

releases and handouts by "spokesman" are also equally dependable and come under this category. News given by diplomatic sources belongs to this category. Such sources said to be called as hard sources.

• CATEGORIES OF REPORTS

Reporting is the art of collecting and gathering the news stories from various sources. Sources of information can be people, letters, books, files, films, tapes - in fact, anything which journalists use to put news stories together. Sources are very important if you want to report on events or issues and explain the world to your audience. Journalists try to work as much as possible from their own observations, but this is often not possible. Some events or issues are finished before the journalist gets there. Others are like plants which only show their stem and leaves above the ground - the all-important roots are hidden from sight. Journalists who only report what they see can miss much of the news unless they have sources to tell them of more details or other aspects which are out of sight.

Reporting may be classified and categorized under various categories such as political, sports, national, city, international, crime, court, development, human interest and weather reporting etc.

Check your Progress

1. What is meant by sources of information?

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2. Mention some of the categories of reporting.

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• CITY REPORTS

Reports containing the events, incidents, accidents, disasters, political happenings, functions, orientation programmes, conducted by the celebrities in around the city, which were telecasted or printed in a newspaper or TV channels are called City reporting.

In a newspaper, the local correspondent is an important connection with the area where it is published. He knows the environment intimately. He is an expert in the happenings of that locality and the newspaper gives much importance to his views. There is no regular routine for him and sometimes he may work on some important or special assignments.

Check your Progress

3. Write a note on Local correspondent.

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• SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Special Correspondent of a newspaper is an important source of news. The duty of special correspondent is to get news items for the newspaper and to

make it clear and meaningful to the reader. Once James Gordon Bennett described a special correspondent should be "half diplomat and half detective".

The special correspondent is well known better to the reader than the editor of a newspaper, because, it is his name that appears as a by-line under the lead story on the front page. However, the life of a special correspondent is not an easy one. He has to come up through the hard path, by reporting the police and courts etc. he has to deal with lot of people, who are of different and various backgrounds, tastes and he has to adjust the likes and dislikes of these various groups is itself a difficult task for anybody.

Moreover, a special correspondent must bear in his mind that news is not what the minister or anybody tells him. He must look at the emerging situation and it is his duty to reveal the reader the meaning of facts. The special and needed qualities of the special correspondent are as follows:

- Vast and varied contacts with official sources
- Ability to keep their confidence
- A flexibility of mind for research
- The ability to encourage others to speak
- The ability to acquaint with different types of people
- Physical stamina and mental courage
- Creativity and a simple, sparking style.

Check your Progress

4. Who is a special correspondent of a newspaper?

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• FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT

A correspondent or on-the-scene reporter is a journalist or commentator, magazines or more general speaking, an agent who contributes reports to a newspaper, or radio or television news, or another type of company, from a remote, often distant, location. A foreign correspondent is stationed in a foreign country. The term correspondent refers to the original practice of filing news reports via postal letter. The largest networks of correspondents belong to ARD (Germany) and BBC (UK).

A correspondent generally includes some of his/her own perspective on the news. For example, a cor-respondent is expected to provide considerable context to the events being chronicled. A reporter, on the other hand, offers largely fact-based reporting.

In Britain the term 'correspondent' usually refers to someone with a specific specialist area, such as health correspondent. A 'reporter' is usually someone without such expertise who is allocated stories by the news desk on any story in the news.

Check your Progress

5. Write a note on Foreign correspondent.

• STRINGER

Stringers are correspondents who are not employed by the newspapers on a full-time basis. Their pay depends on the quantity of published copy they produce. Stringers include students, managers, housewives, teachers or employees working in some departments. Stringers may 'string' or work for more than one newspaper.

• SPORTS REPORTS

Sports journalism is a form of writing that reports on sporting topics and games. While the sports department within some newspapers has been mockingly called the toy department, because sports journalists do not concern themselves with the 'serious' topics covered by the news desk, sports coverage has grown in importance as sport has grown in wealth, power and influence.

Sports reporting isn't as easy as being a fan of sports. There are advantages to understanding a particular sport, but ultimately a sports reporter needs to find the storyline and write the story in a way that brings the reader to the event.

Sports reporters are journalists who write about sports. They are expected to understand and speak the idiom but write so those who don't can still feel they are in the midst of the action. Fans and editors expect them to know the rules of the game and the rules of journalism and be able to meld the two into colorful, action-packed game stories, picturesque profiles, informative features and thoughtful analysis in any medium.

