

## ~~UNIT-II~~

*Reporting Structure of Column*

### ~~REPORTING STRUCTUE OF COLUMN~~

#### ~~STRUCTURE~~

~~This chapter shall cover the following main points.~~

- ~~What is Reporting?~~
- ~~Requisites of News Reporting~~
- ~~Types of Reporting~~
- ~~What is a Column?~~
- ~~Methods For Writing A Column~~
- ~~Types of Column In A Newspaper~~
- ~~News Analysis~~
- ~~Writing News Analysis~~
- ~~Backgrounders~~
- ~~Writing Backgrounders~~

#### ~~• LEARNING OBJECTIVES~~

~~By the end of this unit, the students will learn .~~

- ~~By the end of this unit, the students will learn What is Reporting?  
What are the requirements for good reporting?~~
- ~~What are the different types of reporting? All the topics are covered  
in detail.~~
- ~~Students will learn about the concept of Columns. What are the  
methods that can be used to write a column? What are the different  
types of columns that are written by a Columnist?~~
- ~~This unit also covers the topic of News Analysis. Definition of a  
News Analysis and how to analyze a piece of news and write the  
same.~~
- ~~Students will come to know about the concept of a backgrounder.  
They will also come to know about its use and how to write it.~~



~~News reporting involves discovering all relevant facts, selecting and presenting the important facts, and weaving a comprehensive story. Reporting involves hard work, which in turn involves stamina and patience. The main function of the journalistic profession is news reporting.~~

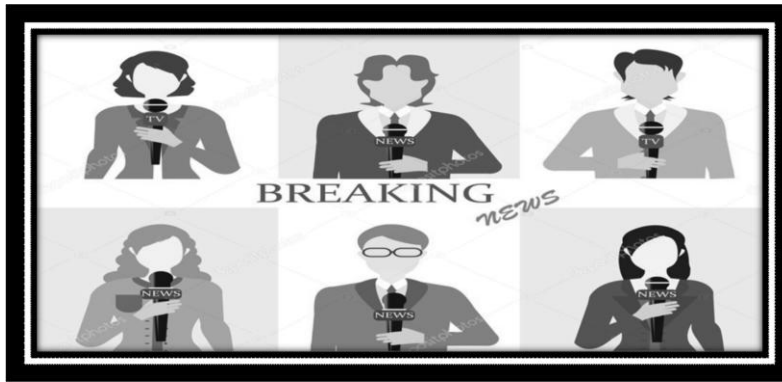
~~A reporter needs not only energy to spend long hours chasing a story, collecting facts from various sources to dig up the truth, but he or she must also have the will to pursue the course of their investigation to the very end to produce a comprehensive story without any missing links or unanswered questions.~~

~~In the modern age of news journalism, the responsibilities of the press have grown manifold. These days, the people are governed by a multiplicity of authorities, viz. The municipality, District Administration, State Government, and the Central Government. Even non-governmental authorities are involved in the lives of the people in one way or the other. The satisfaction of curiosity is the major task of a good journalist.~~

~~The variety and the depth of news has, of late, increased manifold. Newspapers, magazines, and periodicals have become the main source of information for the people. This fact underscores the need for accuracy in news reporting. Giving inaccurate news or putting out news in a casual manner is fraught with grave dangers. A journalist, who is careless in news reporting or indulges in lies, is a disgrace to the profession.~~

## ~~REQUISITES OF NEWS REPORTING~~

~~Reporting Structure of Column~~



~~A News Reporter should follow the following steps~~

~~1. A reporter must appreciate the importance of having a good reputation for absolute reliability. For this purpose, he or she must be systematic in their habits and punctual in keeping their appointments. By observing these principles, every reporter can make their path smooth and trouble-free.~~

~~2. A reporter should have the ability of news reporting and writing skills in the language of their paper. They should possess the quality to compose in a condensed manner as per allowable space.~~

~~3. The reporter of any local newspaper occupies a unique position and hence they become quite popular with the people of their respective towns. They report the local events, functions, fairs, social events, etc., and comes closer to the cultural life of the town. A reporter should follow some professional ethics in the work. Sometimes, while engaged in their profession, they may come to some people and develop confidential relations with them.~~

~~4. Sometimes, a reporter may be asked to write short length paragraphs regarding the local intelligence or about the city news. For this, they should keep their eyes and ears open and develop a nose for local news. They should develop a system to ensure that none of the interesting news is missed by them. They should try to know the secretaries of social, religious, political, musical-dramatic, legal, official, and other organizations and should call upon them regularly to get some interesting stories. They should make inquiries from the police regarding news of accidents and crimes. They should also contact the fire-station for the particulars of local fires.~~

~~5 Every reporter should keep an engagement diary. In this way, they can systematize their work and attend to all the appointments properly and punctually. By keeping an engagement diary they can know about the~~

~~important engagements and other events in the future and cover them without fail.~~

6. ~~The reporter should not forget to give a headline to their typed copies. Every copy which goes to the printer to be set is given a catchline. The catchline is a keyword because during the production it identifies all the sheets of the copy. The catchline is given on each sheet so that the printer can collate the whole story. The catchline should be chosen very carefully. It is better to choose an uncommon word, which may not resemble another news catchline~~

## ~~.TYPES OF REPORTING~~



~~Based on the topics and nature of news, there are different types of reporting such as Objective, Interpretative, Investigative, and Crime reporting.~~

~~Objective Reporting:~~

~~Reporting should be an impersonal job. A reporter should essentially be a storyteller. They should tell the story objectively and truthfully, without lacing it with any personal opinions or comments. They should be fair and impartial in presenting the story.~~



A good reporter however should try to rise above all of them and tell the facts as they have collected them in their search for truth. A reporter should be responsible for the presentation.

Example: A national daily carried on its front page that there was a “mass rape” at a student’s function in a Madhya Pradesh town which was found later on to be baseless. After the report appeared on the front page of the newspaper it caused a sensation. The Editor asked a reporter to investigate. The reporter first questioned the reporter of the news item, who insisted that the mass rape had happened. To corroborate he produced several eyewitnesses. However, when they were cross-examined and asked specifically to reveal only what they had seen, they were baffled and the investigator soon realized that the reporter had written the story based on gossip and filed it without verifying the facts.

The fact was during a function to celebrate the annual day of a local college, a portion of the shamiana came down, the electricity got cut off and a few students entered the women’s enclosure and molested some of the girls.

Reporter must remember that facts are sacred. They must check and cross-check the facts from different sources until they are sure of them. The golden rule of reporting is, to tell the truth, of course, objective reporting is not synonymous with dullness. It means fair and impartial reporting that is free from personal bias or prejudice.

### Investigative Reporting

As the name implies, investigative reports, are those that unearth significant information about matters of public importance through the use of non-routine information-gathering methods. Most day-to-day reporting involves investigation, but true investigative stories require the extraordinary expenditure of time and energy.



### Purpose:

The goal or purpose of investigative reporting is to present things as they are, which is not necessarily as people say they are. Investigative reporters set out to find a deeper reality, to answer questions that may never have been raised before, or at least have never been answered

satisfactorily. Reporting of such depth requires the one looks at situations from the possible angle, through their own eyes, as well as those of others. It requires walking all around the subject both literally and figuratively, searching for the one perspective that shows it best. And sometimes it means getting inside. Ideally, the reporter begins with an intrinsically interesting subject and develops it as fully as possible.

