients, students, or other outsiders of the field. Thus, they may not be familiar with (standard) abbreviations.

Comment [hk5]: A very recent report (published online on Sep 2010) states that tuberculous gumma has been reported infrequently in Indian children. See: Indian J Dermatol Venereol Leprol 2010;76:484-503.

Thus, it seems to me that you should check your statement about the number of cases reported.

Comment [hk6]: References/citations are typically not allowed in an abstract. Also, they should start at #1 and not at #2.

Comment [hk7]: This part constitutes background information and is not necessarily relevant for the abstract.

I recommend to move the entire part to the Introduction section. This would also resolve the issue regarding citations (see previous comment).

Document after editing:

Tuberculous gumma is a rare form of cutaneous tuberculosis that occurs as a result of haematogenous dissemination of mycobacteria in an infected person with a lowered body resistance. This variant of cutaneous tuberculosis is characterised by either multiple abscesses or ulcers on the extremities. Herein, we report two cases of tuberculous gumma in immunocompetent patients. The first case is that of a 29-year-old housewife who developed multiple subcutaneous nodules, which later softened to form abscesses, on the dorsum of her feet over a period of 6-7 months. The second case is that of a 9-year-old boy who developed multiple non-healing ulcers with exuberant granulation tissue on the dorsum of his right foot and on his face during 5 months. Both cases had a positive Mantoux test and raised erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR) values. No other focus of tuberculosis was detected, and both patients responded well to antitubercular therapy. To the best of our knowledge, so far only three cases of tuberculous gumma have been reported in the literature. Among these cases, only one has been reported from India, despite the fact that a number of studies with large groups of patients have been conducted in this country. We encountered two cases of tuberculous gumma in immunocompetent patients over the span of 2-3 months.

Unit:4 Basics of Feature Writing

What are features?

A feature is an opportunity to take more than a superficial look at something. It is an opportunity to explore the background to an issue, or the character of the person behind a news event.

It is an opportunity to offer the reader a better understanding of the news which you are reporting elsewhere in the newspaper.

A newspaper which had no features at all would seem shallow, because there is not enough space within most news stories to dig very deeply into issues. A newspaper which had only features and no news stories would seem narrow, because it would not be able to cover all the stories it should. In fact, magazines do often limit themselves to one specialist subject in this way.

A good newspaper balances its news and features, so that there is always space to give in-depth coverage of one or two news events each day, while covering adequately all the news which the readers want.

In some ways, it is easier to say what a feature isn't than to say what it is.

It is not an opportunity for a journalist who secretly wants to be a great novelist to indulge himself or herself. If you want to write artistic prose, do it in your own time; your first duty while writing for a newspaper or magazine is to inform the readers, and after that to entertain or amuse them. Of course, you should write well if you can, and there is more scope in a feature than in a hard news story for your writing style to show through. The most important thing, however, is the content of the feature; if you allow the literary style to get in the way of the content, you will have failed.

It is not a way of disposing of subjects which are long and boring, but which you feel obliged to publish. Every feature should be assessed on its merits in exactly the same way as every news story - is it newsworthy? In fact, since it will take up many times more space than a news story, it needs to be that much more interesting to deserve the space.

It is not a very long news story. As we shall see later, the structure of a feature is quite different from a news story. You might set out to write a 400-word news story, find that you have much more material, and write 1,000 words. You have not written a feature. You have written a 1,000-word news story (and have probably wasted your time and your employer's money).

Structure of a feature

As we aware, a simple news story is structured as an inverted pyramid. This means that the most important information is presented first, followed by the rest of the information in diminishing order of importance. A news story written in this way can be cut from the back without fundamentally damaging it.

A feature is not written in this way at all. A feature has a beginning, a middle and an end. If a feature is cut from the back, it will leave the story hanging in the air, and leave the reader wondering where the rest of it has gone.

A feature is structured more like the advanced pyramid of pyramids story structure which we looked at in the Introduction to advanced techniques. *[Link]* Like that complex news story, the subject matter of the feature is divided up into separate pieces, each of which is told completely before moving on to the next.

There is a difference between a feature and a pyramid of pyramids news story, though. There is no reason why the pieces in a feature should each be structured as a mini-inverted pyramid; and there is no reason why the most newsworthy piece should be told first, and the least newsworthy last.

Sometimes in a feature you will wish to deal with one piece of the story first, to make sure that the reader understands all the issues involved, before moving on to a more important part of the story. This is perfectly acceptable.

The bead necklace

A feature is rather like a necklace, and each piece of the story is like a cluster of beads. Just as a necklace would not look attractive if the biggest bead was put on first, followed by the next biggest, down to the smallest, so the parts of a feature do not seem right when they are written as mini-inverted pyramids.

Use each paragraph like a bead. Thread on a paragraph or two of descriptive writing, followed by a paragraph of argument. Then thread on a few paragraphs of quotes - some from one side of the debate, some from the other side - with one bead in between them: a paragraph introducing the second speaker. This cluster of beads will have told one part of the story.

You could give exactly the same pile of beads to ten different people, and they would make ten different necklaces. So it is with features. There is no absolute right way or wrong way of writing any feature, just different ways. Nevertheless, just as one person's

necklace will look more attractive than another person's, and just as people become better at making attractive necklaces as they practise, so some features are better than others, and you will get better with practice.

Develop a sense of balance, between the different kinds of paragraph - description, argument, quote, comment. And try to read your own features as if you were a reader who had never seen them before. Develop an understanding of what makes your features easier to read, and what makes them harder to read.

Write to length

It is obviously even more important with features than with news stories to write to length. If the editor asks you for a 300-word news story and you write 350 words, you will be a nuisance, but your last 50 words can simply be deleted (and if you have written the story properly, the story will still be intact).

If, however, the editor asks for an 800-word feature and you write 950 words, you will create real headaches for the sub-editor, for the reader and for yourself. Newspaper pages are not made of elastic; a space which is big enough for 800 words cannot stretch to take 950.

Cutting a well-written feature is difficult for a sub-editor; you should do it before you hand it in. This has two advantages. First, it saves production time; and second, it increases the chances of the cuts being done well, since they are being done by the writer, who understands the merits of each part of the feature.

Subjects for features

One British newspaper had for many years the slogan "All human life is there". Nothing less than all human life is the subject matter for features.

A frequent complaint about the news media is that they tell only bad news. It is easy to see why.