Sports journalism, once dismissed as the 'toyshop' editorial department, has grown in importance as sport has become bigger and bigger business, generating billions in revenue to those who own teams, franchises, tournaments and organizations. Millions consume their newspapers from back to front and the audience for Britain's only 24 sports news channel more than eclipses news rivals.

Sports journalism is changing - the proliferation of dedicated TV channels, websites, radio stations, niche publications and, of course, newspapers offers a world of opportunity, but has also led to a change in the nature of the job.

Drawing on the personal experiences of established and recently qualified reporters, it covers the whole range of skills required by sports journalists from traditional match reporting, news gathering, feature writing and colour copy to the modern demands such as providing a live blog, snaps for a website and updating a Twitter feed even before we getting around writing our story.

• CRIME, ACCIDENTS AND DISASTERS REPORTS

Crime reporting

There are tremendous public interests in crime stories and no newspaper can afford to ignore them without damage to circulation and credibility. Crime is a part of life and it is newspaper's duty to inform the readers of what crimes

are going on in their city, state or country. However, crime reporting should not aim at satisfying morbid curiosity or sensation mongering. Although crime reporting is usually assigned to one of the junior reporters in a newspaper, it is a highly responsible and specialized job. The reporter should not only have the ability to sift the grain from the chaff, and the truth from lies, he should also have good contacts in the police and other departments of the administration as well as working knowledge of the penal codes and law on libel and other relevant matters. Besides, he must observe a code of honour. He should be as objective and as humanly as possible so as to avoid resorting to sensationalism or cheap gimmicks to catch the attention of the readers or the viewers. He should not suppress news of public interest. Nor should he seek to settle personal scores with police officers or lawyers or judges. And he must be careful that in the course of his work, he does not unnecessarily invade a citizen's privacy. There has been much criticism of press reporting of crime and not all of it is baseless. Some reporters have been found guilty of unethical standards, thus causing much pain and sorrow to their victims or their families and friends. Crime Reporters try to glorify the activities of criminals or sometimes make heroes of them. This practice should be discouraged as much as a resort to sensationalism. The crime reporter must never violate standards of decency and good news taste. There are several types of crime news-murders, fires, accidents, robberies, burglaries, fraud, blackmail, kidnapping, rape, etc.

Fires

The reporter must get his facts correct about the essential elements of a fire story the number of persons killed or injured, the extent of damage to property, the loss of valuables, etc. he must also find out if the fire brigade responded in time or was guilty of delaying the fire-operations through sheer lethargy or incompetence or lack of water supply. He should question eyewitnesses about any acts of bravery or cowardice. All these are essential ingredients of a fire story. The lead in a fire story would normally suggest itself. If, for instance, lives have been lost, it needs highlighting in the lead. If possible, the reporter must list the names of the dead and the injured.

Homicides

In cases of a major murder, the reporter should rush to the scene as soon as possible after receiving a tip and gather all the relevant facts. In nine cases out of ten, crime reporters, say, in Delhi depend on police information about murders and there is a time lapse before they can begin their investigations. This often hampers their search for the truth. The reporter must, in any case, exercise great care in how he handles the story. Otherwise, he runs the risk of causing offence. In reporting dowry deaths or alleged dowry deaths, the reporter must refrain from leveling uncorroborated statements by one party or the other. He must therefore get his facts correct by talking to the investigation police officer, the girl's in laws and her parents, and, if possible, with the neighbors.

Accidents

Most accidents are reported on the basis of police bulletins or information supplied by police spokes-men'. However, wherever possible the crime reporter must rush to the scene of a major accident to give authenticity to his story.

Arrests

It is a serious matter to report that a person has been placed under arrest. When such a report is made, the exact charge against the arrested person could be given and it should be documented by either a record or attribution to a responsible official. If such documentation cannot be obtained, the reporter has better to check the facts. The person in question may not have been under arrest at all. In many states an arrest is not formally accomplished until a prisoner is booked. The news, in any case, must be handled with care.

Accusations

It is commonly written that someone is being sought for robbery, suspected of arson or tried for murder. This is journalistic shorthand, which has gained acceptance through usage, but it is neither precise nor correct. Persons are sought in connection with a robbery, unless a charge has actually been made, in which case they are charged with robbery. Persons under suspicion are not necessarily going to be charged with a crime and it is generally not privileged matter to indicate that suspicion is attached to any individual by name. Where the police suspect someone, but lack proof, that person may be held as material witness- that is far different from being accused of as a criminal. Therefore, cases of suspicion are not usually given too extensive and detailed news treatment if no privileged material is available for use. The practice of reporting that a defendant is being 'tried for murder', while widely used, is obviously prejudicial and could be more accurately, if less drama stated, as 'being tried as a charge of murder'.