Investigative reporting means thorough, incisive reporting. It requires an investigative attitude = a curiosity and pungent nose for news, a lot of hard work, and the ability to tell a story in terms of what it means to the reader. Research and legwork for the typical investigative piece are expensive, painstaking, and time-consuming. At least, a few days and often several weeks may be required to gather documents, conduct interviews, and digest previously published materials. The investigation must therefore be limited to a subject worth the price.

### **Methods.**

Methods employed for the investigation piece, though may inspire visions of check-and-dagger operations and dramatic confrontation most investigative reports consist of painstaking and often tedious checking of public records, documents, and other sources.

Investigative reporting has a long tradition in journalism, dating back to the muckrakers at the turn of the century. But it came into its own with the Watergate revelations of the early 1970s. Since then, the investigation has become a standard part of the newsroom structure of many newspapers and radio/TV stations. Much of it is focused on a single objective: ferreting out villains, usually those in government. The concentration on wrongdoing is not universal, however, many journalists argue that the methods of the investigative reporter should be applied to all sectors of society that require examination, explanation, and airing, but are hidden from public view.

In recent years, investigative reporters have turned their attention to the affairs of private industry, individuals, and organizations. Investigative reporting is based on digging, the scrutiny of records, documents, and files.

To do this, reporters have to know their way through the official document. They also rely on sources for tips and inside information. Investigative reporters seek to uncover materials that people want to hide. Some cover-ups are illegal and some are legal but abusive. By abusive we mean that the practices in some way hurt people or deny them their rights.

Although some reporters are assigned investigative reporting as a special beat, all reporters are expected to dig out information on their beats. The reporter who is content to accept handouts and press releases and who relies on the assertions of authorities without checking them fails to inform

readers and listeners of the full dimension of his beat. Such a reporter can never hope to do investigative reporting.

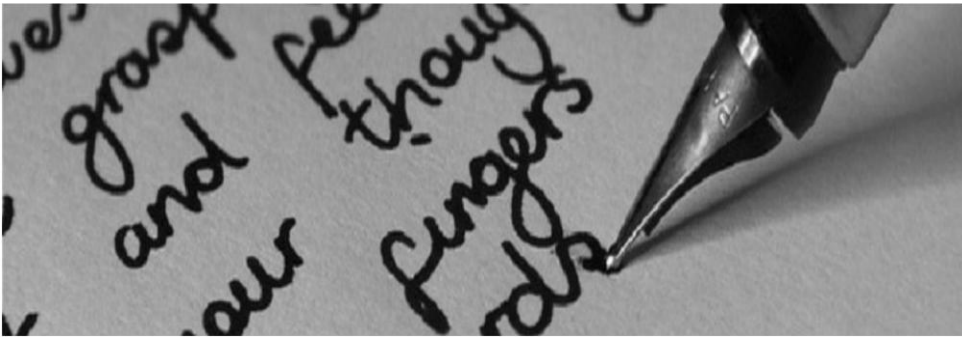
No special attributes are required of the investigative reporter except a sharp, inquisitive mind and familiarity with the area of his investigation. The investigative reporter seldom plays the detective in the sense of shadowing persons. Rather, his quest more often takes him to public records, where he uncovers information about which to query interviewees. In print, these facts usually speak for themselves.

An investigative reporter's job is to establish the facts that those in power want most to keep hidden.

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## INTERPRETATIVE REPORTING

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### Definitions and Purpose of Interpretative Reporting:

At one time in journalism's history, there were only two types of news stories: the spot news or hard news story and the feature story. Spot news, oftentimes also called straight news, hard news, breaking news, etc., is still predominant in print journalism. But in today's more demanding newsroom, spot news and feature are not sufficiently descriptive to classify all the types of news forms being used.

The feature story may be descriptive, a personality profile of the president, a leading movie/TV star, or a local inventor. It may be explanatory, a report on the eating habits of university students. The distinguishing feature of this story is that it does not have any immediacy such as the spot news have. There is no compelling time element because the story usually is not based on something that happened today or will happen tomorrow. Feature stories by their nature are often interpretive.

Interpretative writing covers a diversity of format that is commonly described as depth reports, a term that gained general acceptance after Neale Copple of the University of Nebraska published a book called "Depth Reporting" in 1964. Copple defined depth as the opposite of deadline dictated superficiality.



Depth means thorough, explanatory, or descriptive reporting. It requires an investigative attitude, a lot of hard work, and the ability to tell a story in terms of what it means to the reader. The depth report may be as long as a magazine article, or even longer, but it lacks the subjectivity so often found in magazines, articles or editorials and other opinion columns.

It may be presented in one piece or it may require a series. It requires a lot of research and legwork, at least a few days and often several weeks may be required to gather documents, conduct interviews and digest previously published materials. The typical depth story is “developed news” what editors once called an enterprise story.

### **Definition.**

Interpretative Reporting means that the writer seeks to find the meaning of an event. That is not editorial writing. Editorial writers tell readers or listeners that something is good or bad. That is, they make judgments. The interpretative news writer puts the event in its context. By putting an event in context, we mean that the interpretative writer’s job is to place the news event in the stream of cause and effect. An event that is isolated for a news story is plucked from a larger cycle or stream of related events. The interpretative story puts the news back into this cycle or stream.

Interpretative reporting often comes in the form of articles, sometimes in the form of columns called news analyses, whichever the form these write-ups give the causes and consequences of events.

The interpretative writer reads the fine print of the news story to answer the readers’ question, what does it mean? They write to keep the news events in focus by showing their comparative importance. They not only write about, what’s going on? But goes beyond this to ask and answer the question, what does it mean? They know that nothing just happens without antecedents and other surrounding circumstances. The reporters look for news beyond the spot news. Deadpan reporting of events, even when the source is reputable and newsworthy, may be misleading to the extent that the event doesn’t give the readers the “whole” or “essential” truth. The interpretative report makes up for the weaknesses of deadpan reporting.

Readers demand, today, more than drab objective reporting following the five W’s and H. they demand contextual reporting expanded beyond the five W’s and H.

The reporter of today must therefore prepare themselves to meet the increasing need and demand for “subsurface” or “depth” reporting, to take the reader behind the scenes of the day’s events and activities, related to the news to the reader’s framework and experience, make sense out of facts,



and put factual news in perspective, print out the significance of current events, add meaning into the news, and so on.

In conclusion, interpretative writing is a term that suggests a detailed perspective well beyond the basic facts of the traditional news story. The interpretive story interprets by adding detailed information and authority to the news. When carried out with competence and grace, it shows readers, through the benefit of evidence, rather than telling them what to think.

### **The Feature/Interpretative Writing Process**

The feature/interpretative process starts with an idea that begins in the mind of the reporter. The reporter can get such ideas from anyone and from anywhere. The reporter/writer can and should pick up many ideas in any twenty-four hours of his life just working, living, reading, listening, observing, fantasizing about, and studying every aspect of his environment. The most likely sources of such ideas are (1) people (2) reading and (3) experience.

