

SUB ENABLING 1: CONCEPT RELATED TO NEWS GATHERING AND WRITING IN REPORTING FOR PRINT MEDIA

- + Concept of news and news story**
- + Characteristics of news**
- + Elements/principles (ethical values) of the news stories**
- + Types of news**
- + Importance of news and news stories**
- + Types of news stories**

CONCEPT OF NEWS AND NEWS STORY

What is news

News is timely, accurate information about recent, significant, or unusual events, deemed worthy of public attention, including hard news (serious, immediate) and soft news (human interest). **OR**

News is the reporting of new, noteworthy information about events that have just happened or are currently happening.

What is a news story

Is a specific piece of journalistic writing, broadcast, or report that delivers news to an audience.

A **news story** is a single, structured report of a news event. While "**news**" refers to the general information or events of the day, a "news story" is the individual package—article, broadcast, or interview—used to deliver that information to an audience.

Most news stories are built to answer the **5 W's and 1 H**: Who, What, Where, When, why, and how.

CHARACTERISTICS OF NEWS

In journalism, **news** is defined by specific "news values" that determine whether an event is noteworthy enough to be reported as a story. These are the foundational elements used by journalists to assess newsworthiness

1. Timeliness

Information must be current. In news reporting, **timeliness** refers to the recency and current relevance of a story, answering the critical audience question: *"Why am I hearing about this now?"* the meaning of timelines varies depend on the context and the medium such as immediacy (breaking news) relevance to the calenda- Stories that are timely because of a specific date, such as holidays (Union Day, mental health month)

2. Proximity

Events occurring geographically or culturally closer to the audience have higher news value. refers to the nearness of a news event to the intended audience. It is a foundational news value because people generally prioritize information that affects their immediate surroundings or identities. Proximity is categorized into two dimensions

geographical proximity- This is the most traditional form, focusing on the literal distance between the event and the reader or viewer

psychological proximity- This refers to stories that feel "close to home" even if they happen far away geographically (example issues concerning sports)

3. Impact

Events that affect a large number of people or have significant consequences. In journalism, **impact** (also called **consequence**) measures the significance of a story by the scale and depth of its effect on the audience. It is often considered the most important news value because it directly answers the reader's question: *"How does this affect my life?"*

4. Prominence

Involves well-known people, such as political figures or celebrities. In news reporting, **prominence** is the news value assigned to stories involving well-known individuals, powerful institutions, or famous locations. It is based on the journalistic principle that "names make news"—the more recognizable a subject is, the higher their inherent newsworthiness. Generally, is about who make the story? They might be political leaders, celebrities etc.

5. Oddity

It is also known as novelty, is a news value centered on information that is unusual, unexpected, or out of the ordinary. It operates on the classic journalistic principle: **example "When a dog bites a man, that's not news; but if a man bites a dog, that is news"**

6. Conflict

As a news value refers to the presence of a struggle, disagreement, or opposition between two or more forces. Conflict arises when individuals, groups, or nations have competing interests, ideas, or goals. Example the conflict of middle east (Israel and Palestine), Congo, farmers and pastoralist.

7. Human interest

Stories that trigger emotional responses or highlight shared human experiences. focuses on the emotional and personal aspects of a story to make it relatable and engaging for the audience. It shifts the focus from abstract data or hard facts to how real people are impacted by events.

Example news with Emotional Appeal (empathy sympathy, compassion, anger, or joy.)

ELEMENTS OR PRINCIPLES (ETHICAL VALUES) OF THE NEWS STORIES

There are various principles that guide the gathering and presentation of information to maintain professional integrity, below are those principles.

1. Objectivity

In journalism, **Objectivity** is a pillar of professional ethics. It functions as a "discipline of verification," ensuring that the reporter's personal feelings do not interfere with the audience's right to the facts. Contrary to popular belief, **objectivity** does not mean a journalist has no opinions. Rather, it refers to the **method** used to gather and present information.

2. Balance & Fairness

Balance and fairness are ethical pillars used to ensure that decisions, reporting, and processes are impartial, inclusive, and equitable. While often used interchangeably, they represent distinct moral duties: **Balance** typically refers to the proportional representation of different viewpoints, while **fairness** centers on the ethical and consistent treatment of individuals, regardless of the outcome.

3. Truthfulness

Journalism's first obligation is to report the truth as verified through evidence. In ethical frameworks, **truthfulness** is the active commitment to aligning one's communications with factual reality and sincere belief. While balance ensures a variety of views and fairness ensures unbiased treatment, truthfulness provides the **factual foundation** that makes those principles meaningful.

4. Independence

Reporters must remain independent from the subjects they cover to avoid conflicts of interest. In ethical frameworks, **independence** refers to the freedom from external control, influence, or conflicts of interest that could compromise an individual's or organization's ability to act with objectivity and integrity. It is a cornerstone principle in professions where public trust is paramount, such as journalism, auditing, and law.

5. Accountability

Being responsible for the accuracy of reports and correcting errors when they occur, in ethical frameworks, **accountability** is the obligation to report, explain, and be answerable for the consequences of one's actions and decisions. While "responsibility" often refers to the duty to perform a task, "accountability" is specifically focused on the **results** and the willingness to be judged against a set of standards

TYPES OF NEWS

In journalism, news is primarily categorized by its seriousness and urgency, its specific topic, and its geographical scope.