Most things which happen suddenly, and are therefore news, are unwelcome. For example, deaths, accidents, crimes and so on all happen suddenly, and they are all unwelcome. Very few people can think of anything which could happen to them suddenly that they would welcome, other than winning money in a lottery.

Most things which people will welcome happen only slowly and gradually, and are therefore not news in the strictest sense. For example, the terracing of a village's hillside

farmland, to prevent soil erosion, will take many years, and there is never a precise moment at which the work can be said to be done. Yet this is surely good news.

Features offer an opportunity for a newspaper to redress this balance. They are a chance to step back and view life in perspective, to relate current events to a wider social and historical perspective. They are an opportunity to tell the good news as well as the bad.

"All human life" means just that, the whole of your readers' lives - physical, mental and spiritual. You must reflect their working lives, their leisure activities, their family lives, their spiritual lives.

Above all, you must choose subjects which will interest your readers. No feature can hope to interest everybody, but you must aim to appeal to as wide an audience as possible in general features. There is scope to write for minority interests as well, but we shall come to that later when we consider columns.

Remember that it is not just news and leisure which are suitable for features. The business pages and the sports pages, too, can carry both news and features on their own subjects.

In fact, all sports editors should always have five or six good sports features up their sleeve, for that awful day when all the sport is rained off and they have nothing live to report.

Let us look, then, at the different kinds of features which we commonly find. They fall into two main categories - dated features and undated features.

Dated features will date and become unusable, just like news stories. Undated features can be written in advance and kept until there is space to publish them.

Dated features

There are many categories of dated features, but the most common are the following:

News features

The first and most important type of dated feature is the news feature, which offers extra understanding of the news of the day. It can take many forms:

1. Backgrounders

These explain the historical or social setting in which events are taking place. They help

the reader to understand why current events are provoking the reactions which they do. They are especially helpful in understanding news in societies and cultures with which readers are unfamiliar.

2. Situation reports

These act like a picture of the present state of affairs in a place which has been in the news in the past, but is not now producing news stories. What is the political situation in Uganda, or the security situation in Sri Lanka, or the economic situation in Ho Chi Minh City?

3. Personality profiles

News is about people, because people make the news. If something important is happening, it helps readers to understand it if they are told more about the person behind the news.

4. Revelations

A newspaper, radio or television station's own investigations may reveal something which the public ought to know. There are often injustices in any society - social, economic or political - which journalists can bring to light. Features about inadequate housing conditions for poor people in towns, child abuse or favouritism in political appointments can open a society's eyes to its own problems.

One of the greatest scandal of US politics was revealed in a series of newspaper features - the Watergate scandal, which eventually led to the resignation of President Richard Nixon. Although the amount of space which will be needed to publish such revelations makes them features for an inside page, they will normally also be exclusive news. For this reason, you should also write a news story for publication on page one, cross-referred to the feature inside.

5. Analysis and predictions

An informed and skilled person may be able to write features predicting future events, on the basis of analysing present information. Care must be taken with these, however, as uninformed predictions make newspapers look very stupid. It is often a good idea to invite an academic or experienced person to write a feature of this kind, rather than to write it yourself.

6. Debate of issues

A controversial issue may be debated through the feature pages of a newspaper, so that your readers may be given the arguments for both sides and be able to make up their own minds. This is often best done by two people with opposing views each writing an

argument to support their case. These may be published either on consecutive days or together on the same day.

Good news features

The building of a family business over a period of 20 years is not hard news, because there is no one moment at which it can be said to have happened. It is good news, though, and it is important to report it in order to give a balanced view of society, with all its achievements and failures.

Anniversary features

These are dated features, in that they must be published at a particular time, but they are like undated features in that they can be written ahead of time and stored.

They are features which recall an event from the past, and look again at the event or its implications, or a little-known aspect of it. The feature will be published on or near an anniversary of the event itself.

Not every anniversary of an event is suitable for publishing such a feature. Good anniversaries are the first, fifth, tenth, 20th, 25th, 50th, 75th, 100th and any other centenary (200th, 300th etc).

Columns

There are two types of columns, and they have one thing in common - they are written by one named person and all the views expressed in that column are his or her views. It is not necessary for a column to be impartial and objective; part of its function may well be to provoke people by offering a strong or even biased point of view.

It must certainly have something definite to say. People often enjoy reading a point of view with which they strongly disagree as much as one with which they agree. They will certainly enjoy either of these more than a column which offers no point of view at all.

Columns offer a newspaper an excellent opportunity to introduce two things which readers enjoy, but which are not generally appropriate elsewhere - calculated bigotry, and humour.

1. News opinion column

This is especially true of the first type of column - the news opinion column. In this a columnist writes about the news and offers an opinion of the merits of what is being done

and the way it is being done. No junior reporter should expect to be allowed to write a column such as this. Not only is there the danger of being sued for defamation, but also it will be very difficult for a young person of limited experience to write a column of sufficient depth.

2. Minority interest column

In this second type of column, regular space can be devoted each day, or each week, to a particular subject such as cookery, or golf, or pets, or bush-walking, or any activity about which there is something to say and interested people to buy the paper and read it.

Reviews and previews

Your readers will want to decide whether to pay their hard-earned money to go and see a new play or film, or to hear a concert, to go to an art exhibition or to eat at a new restaurant. You can help them to decide by publishing previews or reviews.

Both of these are your description and opinion of the film or play or concert or exhibition; a preview is published before it is open to the public (as a result of a special press preview) and a review is published as soon as possible after the first public performance.

Diary column

The diary column of a newspaper should not be allowed to become a dustbin for all the material which could not get into the news columns. Each item should be a genuinely interesting, amusing or illuminating piece of news or gossip about the world in which we live.

Be warned, though: people who live in glass houses should not throw stones. Newspapers are full of typographical and spelling errors, so it is unwise ever to make fun of somebody else's typographical or spelling error, however amusing the result. Also, if you use your diary column to criticise people who throw rubbish out of car windows, you had better make sure that nobody ever sees you doing the same thing. Practise what you preach.

Obituaries

Like anniversary features, these can be written in advance but must be used at a particular time - when the subject of the obituary dies. Of course, you cannot tell in advance when you are going to need an obituary (usually referred to as an **obit**).

An obit is an account of the life and achievements of an eminent person who has just died. A disorganised newspaper is always taken by surprise by the death of such a person, and scrambles an obituary together after hearing of the event. It publishes the obit a couple of days later.