Confessions

The use of the word 'confession' to describe statements made by a person to the police or the prosecuting authorities is dangerous when it is not a matter of public record. The fact that a police chief or a prosecutor has claimed to have a confession, except in open court, may be used only at the risk of the news organization. Most press-bar voluntary agreements forbid the use of confessions until they are admitted in open court. The records are full of supposed confessions that backfired later for a variety of reasons and of persons who admitted crimes they could not possibly have committed. Unless and until it is established in fact that a person has confessed, approved procedure for reporters is to use such terms as 'statement', 'admission', 'description' or 'explanation'. They convey the shade of meaning that is warranted by circumstances and do not subject the news organization to unnecessary risks.

There are a few fundamental precautions which a crime reporter must take account of:

- The first is that the police and prosecutors rarely will give them information on a silver platter. That means a tremendous amount of interviewing and research must be done in a very short time so that a coherent story may be written.
- There is no guarantee of police accuracy; and therefore police versions of names, addresses and other facts must be checked.
- Police and journalistic terminology are not identical. The legal term for a slaying is a homicide, but many news organizations loosely and incorrectly refer to such crimes automatically as murder.

• LEGISLATURE AND COURT PROCEEDINGS

Court reporting

Even the big newspapers of India do not have the resources to cover all the courts of their main circulation area. The reason being that there are too many courts. Newspapers neither have the time nor the space to cover everything that happens in the courts. Paper covers only those stories in which their readers are interested. A country governed by laws needs many courts, each with a different jurisdiction. The emphasis of the news media is on criminal courts, High courts, and the Supreme Court. The media are less interested in covering Civil Courts.

One of the reasons for this lack of interest may be that the Civil Courts are jammed with cases, the suits remain pending there for several years and it is assumed that in the mean time, members of the public would lose whatever interest they may have showed initially. If we go through the old files of a news-paper, we will find that the volume of court reporting has increased in recent years. One of the reasons for the increase may be the courts are now getting more active in the field of social justice. Public interest litigations are also increasing. As the number of petitions increase, one notices a corresponding increase in the coverage of courts and the judgments they deliver. There are only a few big newspapers in India who have full time correspondents or reporters exclusively for their court beat. These reporters generally have adequate legal background. Other newspapers mostly hire stringers to cover court stories. (In journalism, stringers a freelance journalist, who is paid for each piece of published or broadcast work, rather than receiving a regular salary. They are heavily relied upon by most television news organizations)

Many of the stringers are professional advocates. Many part-timers also cover stories in their respective areas and come from teaching, law and other professions. A newspaper, which does not have a full time law reporter, may send its regular staff correspondent to cover an important court story.

The first time that one covers the court beat as a court reporter; one usually feels amidst the technicalities and complex language. A trainee reporter aiming to be a future court reporter must at first acquire some understanding of the court jurisdictions, its procedures and its hierarchy. At the apex we have the Supreme Court of India. Then there are the High Courts, Session Courts, Magistrate Courts, etc.

If the reporter is acquainted with the jurisdiction of different courts, then one can easily locate the specific court for a particular matter. Similarly, if one is familiar with the hierarchy in the courts; one can easily guess where the appeal would be filed.

Much of a reporter's success in the coverage of the courts depends on one's contact and sources, and one's ability to gain access quickly to records. For a reporter, the key person in a court is the clerk of the court. A court clerk prepares and keeps the records. He can make available copies of transcript for a fee. Court reporting involves diligent checking of records. The judge who preside a trial is seldom one's source. But a reporter should, as soon as possible, introduce oneself in person to the judge. A court reporter should also have good contacts with the lawyers working on a case and if possible with the respective parties. Where a case attracts much public attention, reporters may be under pressure from rival lawyers for a more favorable description of their individual positions. The reporter must then ensure impartial reportage in all fairness to the proceedings in court.

Court reporters must understand the judicial process from beginning to end. They should know what happens when a suspect is arrested, charged, arraigned, tried, and sentenced or released. Experienced reporters say the best way to learn the process is to spend time at the courthouse. As stated before, begin with the court clerks, who keep track — the list of cases — and the calendar. Find out how to get copies of the court record, filings, and testimony. Read the case files — including motions and pleadings before the trial — and keep track of what's reported about the case if you can't be in court every day, which frequently happens.

Defense attorneys are some of the best sources of information on the justice beat. They often are more willing than prosecutors to talk with reporters about cases on which they are working. Do our best to understand legal jargon, but avoid using it in your stories. If we don't know what something means, ask the person we're interviewing to explain it.