**People as sources of ideas.** Feature article ideas can come from what someone says, does, or even wears. People are a feature writer's most important source of idea. For instance, the personality profile has become one of the most often published feature articles. Further elaboration may come from what the personality says or does. Thus it will pay for a budding feature writer to become a keen observer of people and an idea-seeking listener, questioner, and participant in discussions with persons of contrasting backgrounds, ages, ethnicity, etc.

Instead of taking his car, a reporter should take a bus once in a while and chat with, someone new, listen attentively to talk shows on radio and television, study human interest angles in commercials, attend lectures and news conferences, join activity groups, go to concerts, airports, and depots, plays, theatres, funerals – wherever people are.

A good feature writer must not quit observing people in diverse circumstances and situations. He must develop observation into an intuition. He must "listen with his eyes" as a well-known acting teacher Uta Hagen puts it.

**Reading as an idea source.** a good feature writer should be a reading addict. In his quest for ideas, they should read everything. daily and weekly newspapers, magazines, directories, yellow pages, books, etc. Ideas are lurking even in emails. They read everything to succeed in digging up ideas that could lead to interesting features.

**Experience as an idea source.** Experience is not only the best teacher but it's also a great source of ideas. No amount of people-studying, interviewing and research can replace the personal experience of the writer. To breathe pulsating life into the article, the feature writer should get some

personal experience related to what he is writing about. Successful feature writers have done almost anything to get the ring of authenticity into their articles. They have joined gangs, engaged in affairs, gone to jail or foreign lands, taken jobs in factories they want information about, or worked in hospitals to write factually about medical subjects. They have allied themselves with racketeers, drug pushers and barons, to get an authentic feel of the subject and give readers the facts beneath the stories. A feature writer's experiences covering jobs, places, and people he knows well, sports, hobbies, and games he is familiar with, beliefs and philosophies he cherishes, happiest and/or saddest moments and so on have often provided rich wives of ideas for feature articles.

The second step in the feature writing process follows after the stimulating idea has been identified. the gathering of information relevant to the idea. Once the idea has been itemized, the feature writer, next, forays into various places, books, and materials to gather relevant information concerning the idea. The information-gathering starts up a build up on the idea that develops it as fully as possible.

Information gathering can be done using five principal methods. (i) direct observation, (ii) interviewing, (iii) public records and documents (iv) social science techniques i.e. using precision journalism-surveys and content analysis, and (v) library, research.

Many times, the newsgathering strategies may involve investigative efforts that are carried out to unearth significant information about matters of public interest through the use of non-routine and painstaking examination of materials, scrutiny of records, interviewing of sources, all done to uncover something somebody wants to keep secret or hidden.

The next step in the feature writing process, after finding and gathering relevant information is to use the information to develop an interesting feature story.

This third step starts as the feature writer turns the rough ideas and relevant materials gathered into an outline. Many feature writers do not develop formal outlines before writing the first draft of their articles. An experienced feature writer who knows what he is doing may safely write without developing an outline. However, a formal outline is a rigorous exercise in logic that helps the writer to clarify his purpose of writing and organize his material to achieve that purpose. The reporter might not be thinking of any patterns of development of the outline because some topics just naturally lend themselves to a particular kind of development. For instance, when he is describing an event, he intuitively thinks in terms of chronology. When he wants to explain why something happened, he intuitively chooses a cause-effect pattern.

After the outline development, comes the fourth step. Drafting. Drafting is the process of turning an outline into sentences and paragraphs. Some experienced writers can produce a draft, fix a comma here and a word there and have a professional-quality article almost immediately after the outline has been developed. Other writers need to spend hours drafting and revising before they can get a professional-quality article.

It is impossible to offer firm guidelines on how to draft effectively. However, three principles seem to make the job easier for most people in most situations. draft quickly immediately after your outline, make it easy to expand and reorganize later, start with the easiest ideas.

Most writers strive to create a big rough draft as quickly as possible and then turn the draft into a professional-quality article later.

To make it easier to expand and reorganize the draft later, some writers, write on one side of the paper so that they can cut and paste later. However, the computer has now made the job of cutting and pasting, adding and deleting a lot easier.

Starting with the easiest ideas means that the writer may not necessarily start writing from the beginning of the story. He could start from the middle of the ending or wherever the easiest ideas can be put down.

The last step in the writing process is that of revising and testing (or evaluating) the article. Revising is the process of making sure the article says what the writer wants it to say, and that it says it professionally. As is the case with all other phases of the feature writing process, every writer uses a different technique for revising. But the important point is that a writer needs to have a technique, since to simply read through waiting for the problem to leap off the page seldom works effectively.

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## CRIME REPORTING

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Crime is a special and separate beat in daily newspapers. They have separate reporters to report crimes. However, crime reporting is part of the objective, interpretative and investigative reporting. The public has tremendous interest in crime stories and newspapers cannot afford to

ignore them without damage to its circulation and credibility. Some newspapers had tried to keep crime out of their columns, but that proved counterproductive and they soon included the crime reporting.

Junior reporters generally cover crime, but it is a highly responsible and specialized job. The reporter should have good contacts in the police and other departments of the administration. They must have a working knowledge of the penal codes and law on libel and other relevant matters.

The crime reporter has to follow a code of conduct. There should be objective in reporting. They should avoid resorting to sensationalism to get the attention of the readers. They should not suppress news of public interest, nor should seek to settle personal scores with police officers or lawyers or judges. They should also be careful that in the course of this work they don't unnecessarily invade a person's privacy.

Crime reports should not glorify the activities of criminals. The crime reporter should follow standards of decency and good taste. People sometimes criticize crime reporting by the press. Some reporters have also been found following unethical standards, thus causing much pain and sorrow to the victims or their families and friends.

#### Crime as news.

There are various types of crime news including fires, accidents, robberies, burglaries, fraud, murders, blackmail, kidnapping, and rape.

## REPORTING AND COLUMN



## ~~What is a Column?~~

~~A column is a recurring piece or article in a newspaper, magazine, or other publication, where a writer expresses their own opinion in a few columns allotted to them by the newspaper organization. Columns are written by columnists.~~

~~What differentiates a column from other forms of journalism is that it is a regular feature in a publication = written by the same writer or reporter and usually on the same subject area or theme each time = and that it typically, but not universally, contains the author's opinion or point of view.~~

~~Sometimes a column is published daily or it appears weekly. This piece of writing contains the writer's opinion or point of view. The column endows the writer with an opportunity to give his or her opinion freely. There is no restriction involved in column writing whatever the observation, experience, and knowledge the writer has about the specific topic or subject,~~



~~A column showcases the in-depth knowledge of the subject the writer possesses. To extract the information about the topic a columnist is going to write a column on, he or she uses his contacts in the field or community.~~

~~A column is a voice or a viewpoint of a columnist, not the newspaper and it is generally written using first person singular or third person singular. It speaks about the hot issues in society or politics or even displays the experiences of the writer about a specific subject. The reader is free to agree or disagree with the opinions of the columnist. The columnists can make or break anything. Most of the time, their experiences go in the right direction and their sources bring up the correct information, which reveals the hidden facts.~~