Nobody should be taken by surprise by death - it is the only thing in life which is certain. The organised newspaper has obituaries ready written on all the eminent people who matter to its readers. From time to time, when a person is in the news, his or her obit can be taken out of the filing cabinet and updated. When an eminent person does die, their obit will only need to be brought up-to-date and it can be published immediately.

Trend stories: A trend story examines people, things or organizations that are having an impact on society. Trend stories are popular because people are excited to read or hear about the latest fads.

Undated features

These may be about any subject under the sun (or, indeed, about the sun itself), but it will always help you to decide what will interest your readers if you ask yourself what your readers do with their time.

One good indication of this is what they spend their money on: if they are keen enough to spend money on it, they will probably also want to read about it. This will have a commercial spin-off, if yours is a commercial newspaper, in that you will be able to sell advertising space connected to those activities. Don't forget, though, that some activities may be popular but not need any money spending on them, such as bush walking. And don't neglect generally popular features such as nostalgia or light humour.

Educational features

The world is changing quickly, and the news media can help people to keep pace with the change. Educational features can help people, especially in developing countries, to understand the changes around them, and to adapt.

You could run features on health and hygiene, giving up-to-date practical advice on how to improve the prevention of disease in the village and how to treat simple illnesses.

You could run features on better methods of farming, to give small-scale village farmers higher standards of living, and thereby to build up the country.

Newspapers can run special features for people who have just learned to read, written by a language expert in a way which these people can understand. In this way the new media can play a role in building up their nation.

Food and drink

Everybody must eat and drink. As soon as people can afford it, they start to enjoy food and drink as luxuries rather than just to stay alive. Popular features are recipes, which can be very useful for introducing readers to ways of cooking from other cultures. You may also wish to publish reviews of restaurants, and even a wine column.

Travel

As soon as people can afford it, they like to take holidays. When they cannot afford it, they like to dream about holidays. A lot of money is spent every year on travel, both holiday and business travel. You will offer your readers a service if you write intelligently and informatively about how to spend their money wisely and enjoy travel to the full.

Fashion

Fashions change in all sorts of things, but especially in clothes, and many people consider it important that they are up-to-date in the clothes they wear. An informed regular report on fashion, with good photographs to show readers what is in fashion, will always be popular - especially with women readers.

Entertainment

Rock music stars, movie stars, sportsmen and women, millionaires and royalty ... readers often have a great appetite for knowing all about these people's lives.

Leisure

There are a host of leisure activities which can be written about, either as regular columns or as single features.

It is often a good idea if you, the writer, go and try parachuting, or diving, or horse riding, or mountaineering, and then write about it. It makes it more real for the reader and it makes life more interesting for you. A local club will often allow you to use its facilities

for free in return for the publicity which it will get, in the hope that your feature will attract new members.

TO SUMMARISE:

Newspapers need to provide a good balance of news and features

Features provide an opportunity to report in depth

Features provide an opportunity to report good news

A feature is structured like a bead necklace, and not like an inverted pyramid

Features can and should be about the whole of human life

Tips to write a feature on contemporary topic:

Feature writers seldom use the inverted-pyramid form. Instead, they may write a chronology that builds to a climax at the end, a narrative, a first-person article about one of their own experiences or a combination of these. Their stories are held together by a thread, and they often end where the lead started, with a single person or event. Here are the steps typically followed in organizing a feature story:

Choose the theme. The theme is similar to the thesis of a scholarly paper and provides unity and coherence to the piece. It should not be too broad or too narrow. Several factors come into play when choosing a theme: Has the story been done before? Is the story of interest to the audience? Does the story have holding power (emotional appeal)? What makes the story worthy of being reported? The theme answers the question, "So what?"

Write a lead that invites an audience into the story. A summary may not be the best lead for a feature. A lead block of one or two paragraphs often begins a feature. Rather than put the news elements of the story in the lead, the feature writer uses the first two or three paragraphs to set a mood, to arouse readers, to invite them inside. Then the **news peg** or the significance of the story is provided in the third or fourth paragraph, the **nut graph**. Because it explains the reason the story is being written, the nut graph--also called the "so what" graph--is a vital paragraph in every feature. The nut graph should be high in the story. Do not make readers wait until the 10th or 11th paragraph before telling them what the story is about.

The body provides vital information while it educates, entertains, and emotionally ties an audience to the subject. The ending will wrap up the story and come back to the lead, often with a quotation or a surprising climax. Important components of the body of a feature story are background information, the thread of the story, transition, dialogue, and voice.

Provide vital background information. If appropriate, a paragraph or two of background should be placed high in the story to bring the audience up to date.

Write clear, concise sentences. Sprinkle direct quotations, observations and additional background throughout the story. Paragraphs can be written chronologically or in order of importance.

Use a thread. Connect the beginning, body and conclusion of the story. Because a feature generally runs longer than a news story, it is effective to weave a thread throughout the story, which connects the lead to the body and to the conclusion. This thread can be a single person, an event or a thing, and it usually highlights the theme.

Use transition. Connect paragraphs with transitional words, paraphrases, and direct quotations. Transition is particularly important in a long feature examining several people or events because it is the tool writers use to move subtly from one person or topic to the next. Transition keeps readers from being jarred by the writing.

Use dialogue when possible. Feature writers, like fiction writers, often use dialogue to keep a story moving. Of course, feature writers cannot make up dialogue; they listen for it during the reporting process. Good dialogue is like good observation in a story; it gives readers strong mental images and keeps them attached to the writing and to the story's key players.

Establish a voice. Another key element that holds a feature together is voice, the "signature" or personal style of each writer. Voice is the personality of the writer and can be used to inject colour, tone, and subtle emotional commentary into the story. Voice should be used subtly (unless you're able to make a fetish of it like Hunter S. Thompson!). The blatant intrusion of a distinctive voice into news writing has been called **gonzo journalism**--an irresponsible, if entertaining, trend in contemporary writing according to traditionalists.

Conclude with a quotation or another part of the thread. A feature can trail off like a news story or it can be concluded with a climax. Often, a feature ends where the lead started, with a single person or event.

How to Write a Feature

Writing a feature begins with two important factors: your topic and how much space you can devote to it – your assigned word count. You must work within this parameter, which means you can't stray off topic. You should, however, go into as much depth as possible. This usually includes conducting interviews and gathering background information. For example, a news report might read:

“Witnesses report that the pipe burst at 1:32 p.m.”