• FOLLOW-UP STORY

Follow-ups are needed because one story on its own may not cover all aspects of an event or controversy properly. Although life goes on second-by-second, day-by-day, journalists cannot report it all. Journalists have to concentrate on bits of life and report them to their readers or listeners in 20 centimeter stories or 40-second news reports, three-minute current affairs segments or half-page features. Journalists impose space and time limits on their reports which do not always reflect how important the event is in the real world.

Journalists also attempt to show continuing events in self-contained "chunks" called news stories. With the amount of information now available from throughout the world, we have no alternative if we are to share out our limited time effectively.

However, just because we as a journalist have described an event in a single-column story or a 30-second report does not mean that the event itself

has been described completely. There are often side-issues which have not been touched or later events which will need reporting themselves.

We have to distinguish follow-ups from what we call breaking stories, which are reports of events (or controversies or debates) which are still happening as we report them. The hourly reports on a hijacking are part of a breaking story; the report of the eventual trial of the hijackers is a follow-up.

We normally catch lines the latest version of a breaking story UPDATE (for example "HIJACK UP-DATE") because it still relies on the same news angle (what is happening at the hijack) but gives us a more up-to-date report. By contrast, we would normally catch line a follow-up according to the angle of the follow-up story itself. For example, we might write a follow-up story about the Transport Minister announcing new security measures to prevent further hijackings. We might catch line it "SECURITY PROMISE".

Because events are often connected, it is not always easy to know the difference between a follow-up and a new story or an update of a breaking story. However, a special feature of a follow-up is that it relies for its significance or interest on at least one previous story. Remember though that just because our follow-up describes the effect of a previous story, we cannot expect all of our readers or listeners to remember the original story, even if they did see or hear it.

Writing a single basic breaking news article is a pretty straightforward task. We start by writing our lead, which is based on the most important facts in the story.

But many news stories are not simply one-time events but rather ongoing topics that can last for weeks or even months. One example would be a crime story that unfolds over time - the crime is committed, then police search for and finally arrest a suspect. Another example might be a long trial for an especially complex or interesting case.

Reporters must often do what are called follow-up articles for long-lasting topics such as these. At this link you can read about developing ideas for follow-up stories. Here we'll discuss how to write follow-ups.

The Lead

The key to writing an effective follow-up story starts with the lede. We can't write the same lede every day for a story that continues over an extended period of time. Instead, we must construct a fresh lede each day, one that reflects the latest developments in the story.

But while writing a lead that includes those latest developments, we also need to remind our readers what the original story was all about to begin with. So the follow-up story lede really combines new developments with some background material about the original story.

• SUMMARY

Reporting is the art of collecting and gathering the news stories from various sources. Sources of information can be people, letters, books, files, films, and tapes - in fact, anything which journalists use to put news stories together.

Sources are very important if you want to report on events or issues and explain the world to your audience. Journalists try to work as much as possible from their own observations, but this is often not possible. Some events or issues are finished before the journalist gets there. Others are like plants which only show their stem and leaves above the ground - the all-important roots are hidden from sight. Journalists who only report what they see can miss much of the news unless they have sources to tell them of more details or other aspects which are out of sight.

• KEY WORDS

1. **Reporting :** Reporting is the art of collecting and gathering the news stories from various sources.
2. **Homicides:** In cases of a major murder, the reporter should rush to the scene as soon as possible after receiving a tip and gather all the relevant facts.
3. **Sports Journalism:** Sports journalism is a form of writing that reports on sporting topics and games.
4. **Stringers :** Stringers are correspondents who are not employed by the newspapers on a full-time basis.
5. **Confessions :** The use of the word 'confession' to describe statements made by a person to the police or the prosecuting authorities is dangerous when it is not a matter of public record.

• ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Sources of information can be people, letters, books, files, films, and tapes - in fact, anything which journalists use to put news stories together. Sources are very important if we want to report on events or issues and explain the world to our audience.
2. Reporting may be classified and categorized under various categories such as. political, sports, national, city, international, crime, court, development, human interest and weather reporting etc.
3. In a newspaper, the local correspondent is an important connection with the area where it is published. He knows the environment intimately. He is an expert in the happenings of that locality and the newspaper gives much importance to his views.
4. Special Correspondent of a newspaper is an important source of news. The duty of special correspondent is to get news items for the newspaper and to make it clear and meaningful to the reader.
5. A foreign correspondent is stationed in a foreign country. The term correspondent refers to the original practice of filing news reports via postal letter. The largest networks of correspondents belong to ARD (Germany) and BBC (UK).

• TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Describe the term Special correspondent.