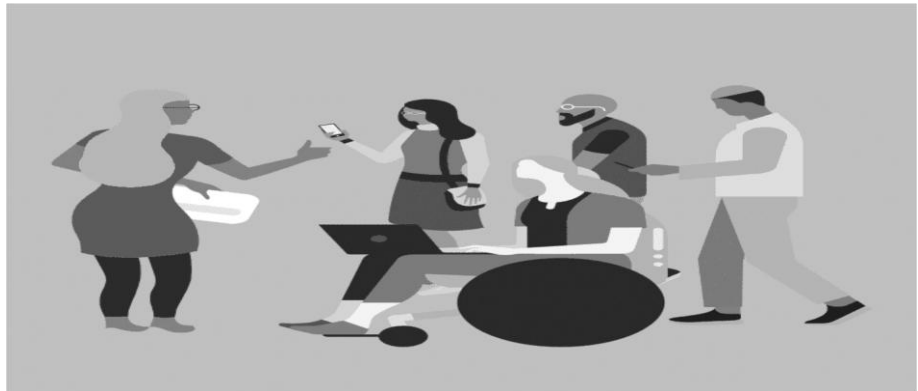
~~Writing a newspaper column provides space for a columnist to share their opinions or analyze a chosen topic using their voice. While a newspaper column does afford a lot of room for freedom, certain conventions should be followed to write an effective column. By learning how to present~~

~~a subject interestingly and how to present the writing straightforwardly, one can write a successful newspaper column that engages the audience.~~

## ~~METHODS FOR WRITING A COLUMN~~



### ~~Method 1. Developing and Sharing Views~~



~~**Step 1. Find Voice for the topic.** As a newspaper columnist, one is charged to have distinct opinions and a voice. This voice could be humorous or dark. For Example.~~

~~(1). A good way to find a voice is to read newspaper articles that report just the facts, and then freewriting a response. Do this with 5 or 6 articles, then chart how to react. One can take a sarcastic tone or an optimistic tone.~~

~~(2). The editor will help to refine the thought of the column as per requirement. So the columnist can visit the editor with their opinion freely without any fear.~~

~~**Step 2. Have An Opinion.** What distinguishes a newspaper column from an article is that a column inserts an opinion whereas the article only objectively reports facts. Forming an opinion is a good way to speak one's voice.~~

~~(1). A good way to test an opinion is to ask oneself. "Will someone have a strong reaction to the article?" If the answer is yes, one can successfully form an opinion. If the stance doesn't elicit any reaction, then one should probably write a very neutral piece.~~

(2). Make sure that one can back the formed pinion up with researched evidence. This will help to persuade the readers to buy into the opinion.

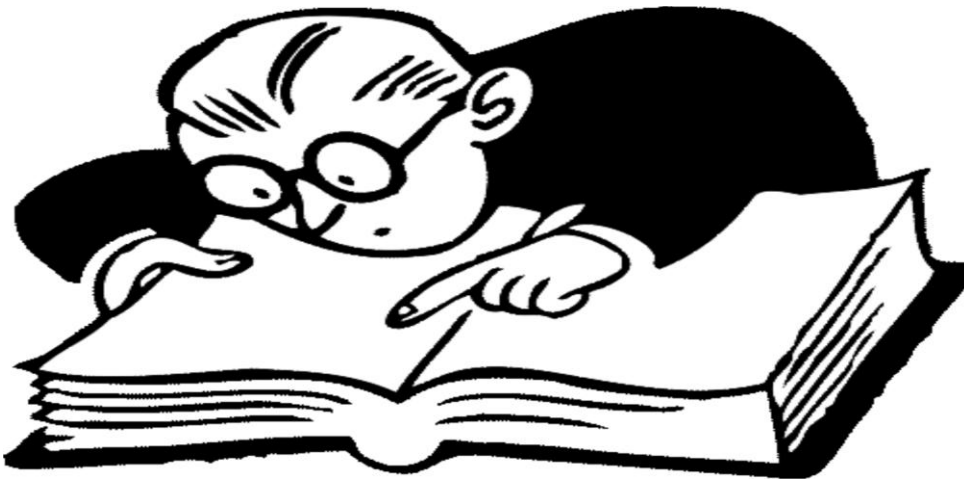
**Step 3. Share Personal Experiences.** A good way to develop a voice and opinion is to draw it from one's personal experiences. Including anecdotes from one's own life will not only make the column more relatable to the reader but also more credible.

(1). If one would have a situation where prescription drug costs buried them financially, then start the column with an anecdote about this time in life before one lays out fiery opinion on the high cost of prescription drugs for seniors.

**Step 4. Write in the first person.** Since a column is based on one's opinion, incorporate voice by using "I." This will remind the reader of one's presence and will help to establish opinions presented by the columnist.

(1) Instead of saying, "The facilities for racehorses are inadequate," use the first person to make the statement more compelling. For example, "The facilities that I, as a trainer, have visited don't meet the horses' needs, which affects their performance and well-being."

## **Method 2. Choosing The Column Topic**



(1). **Look at current events.** The readers will be interested in topics that are dominating the news, such as politics or pop culture, and not some obscure event that's no longer relevant. Stay on top of the news cycle and be ready to jump in with one's own opinion.

(1). Scan newspaper and magazine headlines to see what events are most popular. These reoccurring issues are ones that the general public will be interested in.

(2). Often newspaper columns are about politics, but they can draw on social issues also, such as prison conditions.



~~(2). Find an interesting angle for the topic. Providing readers with a fresh approach to a story can make the column appealing. Thinking about new angles for a topic on current events will be sure to speak to readers.~~

~~(1) Don't be afraid to include yourself in the topic. Look at the personal history for a way to contribute something unique to the column.~~

~~(2) Dive into the details and see where they take. Looking closely at details may provoke a new idea.~~

~~(3). Focusing on local angles is a great way to make your column relevant to the readers.~~

~~(3). Choose a topic for which there is a solution in mind. The columnist should have a conviction to suggest a solution or two for the opinion stated. Readers are looking for answers when they pick up a newspaper column, and it's the job of the columnist to provide them.~~

~~(1). If, for example, if the column says. , "Social media use by students during school hours is crushing student productivity," then the columnist must be prepared to offer a solution to get students to put aside social media and concentrate on the tasks at hand.~~

~~(2) If the columnist has got a strong point of view on a particular topic, but have no solutions to offer, then they should wait to write the column until they have got more concrete solutions.~~

### ~~Method 3. Engaging the Audience~~



**(1). Have a catchy title.** They often include numbers, fun adjectives, and a promise to the reader. This will help set the reader's expectations and grab his or her attention.

For example, "Getting Stains Out of Your Carpet" is a mundane title that's not likely to capture your reader's attention.

Alternatively, "3 Unusual Household Items That'll Get Red Wine Stains Out" is more interesting because it gives the reader a promise.

**(2). Open with a "hook" that will grab the reader's attention.** Make that first sentence count by enticing the reader with the words and ideas. Remember that the opening also lays the foundation for an argument, so make sure it's relevant.

Attention-grabbing opening lines include dramatic anecdotes, controversial statements, irony and wit, references to new studies, or statements that contradict conventional wisdom.

**(3). Tell the reader why they should care.** As one writes an article make sure that every paragraph can answer the question. "Who cares?" Explain why the selected topic is relevant to the readers and how it will positively or negatively affect them.

For example, if you're writing against a new tax proposal, explain to your readers that this new policy will increase their taxes.