A feature might read:

“Joe Smith said he saw the pipe burst from his kitchen window just as he was cleaning up from lunch, at 1:32 p.m. “Water shot 10 feet high and drenched everyone in sight,” Smith said.”

Features typically include expert opinions. Why did the pipe burst? You might get statements from a knowledgeable pipefitter explaining likely problems the pipe may have had. Did any passersby sustain injuries? A news report would most likely give a yes or no answer to that, and, if so, cite the number of injured bystanders.

A feature would delve into whether the city or municipality that was responsible for maintaining the pipe might be liable for those injuries. It could include a statement from someone in authority at the city or municipality regarding the incident and whether that person believes any negligence might have occurred.

The idea behind a [feature](#) is to go one step further: You're not just telling your reader what happened. You're explaining why it's important, who is affected and presenting the big picture.

Writing a feature:

A feature is a longer piece of writing than a news story. Features come in many different types and are widely used in magazines, newspapers and online.

A feature will often cover an issue in greater depth than a news story would do; or it might look at an ongoing story from a different angle.

News Story vs Feature

This table compares some of the characteristics of news stories and features. Remember that these are not hard and fast rules. There can be overlap between the two genres.

For example, a recent news item can be covered in a news feature. Or a news article can abandon the inverted pyramid structure to cover a human interest story using more detail and emotion.

	News Story	Feature
Content	Recent or breaking news	Any issue: could be news-related or human interest
Intro	Summarises the story in a nutshell	Often has a human focus or tells an anecdote
Sources and Angle	Can, but doesn't always, contain more than one source and angle	Always contains a variety of sources and angles
Structure	Inverted pyramid	More flexible: can take linear or a non-linear structure/ include story-telling. Conclusion is important

Writing a review

Reviews are a staple of journalism. Almost anything can be reviewed: music concerts, films, video games, products, books or restaurants.

The aim is to offer an honest critique of the object under review, and to make a recommendation to your audience.

Writing a review demands a different skill from writing a news story. Whereas in a news story, you must be objective and balanced, in a review you can be subjective, giving your opinion.

You can also be more personal and informal in tone: you want to create a rapport with the audience.

Your role as a reviewer is to

- inform

- describe
- analyse
- advise

Tips on reviewing a film

When reviewing a film, you are advising the audience on whether it is worth going to see this film, or spend two hours of their life watching it. Make sure you:

- Include all the relevant detail such as film title, director, lead actors, date of release.
- Summarise the plot concisely, avoiding spoilers and plot twists. Don't give away the ending!
- Select and use short extracts/ examples to illustrate what struck you most about the film. Was a particular scene particularly funny, or poignant? Give an example of good (or bad) acting.
- Other aspects may be worth commenting on, for example music or special effects.
- Give your opinion, but always back it up with evidence. Be fair – don't write off an entire film because you disliked one actor.
- Make a final judgement, for example you could rate it out of five stars.

What is a press release?

A press release is a communication, announcing a story to the public which is deliberately sent to journalists or media publishers in the hope they will publish the news contained in them.

They can come from organisations such as business or charities or from people like politicians or celebrities.

Press releases are usually written by press officers working in the communications or public relations (PR) industry.

Often, their aim is to get their clients' message across or to protect their reputation. Equally, they may want to promote a product or raise awareness about an issue.

Press releases are shorter than news stories, often taking up half a page, or around 120 words.

Some press releases have an embargo, which means the content of the press release must not be published before a certain date and time. For example, a politician may send out a press release containing the speech they are due to make so that the newspapers can report about it first.

If you are a press officer

Your job is to communicate a message in the clearest way possible. You are trying to persuade journalists to report certain information, so make it interesting - suitable for a news article.

One of the most important things is to tailor your press release to the intended target audience.

So if you are sending it to a local newspaper based in a certain town, make sure it's relevant to readers living in that town. If you're sending it to a national newspaper, it needs to have national significance.

Aim to grab the reader's attention.

Avoid jargon, technical language and acronyms - everyone in your company may know what the terms mean, but the general public (or journalist) might not.

Ask yourself: does this make sense to someone who knows nothing about the back story? Make sure you include all the important details that journalists will need to know.

If you are a reporter

Always take the press release as the starting point for a story – don't simply rewrite it as a news story. Remember, it may be one-sided or biased and further sources will be needed to produce balanced, accurate news. Ask yourself what information may be missing

Example of feature writing:

Should parents be responsible for the crimes committed by their children? Reasons for and against are given in this article written by one of our researchers.

Who is guilty when teens break the law? Should parents be blamed? Read to know who should be responsible for the crimes of teens.

It's no secret that teens break the law, thinking they're basically invincible. They engage in underage drinking, vandalism, also possession, and under the influence, of drugs. But then

some young people commit much bigger crimes – felonies such as breaking and entering into a house, grand theft auto, even murder, and rape. Children of all ages are capable of breaking the law, but it can be speculated that adolescents tend to break the law more. Unfortunately, teens in America engage in some pretty risky behavior in their middle and high school years. And unfortunately, these crimes have severe consequences that last a lifetime. While these minors are often thought of as children simply making mistakes, they are still rational, mostly reasonable human beings who know exactly what they are doing. So, therefore, their crimes should not make their parents responsible.

Should Parents Be Held Responsible for the Crimes of Their Children?

Could not, for one, be responsible for the crimes of their children, because any person of sound mind is a rational being. They know when they are committing a crime and doing something wrong. It has nothing to do with their parents – unless the parents are condoning, encouraging or taking part in the crime; then, and only then, should parents be held responsible for their children's crimes. It is rarely the parent's fault, even if they do teach their children right from wrong. Many people attempt to commit a crime because they think they can get away with it. The same goes for teens committing a crime: They do it, most of the time because they anticipate getting away with it. This is no reflection of one's upbringing – only the way that person views right from wrong. Even if the children are diagnosed as mentally unsound, insane, crazy, manic-depressive, it's still not the parent's fault.

If someone's child commits a crime and gets caught for it, a parent should not be held responsible for the child because it is the child committing the crime, not the adult. Some may argue how a child's sense of right and wrong derives from the way their parents raised them – which is true; however, in the case of committing crimes, a child can still steal a pretty piece of jewelry from a friend even if they were taught as a child not to steal. This has nothing to do with the parent, only the child, or teen, committing the crime. If the child commits the crime, they should be at fault and charged appropriately. If one's child commits the crime, unless the parent directly took part in the illegal activity associated with their child, the parent should without a doubt never be held responsible – not morally, emotionally or legally – for this crime.

