

SS901

Introduction

Journalism is an excellent avenue for transforming thinking skills into written communication. Besides clear, simple writing skills, good journalism requires evaluating information, setting priorities, and using judgment. Journalism provides a structured environment for the development of thinking skills.

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Activity 1. Basic rules for writing news stories.

Activity 2. Students must apply rules in writing a story from interviews.

Activity 3. Rules for fairness in reporting.

Activity 4. Explanation of different types of stories and leads.

Activity 5. Students write different types of leads based upon interviews.

Activity 6. Students practice writing different types of leads.

Activity 7. Data for a news story. Students can compare their approaches to the story since they will operate from the same data base.

Activity 8. Must write a news story based upon two different sources of information. Students may compare their results.

Activity 9. Students must evaluate the accuracy of what they have been told by comparing and evaluating different sources of information.

Activity 10. A practice in reporting both sides of a story.

Activity 11. Two exercises in summarizing information.

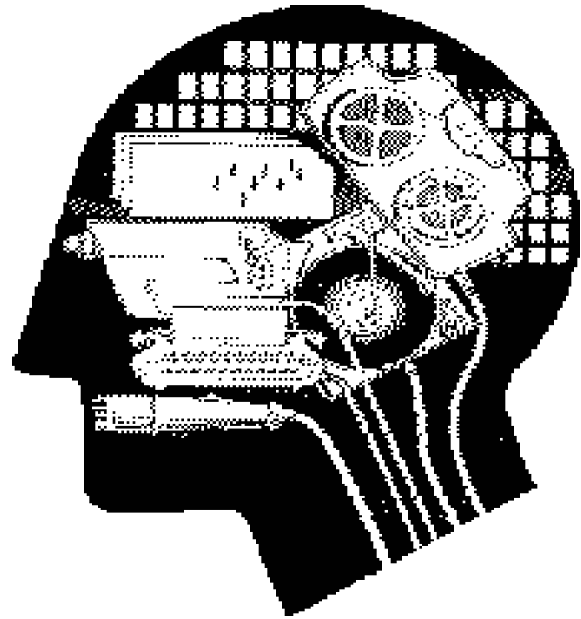
Activity 12. Rules for editing.

Activity 13. Students must select what they think are the most important stories. The results can be compared.

Activity 14. Reducing the length of a story.

Activity 15. Re-writing a story.

Activity 16. Selecting stories and graphics and pasting them up on a layout sheet.



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Rules for Writing News Stories

No matter how well a news story is written, most stories lose half of their readers after the headline and first paragraph. Still more readers drop off after the second and third paragraphs.

One reason readers lose interest in a story is the way the story looks. If it looks hard to read, they may go no further. Good newspaper writing must follow certain rules if you want people to read the story.

Another problem with newspaper stories is space. There may not be enough room in the newspaper for a whole story. Parts may have to be cut out.

Rules

1. Every story should contain the basic facts. These are who did it, what did they do, when did they do it, where did they do it, why did they do it and how did they do it.

2. Try to put the important facts about who, what, when, where, why and how into the first paragraph. This is very hard to do. If you can't get them into the first paragraph, get them into the first three paragraphs. Try to get all the important facts in the first three paragraphs.

3. Make your sentences and paragraphs short. One rule is no more than ten words in a sentence and no more than five sentences in a paragraph.

4. Put the important facts at the beginning and the least important at the end of the news story. Always assume the last three paragraphs will be cut out at best and, at worst, the whole story except the first three paragraphs will be cut out.

Directions

Can you find the Who, What, When, Where, Why and How in this story?

Thirty-five million tires are piled into a half-mile black mountain west of the small town of Westley. They have become a point of contention between environmentalists and the Oxford Energy Company.

Oxford Energy plans to build the world's second electric generating plant fueled by tires at the site. Environmentalists, led by Richard Harriman of the Environmental Action Education Institute, have filed a lawsuit against the proposed construction claiming the plant will increase air pollution.

Oxford Energy decided to locate its plant near Westley because of the tire collection which is the world's largest and increases by 25,000 tires daily. The owner of the tire dump, Ed Filbin, is paid 40 to 50 cents each for collecting the tires which garbage dumps don't want.

The plant will have two incinerators burning tires at the rate of 1,280 an hour. The incinerators will provide steam for the generating plant which will produce 12.9 megawatts of electricity.