1. Categorization by Treatment (Hard vs. Soft News)

This is the most common classification, focusing on the tone and impact of the information. This category comprises hard and soft news

- **Hard News:** these are Serious, time-sensitive factual reporting on events with a significant impact on society. *Examples:* Politics, war, economics, crime, and natural disasters. It is characterized mostly with the inverted pyramid which treat news from most important fact first. eg. **Russia-Ukraine Negotiations**

- **Soft News:** Lighter, entertainment-oriented reporting that focuses on human interest, lifestyle, and culture. *Examples:* Celebrity gossip, movie reviews, health tips, and travel stories. It is characterized with less time-sensitive, uses narrative storytelling, and often has a subjective or emotional tone. Less urgent, more subjective, and entertaining topics, such as lifestyle, arts, and celebrity news. eg. **South Sudan national blind football team.**

2. Categorization by Topic (Reporting Beats)

Journalists often specialize in specific "beats" to provide in-depth coverage of particular fields

- **Political News:** Covers government activities, elections, and public policy.
- **Business & Financial News:** Reports on markets, economic trends, corporate activities, and mergers
- **Sports News:** Updates on games, match results, athlete profiles, and team analyses.
- **Science & Technology News:** Informs the public about breakthroughs, innovations, space, and AI developments.
- **Investigative News:** In-depth reporting aimed at uncovering hidden truths, corruption, or social injustice.

3. Categorization by Scope and Origin

News is also classified by where the event occurs relative to the audience.

- **Local News:** Events happening within a specific city or community, such as local government or school board meetings.
- **National News:** Significant events occurring within a single country that affect the entire nation.
- **International (Foreign) News:** News from around the world that has global implications

4. Categorization by Reporting Style

The way a story is formatted can change its type

- **Breaking News:** Real-time reporting of events as they unfold, prioritized for speed and immediacy.
- **Feature Stories:** Long-form, detailed, and creative narrative-driven articles that explore subjects in depth.
- **Opinion & Editorials:** Articles that express a specific viewpoint or argue a position rather than providing objective facts

IMPORTANCE OF NEWS AND NEWS STORIES

News and news stories are essential for informing the public, fostering democracy, and providing accountability. They keep citizens updated on current events, enabling informed decision-

making, while acting as a watchdog to expose corruption and, ultimately, shaping public opinion, community connection, and historical records.

- **Importance of News**

1. **Informed Decision-Making:** News provides the facts needed to make choices about daily life—from personal health risks and finances to voting and community engagement.
2. **Democratic Watchdog:** Known as the "Fourth Estate," news organizations hold powerful institutions (government and corporations) accountable by uncovering corruption and exposing wrongdoing.
3. **Transparency and Accountability:** By shining a light on official actions, news promotes transparency, ensuring those in power act in the public interest.
4. **Crisis Awareness:** News acts as a vital alert system for emergencies, such as natural disasters or public health crises, allowing people to prepare and protect themselves.
5. **Historical Record:** News provides a primary record of events as they happen, serving as a timeline for future generations and researchers to understand the past.

- **IMPORTANCE OF NEWS STORIES**

While "news" often refers to raw information, **news stories** use narrative to make that information meaningful

1. **Context and Analysis:** Stories go beyond "what" happened to explain the "why" and "how," providing the background necessary to understand complex issues like economic policy or climate change
2. **Humanizing the News:** By focusing on individual experiences, stories foster empathy and a sense of shared humanity, connecting audiences emotionally to global or abstract problems
3. **Fostering Dialogue:** Presenting diverse viewpoints in a story format encourages critical thinking and public debate, helping to build consensus (agreements) on societal solutions
4. **Inspiring Action:** Compelling narratives can mobilize communities and spark social change by highlighting injustices or showcasing grassroots movements.

TYPES OF NEWS STORIES

These refer to the specific journalistic styles used to organize a story.

1. **Straight News Story:** A concise, objective report that uses the **inverted pyramid structure** ▲ putting the most important facts first. A **straight news story** is the "no-frills" foundation of journalism, designed to deliver essential facts to a reader as quickly and objectively as possible. Often called **hard news**, this format prioritizes information over creative narrative, focusing on "just the facts"
2. **Feature Story:** An in-depth, creative narrative that explores a person or trend with more descriptive and emotional detail. A **feature story** is an in-depth, non-fiction news story that focuses on the "how" and "why" behind the headlines. Unlike the rigid inverted pyramid of straight news, feature stories use **narrative techniques** and creative writing to build an emotional connection with the reader.
3. **Investigative Story:** A deep-dive report that uncovers hidden truths or corruption through extensive research and evidence gathering. An **investigative story** is an in-depth news format that uncovers matters of significant public interest that are often deliberately concealed by those in power. Unlike daily news, which reports on events as they happen, investigative journalism uses a systematic, long-term methodology to expose corruption, systemic failures, or hidden truths.
4. **Editorial/Opinion Piece:** A subjective story used to build an argument or share a specific viewpoint rather than purely objective facts. In journalism, Editorials and Opinion pieces are subjective formats used to persuade, analyze, or advocate rather than just report facts. While often grouped under "Opinion Journalism," they differ significantly in **authorship** and intent.

The end

Thank you

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