Parents Are Not Guilty!

Unless the parent assisted in helping the child commit the crime – underage drinking drug usage, for example – the adult should never be held responsible for the child's actions. If a kid gets in trouble, it's easy to blame the parents, attribute the mishap to how they were raised, the kind of family they were born to. But that is what is wrong with this country: no one takes responsibility for their own actions, especially if they're minors. It's a major problem. This way, people become adults never being accountable for anything – they just blame it on someone else. This isn't the way to go; all it does is condition someone that they are not going to face consequences when they do wrong. Why is that detrimental? Because a person gets a pretty rough reality check as an adult when they are faced with legal charges for committing a crime. At that point, their parents surely aren't even in the picture. Only the child/teen should get penalized for committing a crime.

Unit:5 Design and Make up

Make up and its functions, Types of Layout: Horizontal , Vertical Make up, Circus Make up, Modular layout, Broadsheet layout, tabloid layout, Fonts and Typography.

NEWSPAPER MAKE – UP

The front page of a newspaper is like a beautiful face. If it is attractive, it will hold the attention. It is indeed true that the front paper of the newspaper make the newspaper successful. For a newspaper, to report news is a normal function, but there is something special about the fact that the news is printed on its front page.

The front page is the ‘face’ of the newspaper.

Newspaper identity: The newspaper has a name and the uniqueness lies in different styles the different newspapers will write their names.

The Masthead

On observing the front page of a newspaper closely, we can see that the masthead of a newspaper is much more than just the name of the newspaper. Some of its characteristics are:

- It is in distinctive bold print
- It is in a big type-size
- It has a fixed place on the front page and
- It remains in the same form for years

Headlines

Newspapers sell news and headlines are a means to attract the readers towards the news items. For a page designer, each headline is a new and unique challenge. The headline of the news items are much more than just a set of words. It is the responsibility of the page-designer to make each headline as distinctive as possible within the given newspaper format.

The sub-editor/ copy editors give headlines generally. The page make-up person cannot change them, but can increase or decrease the display value, readability or importance of the news item by using different techniques such as typeface or size, placement, making it run horizontally across more columns. Most newspapers everyday give, a four or five column bottom- spread on their front page; it is done to give a solid base to the whole page.

Placement of Photo graphs and cartoons

It is said that a picture is worth a thousand words. On the same basis, it can be said that a good cartoon is worth at least two thousand words.

From a page designer’s point of view, it is important to realize that photographs,

cartoons and graphic have a special significance. Placing a picture or cartoon at wrong place may not only reduce its utility, but also reduce the design appeal of the total page.

Pictures, cartoon and graphics are, usually, evaluated on the basis of:

- Subject matter
- Topicality
- Clarity
- News value, significance

A page designer has to examine whether the pictures, cartoon, graphic, chart, has an independent value or it has to be juxtaposed with a particular news story. The size may have to be adjusted due to placement or space consideration.

12.3. Caption writing is an art by itself, and it comes with experience and aptitude. It is, generally, the job of the news editor. The picture and its caption are complementary to each other, and is very essential to mention when and where the picture was taken, and who the persons seen in the picture are.

Tips for better captions

- Use more of the words provided by the photographer. He or she was on the spot, and what was noteworthy there may create immediacy with the reader.
- Use your other headline idea. That is, the one you had while looking at the picture, as if the photo were to be on a magazine cover.
- Use more from the story. Especially consider good quotes.
- Use what you would put into a lift out.
- Build your caption from the most powerful verb you can find. And get that verb early in the caption.
- Build your caption from the most visual noun you can find. And get that noun early in the caption.
- Add what happened right after the photo was taken.
- Pack the caption with facts that show how the event was special.
- Use the caption to refer to other material.
- Be willing to ask for more space, if need, but also less space, if that makes for a more powerful presentation.

Photo captions and cutlines are the most read body type in a publication. Of all the news content, only the titles of stories or headlines have higher readership than captions. It follows that standards of accuracy, clarity, completeness and good writing are as high for captions and cutlines as for other type. As with headlines, captions and cutlines must be crisp. As with stories, they must be readable and informative.

Captions and cutlines are terms that are often used interchangeably, particularly at magazines. For our purposes, we will make the following distinctions.

Captions: Captions are the little “headlines” over the “cutlines”

Cutlines: Cutlines (at newspapers and some magazines) are the words (under the caption, if there is one) describing the photograph or illustration.

When writing a cutline with or without a caption, it is useful to have clearly in mind the typical reader behavior when “using” a photograph and accompanying text:

- First, the reader looks at the photo, mentally capturing all or most of the most obvious visual information available. Often this reader look is merely a glance, so subtle aspects of the picture may not register with many readers.

- When that look at the photo sparks any interest, the reader typically looks just below the photo for information that helps explain the photo. That's when captions and cutlines must perform.

- Then, typically, the reader, after digesting the information, goes back to the photo (so be sure you enhance the experience and explain anything that needs explaining).

The specific information required can vary from one photo to the next. But for most pictures a reader wants to know such information as:

- Who is that? (And, in most cases, identify people from left to right unless the action in the photograph demands otherwise.)

- Why is this picture in the paper?

- What's going on?

- When and where was this?

- Why does he/she/it/they look that way?

- How did this occur?

Simply stated, cutlines should explain the picture so that readers are satisfied with their understanding of the picture. They need not —and should not —tell what the picture has made obvious. It should supply vital information that the picture cannot. For example, a picture can show a football player leaping to catch a pass, but it likely does not show that the result was the winning touchdown. The cutline should give that information.

Cutlines should be as concise as possible, but they should not sound like telegrams or machine guns. Unlike headlines (and caption lines), they should contain all articles and conjunctions, just as do sentences in news stories. News picture cutlines should be straightforward and clear.

Trite writing should be avoided. Do not point out the obvious by using such phrases as “looks on,” “is shown” and “pictured above.”

Don't editorialize. The cutline writer should never make assumptions about what someone in a picture is thinking or try to interpret the person's feelings from his or her expression. The reader should be given the facts and allowed to decide for herself or himself what the feelings or emotions are.