**(4). Write conversationally.** While one shouldn't throw all the writing rules out the window, one should also avoid jargon, technical language, and complex sentence structure. By writing conversationally, the columnist will be able to communicate their point to the audience more effectively.

Try writing in shorter sentences or using contractions to adopt a more conversational style.

Pretend that the one is writing to a friend and address the reader directly.

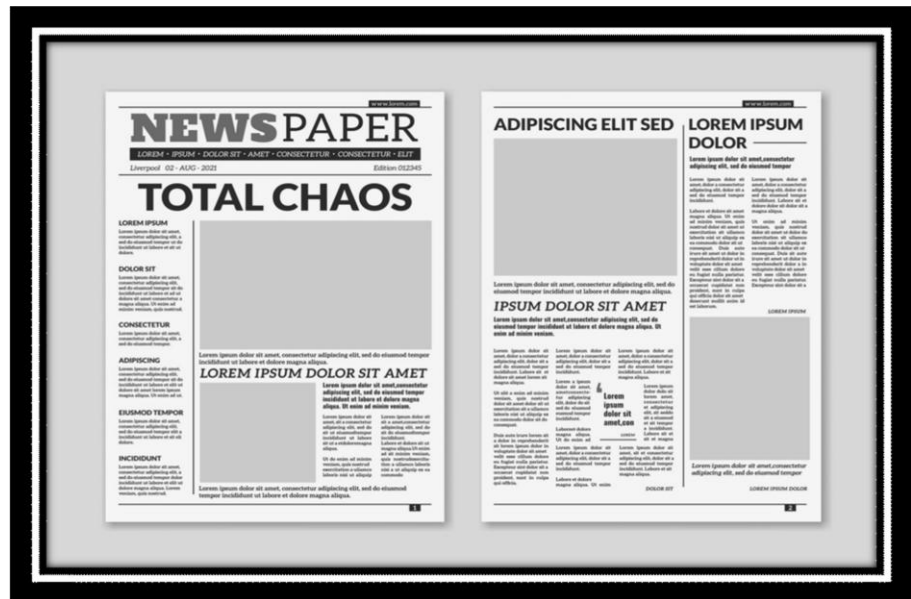
Try talking in one's head as one writes and then read it aloud afterward to see how it sounds.

**(5). Use the active voice.** Using active verbs comes across as more authoritative and it'll help cut down on wordiness. Since the columnist is trying to convince a reader of their opinion, using strong, active verbs will help them in achieving this.

Stating that, "It is believed by the city council that the town people were misled by the mayor" is wordy and leaves the author wondering if the city council is an authoritative source.

Instead, try writing “The city council believes that the mayor misled the townspeople.” One can note how the active voice sentence is more authoritative and straightforward.

#### Method 4. Formatting Your Column



(1). **Keep the column short.** Newspaper columns are typically only 400-800 words so one should get to the point straightaway.

Get used to whittling down the initial drafts. After the columnist reads each sentence ask yourself, “How is this sentence contributing to the argument? Is every word necessary?”

If one finds themselves unsure whether words or sentences contribute to their argument, take them out and read the article again to see if their absence alters an argument.

(2). **Make sure that the topic is clearly defined.** Because newspaper columns are short, the topic and point of view must be clearly defined and focused. State the topic and opinion in the first paragraph. The following paragraphs should relate to this idea.

For example, if the columnist is writing that long-distance relationships are a bad idea, introduce this idea in the first paragraph. Present the problematic aspects of long-distance relationships in the following paragraphs to support the stance.

(3). **Do the research.** While column writing does leave a lot of room for personal voice, it should be anchored in facts. Backing up an opinion with facts will help to make a case for the readers.

The columnist can research in the library or from any computer, but one can also conduct field research by interviewing people involved in the story.

The columnist should make sure about the sources while using them.

If the columnist includes a quote be sure to name the source and their expertise. This way the reader can assess the reliability of that person's statement.

(4). **Use Associated Press format.** Journalism has its specific writing style that ensures that all newspaper writers have consistent guidelines to follow.

Journalism's punctuation is very different from normal English formatting so the columnist needs to review the AP format carefully.

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## TYPES OF COLUMN IN A NEWSPAPER

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Columns are written by columnists.

What differentiates a column from other forms of journalism is that it is a regular feature in a publication – written by the same writer or reporter and usually on the same subject area or theme each time – and that it typically, but not universally, contains the author's opinion or point of view.

Some types of newspaper columns are:

1. Advice column
2. Book review
3. Community correspondent
4. Critic's reviews
5. Editorial opinion
6. Fashion column
7. Features column
8. Food column
9. Gossip column
10. Humor column or causerie

~~11. Music column~~

~~12. Sports column~~

~~13. Opinion column~~

~~(1). Advice column. An advice column is a column in a question and answer format. Typically, a (usually anonymous) reader writes to the media outlet with a problem in the form of a question, and the media outlet provides an answer or response.~~



~~The responses are written by an advice columnist An advice columnist is someone who advises people who send in problems to the media outlet.~~

~~(1) Book review. A book review is a form of literary criticism in which a book is merely described (summary review) or analyzed based on content, style, and merit.~~



A book review may be a primary source, opinion piece, summary review, or scholarly review. Books can be reviewed for printed periodicals, magazines, and newspapers, as school work, or for book web sites on the Internet. A book review's length may vary from a single paragraph to a substantial essay. Such a review may evaluate the book based on personal taste. Reviewers may use the occasion of a book review for an extended essay that can be closely or loosely related to the subject of the book or to promulgate their ideas on the topic of a fiction or non-fiction work.

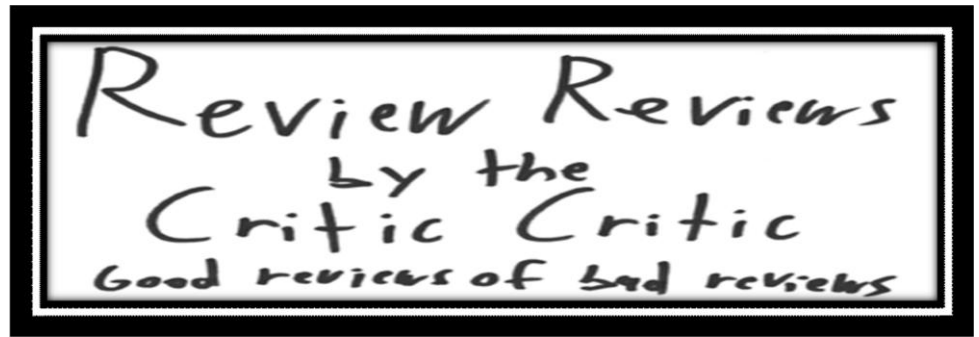
**(2) Community Correspondent.** A community correspondent, also known as a rural correspondent or country correspondent, is someone who produces a regular column on community events, places, and people for publication in their local—typically weekly—newspaper. The writer is generally not a regular member of the newspaper staff but is a stringer who receives little or no pay for their submissions, outside of a free subscription to the periodical.



The columns produced by community correspondents almost universally focus on community events at an extremely localized scale, often from a personal viewpoint. The writers typically have little professional journalistic training and instead of building their articles around major events and themes often focus on the day to day lives and interactions of the people and places in their community. It is not uncommon to read reports of new babies, vacations, recently purchased automobiles, and church suppers in these pieces.

