

What's News?

The following criteria and descriptive quotes³⁶ help news producers, editors, and writers decide what is and isn't "newsworthy." How do these fit with the news in your community? How do they shape what you do and don't find in the news?

Proximity

Small local problems often have more meaning to a community than large distant problems.

Relevance

The story impacts people's lives.

Immediacy

News is what's happening now. "News is only news while it is new."

Interest

"News should make you suck in your breath and exclaim, sit up, take notice, and listen."

Drama

Excitement, danger, adventure, and conflict have the most appeal.

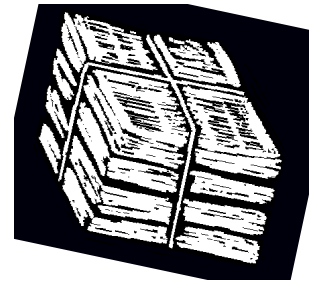
Entertainment

"The surest way to boost audience ratings is to increase the amount of entertaining coverage in a newscast."



Editor's "Newsworthy" Checklist³⁵

- LOCAL VS. NATIONAL VS. INTERNATIONAL
- RELEVANT
- IMPORTANT
- TRAGIC
- UNUSUAL
- IMMEDIATE OR IMMINENT
- INTERESTING
- CONTROVERSIAL
- FUNNY OR IRONIC
- THE FIRST
- THE LAST
- THE BIGGEST
- THE MOST EXPENSIVE



Media Mapping—News

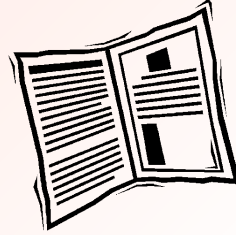
1. Circle the product you're mapping:

ALCOHOL

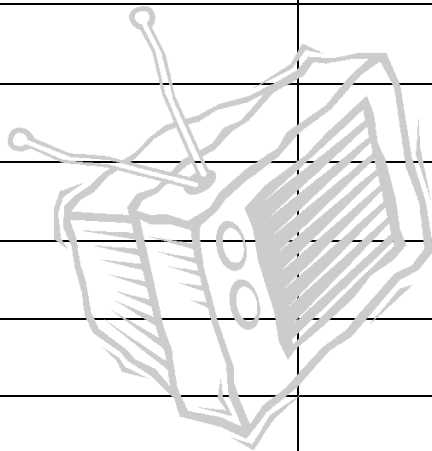
TOBACCO

2. Fill in the table below.

(Use the back if necessary.) COLLECT EXAMPLES OF MESSAGES



MESSAGE MEDIUM	MESSAGE	GLAM CODES
Local TV news	Coverage of New Year's Eve celebration from a bar	FUN, HAP, POP

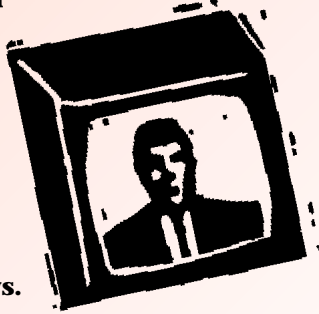


GLAM CODES	
Successful= SUC	Independent= IND
Happy= HAP	Healthy= HLTH
Romantic= ROM	Funny= FUN
Popular= POP	

MESSAGE MEDIA	
TV	Magazines
Radio	Computers
Newspapers	

What's the Angle?

News is supposed to be an objective telling of current events. However, what you read, what you see, and what you hear are always told from a certain point of view. While the job of a news editor is to make sure that stories are truthful, there is no replacing your own analysis. The following questions provide a framework for analyzing the news.



1. Point of View

Are multiple points of view presented in the story? Are all relevant points of view included? Which, if any, are missing?

2. Ordering of Information

What is the first information provided? How does this influence the story? How are different points of view presented? Which comes first? How does this shape your understanding of and feelings about the story? How would the story change if the order of these points of view were reversed?

3. Objective Language

Is descriptive language used to put a particular “spin” (either negative or positive) on the story, or is the emphasis on neutral terms that merely present information and allow the public to make up its own mind?

4. Source Credibility

Are sources cited in news stories credible? What are their credentials? Are all sources identified by name or attributed to “unnamed sources who wish to remain anonymous?”

5. Consistency

Is the information in a given story consistent with other news and eyewitness accounts?

6. Visual Images

What is the relationship between the visual images (photographs, video footage) and the verbal statements (text or spoken)? Does the visual element enhance and illustrate the story?

7. Titles

For newspapers, what is the impact of story titles on your initial response? How does the size of the title and word choice shape interest in the story?

8. Story Placement/Order

Where do stories appear? At the opening or closing of a television newscast? On the first page or the last page of a newspaper? How does this placement affect your view of a specific story's importance?

Operation Deadline

INSTRUCTIONS: Your editorial team must select which stories to cover in a 30-minute evening newscast for your local community. You must allow for:

- three 2-minute advertising breaks
- 2 minutes for weather
- 2-4 minutes for sports

That means you have only 18-20 minutes to actually provide news coverage. Each of the news items listed below has a range of film footage from which to choose. However, there is more for each story than you can possibly use. Your job is to decide:

1. What stories you will include.
2. In what order you will present them.
3. How much time you will devote to each.
4. What will be the angle of each story.



AVAILABLE NEWS STORIES	MINUTES OF FOOTAGE
1. Fire in an abandoned warehouse	5:00
2. Mother gives birth to quintuplets	2:00
3. Surgeon General's Report finds smoking among teens is on the rise	5:00
4. Local charity fundraising drive for the homeless	2:26
5. President completes Russia trip	4:00
6. Police crack local drug ring	6:00
7. The circus comes to town today for a 2-week stay	3:25
8. Local elementary school vandalized	3:00
9. Local youth starts own Internet business	4:03
10. Mayor announces final city budget for the year	2:30
11. Property-tax increase needed to keep school sports	3:10
12. Food poisoning incident at local restaurant	1:12
13. Local music festival set for this weekend	2:00
14. Sting operation targets stores selling alcohol to minors	3:00
15. Drought stretches to 3rd week; no relief in sight	2:48
16. Paris unveils this season's fashions	3:54
17. New media satellite to add 50 television channels	1:55