Avoid the known; explain the unknown. The cutline writer should avoid characterizing a picture as beautiful, dramatic, and grisly or other such descriptive terms that should be evident in the photograph. If it's not evident in the photograph, your telling the reader won't make it happen. However, the cutline should explain something about how the picture was taken if it shows something not normally observable by the human eye. For example, was a wide-angle lens used? Or timelapse photography? Explanations also are needed for special effects, such as the use of an inset or a picture sequence.

Reflect the image. Cutline writers should make sure that the words accurately reflect the picture. If a picture shows two or more people, the cutline writer should count the number of identifiable people in the photo and check the number and sex of the people identified in the cutline to make certain that they match. Special precautions should be taken to make sure that the cutline does not include someone who has been cropped out of the original photo.

Always, always, always check spelling. The cutline writer should check the spelling of names in the story against the names that a photographer has provided to see if there are discrepancies. The editor also should be sure that names in the cutline are the same names used in the story.

“Wild art.” Photographs that do not accompany stories often are termed “wild art.” The cutlines for wild art should provide the same basic information that a story does. Such things as the “five W's” (who, what, when, where and why) are good to remember when writing such cutlines. If you don't have all the information you need, get on the phone and get the information. Don't try writing the cutline without needed facts. Sometimes, wild art is used on a cover page to tease (refer) the reader to a story inside. But, unlike television, don't tease the reader in the cutline. Give as complete a story as possible, giving the reader the option of going inside for more details.

Accompanying art. If a picture is running with a story, a lengthy cutline is usually not needed. Sometimes a single line is sufficient to identify the people or situation shown in the picture and to make clear their relationship to the story. Remember that most cutline readers have not yet read the story. Many of them will read nothing but the cutline and the headline. So the cutline must strike a delicate balance between telling enough information for the reader to understand the photo and its context while being as crisp and brief as possible.

Shorter is better. Cutline writing triggers a temptation to use long sentences. Avoid that temptation.

Over all Pages Design

Having closely examined some of the major components of the front page of your newspaper, individually, let us now take a look at the architecture of the page or

the overall page design. For this, we have to look at the page from some distance. One-way is to do a comparatively study of two or more papers. Hang two or more papers of the same date on the wall, and stand at a distance to take a critical look at these. As you look at these pages, study the structural outline of the news stories, bold headlines, pictures, cartoons, placement of box item, etc. take a look at the whole page from the masthead to the bottom line. Look at the page, as if you were trying to study a painting or sculpture. You will notice that there is a design in the page, a form and a structure. Each page designer has own concept of beauty and page structure. To bring it out, he/she uses different **type size, white spaces, placement of pictures, graphs, charts, cartoons, etc.**

PLANNING OF PAGES

Inside pages of a daily newspaper differ from the front page in their format, structure, and presentation of contents. If you open a daily newspaper, you will see that on top of the page, there may be indications about the topics covered on that page-international news, national news, state news, sports news, business and economy, etc.

Even if there is no indication on the top, one can notice the news items on that page have a common link. It helps the readers in their search for a news item. Also by grouping news items on specific pages we are able to give the newspaper a structure. The inside pages under one group often tend to cover as many news items as possible. Hence, often these pages may seem cluttered.

13.1. Inside page of the Newspaper

Inside pages almost always have advertisements. As ads bring revenue, they are given priority above the news here. In fact, it is the ads that are first placed on the pages. The remaining space or the '**news hole**' is left for the editorial matter. As the number and total space taken by advertisements each day are different, makeup personnel have to deal with different amounts of space everyday. This makes the job of a page makeup artist very difficult.

Inside pages cover a variety of content. And the editorial content decides the design pattern within the available space. The structural position of advertisements also needs to be considered for bringing about a harmonious blend between the advertising and editorial content. Often makeup personnel have no or little control over the placement of advertisements. But it is wise to consult with the advertising department and suggest about advertising placement on the pages in such a way that allows proper designing of editorial content on these pages.

The Editorial Page

One common feature in all daily newspapers is the editorial page. The format of this page looks similar in many newspapers in India and abroad. On this page, you

will notice that there is a section where the editor writes their analysis of the major national and international news items. These are often referred to as the ‘newspaper’s **point of view**.

Each newspaper has a fixed spot for general information items such as the weather forecast, entertainment, cinema, radio, television, etc. the design of the inside pages of a newspaper is relatively much more structured than the front page, which is dependent on the major happenings during the past few hours.

13.2. Page makeup for Editorial Page of a Newspaper

The techniques of brightening the editorial pages are:

The editorial page is often shabbily made-up. But life can be injected into editorial pages. This is despite the content-wise sober and serious nature of the editorial pages.

- Setting the editorials in larger types than ordinary body type used for news
- Setting editorials in wider columns
- Boxing editorials and other stories or articles
- Use of more white space
- Placing the masthead at a lower position (removing it from the top left corner where it doesn’t compete for attention with the editorials)
- Using photographs on the editorial pages though this is not a traditional practice but it would enhance the ‘look’ of the page
- Use of flush-left and right-ragged style of setting to make it distinct from other pages

FRONT PAGE

Newspapers contain many different types of content. There are many different types of news. Then there are editorials, features, articles, etc. in addition to the text material, there are sizeable amount of visuals also. Newspapers are usually divided into several segments for accommodating the wide variety of material.

First there is the front page. **It is the window to a newspaper**. So a lot of importance is given to designing this page. The other important pages are the editorial page and the sports pages. The other pages are business pages, pages for local news, pages for regional news, pages for national news, pages for international news. With increased emphasis on entertainment, there are leisure and entertainment pages. Finally, there are the special pages that come daily, weekly or fortnightly.

Front page of the newspaper

In the past, front-page makeup practice was very traditional. It was old-fashioned and looked artificial and unattractive. Unfortunately, front-page makeup in the

earlier days was highly inflexible. The reasons behind this were unplanned and haphazard placement of stories and photos, and non-adherence of any design principle.

Modern front-page make up is highly functional, well-designed, attractive and very flexible. The front page is the showcase of a newspaper. Thus it should be easy to read, attractive and inviting. It should be orderly, and have a distinctive personality of its own.

One way of getting a well-designed front page is to use the principle of artistic dominance. Front page, being showcases; carry a lot of important stories, which compete with each other for attention. This kind of a situation is confusing for the readers. So the front page has to have a point of dominance. It could be a story, with accompanying picture, or a group of similar stories clubbed together. Dominance can be achieved by way of size, shape, and placement, etc.