**(4). Critic's reviews.** A critic is a professional who communicates an assessment and an opinion of various forms of creative works such as art, literature, music, cinema, theatre, fashion, architecture, and food. Critics may also take as their subject social or government policy. Critical judgments, whether derived from critical thinking or not, weigh up a range of factors, including an assessment of the extent to which the item under review achieves its purpose and its creator's intention and a knowledge of its context. They may also include a positive or negative personal response.



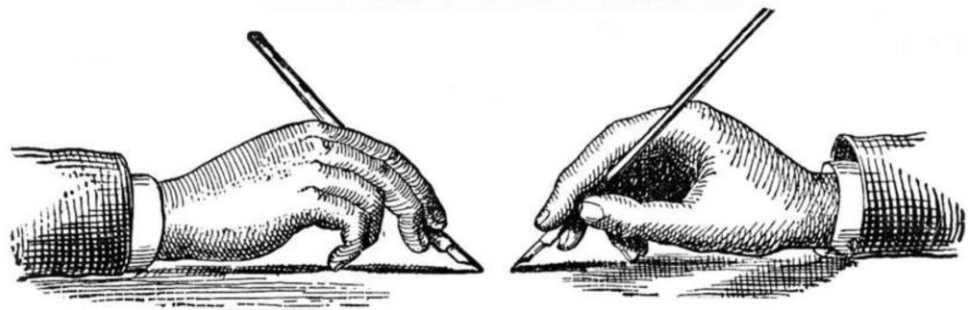


Characteristics of a good critic are articulateness, preferably having the ability to use language with a high level of appeal and skill. Sympathy, sensitivity, and insight are important too. Form, style, and medium are all considered by the critic. In architecture and food criticism, the item's function, value, and cost may be added components.

**(5). Editorial opinion.** A newspaper's editorial board evaluates which issues are important for their readership to know the newspaper's opinion.

Editorials are typically published on a dedicated page, called the editorial page, which often features letters to the editor from members of the public, the page opposite this page is called the op-ed page and frequently contains opinion pieces, by writers not directly affiliated with the publication. However, a newspaper may choose to publish an editorial on the front page.

## Editorial



Many newspapers publish their editorials without the name of the leader writer. Tom Clark, leader-writer for *The Guardian*, says that it ensures that readers discuss the issue at hand rather than the author. On the other hand, an editorial does reflect the position of a newspaper and the head of the newspaper, the editor, is known by name. Whilst the editor will often not write the editorial themselves, they maintain oversight and retain responsibility.

**(6). Fashion column.** The Columnist writes articles that cover the aspect of fashion and style. They explain the goods and bad of a brand cloth material prices etc. In short they review a fashion product. These products



can be branded or non branded. They also cover the celebrity or brand ambassadors who use or endorse those fashion products.

*Reporting Structure of Column*



Fashion is a popular aesthetic expression at a particular period and place and in a specific context, especially in clothing, footwear, lifestyle, accessories, makeup, hairstyle, and body proportions. Whereas a trend often connotes a peculiar aesthetic expression and often lasting shorter than a season, fashion is a distinctive and industry-supported expression traditionally tied to the fashion season and collections. Style is an expression that lasts over many seasons and is often connected to cultural movements and social markers, symbols, class, and culture.

(7). **Features column.** A feature story is a piece of non-fiction writing about the news. A feature story is a type of soft news. The main sub-types are the news feature and the human-interest story. A feature story is distinguished from other types of non-news by the quality of the writing. Stories should be memorable for their reporting, crafting, creativity, and economy of expression.



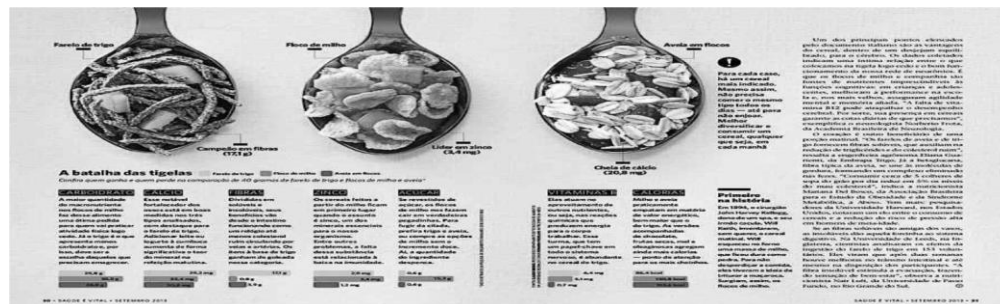
Feature Story as contrasted with straight news reporting normally presents newsworthy events and information through a narrative story, complete with a plot and story characters. It differs from a short story primarily in that the content is not fictional. Like literature, the feature story relies upon creativity and subjectivity to make an emotional connection with the readers and may highlight some universal aspects of human nature. Unlike straight news, the feature story serves the purpose of entertaining the readers, in addition to informing them. Although

truthful and based upon good facts, they are less objective than straight news.

Unlike straight news, the subject of a feature story is usually not time-sensitive. It generally features good news.

Feature stories are usually written in an active voice, with an emphasis on lively, entertaining prose. Some forms, such as a color story, uses description as the main mode.

**(8). Food Column.** A food column is a type of newspaper column dealing with food. It may be focused on recipes, health trends, or improving efficiency. It is generally geared towards gourmets or "foodies".



Since 1994, food writers have also written columns and blogs on the web. Kate Heyhoe's Internet column first appeared on the electronic Gourmet Guide in December 1994 and became the centerpiece of its website. The Global Gourmet, in 1996, making her one of the longest, continuously-running food blogger/columnnists on the web.

**(9) Gossip Column.** A gossip columnist is someone who writes a gossip column in a newspaper or magazine, especially a gossip magazine. Gossip columns are material written in a light, informal style, which relates the gossip columnist's opinions about the personal lives or conduct of celebrities from show business politicians, professional sports stars, and other wealthy people or public figures. Some gossip columnists broadcast segments on radio and television.



The columns mix factual material on arrests, divorces, marriages, and pregnancies, obtained from official records, with more speculative gossip stories, rumors, and innuendo about romantic relationships, affairs, and

purported personal problems. Gossip columnists have a reciprocal relationship with the celebrities whose private lives are splashed about in the gossip column's pages.

*Reporting Structure of Column*

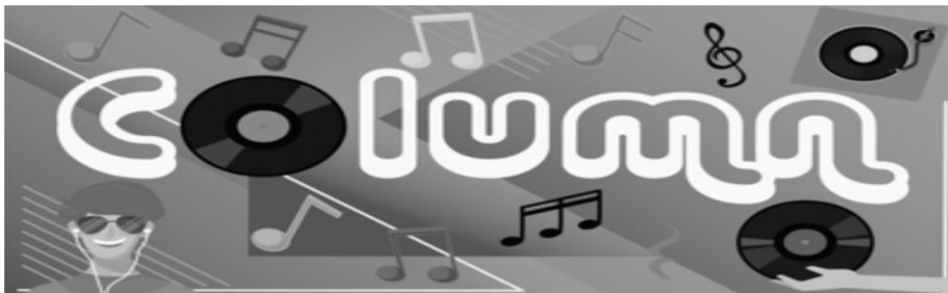
**(10) Humor Column.** Humour is the tendency of experiences to provoke laughter and provide amusement. The term has been derived from the humoral medicine of the ancient Greeks, which taught the balance of fluids in the human body, known as humor (Latin. *humor*, "body fluid"), controlled human health and emotion.



People of all ages and cultures respond to humor. Most people can experience humor—be amused, smile, or laugh at something funny and thus are considered to have a *sense of humor*.

The columnist in this category writes something humorous in nature that can bring a smile to the reader's face. This type of column is light-hearted and these columns intend to make the reader stress-free and relaxed.

**(11). Music Column.** Music journalism or "music criticism" is media criticism and reporting about music topics, including popular music, classical music, and traditional music. Journalists began writing about music in the eighteenth century, providing commentary on what is now regarded as classical music.



In the 1960s, music journalism began more prominently covering popular music like rock and pop after the breakthrough of The Beatles. With the rise of the internet in the 2000s, music criticism developed an increasingly large online presence with music bloggers, aspiring music critics, and established critics supplementing print media online. Music

~~journalism today includes reviews of songs, albums, and live concerts, profiles of recording artists, and reporting of artist news and music events.~~

~~(12) **Sports Column.** Sports journalism is a form of writing that reports on matters about sporting topics and competitions. Sports Journalism started in the early 1800s when it was targeted to the social elite and has transitioned into an integral part of the news business with newspapers having dedicated sports sections.~~



~~The increased popularity of sports amongst the middle and lower class led to more coverage of sports content in publications. The appetite for sports resulted in sports only publications like ESPN and Sports Illustrated. There are many different forms of sports journalism, ranging from play by play and game recaps to analysis and investigative journalism on important developments in the sport.~~

~~Technology and the internet age has massively changed the sports journalism space as it is struggling with the same problems that the broader category of print journalism is struggling with, mainly not being able to cover costs due to falling subscriptions. New forms of internet blogging and tweeting in the current millennium have pushed the boundaries of sports journalism.~~

~~(13). **Opinion Column.** An op-ed, short for "opposite the editorial page" or as a [backronym](#) the "opinions and editorials page", is a written prose piece typically published by~~



a newspaper or magazine which expresses the opinion of an author usually not affiliated with the publication's editorial board. Op-eds are different from both editorials and letters to the editor.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

News analysis refers to the measurement of the various qualitative and quantitative attributes of textual, unstructured data news stories. Some of these attributes are sentiment, relevance, and novelty. Expressing news stories as numbers and metadata permits the manipulation of everyday information mathematically and statistically. This data is often used in financial markets as part of a trading strategy or by businesses to judge market sentiment and make better business decisions.



As a matter of principle, news writing deals with the presentation of facts and arguments. Interpretation of the facts and deriving meaning out of the facts is left to the reader. It is the practice in newspapers that every issue contains a few items/events/issues in which all the available facts are treated together and objective analysis is provided to the readers.

News analyses usually have no fixed place, unlike editorials. In many newspapers, the bottom of the front page carries news analyses, while in others someplace in the inside pages carries the news analyses.

The task of writing the news analysis is given to experienced staffers or trusted outside experts. These days the field staff like reporters, correspondents, and bureau chiefs also sometimes write news analyses. There is a clear difference between news and news analysis. In news, current facts are more important and past facts may be given only to pad the story. The news writer does not attempt the analysis. News analysis is also different from writing articles and editorials. The editorial is mainly opinion writing and provides clear-cut opinions. Articles also contain opinions and guidelines, they may also have some component of the analysis. But news analysis is not supposed to carry any opinion or

~~prescription. It is simply an objective analysis of the assorted facts about an event or issue.~~

~~Some newspapers and television news, nowadays, include analysis, comment, and opinion in the news also. Professionally this is considered to be an aberration only. Professional journalistic values respect the wisdom of the readers and therefore provide analysis, comment, and opinion in specified columns only.~~

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## ~~WRITING NEWS ANALYSIS~~

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~~Writing news analysis involves more work than writing news. Following steps make the task organized and the output is better and more comprehensive.~~

~~**Selecting a Subject.** As a rule, news analysis is prepared on a current topic. But all topics of current value do not qualify to be the subject matter of analysis. Normally a 'burning event' is selected for the news analysis. It means that a news subject that has remained front-page news for more than one day would be fit to be analyzed in detail. In addition to being current, the subject of news analysis must be fascinating or interesting. It means that the subject has to be relevant to the audience.~~

~~For example, an issue, which is of much importance in the UK, may not be very relevant in India. Similarly, the subject matter for news analysis must have a wide impact and many ramifications. A straight story with no angles and controversies may not render itself for detailed analysis. Suicides by the students of class ten and twelve may not be the main stories but many such incidents occurring during the examinations will be a good subject for analysis.~~



**Gathering Information And Facts.** - Since the subject of news analysis is current, such information will be easily available. But news analysis must contain facts and arguments that the reader has so far not received. Following are some of the sources for gathering such information. a) Previous issues of the newspapers b) News magazines c) Official reports and documents d) Annual reports e) The Internet f) Public personalities and specialists

**Analyzing The Information and Finding Trends.** After collecting as much information as possible on the subject, the writer of news analysis makes a deep study of the collected information. Here, the information must be looked in a historical perspective, i.e., with relation to the previous months, years, decades, etc. This generally brings out certain interesting trends, which form the basis for writing the news analysis. News feature writers also try to bring out startling inter-relationships. For example, while doing a news analysis of dowry deaths a writer finds that most of the girls killed due to demand for more dowry were professionally qualified and they had resisted the demands for dowry. The analysis may bring out the trend that educated newlyweds when confronted with demands for dowry passionately put up resistance and then suffered violence. The general principle is more information and deeper analysis provides better results.

**Organizing The Structure.** The writer has a mine of information, but all information cannot be presented. The writer evaluates the collected material and selects information that is both relevant and important. The selected bits of information are then arranged in order of priority. At this stage, it is always better to verify the selected information and facts from a variety of sources. Only the verified information and facts must be presented. Even an insignificant error may make the entire exercise a farce in the eyes of the readers.