Some basic guidelines for more readable front page include:

- Creation of an open page with lot of white space between columns, between stories, pictures, etc.
- Using a news summary rather than having many small stories on the front page
- Making the bottom half as interesting as the top half by using larger pictures, boxed stories, etc
- Avoiding too many boxes, lines and other attention getting devices (like asterix marks, screens, etc) that pull the reader's away from the stories
- Using clearer, easy-to-read typefaces
- Incorporating a sense of freshness and vitality to the page by making small changes to the basic format on different days
- Creating an elegant but different look by having columns of different widths
- Use of simpler nameplate

Page makeup for Editorial Page of a Newspaper

The techniques of brightening the editorial pages are:

The editorial page is often shabbily made-up. But life can be injected into editorial pages. This is despite the content-wise sober and serious nature of the editorial pages.

- Setting the editorials in larger types than ordinary body type used for news

- Setting editorials in wider columns
- Boxing editorials and other stories or articles
- Use of more white space
- Placing the masthead at a lower position (removing it from the top left corner where it doesn't compete for attention with the editorials)
- Using photographs on the editorial pages though this is not a traditional practice but it would enhance the 'look' of the page
- Use of flush-left and right-ragged style of setting to make it distinct from other pages

What Are the Editorial Pages All About?

A newspaper publishes its views on current events -- both local and national -- on its **editorial pages**. This is where editorials, unsigned commentary that reflects the collective position of the newspaper's **editorial board**, appear. Editorials are not news, but rather reasoned opinion based on facts. For example, editorials may criticize the performance of public officials such as the mayor, the police chief, or the local school board; conversely, editorials may praise others for their civic contributions. Whatever the topic, newspapers hope their editorials will raise the level of community discourse.

Two ways this occurs are familiar to any newspaper reader -- **letters to the editor** and **op-ed articles**. Letters are always among the best-read section of any newspaper, for this is where readers express their opinions. Some newspapers limit letters to a certain number of words -- 150, 250 or even 300 -- while others publish letters of virtually any length. Op-ed articles (a contraction of opposite-editorial page) usually run 850 to 1,000 words. Newspapers make space for letters to the editor and op-ed articles freely available as part of their contribution to civic dialogue.

The editorial pages are under the direction of an editor outside the news division. Newspaper people call this "**separation of church and state**," meaning there is a line between news and opinion that must not be crossed. To do so, strips a newspaper of its most valuable asset -- **credibility**. For that reason, **editorial page editors** at some large newspapers report to the **publisher**, who is the **chief executive officer** of the company, and not to the executive editor. Other newspapers may have their editorial page editor reporting to the executive editor. Whatever the organizational model, though, neither department can tell the other what to publish in the newspaper.

Newspapers are the original form of broadband communication, a distinction not always recognized in the age of the Internet. Long before we had computers,

television, radio, telephones and telegraph, newspapers were the cheapest and most efficient way to reach mass audiences with news, commentary and advertising. Newspapers, from their beginnings as hand-printed "**broadsheets**", have been a true random-access medium -- readers can move easily and quickly through the different sections of a newspaper, returning to them days or even weeks later. And because a newspaper's "software" consists of a common language, it possesses a universal and timeless quality. For example, a newspaper published before the American Revolution is as readable today as it was in 1775!

Readability and overall Appeal

Newspapers are meant to be read. Anything that obstructs or reduce the convenience of the reader must be avoided. As far as possible, the news items should be contained in a neatly defined area. Look at the page of a newspaper as a reader, and ask yourself: are the news items displayed in a nice, readable manner? Could you suggest any improvements?

Each letter, each word and each story has special significance. **Headlines, photographs, cartoons, box items, charts and graphics-are all these important ingredients of the newspaper page designs.**

Cropping of Pictures

The intelligent photo editors adopt different creative cropping techniques to bring out the exact point of emphasis a 'pix' (term used for pictures). They try to enlarge the main image, which will have a better visual impact. For instance, a surviving child in an accident was picked up by the policemen and the photographer took a pix, which almost looked like a group, involved in the rescue operations, holding the baby, this pix should not be published as it is. The subject of the main interest is the child, and the readers would like to see its condition and how it looked like after the accident. Here comes the job of a photo editor to do the cropping in such a way that the child stands out prominently in the pix.

Many a times, the photographers do their job mechanically, giving, relevance only to technical qualities, and having no instinct for news. A photo editor, who keeps track of the news, also highlights the portions in the photograph, which has news value.

A photo editor studies the picture carefully, and decided about the cropping. First, he crops the pictures mentally (visualizing how it would look like), and then decides on the final edited photograph. Badly cropped pix cannot be repaired and the person who does such a job for the cropping sake gets the nickname of a 'butcher' from the photographers.

A good photo editor is one who can visualize how the pix will look like when it

is cropped and printed in different sizes and shapes. Generally, as a rule, a bad quality picture should be enlarged to the maximum size to enable the readers to see the details in the photograph, whereas a good quality print will show up clearly even in a smaller space.

Emerging Trends in Newspaper Presentation

Generally, the main focus with newspaper design is not on quickly changing trends, but on the improvement of readability and reader guidance within the paper. For this reason, the front page is used as display for the entire product. New sections are given larger section heads and some papers have even introduced color guide systems to introduce the readers effectively into topics of interest.

In the whole of Europe a trend to use color photos is discernible. And it is not the quantity that counts nowadays, but the quality: few large and well-cut photos per page will do. Surveys among readers and tests - like those that were carried out with an eye-track camera - are meant to help newspapers to take the readers' needs into account when redesigning their publication. It has been proved, for example, that framed-in articles do not attract the readers' attention, so that some newspapers do without frames now. Other tests have shown that readers avoid lengthy articles, which has led to the European trend of topical pages. Such a page is devoted to a single topic, which is then presented by means of different articles, photos and info graphics.

Every newspaper tries to create their own distinctive appearance by means of typography. In the area of headlines, therefore, there is great typographical versatility. It is not a certain typeface that is trendy, but a highly individual and unused one.

The front page serves as the newspaper's display. Important topics appear in teasers and color guide systems help the readers find their way through the paper. Extreme cuts guide the readers' view and create curiosity. When used consequently, extreme cuts contribute to a paper's unmistakable look.