**Writing The News Analysis.** The writer of the news analysis must follow all the basic principles of clear writing and the presentation must be precise and easily comprehensible. The writer should be familiar with the wants and tastes of the readers of the newspaper in which the analysis is to be published. The lowest denominator of the audience must be the target of the writer so that every reader above that level can make sense. The news analysis must resist temptations to allow his or her comments and opinions to creep into the write-up. It is always advisable to create one or two graphics for the news analysis. The choice is between graphs, bar diagrams, pie charts, pictures, and caricatures. Depending upon the nature of the subject, and space available, a decision about the illustrations and graphics has to be taken. The scope of writing news analysis is much wider in news magazines. Many news stories in news magazines contain an element of news analysis, but the principles remain the same. Since the deadline in a

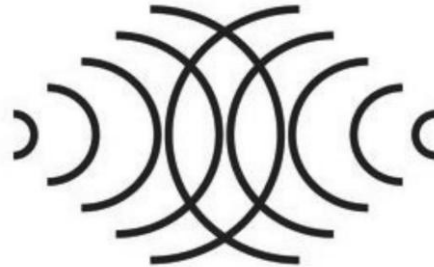


~~news magazine is a little bit extended and space is also more the skills of news analysts are better displayed in news magazines. These days the supplements of daily newspapers have also started carrying news analyses, sometimes on quite non-traditional subjects.~~

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## ~~BACKGROUNDER~~

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### Backgrounder

~~Backgrounders add meaning to the events and issues in the news. Backgrounders do this by explaining them further through background material. These write-ups bring the readers up to date explaining how, why, and when of the event and issue so far. Backgrounders are more or less a historical presentation of the information and facts. For example, if the news of the death sentence to a killer-rapist is in the news, a historical account of the persons hanged in the past will be a good topic for the backgrounder. During elections, background information about constituencies, political groups, and contestants is very important and every newspaper publishes it.~~

~~There is a clear difference between news analysis and backgrounders. There is no or very little element of analysis in the backgrounder. The objective is to provide as much background information as possible. It can be said that a backgrounder is loaded with information, whereas a news analysis would concentrate to find causes and establish trends.~~

#### ~~Writing Backgrounders.~~



~~It is advisable to write backgrounders in a systematic and planned manner. The first two steps for writing backgrounders are the same as for the news analysis. The subject is chosen out of the current topics and as much information as possible is collected from various sources. Sometimes, the need for the backgrounders can be anticipated and the pieces are~~

prepared well in advance. Elections, festivals, and ceremonies are some of the occasions when planning can be done.

For a backgrounder, the data is generally organized in chronological order. Care should be taken to go into the past as much as possible. Since the writer is dealing with the past, there are likely to be gaps. If even after reasonable efforts the gaps are not filled it is advisable to mention this in the writing itself. Similarly, the readers should also be informed if certain data is unconfirmed. The writer has to select the information according to its relevance.

Since the backgrounder contains a lot of facts, it has to be written very carefully to make it interesting and readable. This is a challenge for the writer. Traditionally backgrounders do not contain any pictures or graphics. But there is no harm if the backgrounders are also made more attractive and interesting by presenting data in tabular formats or the forms of bar diagrams, pie charts, graphs, etc. An odd picture may also be used here and there.

It is worth mentioning here that in the new journalistic practices of today, the distinction between various forms of newspaper writing is getting obliterated. Many backgrounders are very well illustrated. There are news items, which contain a few facts lot of analysis and interpretation, some historical perspective, and it may begin or end with an editorial guideline or prescription.

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## SUMMARY

News reporting involves discovering all relevant facts, selecting and presenting the important facts, and weaving a comprehensive story. Reporting involves hard work, which in turn involves stamina and patience. The main function of the journalistic profession is news reporting

Based on the topics and nature of news, there are different types of reporting such as Objective, Interpretative, Investigative, and Crime reporting.

A column is a recurring piece or article in a newspaper, magazine, or other publication, where a writer expresses their own opinion in a few columns allotted to them by the newspaper organization. Columns are written by columnists.

A column showcases the in-depth knowledge of the subject the writer possesses. To extract the information about the topic a columnist is going to write a column on, he or she uses his contacts in the field or community.

Some types of newspaper columns are Advice column, Book review, Community correspondent, Critic's reviews, Editorial opinion, Fashion

~~column, Features column, a Food column, Gossip column, Humor column, Music column, Sports column, Opinion column.~~

~~News analysis refers to the measurement of the various qualitative and quantitative attributes of textual, unstructured data news stories. Some of these attributes are sentiment, relevance, and novelty.~~

~~Backgrounders add meaning to the events and issues in the news. Backgrounders do this by explaining them further through background material. These write-ups bring the readers up to date explaining how, why, and when of the event and issue so far.~~

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## **QUESTIONS**

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### **Short Answer Type Questions:**

- ~~1. What is Reporting? Explain the types of Reporting in brief.~~
- ~~2. What are the requirements for good reporting?~~
- ~~3. What is a Column? Explain any 5 types of columns.~~
- ~~4. Explain the methods of writing a column in brief.~~
- ~~5. Define News Analysis and Backgrounder.~~

### **Multiple Choice Questions:**

- ~~1. \_\_\_\_\_ involves discovering all relevant facts, selecting and presenting the important facts, and weaving a comprehensive story.~~  
(a) News Coverage (b) News Bulletin  
(c) News Reporting (d) Prime Time News
- ~~2. In Journalism Objective is a kind of \_\_\_\_\_.~~  
(a) Interview (b) Reporting (c) Question (d) Reporting
- ~~3. \_\_\_\_\_, are those that unearth significant information about matters of public importance through the use of non-routine information-gathering methods.~~  
(a) Crime Reporter (b) Investigative Reporter  
(c) Interpretative Reporter (d) None
- ~~4. The book \_\_\_\_\_ was published in 1964.~~  
(a) Depth Reporting (b) Detail Reporting  
(c) No Reporting (d) Risky Reporting
- ~~5. \_\_\_\_\_ means that the writer seeks to find the meaning of an event.~~  
(a) Interpretative Reporting (b) Crime Reporting  
(c) Sting Reporting (d) None

6. ~~Objective Reporting follows four W's and H. The H stands for \_\_\_\_\_.~~  
~~(a) Happening (b) Half (c) How (d) Happiness~~
7. ~~The most likely sources for writing an interpretative article are ideas are people, reading and \_\_\_\_\_.~~  
~~(a) Police Station (b) Detectives~~  
~~(c) Experiences (d) News Agencies~~
8. ~~\_\_\_\_\_ is the process of turning an outline into sentences and paragraphs.~~  
~~(a) Writing (b) Printing (c) Drafting (d) Editing~~
9. ~~\_\_\_\_\_ is the process of making sure the article says what the writer wants it to say, and that it says it professionally.~~  
~~(a) Editing (b) Revising (c) Drafting (d) Reading~~
10. ~~Columns are written by \_\_\_\_\_.~~  
~~(a) Writers (b) Reporters (c) Columnist (d) None~~
11. ~~An \_\_\_\_\_ is a column in a question and answer format.~~  
~~(a) Advice Column (b) Gossip Column~~  
~~(c) Fashion Column (d) None~~
12. ~~\_\_\_\_\_ is also known as a rural correspondent.~~  
~~(a) Community Correspondent (b) Social Correspondent~~  
~~(c) Village Correspondent (d) None~~
13. ~~Tom Clark, was the leader- writer for \_\_\_\_\_.~~  
~~(a) The Times of India (b) The Telegraph~~  
~~(c) The Hindu (d) The Guardian~~
14. ~~Music criticism is another word for \_\_\_\_\_.~~  
~~(a) Music Reporting (b) Music Writing~~  
~~(c) Music Lyrics (d) Music Journalism~~
15. ~~\_\_\_\_\_ add meaning to the events and issues in the news.~~  
~~(a) Pictures (b) Music (c) Backgrounder (d) None~~

### **ANSWERS**

- ~~1. (c) 2. (b) 3. (b) 4. (a) 5. (a) 6. (c) 7. (c) 8. (c) 9. (b) 10. (c)~~  
~~11. (a) 12. (a) 13. (d) 14. (d) 15. (c)~~