WRITING THE HEADLINE

Your headline is the first, and perhaps only, impression you make on a prospective reader. Without a headline or post title that turns a browser into a reader, the rest of your words may as well not even exist.

But a headline can do more than simply grab attention. A *great* headline can also communicate a full message to its intended audience, and it absolutely must lure the reader into your body text.

At its essence, a compelling headline must promise some kind of benefit or reward for the reader, in trade for the valuable time it takes to read more.

In page Layout

The layout editor should make the headlines work with the graphics and the art on the page. Most reader surveys show that newspaper readers look first at photos on a page, then headlines.

- The page designer should leave Ample Room so writers can create good headlines. Also, the layout editor should vary the Size and Shape of headlines to accurately grade the news elements for the reader.
- Some basic Types of headlines: **banner (streamer), hammer, kicker or eyebrow (above the main headline), sidesaddle, deck (usually half the point size of the main headline), drop, read-in, read-out, jump heads.**

Some Headline Technicalities

- Don't get into the habit of relying on Squeezing or stretching the headline type to fit the space. To trained eyes, it can look sloppy, especially when the "doctored" headline appears near other headlines.
- In general, commas are used to replace 'and'; semicolons are used to split multi sentence headlines. Many desks do not allow colons to indicate attribution, except in rare cases, so it might be best to avoid that usage altogether.
- Some "headline" words to avoid: slate, solon, nix, eyes, acronyms (unless they are well-known, such as CIA, FBI), names of people who are not well known. Don't convict someone in a headline (unless the story is about a conviction) use "in" instead of "for."
- Avoid repeating bugs or page titles in headlines. For example, in a regular column that runs with the bug "Insider Trading," avoid using the word "Insiders" in the headline.
- Avoid using the same word in several headlines that appear on the same page. This can easily bore the reader.

Headline Typography

How a publication or advertisement is designed tells us a lot about its target audience and about the image, which it is trying to project. For example, in Britain newspapers are generally divided into 'quality' broadsheets and 'popular' tabloids, according to their page size. The cover of the political magazine Prospect uses a cool, formal design, while teenage girls' magazines such as *Mizz* use much more colour and informal typography.

The key elements of page design are **colour, size, type style and shape.**

Typefaces: The shape of the letters in which text is typeset can make a big difference to the image, which is conveyed. Typefaces fall into one of three main categories: *serif*, *sans serif* and *decorative*.

Serifs are the little tabs on the corners of the letters. *Sans-serif* typefaces like Helvetica do not have these: they appear plainer, and can be designed in bolder versions than serif typefaces.

Generally, serif typefaces are more 'traditional' and authoritative, while sans serif faces have a more modern or technological feel. In a broadsheet, a bold serif type like Times Bold may be used for headlines.

Type style: A tabloid front page may contain many variations in type style.

The headline will usually be typeset in a *bold, condensed, sans-serif* type. **It may be 'reversed out' - printed as white type on a black background.**

Bold means that the letters are made up of thicker strokes (lines) than normal, so the typeface looks blacker.

Condensed means that the letters are tall and narrow, allowing more of them to be fitted onto a line at a given size. *Oblique* refers to slanted type, usually sans-serif; slanted serif type is usually called *Italic*.

The body - the main text of the story - will usually be set in a serif type because it's easier to read at small sizes; the *subheads* or *cross-heads* between sections of the story may be in either serif or sans-serif type.

The style of type used in the **masthead** - the newspaper's logo - will usually tell us a lot about the image, which the newspaper is trying to project. The *Sun* and the *Mirror* are sometimes called 'redtops' in the trade to distinguish them from middlebrow tabloids like the *Express* and *Mail*.

The Grid: Almost all publications are designed on a grid. This is a background with columns on it, into which the type is placed. Headlines, photographs and the boxes containing stories can be run across several columns. Newspapers, particularly tabloids, vary the grid from page to page, or even have different grids for the top and bottom half of the page, or columns of different width on the same page.

Type Alignment: Within a column, type can be arranged in one of several ways: justified, where both edges of the column line up; centered; ranged left (where the left edge of the column is straight and the right is irregular) or ranged right (the opposite). The body of the story is usually justified; headlines may be justified, centered or ranged left. A broadsheet may use different alignments for different sections of the paper.

Rules: Rules are what designers call straight lines: a '10pt rule' is a straight line ten points thick (a point is 1/72 of an inch). Rules are used above and below stories, or to separate columns; they can also be used as boxes around stories. A tabloid will

probably use thicker and more obvious rules than a broadsheet.

News stories: Stories are organized methodically. In a tabloid, the main news story may occupy several times the space of the second story. Type size will be used to differentiate between the main headline, the *strap line*, and the main text of the article. Readers will be led steadily into the story. In both tabloid and broadsheet newspapers, stories will usually fit into a square or rectangle, with any surplus being carried over to another page. A '**jump line**' tells the reader which page to turn to.

Pictures: Tabloids will usually have a large picture on the front page. If there is another picture, it will often be very small: so that the main picture looks larger by comparison. Pictures will usually only be used the same size if they are being directly compared - for example, faces of opposing politicians. Pictures in tabloids will be closely cropped to eliminate any irrelevant information, and captions will be used to ensure that we get the intended meaning. In a broadsheet, more ambiguous or more loosely cropped pictures may be used.

Differentiation: Items on the page can be divided into four categories: general information about the newspaper (its name, price, the date and so on); the day's news stories with their accompanying pictures; 'puffs' or 'plugs' promoting what's in the paper, and advertisements, if any. The differences between these kinds of items are usually made very clear:

- A single colour is often used for the *masthead* (the newspaper's logo), which will be set in a type style, which does not appear elsewhere on the page.
- *News stories* are usually typeset in black type on a white background; colour will only be used for the photographs. Stories normally occupy squares or rectangles.
- '*Puffs*' are often set in irregular shapes or boxes with rounded corners, and the photos in them may be cut out to extend beyond the border; they may be colourful and contain a variety of text styles. They usually appear at the top of the page, adjacent to the masthead.
- *Advertisements* will also often be in colour, but will be clearly separated from the other items on the page by a rule or box, and will be well away from the masthead.

Putting it all together: A tabloid front page uses all these techniques to make life easy for the reader. It's obvious which are the puffs and which are the news stories; which is the main news story, and in which order we should read the story. In contrast, a broadsheet will use many of the same techniques but in a less pronounced way, offering readers a choice rather than directing the reader into one story.

Types of layouts: