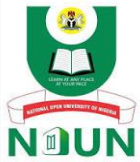
COURSE GUIDE

MAC 225
NEWS WRITING AND REPORTING

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INTRODUCTION

This is MAC 225: NEWS WRITING AND REPORTING, designed to train students to become skilled in writing publishable news copy within given deadlines. The course examines the basic definitions of news, structure of news and journalistic formats of news presentation as well as the methods of producing them. The course also examines the various types of leads, the inverted pyramid, writing transitions and conclusions. For practical exposure and experience in news gathering and reporting, students should be expected to turn in news stories under given deadlines. Model news stories will also be provided to the students for studying and imitation. The students will be encouraged to submit news stories and articles to the metropolitan media for publication.

News Writing and Reporting is a two-credit-unit course with 32 Study Units. This Course Guide is for distance learners enrolled in the B.A. Mass Communication programme of the National Open University of Nigeria. This Course Guide provides you with the necessary information about the contents, process, and materials with which to read and understand the subject matter of the course. The guide also specifies the amount of time you are required to spend on each unit of the assignments. It also gives you some guidance on your Tutor Marked Assignments (TMAs). You are advised to attend the tutorial classes to discuss your difficulties with your tutorial facilitators. I strongly recommend that you go through this Course Guide and complete the feedback form at the end before you begin your study of the course. The feedback form must be submitted to your tutorial facilitator along with your first assignment. This guide also provides answers to several of your questions. However, do not hesitate to contact your study centre if you have further questions. It is my honest expectation that at the end of this course, you will have been familiar with the nitty-gritty of writing and reporting news in today's media industry.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN IN THIS COURSE

This course is meant to expose you to the fundamental requirements of writing and reporting news in a modern media organization. It is designed to train you to become skilled in writing publishable news copy within given lifelines. It is also expected that you will better appreciate the basic definitions of news, structure of news and journalistic formats of news presentation as well as the methods of producing them after going through this course. Furthermore, this course will give you insight into the different (and/or similar) techniques of writing for the print media, broadcast media as well as the specialized skills for advanced and specialized kinds of writing and reporting in modern journalism. It is also expected that you will become familiar with some basic requirements of journalistic practice like qualities a

news writer/reporter should have, elements of good quality journalism, general rules for news writing, how to conduct news interviews, what makes for poor writing and the various components of a news story, legal and ethical requirements of enjoying a healthy career in the media industry etc.

COURSE AIMS

The primary aim of this course is to inculcate in you the appropriate skills for news writing and reporting generally as well as introduce you to basic requirements for writing or reporting for either the print media of communication or the broadcast media of communication. Another primary objective of this course is to introduce you to the fundamental skills required for specialized and advanced writing and reporting especially for the print media of communication. However, a secondary but rather vital aim of this course is also to expose you to the preliminary legal and ethical requirements of enjoying a healthy career in the media industry especially in Nigeria.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the end of this course, the students are expected to:

1. Define news
2. Identify elements of news, news values/virtues
3. Identify and discuss qualities a good news writer or reporter should possess
4. List and discuss what motivates reporters
5. Identify the components of a typical news story
6. List and discuss the general rules/guidelines for news writing or reporting
7. Identify elements of good quality journalism and the elements by which news stories are evaluated before selection
8. Define various types of news interviews and discuss how to conduct a typical news interview
9. Define and explain the meaning and importance of lead in news writing
10. Identify and explain the dos and don’ts of both print and broadcast news copies
11. Write acceptable and publishable copies for the metropolitan media
12. List and discuss standard reporting and news gathering techniques
13. Carry out interviews with media gadgets
14. Identify and discuss some specialized beats as well as the skills required to write or report from such beats
15. Discuss press freedom, the underlying issues, press laws as well as the ethics of media practice at an introductory level.

WORKING THROUGH THIS COURSE

To make the most out of this course, you are expected to read the study units and other materials provided by NOUN. Each unit contains Self-Assessment Exercise (SAE). At certain points in the module, you are required to carry out the assignments, which will be marked by assessors appointed by the University. Remember, all components of this course contribute to your all-round success. So, take your time to read and study the Study Units very well in order to successfully derive the best from the course.

I will also advise you to make concerted efforts towards locating the recommended texts listed hereunder and READ them. This course material will never take the place of those recommended further readings. They will help equip you for an all round experience and exposure in the exciting world of news writing and reporting.

COURSE MATERIALS AND STRUCTURE

The major materials you will need for this course are:

1. A Course Guide
2. Study units that have been broken down to 32
3. Self-Assessment Exercise (SAE) file
4. Tutor Marked Assignments (TMAs) file
5. Relevant textbooks including the ones listed under each unit
6. Copies of newspapers and newsmagazines for practical reading of well written news stories
7. Broadcast news extracts or copies.

In addition to the material listed above, you are advised to read through this Course Guide to familiarize yourself with the structure of the course; the Study Units as well as attempt all SAEs and TMAs. You are also expected to consult most of the recommended resource materials for further reading. Each unit contains Self Assessment Exercises, and at points in the course you are required to submit assignments for assessment purposes. At the end of the course, there is a final examination. The course should take you about 64 hours to complete. You have to draw up your own timetable and allocate time to complete each Study Unit in order to complete the course successfully and on time. All the components of the course are listed and explained below.

STUDY UNITS

This course is structured in a **seven-module** compact with 32 units thus:

MODULE 1: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Unit 1: What is News? /Elements of News Values and News Virtues
Unit 2: Qualities of the News Reporter
Unit 3: What Motivates the News Reporter?
Unit 4: General Rules for News Writing

MODULE 2: THE BASICS

Unit 1: Elements of Good Writing/ What Makes for Poor Writing?
Unit 2: Conducting Interviews
Unit 3: News Gathering and Sources
Unit 4: Journalese

MODULE 3: NEWS WRITING AND REPORTING FOR THE PRINT MEDIA

Unit 1: The Lead
Unit 2: The Story Structure/Components of the Story
Unit 3: Types of News Stories
Unit 4: The Qualities of a Good News Story
Unit 5: Checklist before a Reporter Writes a Story

MODULE 4: NEWS WRITING AND REPORTING FOR THE BROADCAST MEDIA

Unit 1: Criteria for Selecting Broadcast Stories
Unit 2: Style
Unit 3: Features/Structure of a Broadcast News Story
Unit 4: Writing a Broadcast Copy

MODULE 5: SPECIALIZED REPORTING

Unit 1: Introduction to Specialized Reporting
Unit 2: Reporting from the Beats
Unit 3: Online Reporting
Unit 4: Follows

MODULE 6: ADVANCED REPORTING

Unit 1: Science and Technology Reporting
Unit 2: Reporting Sports
Unit 3: Political Reporting
Unit 4: Economy and Business Reporting
Unit 5: Reporting Crime, Accidents and the Courts

MODULE 7: THE REPORTER, THE LAW AND ETHICAL ISSUES

Unit 1: Press Freedom

Unit 2: Basic Press Laws
Unit 3: Ethical Issues in Media Practice

TEXTBOOKS AND REFERENCES

1. Mencher, M. (2010). ***Mencher's News Writing and Reporting (11th Edition)***. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education

2. Agbese, Dan (2008). ***The Reporters' Companion***. Lagos: Newswatch Books Ltd

3. Hule, Bruce D. & Anderson, D.A. (2003). ***News Writing and Reporting for Today's Media***. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education

4. Ogunsiji, M.A. (1989). ***Introduction to Print Journalism.*** Lagos: Nelson Publishers Limited

5. Sonaike, S.A. (1987). ***Fundamentals of News Reporting.*** Lagos, Nigeria: John West Publications

6. Walker, S. (1975***). News Writing***. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company

7. Charnley, M. (1996). ***Reporting***. Toronto: Holt, Rinehart & Winston

8. Brooks, B.S., *et al* (1998). ***News Reporting and Writing***. New York: St. Martin's Press

9. Folarin, *et al* (eds.) (2006). ***Themes in Communication Writing***. Lagos: SMC

10. Obe, Joseph (2005). ***Reporting Diverse Areas: A Concise Text***. Akure: SMC

11. Harper, C. and the Indiana Group (1998). ***Journalism 2001***. Madison: Coursewise Publishing

12. Stovall, J. G. (2006). ***Writing for the Mass Media***. New York: Pearson Education

13. Bonder, F. F., Davenport, J. R., and Drager, M. W. (2005). ***Reporting for the Mass Media*** (8th Edition). New York: Oxford University Press

14. Mencher, M. (2003). ***News Reporting and Writing*** (9th Edition), San Francisco: McGraw-Hill

15. Moemeka, A. (2000). ***Reporter's Handbook: An Introduction to Effective Journalism***. Kearney, USA: Morris Publishing

16. Rich, C. (1999). ***Writing and Reporting News: A Coaching Method*** (3rd Edition). New York: Wadsworth Publishing Company

17. Ekeanyanwu, N. T. (2008). ***International Communication***. Ota: Covenant University Press

18. Okoye, Innocent (2008). ***Nigerian Press Law***. Lagos: Unilag

19. Ewelukwa, B.N. (2004). ***Introduction to Nigerian Press Law***. Onitsha: Maranatha Press Ltd

20. Malemi, E. (1999). ***Mass Media Law: Cases and Materials***. Lagos: Grace Publishers Inc

ASSESSMENT FILE

An assessment file and a marking scheme will be made available to you. In the assessment file, you will find details of the assignments you need to do and submit to your assigned tutor for grading. The Assessment for this course is divided into two namely: TMAs and the Written Examination. Both of them will total 100% at the end of the course. The assignments should be submitted to your tutor for formal assessment in accordance with the lifelines stated in the presentation schedule and the Assessment file. The work you submit to your tutor for assessment will count for 30% of your total score while the Written Examination will account for the remaining 70%.

TUTOR MARKED ASSSIGNMENTS (TMAs)

You will have to submit about 30 TMAs. This means one TMA for each of the Units of the entire Course Structure. You are required to attempt all the questions, and you will be assessed on all of them but the best six performances from the (TMAs) will be used for your 30% grading. This means each will amount to about 5% or returned to 5% after grading.

When you have completed each assignment, send it together with a Tutor Marked Assignment form, to your tutor. Make sure each assignment reaches your tutor on or before the lifeline for submissions. If for any reason, you cannot complete your work on time, contact your tutor with a valid explanation on why you need an extension. Failure to do this may result in unpleasant and avoidable situations.

FINAL EXAMINATION AND GRADING

Since this is a two-unit course, the final examination will be a test of two hours. All areas of the course will be examined. It is in your own interest to read the entire units all over again before your written examination. As earlier mentioned, the final examination will attract 70% of the total course grade. This should not be taken for granted. The examination will consist of questions, which reflects the kinds of SAEs and TMAs you have previously dealt with in the course.

COURSE MARKING SCHEME

The following table lays out how the actual course mark allocation is broken down.

S/N	ASSESSMENT	MARKS
1	The best in Module One (Assignments 1-4)	5%
2	The best in Module Two (Assignments 5-8)	5%
3	The best in Module Three (Assignments 9-13)	5%
4	The best in Module Four (Assignments 14-17)	5%
5	The best in Modules Five and Six (Assignments 18-26)	5%
6	The best in Module Seven (Assignments 27-29)	5%
7	Total for TMAs	**30%**
8	Final Written Examination	**70%**
9	**Overall Total**	**100%**

COURSE OVERVIEW AND PRESENTATION SCHEDULE

Module	Unit	Title Of Module	Weeks Activity	Assessment
ONE	**1-4**	**GENERAL INTRODUCTION**	**Weeks 1 and 2**	**1-4**
	Unit 1	What is News? /Elements of News Values and News Virtues	Week 1	Assignment 1
	Unit 2	Qualities of the News Reporter	Week 1	Assignment 2
	Unit 3	What Motivates the News Reporter?	Week 2	Assignment 3
	Unit 4	General Rules for News Writing	Week 2	Assignment 4
TWO	**1-4**	**THE BASICS**		
	Unit 1	Elements of Good Writing/ What Makes for Poor Writing?	Week 3	Assignment 1
	Unit	Conducting Interviews	Week 3	Assignment

	2			2
	Unit 3	News Gathering and Sources	Week 4	Assignment 3
	Unit 4	Journalese	Week 4	Assignment 4
THREE	**1-5**	**NEWS WRITING AND REPORTING FOR THE PRINT MEDIA**		
	Unit 1	The Lead	Week 5	Assignment 1
	Unit 2	The Story Structure/Components of the Story	Week 5	Assignment 2
	Unit 3	Types of News Stories	Week 6	Assignment 3
	Unit 4	The Qualities of a Good News Story	Week 6	Assignment 4
	Unit 5	Checklist before a Reporter Writes a Story	Week 6	Assignment 5
FOUR	**1-5**	**NEWS WRITING AND REPORTING FOR THE BROADCAST MEDIA**		
	Unit 1	Criteria for Selecting Broadcast Stories	Week 7	Assignment 1
	Unit 2	Style	Week 7	Assignment 2
	Unit 3	Features/Structure of a Broadcast News Story	Week 8	Assignment 3
	Unit 4	Writing a Broadcast Copy	Week 8	Assignment 4
FIVE	**1-5**	**SPECIALIZED REPORTING**		
	Unit 1	Introduction to Specialized Reporting	Week 9	Assignment 1
	Unit 2	Reporting from the Beats	Week 9	Assignment 3
	Unit 3	Online Reporting	Week 10	Assignment 4
	Unit 4	Follows	Week 10	Assignment 5
SIX	**1-5**	**ADVANCED REPORTING**		
	Unit 1	Science and Technology Reporting	Week 11	Assignment 1
	Unit	Reporting Sports	Week	Assignment

	2		11	2
	Unit 3	Political Reporting	Week 12	Assignment 3
	Unit 4	Economy and Business Reporting	Week 12	Assignment 4
	Unit 5	Reporting Crime, Accidents and the Courts	Week 13	Assignment 5
SEVEN	**1-4**	**THE REPORTER, THE LAW AND ETHICAL ISSUES**		
	Unit 1	Press Freedom	Week 13	Assignment 1
	Unit 2	Basic Press Laws	Week 14	Assignment 2
	Unit 3	Ethical Issues in Media Practice	Week 14	Assignment 3
		Revision	1 week	
		Written Examination	1 Week	
		Total Weeks	16 Wks	

HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM THIS COURSE

The Open University system is a unique system whereby the study units replace the traditional university lectures. You will therefore be required to study the units on your own. However, you may arrange to meet with your assigned tutor for tutorials on an optional basis at the study centre. You can also locate like-minded course mates and have interactive sessions with them.

You will have assignments at the end of every Module and Units. This is not different from the traditional university system where a Lecturer might give you some reading to do. The study units will tell you where to read, and which are your text materials or recommended books. You have been given enough in this course so none of you will any excuse not to do well in this course. Each of the study units follows a common format. The first item is an introduction to the subject matter of the unit, and how a particular unit is integrated with the other units and the course as a whole. Next to this is a set of learning objectives. These objectives will help you assess your comprehensive of the unit per time. They are also meant to guide your study so as to give you an all-round learning experience. The main body of the unit guides you through the required reading from other sources. This will usually be either from your recommended books or from a particular reading section.

In summary, this structure is designed to bring out the best in a distance learner. However, you may still want to interact with a tutor over controversial, confusing or any other topic or issue you are finding it

difficult to comprehend yourself. NOUN has made adequate arrangement to see that this is resolved in the interest of the student. This is the major reason why you must patronize the Study Centres.

TUTORS AND TUTORIALS

NOUN Headquarters will provide you with information relating to the Tutor and tutorials at the appropriate time. Your tutor will mark and comment on your assignments, keep a close academic watch on your progress as well as assist you resolve any difficulties you might encounter from time to time. You must therefore take your TMAs to the study centre well before the due date (at least two working days before the expiration of the lifeline). The TMAs will be marked by your Tutor and returned to you as soon as possible.

In the NOUN guidelines, you are expected to contact your tutor if you need help over the following issues:

1. You do not understand any part of the study units or the assigned readings;
2. You have difficulty with the exercises and assignments;
3. You have a question or a problem with your tutor's comments on an assignment or with the grading of an assignment.
4. You have a question or problem with any part of the Course Structure which you think has not been adequately discussed in this Course Guide.

At NOUN, it is also expected (in your own interest) that you make concerted efforts to attend tutorials. This is the only chance to have face-to-face contact with your Tutor and ask pending and pertinent questions which are answered immediately. You can raise any problem encountered in the course of your study during the tutorial sessions. To gain the maximum benefit from the course tutorials, it is advised you prepare a question list before attending them. You will learn a lot from being an active participant in the discussions at the Study Centres or during tutorial sessions.

SUMMARY

The course guide is generally an overview of what you should expect in the entirety of the course. News Writing and Reporting as a course is designed to train students to become skilled in writing publishable news copy within given lifelines. The course will also examine the basic definitions of news, structure of news and journalistic formats of news presentation as well as the methods of producing them. The basic techniques of writing and reporting from some specific beats are also discussed in this course. The preliminary skill of writing for the broadcast media as well as the legal and ethical issues involved in

reporting in a typical media industry like Nigeria also received adequate attention in this course.

We wish you success with the course and hope that you will find it the learning experience captivating, interesting, useful and worth your time.

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MODULE 1: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

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Unit 2: Qualities of the News Reporter
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UNIT 1: WHAT IS NEWS? /ELEMENTS OF NEWS VALUES AND NEWS VIRTUES

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        3.2.2 Components
    3.3 News Virtues
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

At this level of your academic life and studies, it is obvious one of the words you have accustomed to is **NEWS**. At 7.00am each day, the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) gives you the Network News at 7, updated again at 4pm and 10pm. The same goes for the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) News at Dawn, Network News at 9pm etc. And with the era of private broadcast stations, the airwaves are now replete with all kinds of news. The same is not left out in the print media where the primary content is news. Therefore, it is common to hear "Here is the News at 7 read by Funmi Makanna." "This is CNN with the News on the Hour". On and on like that you are bombarded with news bulletins for upward of 18 hours a day. Also, every morning you hear vendors hawking and distributing their newspapers with all kinds of techniques. In fact, before you stepped into the Department of Mass Communication, NOUN, for this course on News Writing and Reporting, you were already familiar with the pillars (or some of them at least) on which newspaper work is based. So, for this course, before we delve into the rudiments of News Writing and Reporting, we must first and foremost understand what is news and the nature of news.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

This section is aimed at introducing the students to the basic definitions of news and gives them the basic knowledge about what should be in a news story. On successful completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- Define News
- Identify and describe Elements of News Values
- Identify and describe News Virtues
- Identify and explain the determinants and the components of news.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 What is News?

News is one of the most difficult issues to define in mass communication. There are almost as many definitions of news as there are journalists. Even laymen in the streets can readily come up with acceptable definitions of news. In general terms, news is very relative and depends on what one thinks is news. At any given moment, millions of events happen simultaneously throughout the world. Obasanjo sacks Education Minister, FRA Williams dies, Super Eagles thrashes Gabon, Obama wins re-election, Clinton in Sex Scandal etc. All of these events are potentially news. However, they do not become news until some reporters give an account of them. In other words, news is the account of an event, not the event itself.

We can now consider some definitions given by scholars and media professionals thus:

William S. Maulsbyl defined news thus:

> *News is an accurate, unbiased account of the significant facts of a timely happening that is of interest to the readers of the newspaper that prints the account.*

William G. Bleyer defines it like this:

> *News is anything timely that interests a number of people; and the best news is that which has the greatest interest for the greatest number.*

Mitchel Chainley defined news as:

> *The timely report of facts or opinions that hold interest of importance, or both for a considerable number of people.*

Prof. Charles Coates defined it thus:

> *News is what interests the reader, the viewer, the reporter, the editor, the producer, their spouses and their neighbours. News is what affects their diets and their lives.*

Sam Zelman of CNN says:

> *News is what is important because of its impact on society; it is what people need to know and what they want to know.*

There have been other numerous definitions of news but interwoven in all of this is the fact that news must be something of interest to a significant number of people. In this regard, the nature of news is always changing because community interests and standards are always changing. For instance, the Western definition of news emphasizes an event that is out of the ordinary, exciting, sensational, and of the "man-biting dog" variety. According to Lord Northcliffe, who revolutionized journalism in England between 1890 and 1920 (incidentally he died a raving lunatic but very wealthy), "if a dog bites a man, it is NOT news, but when a man bites a dog, it is News."

This definition has since influenced Western journalists and media in the reportorial duties. To them, news is made in the developing countries only when there are scandals, coups, civil wars, uprisings, natural disasters etc. Western norms and values maintain that "bad" news is better than "good" news. That is why when 100 planes take off from a base to a destination and 99 of them arrive safely and one crashes, the 99 that arrived safely will not be mentioned or reported but much noise will be made about the only one that crashed. That is news for the Western mass media and audience.

However, for this course, I will define news as ***an accurate, unbiased account of a current, timely event, which is reported in the mass media and is significant to a large number of people in a locality.*** Furthermore**,** in contemporary thinking, today's news is about real life, real people, real events, real places or real issues in a real world reported

in real time using any available means of communication. Agbese (2008) also sees News as finding out and publishing the things people don't want others to know and second, anything that will make people talk.

3.2 ELEMENTS OF NEWS VALUES

While definitions of news vary, the main determinant of what can be considered as news is "INTEREST". To be news, an account of an event must be of interest to the readers, listeners or viewers. Interest in a story is determined by the news values. The elements that determine news values may be subdivided into two groups:

1. Determinants
2. Components

3.2.1 DETERMINANTS

A determinant is a factor that sets the character of something, in this case, news. The determinants of news are:

i. Timeliness
ii. Proximity/Geographic Location
iii. Prominence/Personality Involved
iv. Consequence/Impact/Significance
v. Human Interest
vi. Novelty
vii. Conflict
viii. Necessity.

I. <u>Timeliness</u>

Today's news may be stale tomorrow. Therefore, to attain that reader – viewer or listener interest or appeal, facts must be fresh. However, some issues of great impact are timeliness. So, the best time to tell an important story is as soon as it happens or as soon as possible.

II. <u>Proximity/Geographic Location</u>

Distance between the news item's place of origin and its place of publication determines its degree of reader – appeal, and the limits of reader – interest. Usually, the nearer an individual is to the location of a news event, the more relevant it becomes for him/her. This is referred to as Geographic proximity

There are two types of proximity:

(A) **<u>Geographical Proximity</u>** - This has been described above.

(B) **Proximity of Interest** – An account of students' unrest in Kano will definitely interest students in Owerri than a businessman in Kano. This is referred to as Proximity of interest.

III. Prominence/Personality Involved

ALL men may be created equal, but some are more equal and more newsworthy than others. In fact, "names make news" goes a cliché. However, names don't always make news. Still, happenings that involve well-known people or institutions are likely to be interesting even if not very important.

IV. Consequence/Impact/Significance/Magnitude

How many people an event or idea affects and how seriously it affects them determine its importance as news, as well as the extent to which the information may be useful. Again, an item or event may give rise to thought not because of itself but because of its probable consequences – its significance.

V. Human Interest

Interest in human beings and events because they concern men and women in situations that might confront anyone else, is called human interest. In a general way, human-interest stories might be defined as those stories that arouse an emotion in the reader/ listener/ viewer and evoke emotional response.

VI. Novelty

This sounds like human interest but shows some differences. The unusual makes news. The bizarre makes news too. Remember *the-man-bite-dog principle*. The principle applies here. The first flight to the moon was big news, so was Sandra Day O' Connor's appointment as the first woman Justice of the United States Supreme Court. The day a lady becomes the Vice President of the US it will be the biggest news around the globe. "**Firsts**," "**Lasts,"** and "**Only**" have always been newsworthy. So also are stories of freak occurrences and scientific or pseudoscientific phenomena.

VII. Conflict

Nearly every story on each of our front pages is a report of conflict. Conflict is a central feature of most news. Sometimes it is physical, as in wars or sports. Sometimes it is more subtle and sophisticated like political conflicts.

VIII. Necessity

The seven earlier discussed News Values involve people, events and situations that call out for coverage. The value of Necessity is, however, the journalist's making (Mencher, 2010). According to the Mencher (2010), the journalist has discovered something he or she feels it is necessary to disclose. The essential element here is that the journalist considers a situation to be something everyone should know about and usually it is a situation that needs to be exposed and remedied.

3.2.2 THE COMPONENTS OF NEWS

So far, we have been discussing the determinants of news. In this section we shall be examining the components or the contents of news. A component is a constituent part of something. They tend to have more news values or higher news values than stories that lack them. The more of news components you find in a story, the higher the news worthiness of such a story.

There are many items that could easily fall into the components of News. However, we shall discuss eight that always sell a story anytime it is a content of such story. The eight components of news are:

1. Age 2. Animal 3. Sex 4. Conflict 5. Money 6. Children 7. Beauty 8. Human Interest.

3.3 NEWS VIRTUES

Now that what news is and what determines readers' interest in a story have been discussed, reporters should strive to make the news they publish or broadcast win the credibility and confidence of their readers and listeners by adhering firmly to the triple news virtues.

These triple news virtues are:

1) **Truth**

All news stories must represent factual events and personalities. The reporter should also ensure that the facts of the News are truthful to the best of his/her knowledge before publishing or broadcasting such story.

2) **Objectivity**

Objectivity presupposes that the reporter presents the reader with all sides of an issue, presents all the facts and allows the reader to decide what these facts mean. For a story to be objective, it must be devoid of a reporter's biases and prejudice. It must not also be slanted or editorialized.

3) **Accuracy**

This is the last news virtue. Accuracy is a pillar on which every story rests. A news story can be regarded as accurate if all names, ages, addresses and direct quotations in the story are accurate or correct. The only way to meet this requirement is for the reporter to check, double-check or even triple-check his facts before going to the press.

Self-Assessment Exercise

Discuss the elements of News values and why you think they are important in determining a story's relevance.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Definitions of News change with time, place and who is defining it. Many media organizations and individual journalists also define News differently partially influenced by their varying backgrounds. However, what constitutes News values remains constant-interest. This interest comes in form of values. In conclusion, Thomas Griffith famous quote [cited in Mencher (2010)] becomes relevant here: "Journalism is in fact history on the run. It is history written in time to be acted upon; thereby not only recording events but at times influencing them. Journalism is also the recording of history while the facts are not all in."

5.0 SUMMARY

This Unit is all about News and what constitutes News values and virtues. In this unit, you were specifically taught about the various definitions of News, bringing up different perspectives; the eight elements of News values and the triple News virtues which must be present for news stories to have credibility, relevance and wide acceptance.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Why do we have many and different definitions of news?
2. Discuss the major reasons why Necessity made the list of News values.
3. Which among the News values must be present for a news story to have credibility? Please justify your selection.

7.0 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Mencher, M. (2010). ***Mencher's News Writing and Reporting (11th Edition)***. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education

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UNIT 2: QUALITIES OF THE NEWS REPORTER

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
    3.1 Qualities of the News Reporter
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Reporters write stories and report events and happenings in and around the society. They provide the core of news stories that are published daily in our commercial newspapers or broadcast in the electronic media. As there is no substitute for good reporting, so also there is no substitute for good reporters. A good reporter is a great assert for his/her media organization. He/she is the ear and the eye of his/her medium.
It is what he/she reports that the audience will know about. The reporter touches lives with his report.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this unit is to teach the students the salient qualities they are expected to have if they want to make it in the media industry as a reporter. Basically, at the end of this unit, the student should be able to identify:

- Who a reporter is and what differentiates him/her from other media practitioner
- The qualities that make good reporters
- The differences between a good reporter and a bad one.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 QUALITIES OF THE NEWS REPORTER

Some of the major qualities that make a good reporter are discussed below:

i. **S/He must have a mastery of the written or spoken language of the medium of expression**. This will enable him/her to

interact easily with news sources, eye witnesses or even the victims of events.

ii. **S/He must have a nose for news.** This means the reporter or journalist must be curious about getting news from newsy or stale situations. A good reporter must have a natural instinct for news and should be able to identify news from seemingly events that may not be considered newsworthy by everyone else.

iii. **S/He must be current and keep abreast of events and happenings**. In the media industry, yesterday's news is stale and no more needed. So, to remain relevant in the industry, the reporter must keep abreast of happenings in and around him/her.

iv. **A good reporter must be fair, accurate and objective** in his news writing and reporting job. Fairness, accuracy and objectivity are news virtues which the profession thrives on. Any attempt to compromise any of these values makes a mess of the reputation and credibility of the industry. These qualities of a reporter must be jealously guarded.

v. **A good reporter must be creative**. Creativity makes the reporter see another unique story from an already published report. Without creativity the reporter will remain dry, uninspiring and boring to his readers and even his sources.

vi. **S/He must also have the ability to dress well**. A common idiom says how you dress is how you are addressed and I add that it also betrays your address. A good reporter must know how to dress for the occasion otherwise he/she will be lost in the crowd or misrepresented. Dressing well is not necessarily dressing expensively. It only means having the right kind of dress for each occasion or situation.

vii. **A good reporter must have perseverance**. Perseverance is having the staying power and refusing to give up even when the situation calls for giving up. A good reporter must have the ability to stay longer and under stress or pressure.

viii. **A good reporter must be a good mixer**. There is no room for the reserved kind of reporter who cannot easily get into a discussion with a potential news source. A good reporter should be able to mix easily with all kinds of persons especially when such persons are primary to getting the news he/she is pursuing at that moment. The good reporter should be able to make contacts, grow them and maintain them.

ix. **S/He must have a high level of comportment**. The good reporter must have self-control and high level of comportment no matter the situation or circumstances. He/she is not expected to be carried away easily by any surrounded situation.

x. A good reporter must have the ability to embark on **creative risk** and **courage** especially in reporting coups, wars, conflicts, crime, disaster etc.

xi. S/He must have the ability to ferret out news through the process of monitoring people and events.

xii. **S/He must also possess good observatory skills and an eye for details**. Poorly trained reporters look without seeing. The good reporter is able to see leads and news worthy situations by merely observing people and situations. Whenever the good reporter looks, he/she sees. He/she is also able to taken in a lot of details by mere observation.

xiii. **S/He must be a good listener and must have an unusual patience**. The poorly trained reporters are only interested in hearing their voices in an interview situation. But the good reporter is only interested in hearing the news source talk. Therefore, listening becomes a vital quality a reporter must possess in order to succeed.

xiv. **S/He should also possess enough idealism** to inspire indignant prose but not too much as to obstruct detached professionalism (Ragged Right cited in Agbese, 2008).

xv. **The good and modern reporter must be multi-skilled**. S/He should be equipped with an array of skills to meet the demands of diverse media users (Mencher, 2010).

xvi. **The good and modern reporter must also have the unique quality called enterprise**. He or she should be work through tougher assignments or situation by instantaneously assessing the situation and taking decisions and steps that will give him/her what the media organizer wants.

xvii. A good reporter must also have the strength of character to lead a disrupted personal life without going absolutely haywire (Ragged Right cited in Agbese, 2008).

Self-Assessment Exercise (SAE)
Discuss 10 qualities you think a reporter must have.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Good reporters are great assets to their media organizations. Not everyone who went to a journalism school usually turns out to become a good reporter. This is the primary reason they are always sought after anywhere they could be found. According to Sid Bedingfield, President, Fault Line Productions (cited in Mencher, 2010), "Reporting is the essential ingredient in good journalism. Everything else is dressing…. The reporter is the engine that drives the newspaper, the contributor who makes the newscast worthwhile.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit specifically dealt with the qualities a good reporter who wants to work in a reputable media organization must have. Fifteen of such qualities were discussed in this unit. Further readings may bring up some more.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. As an aspiring reporter identify and discuss five solid qualities you think you must possess to be able to assume a reportorial role in a Newspaper organization.
2. The Nigerian media industry is a unique media terrain. Discuss 10 relevant and time-tested qualities that will help you survive as an upcoming reporter.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Mencher, M. (2010). ***Mencher's News Writing and Reporting (11th Edition)***. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education

Agbese, Dan (2008). ***The Reporters' Companion***. Lagos: Newswatch Books Ltd.

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Obe, Joseph (2005). ***Reporting Diverse Areas: A Concise Text***. Akure: SMC.

UNIT 3: WHAT MOTIVATES THE NEWS REPORTER?

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
3.1 What Motivates the News Reporter?
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Most media organizations are populated by reporters but not all of them win the Pulitzer Prize. Those who do are usually motivated by something to do the extra which results in awards and peer-recognition. This unit is therefore focused on the seven motivating factors that Byron Calame, the Public Editor of *New York Times* identified (cited in Mencher, 2010).

2.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit generally aims to identify the motivating factors that inspire award winning performances and delivery by notable reporters. At the end of this unit, you should be able to identify the motivations that inspire successful careers in award winning reporters.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 What Motivates the News Reporter?

Byron Calame (cited in Mencher, 2010) identified seven motivating factors that he noted came out of working and competing with more than a hundred reporters in his successful career as a reporter and editor thus:

Being First with New Facts or Fresh Insights
Every reporter really desires to be the first to get the news out. The so-called old fashioned scoops are still fashionable even in today's media industry. Being the first gives them a sense of fulfillment and originality.

Pursuing Stories that Can Have Impact
Successful reporters are usually motivated by the desire that their outputs changed the course history. Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein of the famed Watergate Scandal are in this class.

Wining Prizes
This is a little controversial because most journalists argue that their stories were not motivated by prize and awards. But a careful look at the work of journalists suggests this is one of the motivating factors.

Impressing Sources
According to Byron Calame cited in Mencher (2010), most of the journalists remain highly motivated to impress their sources with the accuracy, fairness and depth of their work.

Finding Out What's Really Happening
According to Byron Calame cited in Mencher (2010), "A fundamental motivation of reporters is the curiosity that drives them to get to the bottom of a confusing or complicated situation and to find patterns that help explain it to readers. Making sense out of chaos-especially when you can do it first-is something many reporters find rewarding."

Telling Stories in a Compelling Way
Most reporters who aim to the top are usually moved to tell their stories in a way that their listeners or audience are compelled to see to the end of the story.

Getting on the Front Page
Any reporter who spends five months in a media organization, say Newspaper, and does not get on the front page of the paper, may be regarded as not doing well. Front page stories are big stories in the judgment of Editors. So, reporters strive to have a sense of fulfillment that their story was considered big and good to make a front page. The feeling is always rewarding and unexplainable.

Self-Assessment Exercise
In your own words, discuss five factors that drive reporters to success.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In life there must be something that drives you to fulfillment. The same is applicable to careers especially in the media industry. Reporters are not amongst the richest in the society and the profession is also not very financially rewarding especially in Nigeria. There must be something then that drives reporters in this part of the world to be courageous and take creative risks. These factors are what we attempted to discuss in this unit.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we looked out the various factors motivating reporters and journalists alike to career growth and fulfillment. These factors were from the work of Byron Calame, the Public Editor or Ombudsman of *The New York Times*. Seven of such motivating factors were identified and discussed in this unit.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. In your own assessment, suggest two other factors that you think motivate reporters that were not discussed in this unit.
2. Defend the argument that winning prizes does not motivate reporters.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Mencher, M. (2010). ***Mencher's News Writing and Reporting (11th Edition)***. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

Agbese, Dan (2008). ***The Reporters' Companion***. Lagos: Newswatch Books Ltd.

UNIT 4: GENERAL RULES FOR NEWS WRITING

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
    3.1 General Rules for News Writing and Reporting
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The success of any profession depends on the quality of rules and regulations guiding such a profession and concerted efforts to ensure such regulations are not tampered with. In this unit, we will be considering the general and basic rules that guide news writing and reporting.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to identify not less than 20 rules that guide news writing and reporting.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 GENERAL RULES FOR NEWS WRITING AND REPORTING

Do not pass a verdict or make a judgment
It is not your duty as a reporter or writer to pass a verdict or make judgment. Just gather the facts of the story, present them to your audience and let them decide on whose side they will want to go.

Do not editorialize
Leave editorializing to the Editorial Writers. News reports must be as straightforward and objective.

Avoid the use of unfamiliar jargon
Do not assume that your audience knows the meanings of the unfamiliar jargons you are using. Always use familiar words.

Keep yourself and other reporters out of the story
Keep yourself and other colleagues out of the story unless you and they are an essential part of the news.

Avoid the use of "told me", "told this writer" or "told our reporter"
The phrase "in an interview will serve your purpose.

There must be perfect accuracy in writing and reporting
When in doubt, leave it out.

There must be no willful distortion of facts in either news or headlines
Never tamper with the facts of a story no matter the benefits that may accrue to you as a result. This is an unforgivable offence in journalism. Any reporter who tampers or fabricates the so-called facts of a story is finished in the industry. You become leprous, untouchable and unemployable.

Guard against publication of libelous statements
The good reporter is the one who lives to write another report and see the fame of the previous reports come to him. Avoid writing your way into jail. Libelous statements should be avoided because of its capacity to keep you in jail and close down your media organization because of insolvency resulting from the inability to pay court fines.

Always use simple words
News writing and reporting are not the platforms to impress anybody with long sounding and big words. Always use the nearest simple word. A good news report is the one the average reader reads and understands.

All news copies must be typewritten and double-spaced
The era of hand-written copies is gone. Therefore, a reporter must know how to type his story using the computer. It must also be typed in double space so that Sub-Editors and Editors will be able to edit the copy.

The first page must carry the reporter's surname, a slug line and date in the top left-hand corner
Slug lines must be short- preferably one word.

Start your story half-way down the first page
You must give enough space for your superior editorial staff to work on your copy.

Leave at least 1(inches) margin at left, right, top and bottom of each page
Don't overcrowd the pages. Leave appropriate margins as suggested.

Each page must be numbered or lettered
The correct letter or numeral is in the form of "B copy next" or "page 2 next". This type of numbering must appear at the bottom right-hand corner of each page except the last.

The end of a story must be marked by a centred **"30"** or **"***"** or **"#".**

Always make your lead interesting
Guard against misleading leads. Leads sell a story. Therefore, to get and keep the attention of your audience, the lead must be interesting.

Use the Inverted Pyramid format when writing your news story
This is the generally accepted format for writing news reports because it presents the most important elements of a story in the first few paragraphs. The format also makes it easy to cut stories from the bottom without losing any substance of the story.

You must quote accurately
Use quotes only where necessary to brighten up your story. Please, do not overdo this in your copy.

Use SAID if you want to write in the present tense and SAID THAT if it is reported speech
This style helps the copy retain currency and life.

Always read your copy carefully and connect all typographical spelling and grammatical mistakes before turning it in
This is a primary rule even in ordinary or everyday writing. No amount of haste could justify a badly written copy.

Your copy must be submitted in duplicate and both copies must be properly edited

Never underline words or phrases or titles of books in your copy

From the perspectives of Agbese (2008), a seasoned reporter and publisher, **don't exaggerate, don't over-dramatize, beware of adjectives, use the active voice and be natural and conversational when you write**

Self-Assessment Exercise
Identify at least ten rules of writing a good copy.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The media industry is an organized industry and so there must rules and regulations guiding how copies are written and filled for publication. Some of these rules may differ from country to country but the underlying fact is that they make for good writing. Any report that lacks these rules or some of them will definitely turn out rejected by a reputable editor or media organization.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit focused on the rules that make for a good copy. It is believed that you are now familiar with these rules after going through this unit.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Identify ten rules of news writing and argue that they should be retained even beyond this century.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Mencher, M. (2010). ***Mencher's News Writing and Reporting (11th Edition)***. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education

Agbese, Dan (2008). ***The Reporters' Companion***. Lagos: Newswatch Books Ltd.

MODULE 2: THE BASICS

Unit 1: Elements of Good Writing / What Makes for Poor Writing?
Unit 2: Conducting Interviews
Unit 3: News Gathering and Sources
Unit 4: Journalese

UNIT 1: ELEMENTS OF GOOD WRITING/ WHAT MAKES FOR POOR WRITING?

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
    3.1 Elements of Good Writing
    3.2 What Makes for Poor Writing?
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A good reporter must first and foremost be a good writer. This is because his writing skills are needed in his news writing and reporting job as a journalist. A poor writer can never make a good news writer or reporter. Good news writing begins first from understanding the elements of good writing and applying them in our writing assignments. This is the focus of this unit. Good writing has six characteristics, which are called elements of good writing.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, the student should be able to:

- Identify the rules or elements of good writing and demonstrate a reasonable skill in the use of such element.
- Identify and discuss the elements that could constitute poor writing.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 ELEMENTS OF GOOD WRITING

Precision
A good writer must always obey the rule of precision. Words should be used and they should mean exactly what you or intend them to mean. You should never use for example “uninterested” when you mean “disinterested”, nor should you use “farther” for “further”. If you report that fire has destroyed a house, you mean it must be rebuilt, not repaired. If you say fire fighters donned oxygen masks to enter a burning building, you are impugning either their intelligence or yours. Oxygen is dangerous around fire; fire fighters use their tanks (Hule and Anderson, 2003).

Words are the tools of your trade and the writer can use only certain words in certain situations. Also, the writer can choose from many words. That freedom can be both exhilarating and dangerous.

Clarity
All news reports and stories must be clearly written. Every reporter should be aware of the following when attempting to write clear stories:

(A) Should make use of simple sentences and familiar words.
(B) Use correct grammar and punctuation.
(C) Should be able to think clearly by structuring the story to have a beginning (lead), middle (body) and end (conclusion).
(D) Make use of the active voice.
(E) Avoid adjectives and exaggeration.

Pace
Good writing must have a pace appropriate to the content. Sentences and words give a story mood. Short sentences convey action, tension and movement. A series of long sentences conveys a more relaxed mood; long sentences slow down the reader. Between these two extremes are sentences of varying lengths, and good writers use them all. Not all sentences should be long or short. Nor should they all be of medium length. An abrupt change in sentence length draws attention to the sentence. Try it sometimes (Hule and Anderson, 2003).

Transitions
Good writing uses transitional devices that lead the reader from one thought to the next. A transition is a bridge, which assures the reader that the writer has a sense of direction. A transition can be a word, a phrase, a sentence or a paragraph. Common transitions are “and”, “but” and “however.”

Sensory Appeal
Good writing must appeal to the reader’s senses. Good writing appeals to one or more of our five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch.

Analogies
Good writing uses analogies. Analogies permit writers to show similarities and contrasts. Similes and metaphors are often used to achieve this purpose. Where the simile compares one thing to another, a metaphor says one thing is another. With similes and metaphors, writers draw word pictures.

3.2 WHAT MAKES FOR POOR WRITING?

If the story shows dull writing
Dull writing never makes good copy. To avoid this always use active voice and make your writing conversational and lively.

If the story is not interesting
Interest is a constant variable in selecting a story as good. Any uninteresting story will sure pass off as a clear evidence of poor writing.

If the story is too vague, abstract or unclear
Vague and abstract stories will always be rejected on the platform of poor writing. To make your stories interesting, it must be clear and unambiguous.

If there are too many stories already on the subject
Your story could be rejected as poor if you are writing on what every other person has written on. This is even worsened by the fact that you did not bring in any new or fresh facts to your writing. Therefore, avoid writing on what every other person has written on if you don’t want your report to turn out regarded as poor.

If the story is piece of propaganda or resembles one
Any attempt to pass off a piece of propaganda for a news report or story will definitely be rejected as poor writing.
If the story is trivial

Trivial and unimportant stories are likely to be rejected as poor writing or evidence of it. Write on important issues that will interest majority of your audience.

If the story is not in good taste
Any writing that offends public morality or shows evidence of bad taste in the choice of words and phrases will be rejected as poor writing.

If the story runs against the policy of the newspaper or its style guide
Every media organization has a style guide- a body of rules that guides how a particular media establishment intends to present its reports and stories. Any violation of the style guide will send your paper to the Editor's waste basket.

If the story has too many figures and statistics
People naturally hate stories with too many figures and statistics. If your story is for instance about a budget proposal, find a creative way of presenting.

If the story is free publicity stunt
A story that is free publicity stunt usually tries to trick readers with an advertising matter in a form of a news story. Readers and editors normally abandon such stories.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2.1
1. Discuss five elements that must be available before you could assess a writing as good.
2. Why will an editor reject a story as poor writing?

4.0 CONCLUSION

Knowing how to write generally is the first practical step to knowing how to write for media organizations. The elements of good writing therefore serve as fundamental pillars upon which good writing rests.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit focused on the elements of good writing. Six of such elements were discussed. Also discussed in this unit are the elements that could make one's writing turn out poor. About ten of such were also discussed in this unit.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Defend the argument that the presence of the elements of good writing will definitely return a copy as good.
2. Discuss the major reasons why a copy may turn out as poor writing.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 2: CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
    3.1 Types of Interviews
    3.2 Preparing and Conducting the Interview
    3.3 Phrasing the Questions
    3.4 Establishing Rapport with a Source
    3.5 How to Ensure Accuracy
    3.6 Quotes and Attributions
    3.7 Handling on and Off-the-Record Information.
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The interview is the art of meeting people and asking them questions with a view to eliciting information on specific issues or happenings. Generally, a reporter conducts interviews when he needs information about events or issues of public significance. The interview is a journalist's tool for digging out facts and its importance in the news gathering process cannot be over-emphasized.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this lecture, the students will be able to:

- Identify the different types of interviews and how to go about organizing them.
- Prepare and conduct interviews
- Phrasing questions for interview
- Establish rapport with an interviewee
- Ensure accuracy in conducting interviews
- Quote and attribute correctly
- Handle on- and off-the-record information more professionally.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

Exclusive Interview
This refers to an interview exclusively conducted by a reporter without any other reporter participating in it.

Panel Interview
In this interview, more than one reporter from a particular media establishment participates in the interview.

Telephone Interview
This is conducted through the telephone especially now that telecommunication industry in Nigeria has improved greatly.

Personality Interview
This is conducted with the view to gathering information concerning a person whose life's activities the reporter wants to write about. Most personality interviews are usually done on an exclusive basis.

On-the-Spot Interviews
This refers to situations when reporters ask other persons impromptu questions, usually people who are important in government, visiting dignitaries, social celebrities, top military officers, academics, big business persons etc. The interview is usually transit in nature and takes place during stop over at the Airport, venue of events etc.

Group Interviews
This is an interview in which many reporters from different media organizations participate. It is usually a question-and-answer session during press conferences, press briefings etc.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

I. Identify and discuss five types of interviews usually conducted in the Nigerian media industry today.

3.2 PREPARING AND CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW (Interview Skills)

1. The reporter who wants to conduct an interview must "Be Prepared". The first step is to identify the subject of the interview and the personality to be interviewed. As a reporter, you must establish the need for the interview. You must also have a good idea of the kind of information you seek, so that everything that is given to you will not seem like what you are looking for. Having

identified the subject and the person to be interviewed, you go ahead and book an appointment with the interviewee. You can book appointment through the telephone, you can go to his/her office or visit him/her at home as a last resort. Make sure you book an appointment first.

2. If the interviewee wants to know why you want to interview him/her, you could give him/her a general idea and nothing more. It is unprofessional to give out your entire questions to the interviewer ahead of time. You will end up with canned answers.

3. You then prepare you questions and arrange them in order of importance. You are not expected to forward the questions to the interview before the interview date.

4. Do a thorough background research on the subject matter and familiarize yourself with the historical background, social and economic activities of the interviewee. His political leanings and hobbies must not be overlooked.

5. On the day of the interview, arrive at the venue of the interview on time atleast 15 minutes before the beginning of the interview. This gives you a cool start.

6. Listen and listen well. Let the interviewee do the talking and encourage him by nodding your head, but don't overdo this. Don't interrupt to offer your opinion, but you can ask necessary follow-up questions when the need arises.

7. You should watch out for the interviewee's emotional tone level (ETL) as the interview progresses. The ETL may fluctuate from time to time due to the intensity of the interview. If the ETL is too high, you should try to bring it low by asking trivial questions. If it is too low, you should try to raise it by asking sensitive and breath-taking questions.

8. If you are conducting the interview with a microphone or tape recorder, always hold it yourself. Never allow your interviewees to hold the microphone otherwise they will take over the control of the interview.

9. When the interview reaches the central theme, the question should be short and delivered at a time. Try to make the interviewee answer the central questions.

10. Never feel intimidated about the personality you are to interview. Don't forget you are not there in your own capacity, you are representing majority of the audience who read or watch your media organization. Therefore, be confident. It gives you a cool and calculated head.

11. The first question is very vital. Settle for a simple, non-committal question. This will help to reduce any tension already in the atmosphere.

12. Do not ask dead-end questions. Dead end questions do not require detailed answers. They may end up with YES or NO kind of responses.

13. Do not be prosecutorial in your approach. Remember the interviewee is not on trial and you are not a lawyer or judge.

14. Do not lecture the interviewee; ask your questions as straightforward as possible.

15. Take notes even if the tape recorder, midget or any other electronic device you are using is fool proof. Anything can happen.

16. At the end of the interview, you should not hesitate to thank the interviewee and assure him that you may call again if the need arises for further clarification about issues raised in the interview.

17. Finally, when writing your story, never forget the off-the-record rule as some information might have been given to you off-record. Never abuse privileges and confidences. Such abuses hinder the growth of the industry.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2.2

1. Discuss 10 vital skills a budding reporter needs to have in conducting interviews.

3.3 PHRASING THE QUESTIONS

The way an accomplished lawyer asks questions determines whether the lawyer will win his case or not. The journalist faces the same challenge. Reporters have missed many stories because they didn't know how to ask questions. By the phrasing of the question, many reporters signal the response they expect or prejudices they have. There are basically two ways a reporter could phrase his/her questions to get the desired results.

The first is through the Open-ended questions and the second is through the Close-ended question.

3.3.1 Open-Ended Questions

Open-ended questions allow the respondent some flexibility. In response to an open-ended question, the source often reveals more than he or she realizes or intends to. Open-ended questions are less direct and less threatening. They are more exploratory and more flexible. However, if you want a person's biographical data, don't say "Tell me about yourself".

3.3.2 Close-ended Questions

Close-ended questions are designed to elicit specific responses. Instead of asking a previous employee to appraise a Minister-designates' managerial competence, you may ask, "How well does Chief Ekeanyanwu listen to the people who work for him?" "Does he explain his decisions?" When you ask vague questions you may likely get vague answers. By asking a specific question, you are more likely to get a specific answer.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2.3

1. Discuss four benefits close-ended questions have over open-ended questions.

3.4 ESTABLISHING RAPPORT WITH A SOURCE

The right chemistry produces an interview that is fun for both parties. When John Lindsay was the mayor of New York, the AP's Pett opened an interview with the question, "Would you want your daughter to marry a mayor of New York?" Lindsay roared in laughter and Pett had a great interview.

Rapport is the relationship between the reporter and the source and is very crucial to the source of the interview. The relationship is sometimes relaxed, sometimes strained. Often it is somewhere in between. The type of relationship you try to establish with your source is determined by the kind of story you are doing.

There are several approaches to establishing rapport with a source (These approaches also serve as interview approaches). They include:

1. You can start off with small talk and allow the familiarity to graduate to the level you could take advantage of and then bring up the major issues of the interview.

2. Bring up something humorous about the interviewee you have found out during your research and which you think can interest the interviewee in your opening statements. This may be the small talk that will create the needed rapport for you.

3. Ask about something you know the source will want to talk about. If he is a Premiership fan and ready to bet his life over Chelsea, take advantage and talk about the Chelsea versus Man U penultimate game that may decide who wins the EPL 2011 Season. Once he identifies he has same addictions and hobbies like you, he creates the rapport for you to talk to him

4. Show sources what you have in common. This will support the Number 3 point made above.

5. Empathize with your sources or subjects. Don't always be the judge and prosecutor. Sometimes, it may help to put yourself in their shoe and feel the pains. This may draw you closer to him or her during the interview process.

6. Conduct the interview where the source feels most comfortable. When you create such a relaxed mood for him, he comes out as if he has known you for a long time. The ultimate outcome may a great interview for you.

7. Where you sit in relation to the person you are interviewing could also be important in determining the kind of rapport you develop. Unless you are deliberately trying to make the interviewee feel uncomfortable, do not sit directly in front of him/her. Permit your sources to establish eye contact if and when they wish.

8. Tape recorders ensure accuracy of quotes, but they make many speakers self-conscious or nervous. Try to place it in an inconspicuous spot and ignore it.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

1. Discuss four practical things you need to do to establish a rapport with a source you are about to interview.

3.5 HOW TO ENSURE ACCURACY

Accuracy is a major problem in all interviews. Both the question and the answer may be ambiguous. You may not understand what is said and you may record it incorrectly too. You may not know the context of the remarks and your biases may interfere with the message.

Techniques to Ensure Accuracy
To ensure accuracy, the following techniques could be adopted:

1. Observing: Some reporters look but do not see. As a reporter, when you look, please, observe.

2. **Understanding:** Understanding what you see is crucial to the news gathering process, so also is the understanding of what you hear. Never assume you understand. Make sure you do. Ignorance is never an excuse in law.

3. **Asking Follow-up Questions:** If you understand what the source is saying, you should show this by asking meaningful follow-up questions.

Other Techniques to Achieving Accuracy:

- Encourage the speaker to add more details.
- Another devise to making the source talk is not a question at all; it is a pause.
- Before you leave, ask if there's anything you forgot to ask. Put the burden on the source. You are also doing him a favour by giving him the chance to contribute to direction of the interview.
- Quickly review your note and check facts, especially dates, numbers, quotes, spellings and titles.
- As a matter of courtesy, tell the source when the story might appear.
- Remember that the interview may be over, but your relationship with the source still stays.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2.5
1. Discuss the primary techniques adopted by reporters to achieve accuracy.

3.6 QUOTES AND ATTRIBUTIONS

Introduction: Direct quotes add colour and credibility. By using direct quotes, you are putting your audience directly in touch with the speaker. Like a letter, direct quotes are personal. Not everything people say should be put into direct quotes. You need to learn what to quote directly, when to use partial quotes and when to paraphrase. You must also learn how and how often to attribute a remark because some information may not excuse you from a possible libel suit. Therefore, you must also learn to deal with off-the-record quotes and background information.

What To Quote Directly

Brief, precise and relevant quotes spice up any story. But you can overdo a good thing. You need direct quotes in your story, no doubt but you also need to develop your skill in recognizing what is worth quoting. Make use of the following guidelines:

(A) Use direct quotes when someone says something unique.
(B) Use direct quotes when someone says something uniquely.
(C) Use direct quotes when someone important says something important.

Problems In Direct Quotation

(A) **Paraphrasing quotes**: Some quotations need verifications while others need clarification. Do not quote someone unless you are sure of what that person means. The best way to avoid confusing and unclear quotes or needlessly long wordy quotes is to paraphrase.

(B) **Partial quotes**: It is also much better to paraphrase or to use full quotes than to use fragmentary or partial quotes. Example:

> *The Vice-Chancellor said lecturers should "turn off" unnecessary lights and "lock up" before closing for the day.*

This sentence will be better off without quotation marks. Again, partial quotes often contain an ellipsis inside them to tell the reader that some of the words of the quotes are missing. Example:

> *"I have come here tonight ... and I have crossed state lines ... to conspire against the government".*

This practice at times may be justifiable, but you should not keep the reader guessing and wondering what is missing.

Correcting Quotes:
None of us regularly speaks in perfect, grammatical sentences. The same persons when writing down his remarks presumably would write grammatically and correctly.

Therefore, it is accepted practice on many newspapers to correct grammar and to put a person's remark into complete sentences. This has, however, brought some controversy. The question is "Would you fix a quote to make the person you are quoting sound grammatical?" Here are some opinions and answers from renowned reporters.

1. **Columnist James Kilpatrick:**
   Sure. It is elementary courtesy, and every one does it. You don't change the substance of your subject's thought, of course. You could make anyone in politics look ridiculous if you quoted him verbatim all the time with all the ands, ifs, buts, and ors.

2. **Jack Newfield, former Senior Editor for Village Voice:**
   No, I don't. New York political leader Meade Esposito's colorfulness comes from his lack of grammar.

3. **The AP Style Book says:**
   Quotations normally should be corrected to avoid the errors in grammar and word usage that often occur unnoticed when someone is speaking but are embarrassing in print.

4. **Use of Obscenity:**
   On most newspapers, some things people say are never permitted in print, even if they are said uniquely. Newspapers rarely print obscenities, profanities or vulgarities unless they are essential to the story. For instance, obscenities are not used in the Washington Post except with the approval of a top editor. But if it is a "Hardcore" obscenity referring to the body and sexual or excretory functions, The Washington Post's Style Book calls for the first letter followed by dashes. E.g. **He called the President a "f--king fool"**

Attributing Direct and Indirect Quotes
In composition and creative writing classes, you may have been told to avoid repeating the same words. This is not so in news writing and reporting especially for the word "said". Reporters and editors prefer forms of the verb "to say" in most instances, even if they are repeated throughout a story. There are reasons for doing so:

(a) 'Said' is Unobtrusive – Not easily noticeable and hides in the news columns and calls no attention to itself.
(b) 'Said' is Neutral - It has no connotations.
(c) 'Said' is Objective – It does not depict the reporter's biases.

Guidelines on how to Attribute Information

1. If a direct quote is more than one sentence long, place the attribution at the end of the first sentence. Example:

> *"The bus overturned at least three times," the policeman said. "None of the twenty passengers was hurt. Luckily, the car did not explode to flames."*

2. Do not follow a fragment of a quote with a continuing complete sentence of quotation. For example:

WRONG: - The Vice-Chancellor said the time had come "to turn off some lights. We all must do something to conserve electricity."

RIGHT: - "The time has come to turn off some lights," the Vice Chancellor said. "We must all do something to conserve electricity."

Always separate partial quotes and complete quotes.

3. The First time you attribute a direct or indirect quote, identify the speaker fully. Example:

> *The Vice-Chancellor of the prestigious Covenant University, Prof Aize Immonokhome Obayan, said students will no longer be allowed to wear jean trousers to lectures.*

4. Don't attribute direct quotes to more than one person, as in the following:

> *"The bullets came out from everywhere," witnesses said. "The protesters had guns, even the children amongst them."*

You can, however, eliminate the quotation marks, if indeed any witness made the statement. Never make up a source and never

invent a quote for anonymous witnesses. It is dishonest, inaccurate and inexcusable.

5. In stories covering past news events, use the past tense in attributing, and use it throughout the story. However, stories that do not report on news events, such as features, may be effective if the attributions are consistently in present tense. Example:

"'I like being the mayor,' she says"

You are indicating that she still enjoys it.

6. Ordinarily, place the noun or pronoun before the verb in attributions. Example:

"Everything is under control," the Inspector General of Police said.

If you must identify a person by indicating a long title, it is better to begin the attribution with the verb. Example:

"I enjoy the new position," says Prof. Prince Izedonmi, Dean of Post Graduate Studies, Covenant University.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

1. How would you handle errors in direct quotation?
2. Discuss the guidelines in attributing information

3.7 HANDLING ON AND OFF – THE – RECORD INFORMATION

Introduction: Sometimes a speaker or source may not want to be quoted at all – directly or indirectly. Therefore, you must learn to use sound professional judgment in handling them. If you agree to accept their information, you must honour their request to remain off the record. Breaching that confidence destroys trust and credibility.

Guidelines For Citing Sources

Not naming sources is dangerous for two important reasons:

i. Such information will lack credibility and make the reporter and the newspaper suspect.
ii. The source may be lying.

The following distinctions are made regarding sources and attributions:

1. ***Off-the-Record***: This means you cannot use the information given to you no matter the situation or pressure of breaking out with a scoop.
2. ***On Record***: This means you can use the information as well as attribute it to the source. This is the ideal situation you must get your sources to give you information. Anything outside this is a risk.
3. ***Not for Attribution***: This means you may use the information but may not attribute it to the source. You must take responsibility for the use of the information.
4. ***On Background***: This means you may use the information but with a general title for a source. Example: "A Presidential Aide", "A Senior Official". The real source's name must be mentioned.
5. ***On Deep Background***: This means you may use the information, but you must say it on your own and take responsibility.

Please note that there is currently no universal agreement on these terms as different practitioners in different circumstances interpret them differently. Therefore, your obligation is to make sure you and your sources understand each other. Set the ground rules ahead of time. Clarify your terms and make sure you know the policy of your paper on such matters.

Self-Assessment Exercise

Discuss the guidelines for citing sources.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The interview remains one of practical ways a reporter uses to gather news and information in the course of his/her assignment. It is necessary therefore for every reporter to learn the skills of interviewing and apply them where and when necessary.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt:

1. The meaning of interviewing
2. The art of interviewing
3. The different types of interviews
4. The techniques and skills required to carry out an interview and the various ways to quote and attribute information that comes from interviews.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Is interviewing and art or a science? Please, justify your answer with valid argument.
2. Discuss five primary types of interviews a news reporter could carry out in the course of his/her assignment.
3. Discuss 10 effective approaches to carrying out a successful interview.

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UNIT 3: NEWS GATHERING AND SOURCES

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

To define news is one thing to get it is another. To gather news the reporter must know where and when to look for it, what and whom to see, why and how to verify the facts he assembled and when and how to use the information he has gotten to write a story. News gathering is the major occupation of both cub and experienced reporters. This is the major reason greater attention will be paid to it in this unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you are expected to do the following:

- Explain the meaning of news gathering and its vital role in the daily reportorial duty of a journalist.
- Differentiate the types of sources available to the reporter and how to deal with them.
- Demonstrate how to find the story idea, especially during periods of news "scarcity".
- Discuss how to cross-check the facts of your story.
- Discuss how to develop and grow your sources.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 NEWS GATHERING AND SOURCES

Every story begins as a stream does "from a source". You cannot find a great story today that does not have a story. This reminds me what one of my great Professors told me-that every PhD as a story! Such stories also have a beginning. This is the major reason most persons who are unfamiliar with the news gathering process often wonder how reporters gather and assemble their information, how do they get access to information and information sources, and how do they sustain the daily publication of news in their media organizations. This shall be our concern in this section. There are three broad categories of sources of news stories thus:

1. Predictable Sources 2. Unpredictable Sources 3. Anticipated Sources

Predictable Sources
These are sources that regularly service the news industry either because of their function that make their activities of public interest or by their nature that help generate events that attract a large number of people. Predictable Sources include diary of news, published reports in form of newspapers, magazines, journals, and handouts, broadcast on Radio/TV and prepared speeches. It also includes active or dramatic newsbreaks, which include news from the police, hospitals, fire service, hotels, schools, religious organizations, labour and political associations. With predictable sources, you are sure to get something from there all the time.

Unpredictable Sources
This means a nose for news that borders on the ability, training, exposure and experience of the reporter to determine what news is and report it accordingly. Unpredictable sources are the likely sources where breaking news or tips that could lead to scoop could come from.

Anticipated Sources
This is similar to predictable sources except for the fact that anticipated sources are restricted to planned events that a reporter knows will definitely happen. Such events include a national day celebration, budget speech and special anniversaries, Labour Day etc.

No matter the sources of getting news, a good reporter should have the ability to listen, see and possess attributes of a good interviewer. These are needed in dealing with those sources.

In summary, a reporter gets news by:

1. Going to the scene of the news event and observe events unfold;
2. Talking to people what witnessed the event happen or what you will consider as using eye witness accounts;
3. Consulting secondary sources like records, reports, documents, files, etc to cross check and corroborate facts and figures.

Sources could also be human in nature, physical or online. Human sources are those personal contacts you have build over time. They are also authorities and people involved in news events. The physical sources are consists of records, documents, reference works etc. The Online sources include a vast array of human and physical sources, from academics to government data (Mencher, 2010).

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Discuss the various ways a reporter could gather news of an event he or she did not witness.

3.2 HOW TO FIND THE STORY IDEA

How to find the story idea has always pricked the mind of reporters especially during lull period. But the imaginative reporter will discover in this section that the story idea could be obtained from a lot of places. For instance, readers sometimes bring story ideas to the newspaper office. Most story ideas, though, are the result of an active imagination, a lively curiosity and a little help from friends. Journalists soon learn to recognize how stories written for other publications can be written for their own. They get in the habit of carrying a little notebook to jot down ideas when something somebody says strikes a responsive chord. But even for good journalists, the wellspring of ideas sometimes dries up. Therefore, take note of these 10 sources of story ideas. They are good for anytime and anyplace. They were compiled from the earlier version of Mencher (2003).

Other people

As a journalist you meet many people from time to time. What are they talking when they are not talking business? What have they heard lately? Journalists have to listen even if it means eavesdropping while having a cup of tea. What do you think interest people? There is no better source of story ideas than the people you meet while you are off-duty or on duty. They are, after all, your readers. Therefore, take note of others and always try to find out what's on their mind. Whenever you look try to see beyond your nose.

Other publications

News stories are sometimes recycled across the country by different media organizations in different ways. Read other newspapers, magazines, books, pamphlets and the house journals and newsletters of businesses and organizations. But please note that all stories cannot fit in every community. You have to know your own readership. A story about urban renewal will definitely attract more attention in Lagos than in Iyana Iyesi. When you are reading other publications for ideas, remember that you should not duplicate a story in your own newspaper report verbatim. You are only looking for the idea, so as to take the story from a new angle.

News releases

Releases from Public Relations persons are valuable sources of story ideas. Try to follow up on some of these regular releases that come to your media organization. You may never know where they will take you to or predict the end.

Social services directory

Many cities and localities have a composite listing of all agencies providing social services. These listings could throw up different kinds of ideas about the society which a reporter could follow through. You should therefore take note that each of those agencies and their clients could lead to a potential story.

Government reports

Aso Rock is the Nigerian seat of Government. On a daily basis, information and statistics flow from such a place. But behind every piece of statistics, however, is a person. Every person is a potential story. The census report for instance contains not only the number of people in a community, but also their income and education, how many cars they own, whether they rent or own a house, etc. Such census reports tell much more. Therefore, find out what and why, and you have for yourself a treasure chest of stories.

Stories in your newspaper

Many a stream has yielded gold nuggets after the first wave of miners have left. Newspapers sometimes play hit-and-run journalism. Always ask yourself, whenever you read a report in a newspaper, if the human interest angle has been reported adequately. When your newspaper is concentrating on the election winners, maybe you can get an interesting story by talking to the losers and their supporters. And when the unemployment statistics are reported in your newspaper, remember that behind each of those numbers is a name of a person without a job and probably a family to support.

Advertisements and Yellow Pages
Advertisements especially classifieds, could be valuable sources of story ideas. Look through the Yellow Pages too. You may stumble on a good story idea.

Wire copy
Whenever you go through the stories from the wire services, don't forget to ask yourself if there are any stories that can be localized amongst them. When a wire service story for instance describes the increase in the rate of inflation, you should ask yourself how the people in your community would be affected. Always look for a local angle or slant.

Local newspapers
Don't ever brush off local news tips. Your readers may be more interested in them than the so-called national news stories.

You
In the final analysis, you are the one who must be alert enough to look and listen to what is going on around you. Always raise posers for yourself and attempt to answer them. Remember, reporters who are attuned to people rather than institutions will find the world around them a rich and fertile source of human interest. Don't tune out. Look and see!

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3.2
As a resourceful reporter, where will look for story ideas in times of lull.

3.3 CHECKING THE FACTS OF A STORY

A lot of places and information are available for the reporter who is very thorough in his job and desires to verify every fact that goes into his story before publication. Some of these avenues are found in the reference manuals maintained in most newsrooms or in newspaper libraries. Below is a list of some of the avenues and places available for the reporter to check, cross-check or even triple-check his facts before going to press:

Local and Area Telephone Directories: This could be used to verify the spelling of names and addresses etc. They are usually reliable, but they are not infallible.

City/Town Directories: These provide the same information as the telephone directory but also provide information on the occupations of citizens and the owners or managers of businesses.

State Manuals/Brochures: These provide information on various government agencies.

Maps of the City: County, State, Nation and World Local maps are usually posted in the newsrooms. Others may be found in atlases.

Bartlett's Familiar Quotations: This will help you not to quote anyone out of context or state a quotation as anonymous when it actually has an author.

National Assembly Records, Gazettes and Hansards: These are where Government establishments and parastatals store its official information for retrieval and reference.

Facts on File (Facts on File Inc): This is a weekly compilation of news from metropolitan newspapers.

Guinness Book of World Records: Anybody who has done any notable thing and probably what no one has done before then gets listed in Guinness Book of World Records.

Current Biography: You no longer need to worry that you can find the date of birth of a notable personality or his middle name or even place of birth. Check current biographies.

Trade and Professional Journals and Newsletters: This will obviously contain useful information on businesses and related matter.

Reader's Guide and Reader's Digest: Any reporter who is not reading Reader's Guide or Reader's Digest is obviously missing out on an important information loaded book that could be useful to the modern reporter.

Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language: This is a good reference material for journalists.

Who's Who (St Martin's, New York): Shows who is who as published by St. Martin's.

Who's Who in America (Marquis): Also shows who is who in America.

World Almanac and Book of Facts: A book where you may probably find any meaningful thing you are looking for.

These useful publications and others not mentioned here, enable reporters to verify data and so avoid unnecessary embarrassment caused by avoidable and recognizable errors.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE
Identify and discuss 10 useful places to verify facts as a reporter.

3.4 HOW TO HANDLE SOURCES

Journalists and the profession rely heavily on dependable sources to succeed with the reportorial assignment. One of the trade secrets of any reporter/journalist is the contact with people who confide what is happening in their places of work and interest, whether in politics, business or society. As such, sources are as necessary as notebooks. Here are some suggestions on how to manipulate and/or manage sources:

Use Sources as Starting Points for Some Stories:
Use sources as starting points for your story but not the end point. Always double and triple check with other public and private sources before going to press or on air. Do your research and you will find the supporting facts that corroborate your story or questions the credibility and thus reliability of the facts you are about taking to the public sphere.

Maintain a Skeptical Attitude:
Don't be reluctant to discard sources' tips if they cannot be substantiated. It is a healthy skeptical attitude that gets you out of trouble in the long run.

Be Careful with Confidential or Anonymous Sources:
You must be careful with sources who give you information in confidence. The Off-the-record rule must be obeyed. In practice you will sometimes have certain things only if you agree to go off the record and listen without quoting. If what the source said is true, you can verify it later by other sources or facts. But if you don't listen at all, you won't know what to investigate. Once you have promised to keep a source's comments confidential, don't break your promise. Be careful not to blunder into suggesting who your source is by some inadvertent reference that can be traced to your source. This could lead to dry up of sources for the industry.

Be Aware that Many Editors Discourage Anonymous Un-Attributed Sources:
The granting of secrecy to a source is an open invitation to exaggerate, embroider, embellish or slant. Some reporters have found ways to avoid using unnamed sources. One method is to read back the quote you want

to use so as to diminish the source's anxieties and fears. A second technique is to take the time to discover documents that prove the source's allegation. If you can corroborate any information given to you of the record, you could go ahead and use such information without attributing it to your confidential sources.

3.5 DEVELOPING YOUR SOURCES

As you meet more people and learn your community, you should continually update your records of contacts. They come in handy sometimes. Try to develop a bookkeeping method for keeping tracks of your contact. Developing sources differ from one journalist to another. But here are some tips on how to develop a source:

1. **Keep a File Box of 3×5 Cards**: Use one card for each source. Be sure to list the telephone numbers of both office and home or keep the same information in a small notebook you can carry with you or use both the file and the notebook. Sometimes it pays to leave your address and phone numbers with your source so that he can always call you up when something that is newsworthy turns up, since you as a journalist cannot be everywhere at the same time.

2. **Always Review Your Card or Notebook from Time to Time**: People are always moving. They are either changing jobs or location. You need to update your notebook from time to time or you will find out you just have a record of useless data.

3. Sometime you call your contacts just to say hello. Don't call them only when you want to use them.

4. If you can afford it, sometimes take your contacts to lunch, dinner etc. Know their kids and spouse's names, birthdays and anniversaries.

5. Build a healthy relation based on trust and confidence with sources. If they grow to trust you, they will not have problems talking to you when something important turns up.

6. You can also reverse the process. Whenever any useful information comes to you, make it a habit to pass on such to your sources. When they get tips too, they will pass them on to you. It is a mutual thing.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Journalists have a common saying that a reporter can never be better than his or her sources (Mencher, 2010). Reporters therefore spend quality time looking for and cultivating contacts that could become useful to them in the course of their assignment as reporters. Cultivating and developing sources becomes a must for a every reporter who wants to remain in the business.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit discussed the place of sources in the news gathering process. How to look for sources, cultivate them as well as grow them were the major highlights of this unit. It is expected that you now know much about sources and the news gathering process as an upcoming reporter.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss the news gathering procedure and mention five places to verify your facts before turning them out to your editor.
2. Will all your sources be reliable? How would you handle sources to ensure they don't get you into trouble?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 4: JOURNALESE

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
    3.1 Newsroom Terminologies
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The media profession, like every other notable profession, has its language. This is sometimes referred to as jargons or technical terms associated with the profession. For the media industry, the technical language is called Journalese. Journalese is the language of the art of journalism. This will be the preoccupation of this unit. However, attention will only be paid to those terminologies associated with the News room where reporters and writers usually domicile.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this chapter, it is expected that you will be able to list and explain the technical words, phrases and terms commonly used in the Newsroom by reporters, writers and their editors.

3.1 MAIN CONTENT

3.2 NEWS ROOM TERMINOLOGIES

Most of the definitions provided in this section were compiled from the Press Association, Reporters' Companion, Mencher (2010), online searches and media related dictionaries.

1. **Add:** Additional news matter to a story already written or is about to be written.
2. **Assignment:** An order to a reporter to cover an event. Assignment is the day's job given to a reporter to cover by his or her News Editor or direct boss.
3. **Attribution:** This means the identification of the person being quoted in the reporter's story. You only attribute a story to a source if he or she gives such information on record.

4. **Actuality:** This is an on-the-scene report in broadcasting.
5. **Air time:** The time at which a programme is broadcast.
6. **Audio:** Sound
7. **Background:** Information that may be used by a writer entirely on his own responsibility and cannot be attributed even to a "reliable source". The reporter can only use information given on background on his or her own risk.
8. **Banner:** Headlines written across or near the top of most Newspaper page. It is also called a Streamer or Streaming headline.
9. **Beat:** Area assigned to a reporter for regular coverage. A beat could be a place or a subject. Example: State House Correspondent has the State House as his/her beat while Energy Correspondent has issues related to energy as his or her beat. In the US, beat could also be regarded as an exclusive story.
10. **Break:** This is when a news development becomes known and available.
11. **Beeper:** A telephone conversation or interview recorded for later playback on air.
12. **Body type:** The type in which most of the newspaper is set, usually 8- or 9-point type.
13. **Bulletin:** News of the day as presented in each of the media organizations.
14. **By line:** The author of a story or the name of the reporter who wrote a particular story.
15. **Bulldog:** Early edition, usually the first of a newspaper's edition for the day.
16. **Caps:** Capital letters or uppercase letters.
17. **Caption:** Synonymous with cutline. It is the explanatory lines above or below a newspaper photograph, illustration or diagram.
18. **Column:** The vertical division of the news page which is usually divided into about five or more columns. It could also be regarded as a signed article of opinion or strong personal expression by an expert.
19. **Copy:** News story or report.
20. **Copy Flow:** This refers to the flow of a news story from the reporter to the news desk and to the editor who makes the final decision as to use the story or not.
21. **CAR:** Computer Assisted Reporting- the use of online databases and other related resources for the of a news story. Some refer to it as Database Journalism and others call it Precision Journalism.
22. **Crony Journalism:** This is a kind of reporting and coverage that ignores or treats lightly negative news of about friends and acquaintances.
23. **Continuity:** All radio and television scripts besides commercials

24. **Cue:** Noun; a signal to an announcer, newscaster or production personnel to participate in a broadcast.
25. **Cub:** A beginning reporter.
26. **Cutaway:** The transition shot from them to another. It is used to avoid Jamb cut.
27. **Deadline:** Time by which a reporter, editor or desk must have completed scheduled work for the day.
28. **Dateline:** The name of the city or town and date, which are placed at the beginning of stories not of local origin.
29. **Credit line:** The line that designates, if necessary, the source of a story or cut "By NAN–News Agency of Nigeria".
30. **Dry:** A period lacking in news. This is called a lull period.
31. **Dolly:** Camera platform.
32. **Dub:** The transfer of one videotape to another.
33. **Exclusive:** A story that is printed solely by one newspaper or an individual. This could also be called a "scoop".
34. **Edition:** One version of a newspaper per day.
35. **Editorial material:** This means all materials in the newspaper that is advertising related.
36. **Enterprise copy:** This is a story often covered by a reporter. It is like a news story but digs deeper than the usual news story.
37. **Establishing shot:** This is a wide shot used to give the viewer a sense of the scene of action.
38. **Fade:** Either physical or mechanical lowering of a voice or music to smooth a transition between sounds.
39. **File:** To send a story to office usually by wire or telephone or to put news services on the wire.
40. **Filler:** Minor news materials used to fill up spaces in the newspaper. It is also called column closers and shorts.
41. **Flag:** This is the printed title of a newspaper on page 1. It is also called logotype or nameplate.
42. **Folo:** A story that follows up a particular theme in a news story format. **FM:** Frequency Modulation.
43. **Freelance:** An unattached writer, reporter, photojournalist or columnist who writes for a media organization for a fee.
44. **Graf:** Abbreviation for paragraph.
45. **Handout:** Term for written publicity or special interest news sent to a newspaper firm.
46. **HFR:** Abbreviation for "Hold for Release" material that cannot be used until it is released by the source or at a designated time. It is also used to tag a story as "embargoed".
47. **Jump:** This means continuation of a story from page one to another page.
48. **Kill:** To eliminate a news story or refuse to use it because it is news worthy. This also means to spike a story.
49. **Log:** Schedule of broadcasting.

50. **LTK:** “lead to come” usually placed after the slug. This means the lead will be supplied later.
51. **Make up:** Also called layout or design. This is the arrangement of body type, headlines, and illustrations into pages.
52. **Masthead:** The heading on the editorial page that gives information about the newspaper. This is sometimes confused with Flag or Nameplate.
53. **Must:** A designation placed on a copy to indicate that it must be run or published.
54. **More:** Designation used at the end of a page of copy to indicate there are one or more additional pages.
55. **Morgue:** The newspaper library, where published stories photographs and resource materials are stored for reference purposes.
56. **Mix:** Combining two or more sound elements into one.
57. **Montage:** A series of brief shots of various subjects to give a single impression or communicate one idea.
58. **News hole:** Space in a newspaper allotted to news, illustrations and other nonadvertising material.
59. **O/C:** On camera. A reporter delivering copy directly to the camera without covering pictures.
60. **Outtakes:** Scenes that discarded for the final story.
61. **Op-ed page**: Abbreviation for the page opposite the editorial page.
62. **Precede**: A story written prior to an event. It could also be referred to as the section of a story preceding the lead.
63. **Put to bed:** Closing the forms of an edition.
64. **Rewrite:** To write a story a second time to make it better or to condense it.
65. **Sacred cow:** Slang for a subject or story in which the publishers or editors are interested and which must be printed.
66. **Scoop:** See exclusive.
67. **Slug:** The word or words placed on a copy to designate the story. This is usually placed in the top left hand corner of the page.
68. **Stringer:** A correspondent, not a regular staff member of the media organization, who is usually paid per story. Could also be regarded as a freelancer.
69. **Stet:** Let it stand, restore.
70. **SOF:** Sound on Film recorded simultaneously with the picture.
71. **SOT:** Sound on Tape. Recorded simultaneously with picture on tape.
72. **Split page:** Front page of an inside section. Also known as the break page, second front page.
73. **Text:** Verbatim report of a speech or public statement.
74. **Tip:** Information passed to a reporter, often in confidence.
75. **Trim:** To reduce a news story carefully.

76. **Update:** This is a story that brings the reader up-to-date on a situation already in the news.
77. **V/O:** Reporter's voice over pictures. Also called Voice Over.
78. **VTR:** Videotape recording.
79. **Wire services:** This is a synonym for press agencies or news agencies. Media organizations usually subscribe to these agencies for news stories etc.

4.0 CONCLUSION

It is important for every reporter to familiarize his or herself with the above newsroom terminologies in order to remain connected to fellow reporters in and out of the newsroom. Proper understanding by all makes communications very easy.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit dealt with terminologies commonly used in the newsrooms across the globe. It is expected that you can now identify 80 of these and explain them.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Identify twenty core newsroom terminologies and explain their meaning.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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MODULE 3: NEWS WRITING AND REPORTING FOR THE PRINT MEDIA

Unit 1: The Lead
Unit 2: The Story Structure/Components of the Story
Unit 3: Types of News Stories
Unit 4: The Qualities of a Good News Story/Elements by Which News Stories are evaluated
Unit 5: Checklist before a Reporter Writes a Story.

UNIT 1: THE LEAD

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
    3.1 Function/Importance of the Lead
    3.2 Hints on How to Write the Lead
    3.3 Types of Leads
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Since most stories are written in the Inverted Pyramid form, the news reporter must master the lead. The lead is the first paragraph of a news story and contains the 5Ws and H. In fact, the lead is the most important part of a news story because it contains the most important facts of such a news story. The lead also summarizes the facts of a news story and it must be attractive, interesting and readable. The lead could extend to the second paragraph of the story but under normal circumstances, it should not go into the third paragraph. This is not to say that one has not come across a story of three-paragraph lead in our dailies. What we are trying to emphasize here is that a reporter should not indulge in writing three-paragraph leads.

According to Mencher (2010), “The lead sentence usually contains one idea and follows the subject-verb-object sentence structure for clarity.” This means the lead should begin with the subject, followed by an active verb and conclude with the object of the verb. This structure also makes the reporter to write simple and short sentences.

Some writers and editors also prefer to place word limit on leads. Mencher (2010) says a lead should not exceed 35 words.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Define a lead
- Identify the elements of a lead
- Identify and explain the functions/features of a lead
- Identify common lead types as well as give examples of each
- Write a good lead.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 FUNCTION/IMPORTANCE OF THE LEAD

1. **The Lead Summarizes the News:**
   It gives the reader the sense of the story to follow and takes him or her to the supporting facts or claims presented in the opening statements.

2. **The Lead Answers the Questions Raised by the 5Ws and H:**
   However, not all the answers provided by the 5Ws and H must be present in every lead to make it acceptable but no important one should be left out or omitted.

3. **The Lead Must Emphasize the News Feature:**
   The lead is expected to play up the most interesting or significant aspect of the story. The news feature must be played up in the lead.

4. **The Lead Must Furnish the Reader with Identification Needed for Clarity:**
   Persons, places and events must be given identification to make the lead clear to the reader. These bits of information may be considered as parts of the answers to the WHO, WHERE and WHAT of an event.

5. **The Lead Must also Suggest or Give the Authority on Which the News is Written:**
   This is called DOCUMENTATION. Documentation gives credence to the news story.

6. The Lead Must Attract Readers to the Story:
As the window of the story, the lead must get the attention of the reader and sustain this till he or she gets into the story.

7. The Lead Should Suggest the Headline:
From the lead it becomes easy for the sub-editor or editor to cast the headline for the story. The lead should help suggest this.

3.3 Hints on How to Write the Lead

1. Use the SVO (subject-verb-object) sentence structure.
2. Make use of simple and short sentences.
3. Discover the most important element of the story and play this up in your lead.
4. Decide on what lead feature to emphasize among the five Ws and H and make this part of the first sentence.
5. Use a single element if you find out that one element stands out clearly in the story.
6. Make your lead go straight to the point.
7. Always ensure that your main verb is in the active voice.

3.4 TYPES OF LEADS

There are several types of leads; however, Sonaike (1987) identifies nine thus:

1. Summary Lead which comprises of a statement that answers the 5Ws and H of a news event;
2. The Effect's Lead which focuses on the effect or consequences of an event;
3. The Contrast Lead which portrays contrasts of news events;
4. The Direct Address Lead which directs its statement at the reader;
5. The Question Lead which asks a questions and provides an answer as well;
6. The Cartridge Lead which presents the gist of an even in the fewest words;
7. The Double Feature Lead which contains two separate ideas;
8. The Quote Lead which starts with a quotation and
9. The Shirt-tail Lead which is a lead broken into two sentences expressing two related ideas.

We shall further explain some of these lead types that are relevant with examples.

1. Summary Lead

The summary lead is often used with the Inverted Pyramid form because it seeks to summarize the story in a few lines and tells the reader what he needs to know by answering the 5Ws and H. The summary lead summarizes the whole story and gives details later. It is very brief and deals only with the key points of the story.
Example:

> *The ultra-modern Ariaria International Market in Aba, Abia State, reputed to be the biggest in Africa, was razed by fire on Tuesday.*

2. Figurative or Coloured Lead:

This lead permits the extensive use of figures of speech or allows the use of words in the figurative sense rather than the literal sense. The power of a figurative lead is in its eye-catching effect.

Example:

> *After a countdown of several weeks, the Governor has put a fire button and blasted the MD of the state-owned sugar company into the rank of redundancy.*

3. Quotation Lead:

A quotation lead usually consists of a striking statement that could make readers interested in the story. Because the quotation lead is easy to write, the general rule is to use it sparingly. It should be used only where the quote is quite significant, and in cases where it could add drama to the story. Whenever a quotation is used, the explanation of such quotation should be made in the next paragraph.

> *"The implementation of the present law on abortion would continue to impede the control of abortion in the country"*
> *This was contained in a call to the federal government by the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) to legalize abortion.*

4. Question Lead

The question lead raises a question and attempts to answer the question. A question lead is commonly used in explanatory or specialized writing. The question at times answers itself when it is rhetoric.
Example:

> *What is constructive comment and what is disloyalty to the state? This is the question in many minds today following the dismissal of a state commissioner as a result of an alleged anti-government speech.*

The function of the second paragraph as statement following the questions is to explain the question to the listeners, readers or viewers.

5. Bullet Lead

Bullet lead is nearest to the headline. It is a shot sentence that carries great impact. Example:

> *Multibillionaire and business tycoon, Chief John Agoli was killed today in a car bomb blast outside his home.*

6. Staccato Lead

This consists of short sentences, coming one after the other to create heightened effect. It is used to establish a mood best suited for the kind of news story.

Example:

> *The disaster started with a building flash. Next, a shattering roar that led to a crumbling wall. Then breaking glass, and death.*

7. Immediate-Identification Lead:

In the immediate-identification lead, one of the most important facts of the story is the "WHO" element. Reporters often use this approach when someone important or someone whose name is widely recognized is making news. Example:

> *Pop Singer Roy Kelly was hospitalized in good conditions with second-degree burns on his scalp last night after his hair caught fire when he was filming a commercial.*

8. Delayed-Identification Lead:

When a reporter uses this type of lead, usually it is because the person or persons involved have little name recognition among the readers. Example:

Madison – A 39-year old carpenter was killed today in a two-car collision two blocks from his home.

Dead is William Domonske of 205 W.Oak St. injured in the accident and taken to Mercy Hospital were Mary Craig, 21, of 204 Maple Ave. and Rebecca Roets, 12, of 207 Maple Ave.

9. **Multiple-Element Leads:**
   In some stories, choosing one theme for the lead is too restrictive. In such cases the reporter can choose a multiple – element lead to work more information into the first paragraph. However, such a lead must be written within the confines of a clear, simple sentence(s). Example:

   PORTLAND – The city council Tuesday ordered three department heads fired, established an administrative review board and said it would begin to monitor the work habits of administrators.

10. **Lead With Flair:**
    Although the Inverted Pyramid is designed to tell readers the news first and fast, not all stories begin with the most important statement. When the news value you want to emphasize is novelty, often the lead is unusual.
    Example:

    ROME, ITALY (AP) – The wedding guests included a drug suspect, the social coordinator was a narcotics agent, the justice of the peace was a police chief and 52 officers were party crashers.

    For the unsuspecting bride and groom the ceremony Friday was truly unforgettable – a sting operation set up by state and local police that led to 30 arrests.

Please note, you may come across other types of leads, depending on the author you are reading. However, the summary lead is the most commonly used in this part of the world because of its tendency to summarize the 5Ws and H in the lead.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3.1
Why is a good lead important to a story?

4.0 CONCLUSION

Good leads are essential to the overall value of a story. It is also important to the understanding of the major theme espoused in a story. Writing it correctly becomes a primary skill every reporter must get. It is also important to conclude here that different authors may choose to give any suitable title or name to lead types. This is not the issue. A multiple element lead may be described as a summary lead in another context. This does not make the authors wrong or right. What is important to the editor is writing a good lead.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you were exposed to lead writing in the print media. The features, functions and types of leads were also discussed. It is expected that you can now write a good lead after studying this unit.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Identify five leads of five lead stories in the Guardian newspaper and state the types of lead they are.
2. Identify and discuss two types of leads that will be suitable to the general interest newspaper.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 2: THE STORY STRUCTURE/COMPONENTS OF THE STORY

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
    3.1 The Inverted Pyramid Format
    3.2 The Advantages/Importance of the IPF
    3.3 The 5Ws and H
    3.4 Components of the Story
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Story structure distinguishes news writing from other types of writing such as the essay, poetry, drama, novel, short story and so on. Whereas the author of these other forms of composition usually begin with minor incidental details and work to a climax near the end of their compositions, the news writer reverses this plan of organization. He begins with the climax. In his first paragraph generally referred to as the lead or introduction, the news writer begins with the most important information or climax of the story. The second most important information comes second; the third most important information comes third and so on. This form of news writing is called the Inverted Pyramid Format.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

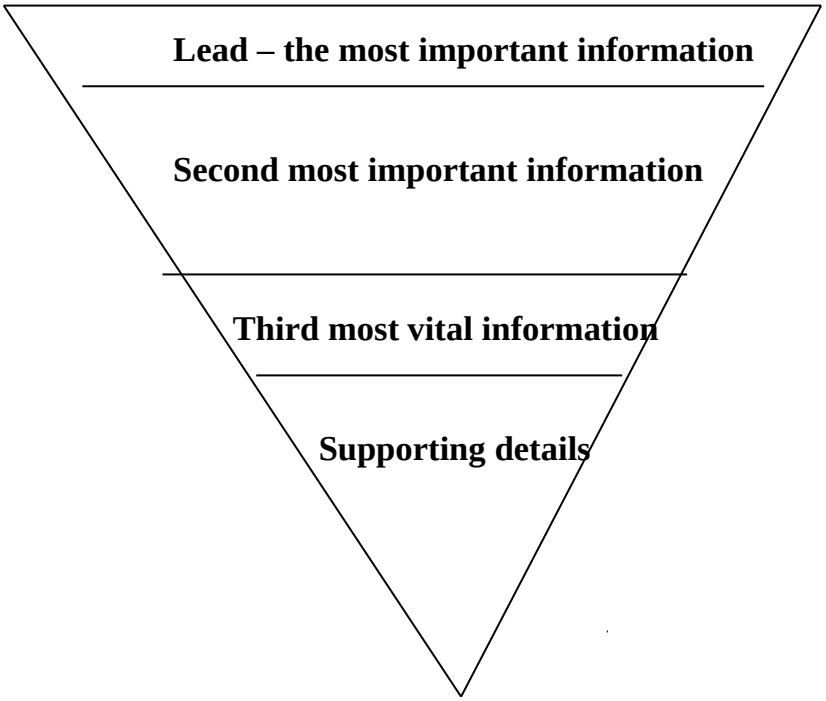
At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- describe the news story format.
- discuss the Inverted Pyramid Format of writing.
- identify and explain the 5Ws and H.
- differentiate between news writing and other forms of writing.
- explain the components of the story.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 THE INVERTED PYRAMID FORMAT

The Inverted Pyramid Format is a news story writing format used centuries ago; however, most modern newspapers still use the format because it is the most space-efficient story form known. It permits writers to deliver the most important information in a paragraph or two. This type of news writing format gives the most important information in the news first in form of a lead and goes on to develop the story in a descending order of importance. The Inverted Pyramid story has no conclusion, as many single incident news stories are presented in this form. The illustration below shows the format.



The purpose of this type of structure is to present the news quickly, clearly and readably, to help the reader easily understand the content of the story. Its basic logic grows out of the different ways in which readers approach a news story. Some will be so interested in the subject that they will read every word the reporter writes, regardless of how it is written; others read only a few paragraphs; many will only read the headline and lead.

To provide all these readers with maximum benefit, the reporter arranges the fact in descending order of importance. The Inverted Pyramid form has a professional advantage over the conventional method of essay writing. When a news story is very long and needs

cutting, the sub-editor can easily cut from the paragraphs, which contain the least important details.

3.2 THE ADVANTAGES/IMPORTANCE OF THE INVERTED PYRAMID FORMAT

1. It makes the reader get the gist quickly.
2. It helps in headline writing.
3. It facilitates reading.
4. It satisfies the curiosity of the reader.
5. It helps and facilitates page make up.
6. It facilitates editing to suit the news hole.

3.3 THE 5WS AND H

The first person associated with the ***5Ws and H*** is Rudyard Kipling. "I keep six honest serving men, they taught me all I know and their names are **What, Why, Where, When, Who, and How**". The question these "men" raise is **What happened**, **Why it happened, Where it happened, When it happened, Who was involved and How it happened.** It may be that not all of these questions can or should be answered in connection with a story but it will be unfortunate and unprofessional for a reporter not to make attempt to find answers to these questions.

1. What Happened?

From the analysis of news stories published in five notable newspapers in Nigeria, the WHAT of the stories is the most common starting point. In asking the question What Happened? The answer forms the opening of the story.

Example:

> A total sum of N2.8 billion was pumped into the foreign exchange market in March this year alone by the Central Bank of Nigeria.

A further explanation of the "What" follows:

> This represents an increase of 15% over the level of N2.4 billion recorded last year.

2. Who Was Involved?

The news of WHO as the opening element shows the prominence of the personality involved in the news story and it is from this angle that Harold Evan in his book – News Writing – defines news as people. When the WHO is not prominent, that is, when it has no attraction in itself and leads to no special destination in the society; it will rarely open

the news story. In some cases, special WHO may justify emphasis even though identification does not become part of the lead.

Examples:

President Olusegun Obasanjo has promised to improve the conditions of service of federal civil servants in the country in order to stem corrupt practices.

United States President George W. Bush has announced a donation of $50m in support of the AIDS epidemic in Africa.

3. Where Did it Happen?

The location of a news story is important and of interest when the media considers their area of coverage or place of reporting.
Example:

An Evangelist of the Christ Church of the lord, Mr Aboidun Baruwa, was killed by a lion at the zoological garden of the University of Ibadan last Saturday.

4. When Did it Happen?

Time element is important in a news story, and in most cases, it is included in the lead. However, it often sounds odd to begin a news story with time. That is why" At noon last Saturday" cannot begin a story.
Example:

President Goodluck Jonathan leaves Abuja Monday morning for Madrid, to begin a three-day state visit to Spain.

5. Why Did it Happen?

The WHY of a news story is the circumstances surrounding the event behind the story. In most cases, the WHY is always answered in the body of the news story, unless when the circumstances surrounding the WHY deserves more explanation.
Example:

INEC cannot remove Ngige based on his expulsion from the PDP. This clarification was

made yesterday by the INEC Chairman, Abel Guobadia, to refuse claims credited to him.

6. How did it Happen?

The HOW of a story is closely related to the WHY. That is why the HOW and the WHY of the story is usually left for the second or third paragraph that form the body of the story. However, the HOW of a news story is mostly used to explain the process the event takes to become a news story.

Example:

Taiwanese police have rescued a wealthy businessman kidnapped and held for two weeks in the boot of a car while his captors demanded a ransom of 50 million Taiwan dollars.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

1. Justify why you may like to begin your news stories with any of the 5Ws and H.

3.4 COMPONENTS OF THE STORY

(This section is completely based on the work of the renowned News Writing and Reporting author, Melvin Mencher, 2010).

The components of a story are what the story must contain to be accepted. Mencher (2010) identifies seven of such components thus:

1. **Accuracy:**
   All information provided in a story must be accurate and the facts must also be verifiable.
2. **Attribution:**
   The sources which provided the reporter with information he or she used in writing his/her story must be properly identified.
3. **Complete:**
   A news story should contain the specifics that illustrate, prove and document the main point of the story
4. **Balanced and Fair:**
   A news story should make sure all sides in a controversial issue are presented.
5. **Objective:**
   The writer or reporter should never inject his or her own personal biases and prejudices into his or her story.

6. **Brief and Focused:**
   The good news story should get to the point as quickly as possible and should keep to the point.
7. **Well-written:**
   A good news story should be clear, direct, interesting and error-free.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Good journalism starts by having good reporters who thrive upholding the ABC of journalism - Accuracy, Brevity and Clarity. Sometimes, these values are seen as moral necessities for the practice of the profession and should be upheld by anyone who wishes to make a name in the industry. The eight components of a story discussed in this section are just expansions of the ABC of journalism.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you learnt the story structure where the Inverted Pyramid Format and 5Ws and H were presented to you. You also studied the components of a story where seven of the most vital ones were also presented.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Differentiate between a news story structure and style with that of a normal essay in English Language.
2. Discuss why the components of a story are vital to a journalist's credibility.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 3: TYPES OF NEWS STORIES

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
    3.1 The Straightforward News Story
        3.1.1 Hard News
        3.1.2 Soft News
        3.1.3 Human Interest News
        3.1.4 Expected News
        3.1.5 Unexpected News
    3.2 Investigative Stories
    3.3 Interpretation Stories
    3.4 In-Depth Stories
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The challenge of news classification should not be seen as a simple one. This is because the characteristics of one type of story may be found to be some of the characteristics of another type. For example, the difference between an in-depth story and an investigative story is purely a matter of degree of thoroughness. In broad terms, there are four major types of news stories. They are:

1. Straightforward News Stories which include hard news, soft news and human interest news
2. Investigative Stories
3. Interpretative Stories
4. In-depth News Stories.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Identify and explain the different types of news stories.
- Write the different types of news stories.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 THE STRAIGHTFORWARD NEWS STORY

This is the product of the usual routine reporting. Most of the stories published in our commercial newspapers are straightforward news stories. Such stories are never interpreted, editorialized or laden with reporter's biases and prejudices. They are stories objectively and anchored on facts. The reporter adds or subtracts nothing from the facts on which the story is based.

A straightforward news story may be short or long, but it can hardly be long enough to occupy three-quarters of a page or a whole page. As a rule, its lead must answer to the 5Ws and H and the story, as a whole must leave no questions unanswered. The story must be simple, accurate concise and understandable. As stated earlier, straightforward news story maybe hard news, soft news and human-interest news.

Hard News
Hard news stories are stories that deal with government, economic, social and political policies. They are stories with a lot of facts and figures. Stories concerning the annual budget, political and economic programmes are all hard news stories.

Soft News
These are stories about trends, fashion, entertainment personalities and lifestyles. The time element is not too emphasized in writing such news stories.

Human Interest News
These are stories valued more for their emotional impact or oddity. They usually arouse human feelings and conjure up sentiments and emotions in the persons who read them.

Expected News
Expected News is anticipated and therefore planned for. It usually flows from events that are scheduled in advance.

Unexpected News
Unexpected News is not anticipated. It takes people unawares. Examples include murders, natural disasters, accidents etc

3.2 Investigative Stories

These types of news hinges on the pursuit of information that has been concealed. Investigative stories therefore require the digging out of facts. The investigative reporter is not expected to inject his own biased ideas or opinions into his story. He is not expected to editorialize or interpret the facts either. Examples of investigate stories that made headlines are – The Watergate Scandal, the Buharigate Scandal, and Enwerengate etc.

3.3 Interpretative Stories

This is a form of story in which the reporter is free to interpret the news the way he or she sees it. S/He is allowed to inject his own biased but expert opinion, editorialize and pass comments on the fact being reported. Interpretative stories require additional facts, detailed explanations and logical analysis. Examples include personality profiles and feature articles.

3.4 In-Depth Stories

This is complete quality news reporting. In-depth story needs the full treatment and it needs backgrounding. It requires creative thinking and deep imagination on the part of the reporter and writer. Most newsmagazine stories are usually in-depth stories and there is little difference between an in-depth story and an investigative story.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Discuss four types of news stories.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The challenge of classifying news is not a small one. However, reporters and writers alike should make efforts to understand the style demands of the different types and adhere strictly to such demands. It is unforgivable for a reporter to pass comments or twist facts in a straightforward news story.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit has exposed you to the different types of news stories and the demands of writing them. It is expected that you can now identify the different story types and attempt writing each one of them.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss the major differences between a straightforward news story and an in-depth story.
2. Discuss the major differences between Hard news and Soft news.

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UNIT 4: THE QUALITIES OF A GOOD NEWS STORY

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
    3.1 The Qualities of a Good News Story
        3.1.1 Accuracy
        3.1.2 Objectivity
        3.1.3 Balance/Fairness
        3.1.4 Currency
        3.1.5 Clarity
        3.1.6 Brevity
        3.1.7 Attribution
        3.1.8 Complete
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Editors generally feel that some new stories are good while some others are not. This is because news stories must meet some certain criteria for them to be adjudged good. These criteria are referred to as the qualities of a good news story.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this chapter you should be able to identify and explain the qualities of a good news story.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 THE QUALITIES OF A GOOD NEWS STORY

3.1.1 Accuracy

Accuracy is the pillar on which a news story rests. A news story can be regarded as accurate if all names, ages, addresses and direct quotations in the story are accurate and correct. Inaccuracy in news writing could lead to costly libel suits and a possible dismissal from your work. So, efforts must be made to ensure that the facts you used in writing any story are accurate to the best of your knowledge.

3.1.2 Objectivity

This presupposes that the reporter presents the reader with all sides of an issue and all the facts involved in the issue. This nature of presentation allows the reader to decide what these facts mean and whose side he or she has sympathy for. For a news story to be objective, it must not be slanted or editorialized. There is no room here for the reporter to inject his or her opinion; no matter how specialized such opinion may be regarded.

The objective criterion has generated a lot of arguments because people believe it is difficult to be objective when writing a news story. They assert that the word objective is relative and so mean different things to different people. Subjectivity could be displayed either in choice of words or in the choice of facts.

3.1.3 Balance/Fairness

This entails treating all sides of a story equally without showing any form or evidence of bias and partiality. This could also be described as giving equal attention and prominence to the two sides of a story. In broadcasting, it is called the "Fairness Doctrine." The views expressed by opponents on an issue must be given adequate coverage without any form of preferential treatment to any of the opposing views. Balancing up a news story is very tasking indeed. Unless a reporter remains objective, he or she will miss out this crucial requirement.

3.1.4 Currency

Yesterday's news is no longer news. It is stale and no longer meant for consumption. A momentary delay in getting a story across to consumers as soon as it breaks could make it stale. The reporter should therefore be current in his or her search for news. A news story must be something new that has just happened.

3.1.5 Clarity

News stories must be written in clear, simple and easily comprehendible language. To achieve this, a reporter is advised to use simple and unambiguous words; simple sentences that mean exactly what the writer intends them to mean, and good grammar and punctuation that will bring the actual meaning closest to comprehension.

3.1.6 Brevity

For a news story to attract the attention of both the Editor and the readers, it must be very brief, clear and simple. Most readers are in such a hurry to read an entire story in a newspaper. So, it is advisable to tell the news in such a concise manner as to maintain the interest of the reader. This criterion gave rise to the adoption of the Inverted Pyramid form and the summary lead.

3.1.7 Attribution

This is all about identifying the sources that provided information in the course of writing the story. Attribution help place a quote in proper context and also validate the claims of the reporter. It improves the overall credibility of the story.

3.1.8 Complete

According to Mencher (2010), complete stories are written by reporters who anticipate and answer the questions their readers, viewers and listeners will ask. The complete story contains the specifics that illustrate, prove and document the main point of the story.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE
Discuss five primary qualities you think a good news story should have.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In the newspaper business, there will continue to be rejection and acceptance of copies. This is majorly because not every copy that is submitted will find itself in the day's edition of the newspaper. To be accepted, a story must have all the qualities discussed in this unit.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit dealt with the qualities of a news story. It is our expectation that you are now familiar with the reasons why some stories are rejected why others are not. The stories that lack some or most of the qualities discussed in this unit are most likely going to be rejected.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Give three solid reasons why Attribution is very vital to a story's completeness.
2. Is Objectivity a realistic quality for a news story? Support your

position with relevant facts.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 5: CHECKLIST BEFORE A REPORTER WRITES A STORY

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
    3.1 Checklist Before a Reporter writes a Story
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Information is the key to good reporting. The reporter is expected to collect enough information and put it together to make meaning to the readers. Because facts are the ingredients used in writing a good story, a reporter must always have a checklist of this before the actual writing process begins.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to determine what will be in a checklist before a reporter writes a story.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 CHECKLIST BEFORE A REPORTER WRITES A STORY

The checklist before a reporter writes a story is based on the practical work and writing of Agbese (2008) thus:

1. **Do I have all the Information I need to Write a Complete Story?**
   A reporter must make sure all the required information are in before the writing process begins proper. A good reporter usually asks himself or herself the questions his or her readers will ask and find answers to the questions.

2. **Have I Covered All the Angles, Interviewed Everyone Concerned and Verified All the Information Given to Me by the Various Sources?**
   An attempt to answer this question in the affirmative will

definitely lead to a well written and complete story. Any reporter who is in the habit of asking himself/herself this question and then making concerted efforts to find answers to it will end up an award-winning reporter.

3. **Have I Answered All the Questions the Questions Posed by the 5Ws and H?**
   The 5Ws and H raise questions whose answers summarize all that a reader needs to know about an event. Every reporter should make attempt to find answers to the questions they ask.

4. **Am I Clear in My Mind What Sort of Story I Want to Write?**
   If the reporter has any doubts in his/her mind about the sort of story he/she intends to write, then something is not right.

5. **Do I Fully Understand the Story I am About to Write?**
   This follows from point No.4 above. The reporter must fully understand the sort or type of story he/she is about to write by appreciating the nature of facts available and the possible consequences of the story's release.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

1. Discuss the checklist a reporter must take note of before writing his report.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This checklist is not exhaustive. There could be many more even some developed by reporters themselves to assist them in delivering quality. However, if the answers are provided to the questions asked in the checklist, then the reporter is ready to write the story.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this chapter, you learnt some of the items that must be available to you as a reporter before you write a story that could get you positive attention.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss the question posed by the 5Ws and H and state why they are important to a story's completeness.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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MODULE 4: NEWS WRITING AND REPORTING FOR THE BROADCAST MEDIA

Unit 1: Criteria for Selecting Broadcast Stories
Unit 2: Style
Unit 3: Features/Structure of a Broadcast News Story
Unit 4: Writing a Broadcast Copy

UNIT 1: CRITERIA FOR SELECTING BROADCAST STORIES

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
    3.1 Criteria for Selecting Broadcast Stories
        3.1.1 Timeliness
        3.1.2 Information and Explanation
        3.1.3 Audio or Visual Impact
        3.1.4 The facts
    3.2 The Don'ts of a Broadcast Copy
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.1 Tutor Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Broadcast news stories are written differently when compared to print news stories that we have been dealing with in our earlier units. Broadcast stories are written to be easily understood. According to Mencher (2010:195), "to write effectively for radio you must unlearn the prose writer's rules about sentence structure. Disregard such forms as dependent clauses and balanced sentences. You can even forget the first grammatical rule you ever learned – that a sentence must have a subject and a verb. Some of radio's most effective sentences are not complete sentences at all. They are descriptive phrases. They save a lot of words and go over very smoothly on the air".

These make broadcast copies a little more technical than the usual prose copies. This unit shall therefore focus on the criteria for selecting broadcast copy and the things a broadcaster cannot do when preparing a broadcast copy.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

1. Explain the criteria for selecting broadcast stories
2. Explain the don'ts of a broadcast copy
3. Distinguish between writing for the print and the broadcast media.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 CRITERIA FOR SELECTING BROADCAST STORIES

There are many reasons why a broadcast news story may be rejected in the newsroom. Apart from the universally accepted standards, different broadcast stations have other unique parameters that their reporters must follow in writing for the Station. However, the following could be regarded as some of the criteria that are generally applied in selecting broadcast news stories.

3.1.1 Timeliness

Timeliness as a news value is more important to the broadcast news writer than to the print reporter and writer. Print journalists tend to work on daily cycles but broadcast journalist work on hourly or less cycles. Generally, a news broadcaster has to "go to press" many times a day, particularly if he is working on radio. The news must be up to the minute. News that is more than an hour old may be too stale for broadcast selection (Aworo, 2005 in Folarin *et al*). So, timeliness is a core criterion in selecting broadcast copies.

3.1.2 Information, not Explanation

Broadcast news writers always look for selection stories that do not need a lot of explanations in order for listeners or viewers to understand them easily. They prefer stories that are relatively simple and can be told in a simple and straightforward manner. The suggested maximum length for most TV newscast is about 2 minutes; the normal length should be about 20 to 30 seconds (Aworo, 2005 in Folarin *et al).* What is important to the broadcaster is giving information not explaining in details what happened. In essence, the broadcast news story concentrates on the WHAT and WHERE and delves less into the WHY and HOW of events because of the airtime allocated to the story (Obe, 2005). Every broadcast news writer must have this understanding if he or she intends to write acceptable copies.

3.1.3 Audio or Visual Impact

Broadcast news editors will always select stories that the audience can hear or see. As a broadcast news writer, always write for the ear or eye if you want your copy selected all the time. This is because news events that have good visual appeals to the audience are usually hot cake. Some broadcast news events are selected because they have both visual and audio effects that the public want (Obe, 2005).

3.1.4 The Facts

In the course of an assignment, many facts will be thrown up at the reporter. It is his or her duty to organize these facts into some sort of order. Do not forget that broadcast reports do not require do much detail; it becomes important that the reporter must organize the facts in such a way that the important details are not lost. The best practical way to go about this is to fully understand the facts you want to base your story on before you begin the writing process. Afterwards, you could write from your memory and only use the facts to cross-check. This technique when expertly used results in concise, clear copy.

3.1.5 Other Criteria

A broadcast story that must be accepted according to Mencher (2010) should use everyday language, written in short sentences, limit every sentence to one idea, use the present tense whenever appropriate and usually the story should confine itself to one overriding theme.

3.2 THE DON'TS OF A BROADCAST COPY

1. Do not scare listeners
2. Do not give orders
3. Do not start a story with:
    - "As expected"
    - "In a surprise move"
    - " A new development today"
    - "Our top story tonight is"
    - "There is" or "It is"
    - A participial phrase
    - A personal pronoun
    - A question
    - A quotation
    - An unknown or unfamiliar name
    - Someone's "making news" or "making history"
    - "Another", "more" or "once again".

4. Do not characterize news as good or bad
5. Do not use any form of "to be" as the main verb in your lead
6. Do not bury the verb in a noun
7. Do not use "yesterday" or "continues" in your first sentence
8. Do not use "no", "not" and negatives in your first sentence
9. Do not use newspaper style, language or rituals
10. Do not cram too much information into a story
11. Do not lose or mislead a listener
12. Do not make a factual error

Adapted from Mencher, Melvin (2010). ***Mencher's News Writing and Reporting (11th Edition)***. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4.1

Explain 10 don'ts of a broadcast news copy.

4.0 CONCLUSION

From our discussion so far, it is obvious that broadcast news serves a purpose different from the print output. It is basically intended to provide the audience with information without necessarily bugging them down with so many details. How to go about doing this correctly is the focus of the unit which concentrated on the criteria for selecting a broadcast story.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit focused on the criteria for selecting a broadcast copy and the things a broadcast news reporter is not expected to do in the course of preparing and writing a broadcast news story.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Justify with four valid reasons why a broadcast copy is more interested in giving out information and not details.
2. How will you use facts in writing a typical broadcast story?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 2: STYLE

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
    3.1 Style
        3.1.1 Personal Style
        3.1.2 Era or Period Style
        3.1.3 Media Style and Mechanics
    3.2 Broadcast Style
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Every media organization of worth has a style guide which helps the journalists in that organization know how to present their copy in an acceptable manner. This is because writing, whether for print or broadcast, runs on style. Style distinguishes, say a print copy from a broadcast copy. The major difference between a broadcast copy and advertising copy is style. The way Public Relations' copies are written is different from the way advert copy is written. Again, the difference manifests as style. Style is everything that makes a copy from a particular type of medium different from the others. Therefore, reporters are expected to conform to the style guide in writing and presenting their copy.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Describe what style is all about.
- Identify the unique broadcast style of writing stories.
- Apply broadcast style in writing and presenting your own broadcast stories.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 STYLE

Ekwelie (1992:56) notes that every aspiring writer must contend with three basic styles thus:

His own emerging style which will make his writing distinct.
The style of his times with regard to sentence construction, diction as well as syntax.
The style of his or her medium, which is a hybrid between normal and the idiosyncratic use of language.
These are further explained below.

3.1.1 Personal Style

Personal style is usually identified with individual writers. It is a style most established authors are known for. Chinua Achebe, for instance, has his style of writing as reflected in his novels. The same is applicable to the Nobel Laureate, Professor Wole Soyinka, who is known to write for a particular audience. This comes in their choice of words, phrases etc and the way and manner such words, phrases etc are presented in their works. Wole Soyinka's "*The Lion and the Jewel*" is written in a different linguistic style from "*The Man Died*". Journalists should strive to apply personal style in whatever they do. It makes you unique. Personal style does not have to flagrantly abuse the house or media style of a particular media organization. House style takes precedence but a journalist may decide to apply such a House style in a very unique and personal way.

3.1.2 Era or Period Style

This is the prevailing style of a particular period in history. The style of the Shakespearean Age and the Modern American Literature are totally different. Language changes with history and time. For instance, during the colonial days in Africa, the rhetoric of politicians and the so-called statesmen were largely nationalistic. Today, the language has changed. Such rousing patriotic speeches then may not impress anyone again especially in the midst of abundance and paradoxical lack caused largely by a very corrupt and inhuman political class who are basically amassing wealth at the instance of the hungry masses.

3.1.3 Media Style and Mechanics

As we noted in the introductory part of the unit, every media organization has its style, usually called House Style or Style Guide. A House Style is a journalistic code book, detailing how everything that pertains to writing should be handled. The House Style differs from media house to media house; from the print media to the broadcast media etc. However, notwithstanding the differences manifested in styles in the different media organizations, the standards and mechanics of writing remain universal. Each House Style stems from standard language usage but sometimes bows to stylistic idiosyncrasies. Bad mechanical style is a bane to good writing. Ume-Nwagbo cited in Aworo (2005) noted for example that the English Treason Act of 1351 came under strict scrutiny during the trial of the Irish nationalist Roger David Casement in 1916, over the way the wording, originally in Norman French, was or was not punctuated. That case was one instance in which the absence of comma would have saved the neck of accused for high treason.

It is no longer news that poor punctuation gets in the way of good writing. Written language is a very demanding assignment and must be treated as such. This is corroborated by Francis Bacon, the father of English essays, when he noted that "words are like leaves. Where they most abound we cannot find the fruit of the truth beneath". This is a serious warning against verbiage or simply verbosity. A writer therefore must follow the medium's style guide on punctuation, spelling, capitalization, diction, syntax, and taste.

3.2 BROADCAST STYLE

Broadcast news writers make use of the conversational style or we call everyday language style. According to Mencher (2010), broadcast news serves a purpose different from that of the print. Its primary intent is to provide the public with basic information quickly and clearly. The broadcast writer is much more interested in getting the story idea across without the details. This is the major reason the broadcast style is unique and rigid. The broadcast journalist examines every word and idea before use. This is because too many words may squeeze another item in the story and too many ideas and the listener or viewer may become confused (Mencher, 2010).

A typical broadcast style of writing will contain the following guidelines:

1. Use short sentences and words the announcer can pronounce without gasping for breath.
2. Do not attempt to tell too much in your opening statement. The radio listener requires a little time to adjust after each story.
3. Never lead into a story with a question. There is a little line between such leads and commercials.
4. Avoid hanging and dangling phrases since they break up the flow of thought.
5. Attribution should precede assertion where and when a story must be attributed. Also, attribution should come at the beginning of a sentence where necessary.
6. Be conversational. This means you should write the way you talk.
7. Do not start a story with a participial phrase.
8. Use ordinary, one-syllable words whenever possible.
9. Use vigorous verbs. This means you should as much as possible avoid adjectives and adverbs.
10. The active voice is always preferable than the passive voice. Use it.
11. Use familiar words in familiar combinations.
12. Write simply and in a direct manner. Always avoid the use of unnecessary words.
13. Write in language that could be read easily.
14. Use a phrase to indicate someone is being quoted.
15. Place titles before names and they should be used for proper identification of people and nothing more.
16. Where appropriate and accurate, use the present tense or the present perfect tense.
17. Numbers must be written to be read out loud. The best way is to write out numbers from one to ten and then to use figures for numbers up through 999.
18. Round off figures especially the ones dealing with budgets, money matters etc.
19. Avoid the use of tongue-twisting words.
20. Avoid abbreviations unless they are standard abbreviations that could easily be understood by all.
21. Avoid the use of symbols or sketches.
22. Do not hyphenate words.
23. Avoid unnecessary use of quotations and reduce the use of punctuation marks too.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4.2

1. Discuss 15 things you must not do when writing a broadcast copy.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The broadcast writer must be simple and direct. He or she must always bear in mind that he/she is writing for the ear and the eye. Make sentences simple, short and easy to understand. Do not attempt to cram too many information and facts in your story and remember your listeners and viewers are basically in a hurry. Do not keep them waiting and guessing.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you learnt the meaning of style and the implication in broadcast news writing. You also learnt the broadcast style and how to apply the knowledge in writing and acceptable broadcast copy.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Define style in broadcasting.
2. Why is it necessary to have style guides in broadcast media houses?

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UNIT 3: FEATURES/STRUCTURE OF A BROADCAST NEWS STORY

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
    3.1 Structure of a Broadcast News Story
        3.1.1 News Highlights
        3.1.2 Lead
        3.1.3 Correspondents' Reports and Inserts
        3.1.4 Lead-in and Lead-out
        3.1.5 Wrap Around
    3.2 Features of a Broadcast News Story
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Kombol (2005, in Folarin *et al*, 2005) notes that broadcast news writing is unique and designed to suit the mechanics of the profession. The writing also requires a higher order of skill than those required for writing for newspapers and newsmagazines.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, the student should be able to:

- Identify the basic structure of broadcast news stories.
- Identify the features of a broadcast news story.
- List and discuss the characteristics of broadcast news writing which differentiate it from other forms of writing.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 STRUCTURE OF A BROADCAST NEWS STORY

News broadcasts, according to Kombol (2005), have identifiable features and sections with special significance. It is usual for news broadcasts to begin with a time check, station identification, greeting and the name of the newscaster (s) (Kombol, 2005). However, different broadcast stations have individual styles, which do not differ significantly from what is presented below.

3.1.1 News Highlights

This comes up at the beginning of the programmes and gives listeners an idea or run-down of the major stories contained in the day's programme in a descending order of importance. News highlights are also referred to as top stories of the day. They should be brief, punchy, interesting, attracting and written in the present tense. They also serve to arrest listener attention and get the listener to sit down for the real gist (Kombol, 2005).

Examples as adapted from Kombol (2005):

- National Economic Council meets over current power sector reforms.
- A bill to enforce the use of seat belts by motorist is being considered by the Senate.
- Sokoto House of Assembly grants Governor Degoye Kpongo a leave of absence of 120 days.
- Federal Government designates Bar Beach Towers Lagos as military barracks

3.1.2 Lead

The broadcast lead opens news stories. In writing the broadcast lead, immediacy is the key (Kombol, 2005). Listeners and viewers must be made to understand that the news is current and the events are happening now. Because of this broadcast leads are always written in the present tense. The broadcast lead should not attempt to answer the 5Ws and H like its print counterpart. Only the most important of all of these should be featured in the broadcast lead.

Example:

The First Lady of Lagos State, Mrs. Kemi Fashola, says maternal mortality is on the rise in the state.

Two types of broadcast lead are commonly used in most broadcast stations. The first is the Shot-gun lead which identifies a single development in the story and the second is the Umbrella lead which is also called Summary lead because of its tendency to highlights a series of developments in the story.

3.1.3 Correspondents' Reports And Inserts

Correspondents' reports add credibility to the broadcast news report as the various media audiences are made to see that the media organization in question was actually at the scene of the event and had reporters on ground to monitor the situation and report direct from the scene.

Through correspondents' reports and inserts, listeners and viewers are brought to the scene of the event. This also helps to add detail to the report.

Example:
The National Assembly says all governments parastatals will be offered for sale. The spokesperson for the Assembly Kalu Ngor stated this at ……
Correspondent Jimoh Ibrahim completes the story.

3.1.4 Lead-in and Lead-out

The lead-in is used to prepare the minds of listeners for correspondents' reports and inserts. It is regarded as a transition device that transports the listeners from the story into the correspondents' reports that has more detail.

On the other hand, the lead-out takes the listeners from the scene of the event back to the studio where the story is expected to be wrapped up. Lawrence (1983) cited in Kombol (2005) notes that while the lead-in prepares the audience for the video or audio report, the lead-out re-identifies the voice in the actuality or video segment.

Examples:

1. **……., State House Correspondent Yemi Adenuga now completes the report. (Lead-in)**
2. **….., from Lagos, Amaka Igwe now reports (Lead-in)**
3. **….. that was Yemi Adenuga from the State House (Lead-out)**
4. **…..Amaka Igwe from Lagos (Lead-out).**

3.1.5 Wrap Around

Wrap around is simply a sign out by correspondents to indicate that they are through with their correspondents' reports. Upcoming reporters should note that it is proper for the correspondent to say his or her name and the name of the station before signing off on the reports.

Example:

1….. From Lagos, Amaka Igwe reporting for Channels Television.
2. ….. Amaka Igwe, Channels Television.

3.2 FEATURES OF A BROADCAST NEWS STORY

Features or characteristics of a broadcast news story have a lot to do with the style of broadcast media organizations. Since style has been dealt with in the preceding unit, we will for the sake of emphasis reiterate some of the basic features of a broadcast news story thus:

1. Broadcast copy is written in the way people speak. So, it is conversational.
   Example:
   The lead defence counsel in an advanced fee fraud trial, Mr. Olisa Agbakoba, is threatening to file a motion for mistrial unless some documents are furnished by the prosecution (Kombol, 2005).

2. Sentences in broadcast news stories are usually short. Brevity in sentence construction is the key word here. Apart from being short, the sentences should also be simple in nature. Complex sentence structures confuse listeners.
   Example:
   Complex sentence:
   Following the decision of the International Court of Justice at The Hague, the Netherlands, over the sovereignty of Bakassi Peninsula, the Cross River State Government has been barred from exercising any control or power over the communities in its estuary (Oretade, 2005).

   Shorter sentences (Acceptable for broadcast news story):
   The Cross River State Government has been barred from exercising any control over the communities in the Bakassi region.
   This follows the decision of the International Court of Justice at The Hague, the Netherlands, over the sovereignty of Bakassi Peninsula.

3. Independent clauses should be avoided in broadcast news writing because they often delay the main theme of the story.
   Example:
   POOR: Having identified the problems inherent in corruption, the Chancellor of Covenant University has condemned corruption in its totality.
   BETTER: The Chancellor of Covenant University has condemned corruption due to its inherent problems.

4. The sentence structure for broadcast news stories remains the Subject-Verb-Object type of writing sentences even for print media organizations.

5. Broadcast news stories are written in the Active Voice. The active voice is rigorous and lively, while the passive voice is dull.
   Example:
   Active Voice: The lawyer took his wife home

Passive Voice: His wife was taken home by the lawyer

6. Use the present tense which gives a sense of immediacy and currency.
   Example:
   WEAK: The Vice-Chancellor said Monday she will remove her deputy over the allegation.
   STRONG: The Vice-Chancellor says she will remove the deputy over the allegation.

7. Always use words that convey currency like "Today", "This morning", "Earlier today", "Monday morning" etc.
8. Use contractions where appropriate. It is part of everyday speech because people tend to cut words short so as to say more in less time. Contractions obviously make broadcast news writing more conversational. However, where they will mislead the listener or be totally misunderstood, they must be avoided. The broadcast news writer should also know that negative contractions are avoided in broadcast news writing (Kombol, 2005).
   Example:
   POOR: The Vice-Chancellor says she won't apologize for the many rules in Covenant University.
   GOOD: The Vice-Chancellor says she will not apologize for the many rules in Covenant University.

9. Homonyms are certain words that sound alike and it very easy to mistake one for another. Broadcast writers should guard against such mistakes. Proper use and in the right context is advised.
10. Punctuation, quotations, use of numbers, abbreviations and acronyms are usually subject to House Styles and Guides. This has been dealt with in the unit on Style. Please, go back to that Unit if in doubt.
11. Finally, it is expected that a typical broadcast copy should have the following basic rules:
    - All copy should be typed.
    - All copies should be doubled-spaced.
    - One story should be limited to a page.
    - Words that are difficult to pronounce or require some special emphasis should be underlined.
    - A single word should not be split between pages.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4.3

1. Justify the application of the first three rules discussed under the features of broadcast news story.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Broadcast news writing is guided by many rules as could be seen from this unit and the other units preceding this. To have a full grasp of these rules and apply them without stress, it is advised that upcoming broadcast news writers should constantly engage in practising with the rules. By so doing, they will become familiar with their use and application.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit you learnt about the structure and standard features of broadcast news writing. It is expected that you are now familiar with such structural features and is able to apply them in your writing.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Identify and discuss the structure of a broadcast news story.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 3: WRITING A BROADCAST COPY

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
    3.1 How to Write News for the Broadcast Media
        3.1.1 Start with a Broadcast Lead
        3.1.2 Introduce Lead-ins and Lead-outs
        3.1.3 Remember to Wrap Up
        3.1.4 Remember to Relate Words to Pictures
        3.1.5 Avoid Clichés
    3.2 Writing a Broadcast News Story
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Writing a broadcast news story or copy to be read by a newscaster is different from writing it for a newspaper. Broadcast copies are written in a way that it would be easy for newscasters to read it. The primary goal of the broadcast news story is to make the copy easy for the newscaster to read as well as easy for the audience to understand.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, it is expected that you should be able to:

- write a typical radio and television news story or copy.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 HOW TO WRITE NEWS FOR THE BROADCAST MEDIA

3.1.1 Start with a Broadcast Lead

The broadcast lead opens news stories. In writing the broadcast lead, immediacy is the key (Kombol, 2005). Listeners and viewers must be made to understand that the news is current and the events are happening now. Because of this broadcast leads are always written in the present tense. The broadcast lead should not attempt to answer the

5Ws and H like its print counterpart. Only the most important of all of these should be featured in the broadcast lead.

Example:

The First Lady of Lagos State, Mrs. Kemi Fashola, says maternal mortality is on the rise in the state.

Two types of broadcast lead are commonly used in most broadcast stations. The first is the Shot-gun lead which identifies a single development in the story and the second is the Umbrella lead which is also called Summary lead because of its tendency to highlight a series of developments in the story.

3.1.2 Introduce Lead-ins and Lead-outs

The lead-in is used to prepare the minds of listeners for correspondents' reports and inserts. It is regarded as a transition device that transports the listeners from the story into the correspondents' reports that has more detail.

On the other hand, the lead-out takes the listeners from the scene of the event back to the studio where the story is expected to be wrapped up. Lawrence (1983) cited in Kombol (2005) notes that while the lead-in prepares the audience for the video or audio report, the lead-out re-identifies the voice in the actuality or video segment.

Examples:

1. **……, State House Correspondent Yemi Adenuga now completes the report (Lead-in)**
2. **…., from Lagos, Amaka Igwe now reports (Lead-in)**
3. **….. that was Yemi Adenuga from the State House (Lead-out)**
4. **…..Amaka Igwe from Lagos (Lead-out).**

3.1.3 Remember to Wrap Up

Wrap-up is simply a sign out by correspondents to indicate that they are through with their correspondents' reports. Upcoming reporters should note that it is proper for the correspondent to say his or her name and the name of the station before signing off on the reports.

Example:

1….. From Lagos, Amaka Igwe reporting for Channels Television.

2. **….. Amaka Igwe, Channels Television.**

3.1.4 Remember to Relate Words to Pictures

This aspect is applicable to visuals only. While relaying a videotaped report, it is important that the words must tally with the pictures. This

requires good editing to ensure words and pictures are complementary (Obe, 2005: 35).

3.1.5 Avoid Clichés

(This section is adapted from Oloruntola Sunday's "News Reporting and Writing")

Eric Partridge, in his Dictionary of Clichés, defines a cliché as a phrase so hackneyed as to be knock-kneed and spavined. They not only fail to enliven dull copy, clichés make even the most significant item sound trite. Hyperboles and clichés are for hacks. This, then, is a dictionary for hacks (Examples of clichés that should not appear in broadcast news stories):

Absolute farce, got the message, painted a grim picture, all-out-effort, heated debate, picking up the pieces, anybody's guess, high-ranking official, pool of blood, at this point in time, how does it feel?, probe, beat a hasty retreat, in due course, put into perspective, bid (for attempt), iron out the problem, quiz (for questioning), bolt from the blue, jobless youngsters, rushed to the scene, a brutal reminder, last but not the least, selling like hot cakes, calm before the storm, last minute decision, shot himself in the foot, calm but tense, leaps and bound, show of force, chequered career, leave no stone unturned, sitting on the fence, clampdown, loud and clear, square peg in a round hole, daylight robbery, major new developments, desperate attempt/bid, up in arms, stuck to his/her guns, marked contrast, dramatic decisions, vanished into thin air, dug in their heels, new move, mindless vandals, nipped in the bud, virtual standstill, effortless victory, over and above, weighty matter, fell on deaf ears, a whole new ball game, get under way, saw the writing on the wall, given the green light.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

1. Identify 10 common clichés that should be avoided in a broadcast news copy and attempt to replace such with an acceptable word or phrase or statement.

1.1 WRITING A BROADCAST NEWS STORY [This section is partly adapted from Obe (2005:36-38), "Reporting Diverse Areas: A Concise Text"]

Broadcast news writers must have a clear understanding that they require enough space and paper to write and that they do not have the economy of space associated with newspapers and newsmagazines.

They must therefore be vast and knowledgeable in broadcast news writing to get above any challenge this may pose. Since broadcast news reports are written for easy delivery, the font size should be big, about

32 points, while the double line or sometimes triple line spacing should be applied.

When writing a broadcast news story, the writer should begin every new story from a different page. For television copies, they should be positioned on the right half of the page while the left side is used for instructions on video or audio. These instructions are meant for only the newscasters and are usually written in capital letters while the actual story is written in small letters. Television copy is written on the right half of the page in a 40-character line. Each line will average about six words, and the newscaster will average about 25 lines per minute.When the story continues on the next page, -MORE- is used to indicate this. This is usually written in parentheses at the bottom of the page. It is also advised that you end a typical broadcast news story with a complete sentence. Should the story continue on the next page, it should begin with a new paragraph (Obe, 2005:36).

Samples of broadcast news stories adapted from already cited authors are reproduced here to guide you in practice and writing:

SAMPLE RADIO COPY [Adapted from Oloruntola Sunday (n.d.)]

West Broadway

12- 30
1 – 11 – 88

Flanagan

Members of Citizens for the Preservation of West Broadway plan to gear up their petition drive again this weekend. The group began circulating petitions last weekend.

The petitions request the city council to repeal all previous ordinances and resolutions on the widening of the West Broadway. Many residents of the West Broadway area complain that the proposed widening project will damage its residential nature.

Petition drive coordinator Vera Hanson says the group is pleased with the show of support from residents all over Springfield…. But it wouldn't know exactly how many signatures it has until next week.

❖ **Key for Sample Radio Copy**

"West Broadway" is the slug for the story
"12 – 30" is the time of the newscast
"1 – 11 – 88" is the date of the broadcast
"Flanagan" is the name of the reporter

SAMPLE TV COPY [Adapted from Oloruntola Sunday (n.d.)]

Six	**6 – 17**	**art**
Jorgenson		
MOC JORGENSON		A lesson in art and architecture paid off for some Buchanan High School Students today. Ribbons were the prizes for entries in a sketch exhibit of scenery and buildings in the capital city area.
SOF: 27 NAT SND UNDER VOICE OVER		
KEY: BUCHANAN		The Springfield art club sponsored the show and called in Springfield College art Professor Bill Ruess to judge the artwork.
HIGH SCHOOL :00-05		Ruess says he was impressed by the students' skills, especially those who tried their hands at the different media for the first time.

Key For Sample TV Copy
"Six" is the time of the newscast
"6-17" is the day of the broadcast
"art" is the slug for the story
"Jorgenson" is the name of the reporter
"MOC" means the person is live on camera with audio from this microphone
"SOF: 27" means there is sound on the film lasting 27 seconds
"NAT SND UNDER" means the film sound should be kept at a low level

"VOICEOVER" means the voice is from the anchor person in the studio speaking over the film that is being shown.
"KEY: BUCHANAN HIGH SCHOOL" indicates the title that should be shown over the film.
"00-05"indicates that the title should be shown five seconds after the report of the news items begins.

Example of a Newspaper Lead Rewritten for Broadcast
Newspaper Lead (Adapted from Mencher 2010):
As Gov. Alfred Caster neared the end of his seven-day working vacation aboard a riverboat today, his aides said that he was unconcerned about editorial criticism that he had become an absentee governor whose administration was adrift.
Broadcast Lead:
Some newspaper editorials have criticized Governor Caster as an absentee governor. But officials aboard a riverboat with the governor say the criticisms don't bother him. The governor is nearing the end of his seven-day working vacation on the boat.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE
1. Copy out two newspaper stories from the Punch newspaper and rewrite them for broadcast use.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Writing for the broadcast media is both tedious and interesting. An upcoming reporter or writer should pay attention to the details of doing this and do a lot of practice so as to master the art.

5.0 SUMMARY

This is unit re-emphasized some of the points discussed in the preceding units of this module. It is expected that you can now write a good broadcast story following the style and rules that have been discussed in this unit.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss five of some of the things you need to know as you prepare to write a broadcast news story.
2. Get any daily newspaper in Nigeria and rewrite its five top news stories into a radio news copy.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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MODULE 5: SPECIALIZED REPORTING

Unit 1: Introduction to Specialized Reporting
Unit 2: Reporting from the Beats
Unit 3: Online Reporting
Unit 4: Follows

UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION TO SPECIALIZED REPORTING

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
    3.1 What is Specialized Reporting?
    3.2 Who is a Specialized Reporter?
    3.3 How to Identify Specialized Reports
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Specialized reporting has become a necessary part of the press because of the need to address the inadequacies presented by straightforward news reports. The society is getting more and more complex with time so also are the people. Mere news stories are no longer adequate to address the yearnings of the complex human societies for complex angles to stories. This is what this unit is all about.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Define specialized reporting and identify the attributes of a typical specialized report.
- Distinguish between a specialist reporter and a generalist.
- Identify and explain the special qualities of specialized reporter.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 WHAT IS SPECIALIZED REPORTING?

Specialized reporting, according to Obe (2005:45), simply means reporting from special areas or fields. It is a clear departure from the general type of reporting that is not focused on particular fields or areas. It is therefore referred to as reporting specialties.

Specialization is not unique to journalism alone. Other professions like law and medicine also have their areas of specialization. For law, some lawyers specialize in maritime law, company and allied matters, criminal law, civil law, jurisprudence, etc. For medicine, specialization is even more pronounced. In some advanced western nations, you must specialize before you are allowed to practise.

This underscores the need for specialization in the media industry. A cub reporter that just left journalism school may not be able to give the required treatment to energy or budgetary issues as a financial correspondent with adequate training in financial issues or energy correspondent will do. Therefore, the cause of specialization in the media industry should continue to receive adequate attention in order to properly institute it in the profession and subsequently prepare reporters well to fulfill its demands.

Specialized reports could therefore be regarded as in-depth, thorough, elaborate, comprehensive, discriminate and very lucid report of a specific area or field of journalistic coverage (Obe, 2005). In other words, specialized reporting is a very knowledge demanding and brain tasking intellectual piece focusing on specific issues in specific areas of media coverage.

3.2 WHO IS A SPECIALIZED REPORTER?

A specialized reporter is a special kind of correspondent who covers a particular beat for his or her media organization. A special reporter could also be referred to as a seasoned, professional reporter who covers a particular beat for his organization. A specialist is a beat reporter and is very knowledgeable in his/her area of coverage. He/she is contrasted with the generalist or roving reporter. A correspondent is usually in charge of his/her organization’s news bureau or office in major cities or towns where his organization operates. He or she could also be in charge of subject areas or matters for his/her organization. This will be further explained in beat reporting.

Academic Qualification:
A good university degree or diploma in the area of coverage is a good starting point for specialist reporters. This means a specialist reporter in financial matters, e.g. a Financial Correspondent, should have at least a degree or diploma in finance, banking, accounting, business or management. This gives him or her the requisite knowledge base to hold his/her own in that area. Such academic background also enables the specialist to acquire the necessary technical competence to cover such a special beat.

Professional Qualification and Experience:
1. The specialist reporter must be an accredited journalist registered with the professional association or, as the case may be, in the country of practice.
2. He/she must have worked as a journalist at whatever capacity for some time.
3. He/she should have adequate exposure or professional training in the area of specialization.
4. He/she must have long-term experience as a generalist and assisting correspondent in the particular field of coverage.

Personal Qualities:
1. First and foremost, s/he must be a good and seasoned reporter.
2. S/He must be a good analyst.
3. He/she must be passionately and resolutely committed to the area of coverage.
4. He must have a wealth of experience and knowledge in the field or area of coverage.
5. He must be skilful in packaging interesting and intellectually stimulating write-ups.
6. He must be research-driven so as to give his stories enough depth and factual support.
7. S/He must always be prepared.
8. S/He is always at alert.
9. S/He is very persistent.
10. S/He is always there whenever the news breaks.
11. S/He easily mixes up.
12. S/He easily cultivates sources and maintains them.
13. S/He dresses fine, very courteous and amiable.
14. S/He must be knowledgeable about the area of coverage and have the technical, professional and educational competencies to cover the area.
15. S/He has a nose for news.
16. S/He must be an expert/specialist in his beat.
17. S/He must be information and communication technology (ICTs) compliant.

18. S/He must be a career-oriented personality and journalist.
19. S/He must be courageous and fearless.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

1. Discuss the academic qualification of a specialized/specialist reporter.

3.3 HOW TO IDENTIFY SPECIALIZED REPORTS

1. Specialized report is in-depth, thorough and detailed. It is complete in content and delivery.
2. Specialized reports also involve the use of technical and advanced language with explanation where necessary.
3. Specialized reports are usually serious in tone and well packaged.
4. Specialized reports should provide background and precedence. This is the primary reason the specialist must be research savvy.
5. Specialized reports should reflect sound professionalism and experience of the writer in the choice of words, sentences etc.
6. Sometimes, there are some levels of professional subjectivity in the stories reported.
7. Specialized reports are sometimes very critical and scientific.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Specialized reports are in-depth reports which do more informing and educating its readers than entertaining them or anything else. Such reports must be written with this understanding in mind. For reporters to deliver on the demands of this type of reporting, they must have requisite education and professional training which must be supported by long and relevant experience as a generalist/reporter.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit has introduced you to specialized reporting, its attributes and the qualities expected of a specialist reporter.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss briefly 10 items you expect to find in a specialized report that is well written.
2. Which five qualities are most needed for a specialist reporter?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Mencher, M. (2010). ***Mencher's News Writing and Reporting (11th Edition)***. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education

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UNIT 2: REPORTING FROM THE BEATS

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
    3.1 What is a Beat?
    3.2 What is Beat Reporting?
    3.3 Who is a Beat Reporter?
    3.4 Types of Beats
    3.5 Principles of Reporters on a Beat
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Obe (2005) notes that beat is a journalistic term used to refer to segmented area or particular field a reporter is assigned to monitor and report from there on a regular basis. According to him, the act of monitoring and covering assigned beats for the purpose of publication is referred to as beat reporting. This is another angle to the discussion on specialized reporting. This unit will concentrate on beat reporting, types and the kind of reporters assigned to cover particular beats.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Define what beat reporting is all about.
- Identify and discuss the types of beats available.
- Identify the requisite qualities expected of a beat reporter.
- Identify the principles or rules guiding reporters on the beat.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 WHAT IS A BEAT?

A beat is a reporter's assigned area of responsibility. A beat may be an institution, such as the National Assembly; a geographical area, such as a small town or an entire city/town, or a subject area, such as science and technology, business etc.

3.2 WHAT IS BEAT REPORTING?

Beat reporting is the act of covering and reporting from a particular field or subject of coverage for your media organization. Beat reporting is therefore specialized news gathering. It could also be regarded as a form of correspondence. Here, the beat is the place of coverage while the correspondent in that place is the beat reporter.

3.3 WHO IS A BEAT REPORTER?

A beat reporter is well trained and adequately equipped with special knowledge in a particular area of news coverage where he represents his news organization. A beat reporter may be a young reporter assigned to cover such local beats like the police, the courts, local government or the schools. A beat reporter could also be a well-trained and very experienced reporter of many years standing who covers very important institutions like Aso Rock for his media organization. In this instance, one has to be a successful reporter before one is assigned to cover such important beats.

3.4 TYPES OF BEATS

There are basically two types of beats. The first is the Topical. Topical beats thrive because the media audience constantly needs updates from such topical subject. Some topical beats are Education, Politics, Business, Economy, Science and Technology, Health etc. The second type of beat is the Geographical beat. Geographical beats require the reporter to report from specific location on all topical issues and subject matter.

3.5 PRINCIPLES OF REPORTERS ON A BEAT

If you must succeed as reporter on the beat, you must:

1. **Be Prepared**: Have a basic education in journalism, understand the society, understand the government, know history, economics and psychology and be well exposed in your area of coverage.

2. **Be Alert**: The germ (the beginning) of a good story is hidden in many a routine one. So, always stay focused and take tips seriously.

3. **Be Persistent**: Persistence entails two things to a reporter on a beat. First, it means that when you ask a question; you cannot give up until you get an answer. Second, it means that you must keep track of slow-developing projects or problems.

4. **Be There**: In beat reporting, there is no substitute for personal contact. The only way to cover a beat is to be there every day, if possible. You must make yourself seem to be part of the community you are covering.

5. **Be Wary**: You must always try to keep your readers informed about the latest events or developments. You must also be cautious in your dealings that come across you.

6. **Set Daily Goals**: Make sure you have a good idea of what you want to accomplish on a daily basis.

7. **Build Sources:** There is no substitute for regular contacts that will alert the reporter the first time they hear or see anything news worthy in the beat.

8. **Do Favours:** Where appropriate, go out of your way to do favours for your sources. It sure will help in times of your own need.

9. **Ask the Sweeping Questions**: If you like, ask the dumb questions but make sure you are asking the questions that will get something out of your sources or subjects.

10. **Listen Carefully And Watch Carefully**: Some reporters look but they don't see. When you look try to observe and see what is happening around. Check out the moods, the reactions, body language when the question was asked etc. Look and see.

11. **Look at the Records:** In covering your beat, you are expected to constantly keep in touch with original documents. Go for the original source material.

12. **Make Phone Calls**: Make constant phone checks and calls even if not very necessary. You should also know that phone calls cannot replace direct contact. They are only a supplement.

13. **Start out Early and Fast:** You need to constantly leave your office early to your beat. You must a clear understanding that stories do not usually pump up in the newsroom. So, what are you still doing there by 9.00 in the morning?

14. **Know the Beat**: You must make a concerted effort to know your beat like you know your true friend. There is no substitute for this. Just make sure you understand the process in and around your beat.

15. **Show Some Courtesy and be Friendly:** As a beat reporter, you should be able to relate with people in your beat and treat individuals you beat there some respect. You may never know who the next source might be. A beat reporter should also try to make friends in his/her area of coverage. You sure need them than enemies.

16. **Be an Observer:** A beat reporter should maintain a critical distance between him and the subjects he is covering. He must be a non-participant observer and not a participant. The moment a reporter associates very closely with the subjects of his beat, he begins writing for his sources rather than the audience. This is very dangerous (Obe, 2005:70).

17. **Be Protective of Confidential Sources**: You must respect the off-record rule. You must also maintain the confidence of your sources even at gun point. Any beat reporter who easily divulges the sources of information or gives a hint about it because of threats, is already dead professionally.

18. **Maintain the Triple News Virtues**: The triple news virtues are they fundamental pillars upon which every news story must rest. They are: truth, objectivity and accuracy. For no reason should any of these be violated.

19. **Finally, I tell my students that there are no dry beats but dry people covering a beat**. You must be lively, amiable, a goal getter, a keen observer and very courageous and passionate about that beat. Without this, your beat may turn out dry because you made it so. Do not be dry in your approach to your beat assignment.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

1. Discuss the assumed qualities of a beat reporter.
2. How will a beat reporter effectively cover his or her beat to get maximum returns?

4.0 CONCLUSION

Beats come and go but good reporting remains. A beat reporter must remain a fine reporter of the highest standards. There are beats that will come up to address specific trends at that time and some become more sophisticated with time and developments in technology etc. The reporter is expected to keep abreast of these developments and ensure he is not left out when the trains moves.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have discussed beat reporting as part of specialized reporting and evaluated the principles of reporters on the beat.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss beat reporting as specialized reporting.
2. Does the beat reporter necessarily have to be a specialist? Justify your position with robust argument.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Mencher, M. (2010). ***Mencher's News Writing and Reporting (11th Edition)***. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

Hule, Bruce D. and Anderson, D.A. (2003). ***News Writing and Reporting for Today's Media***. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education

Folarin, et al (eds.) (2006). ***Themes in Communication Writing***. Lagos: SMC

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Stovall, J. G. (2006). ***Writing for the Mass Media***. New York: Pearson Education

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UNIT 3: ONLINE REPORTING

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
    3.1 Qualities of Online Reporters
    3.2 Online Websites Related to News Reporting and Journalism
    3.3 Tools for Today's New Media Journalist
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit is about online reporting which is different from Computer Assisted Reporting (CAR). Please, CAR is not synonymous to Online Reporting. However, Online Reporting is a component of CAR if given the complete treatment. For the benefit of doubt, CAR is all about using web resources and database journalism to augment everyday reportorial assignments, while Online Reporting is like writing for the internet newspaper. It is like blogging. Notwithstanding this distinction, one could see a lot of similarities between CAR and Online Reporting.

Back to the theme of this unit. Online Reporting is a revolutionary departure from known conventional ways of journalism. It is uses advanced technological tools like the internet to gather information and disseminate same through such tools. It is a one-stop reporting. All you need have is a smart laptop with wireless internet connectivity and some advanced search program software and then you have an online newspaper right on your lap.

The potential of Online Reporting is unimaginable. Its reach is so wide and its audience unquantifiable. It is newspaper without borders. Its primary challenge is credibility. There is little Government check on entry requirements and monitoring capacity. In fact, anybody with very little resources for the basic needs could start Online Journalism at will. This is the major danger in its rise. However, the above does not diminish its potentials and advantages especially on how it has revolutionized journalism in the 21st century.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Define Online Reporting/Journalism and distinguish this from Computer Assisted Reporting.
- Identify and explain the qualities expected of an Online Reporter.
- Identify and explain the current tools for today's new media journalist.
- Identify websites related Online Journalism.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 QUALITIES OF ONLINE REPORTERS

1. Online reporters must normally possess the qualities of a reporter which have been treated in detail earlier. These qualities are basic. The other ones following these are additional because of the demands of Online Reporting.

2. Ordinarily, Online Reporters must be versed in the use of computer and internet resources. In the reasoning of Dominick (2002) cited in Obe (2005), the Online Reporter should understand most computer software packages required for internet operations. He or she should also be able to integrate hypertext links to related topics, sound and video clips that are relevant to spice up a story.

3. The Online Reporter must also be familiar if not at home with the tools for today's new media journalist. In the normal sense, the Online Reporter is a new media journalist, so, he or she should be able to work with some or all of these tools.

4. The Online Reporter should a research-savvy person. His/her primary assignment may entail searching and researching online resources for information. So, he/she must be familiar with research methods and research sites for his reportorial duties.

5. The online reporter is not just a nimble wordsmith, in today's information society; he/she has to be a database manager, a data processor and a data analyst (Philip Meyer cited in Mencher, 2010).

3.2 ONLINE WEBSITES RELATED TO NEWS REPORTING AND JOURNALISM

Many online resources and websites are available for journalists for news reporting and e-journalism. The list is exhaustible, so, we are merely listing some of them here.

1. PowerReporting.com
2. Reporter's Desktop (www.reporter.org/desktop/)
3. The Foundation for American Communications' FACSNET (www.facsnet.org)
4. National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting (www.nicar.org)
5. Cyber Times Navigator (www.nytimes.com/navigator)
6. ProfNet (www.profnet.com)
7. The National Press Club maintains (http://npc.press.org/newssources/searchdirectory.cfm)
8. Special Libraries Association, which represents news librarians maintains (www.ibiblio.org/slanews/internet/experts.html)
9. Investigative Reporters and Editors Inc (www.ire.org)
10. CNN.com
11. ZDNet.com
12. Weather.com
13. MSNBC
14. CNET.com
15. WWW.Zatso.com
16. WWW.Mediachannel.org
17. WWW.newslink.org
18. WWW.trib.com
19. WWW.freedomforum.org
20. http://www.saharareporters.com/

3.3 TOOLS FOR TODAY'S NEW MEDIA JOURNALIST

According to Mencher (2010), the expansion of multimedia ownership has brought about multimedia journalist also known as new media journalist. Some of the tools necessary to function at this level include (adapted from Mencher, 2010):

1. A digital camera that can take high resolution still photos and video.
2. A laptop with wireless internet access.
3. A handheld computer such as Palm personal digital assistant.
4. A digital audio recorder for recording interviews.
5. A mobile Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) receiver for location finding.

6. A digital cell or smart phone.
7. A high capacity flash-drive for storage purposes.
8. A variety of software packages installed in the laptop.
9. Instant Messenger and Voice over IP (VoIP) software for real-time, no cost communications over the internet.
10. A handheld scanner for digitizing documents on the spot.
11. A satellite telephone for making calls when cell phone service is unavailable.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

1. Discuss the use of 10 new media tools mentioned in this unit.
2. Discuss the qualities of an Online Reporter.

4.0 CONCLUSION

As the digital revolution continues, the relevance of Online Journalism continues to widen. The online reporter is therefore expected to assume the role of a new media journalist and so equip himself or herself for enormous challenges associated with Computer Assisted Reporting and Online Journalism.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you were able to learn the meaning of Online Reporting, Computer-Assisted Reporting and the distinction plus similarities between them. You also learnt the qualities of an Online Reporter as well as the tools a new media journalist should have to be able to deliver in the 21st century.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Distinguish between Online Reporting and Computer-Assisted Reporting.
2. Discuss the application of Online Reporting /Journalism in Nigeria.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Mencher, M. (2010). ***Mencher's News Writing and Reporting (11th Edition)***. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education

Folarin, et al (eds.) (2006). ***Themes in Communication Writing***. Lagos: SMC

Obe, Joseph (2005). ***Reporting Diverse Areas: A Concise Text***. Akure: SMC

Stovall, J. G. (2006). ***Writing for the Mass Media***. New York: Pearson Education

Bonder, F. F., Davenport, J. R., and Drager, M. W. (2005). ***Reporting for the Mass Media*** (8th Edition). New York: Oxford University Press.

UNIT 4: FOLLOWS

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
    3.1 The Second-Cycle Story
    3.2 The Developing Story
    3.3 The Update
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

What follows a story may be as important and interesting as the original story. After people ask what happened, they usually ask, what happened next? And because newspapers are always in a hurry to meet up with deadlines, follow-up stories or simply “follow” are now common features of the media industry.

A follow or follow-up story tells the readers what happened next after the initial break out of the news. A follow could also aim to catch up on a running story or complete a story started by another newspaper. A follow also keep readers posted about breaking news. A follow also deals with events and issues that happened months ago and reports latest developments about such issues and events.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of the unit, the student should be able to:

- identify follow-up stories and attempt to write such stories.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 THE SECOND-CYCLE STORY

The second-cycle story is a second version of a story already published. It is also called a "second-day" story. A second-cycle story usually provides a fresh start to an already published story. To give a fresh start to second-cycle stories, reporters could do the following:

1. Supply information not available when the first story was written. News stories should be constantly updated when new facts come in.

2. Use enterprise to uncover information not contained in the original and then you can use reportorial creativity to make a Second story out of the new facts.

3. Supply fresh details, colour and background, even when nothing of substance is new. This will keep your report very lively and interesting.

4. Respond to news of the first story with analysis, possible developments or the reactions of people whom the news would affect. This will entail some digging deep for more relevant facts.

5. Gather local reactions to a national or international story and then represent a second version of that story using the local or national angle as the new twist.

3.2 THE DEVELOPING STORY

The developing story contains the latest developments about an unfolding or continuing event or issue. The developing story begins with the new information or the latest information in the lead. In the second and third paragraphs, you write a tie-back to the previous story. Developing stories are usually organized and written thus:

1. **New/Latest Lead**: This is a normal lead but contains the latest information you gathered.

2. **Tie-back:** This helps to connect the reader back to the original story. Do not forget that the lead is based on the fresh facts so tie back is a technique to connect the latest lead with the original story.

3. **Transition**: Developing stories are continuing stories. Transitions help to connect parts to the whole.

4. **Return to the Story:** After the new lead and tie back, you can return to the story and continue. This gives a complete picture of the entire story as it unfolds.

3.3 THE UPDATE

The update is the third type of follow-up story. The follow-up story tends to update your knowledge on a particular story earlier published. After a story about a person or a situation has been published, a later look may result in another story of a major significance. This story is called the update.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The newspaper business is like a hit-and-run business because of the craze by journalists to meet lifelines. This singular factor makes it nearly impracticable for a breaking story to have all the details in before press time. Follows now offers opportunity to reporters to rush to meet deadlines and then come back to the story again in the form of follows. By so doing, the readers hardly miss out on any latest information on running stories.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit discussed follows and the three variants of it. The content of each variant also received attention. It is our expectation that you can now write follow-up stories after the initial publication of the original story.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

1. Discuss the three variants of follow-up stories.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Pick any Nigerian daily national newspaper and attempt to write a follow-up story on two of the lead stories.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Mencher, M. (2010). ***Mencher's News Writing and Reporting (11th Edition)***. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

Stovall, J. G. (2006). ***Writing for the Mass Media***. New York: Pearson Education

Bonder, F. F., Davenport, J. R., and Drager, M. W. (2005). ***Reporting for the Mass Media*** (8th Edition). New York: Oxford University Press.

MODULE 6: ADVANCED REPORTING

Unit 1: Science and Technology Reporting
Unit 2: Reporting Sports
Unit 3: Political Reporting
Unit 4: Economy and Business Reporting
Unit 5: Reporting Crime and the Courts.

UNIT 1: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY REPORTING

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
    3.1 Qualification and Training
    3.2 Issues for Science and Technology Coverage
    3.3 Writing Rules for Science and Technology Reporting
    3.4 Qualities of a Good Science and Technology Report
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Obe (2005) argues that the need for people to know the social aspect of sciences informs science and technology reporting. Science reporting does not bore the reader with scientific jargons but interprets science based stories so that the non-science reader could find meaning in such reports as well as how such scientific analysis affects them as members of the society.

Science and technology should therefore help lay persons to decode, analyze, interpret as well as make meaning to scientific issues and reports. Basically, communicating the social aspects of sciences is a fundamental objective of science and technology reporting (Obe, 2005). Science and technology reporting also falls under advanced and specialized reporting, which have been partly dealt with earlier in the preceding units.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to explain:

- The meaning and justification for science and technology reporting.
- The qualification and kind of training expected of a science and technology reporter.
- The qualities of a typical science and technology report.
- Avenues for science and technology reporting.
- The guiding principles of science and technology reporting.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 QUALIFICATION AND TRAINING

Science and technology reporting is a technical area. So, every Tom and Harry reporter cannot function well in this beat. Therefore, some basic academic and professional training is required for the science and technology reporter. These include the following points:

1. All the qualities of a reporter already discussed in the preceding units of this course remain relevant here.
2. The science and technology reporter must have an academic qualification in any of the basic sciences. This background gives him a footing and a platform for detailed analysis. But please note that a degree or any relevant qualification in the sciences is not a prerequisite for success as a science and technology reporter.
3. Then the reporter must also have some specialized training in covering such a unique beat.
4. All other qualifications expected of a beat or specialist reporter as earlier outlined in this course.

3.2 ISSUES FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COVERAGE

There are many begging issues that science and technology reporter could focus on so that his beat will be a constant source of news for his newspaper. Some of these issues as compiled by Obe (2005) include:

1. News on latest scientific development and discoveries.
2. News on scientific predictions.
3. News on scientific adventures.
4. News on the unusual.
5. News on issues and processes for improving health care delivery.

6. News on technological developments and innovation.
7. News on scientific warning, nature of the universe and heroism.
8. News on scientific researches, findings and breakthroughs.
9. News on universities, technology institutes etc that focus on science and technology issues.

3.3 WRITING RULES FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY REPORTING as compiled by Obe (2005) include:

1. Do not use too much technical language especially for the purpose of impressing instead of informing. This should be avoided at all cost. You are the expert.
2. Interpret the reports to the understanding of your audience. They are reading your article or story to make meaning not to be dazzled or confused with jargons.
3. Make your reports very brief, accurate, interesting and straight to the point. Unnecessary details that do not add anything new or fresh to the story should be removed. Avoid needless verbosity.
4. Be creative as a reporter. Bring colour and human-interest angles to your story.

3.4 QUALITIES OF A GOOD SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY REPORT

The qualities of a good science and technology is compiled from the work of Gary Blake (1996) cited in Obe (2005). Gary Blake is an expert on technical writing. The qualities of a good science and technology report include:

1. **Mechanical Accuracy:** There must be grammatical accuracy and the entire report must be error-free. A good science and technology is also free of linguistic errors.

2. **Technical Accuracy:** This has to do with the reporters' capacity to write credibly in the area of science and technology. Is the report an expert opinion in the area? Is the analysis credible? What are the competencies of the writers? These questions are to be answered in the affirmative for you to know that you have a good science and technology report.

3. **Internal Consistency:** There must be uniformity of purpose and content especially the way and technical details are presented.

4. **Interest:** Interest is the primary reason the readers want to read the story. Therefore, there is no substitute in making the report interesting.

5. **Fact and Objectivity:** Apart from making the report interesting, it must also be factual, accurate and objective in order to retain the interest of the readers.

6. **Persuasivenss:** Yes, the primary purpose of science and technology reports is to provide information. However, it should also have the capacity to persuade the readers to action.

7. **Conciseness:** The science and technology story must be brief and straight to the point. Needless details should be avoided.

8. **Clarity:** The science and technology story is not the right avenue to mesmerize the readers with scientific jargons and needless technicalities that could easily be explained off in the analysis. Clarity and brevity are two core qualities that a good science and technology story should have.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

1. Name 10 areas from which a science writer could focus his or her writing on.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Science and technology reporting is a specialized kind of reporting. It can also fall under advanced reporting. It is also one of common beats you find in the industry. Every media organization should endeavour to have specialist and well trained reporters' cover this beat for their organizations. This is the only way to improve on this specialized area of journalism.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit has exposed you to the details of one of the core areas of specialized reporting - science and technology reporting. It is believed you are now familiar with this area of reporting and what it takes to write a good science and technology story.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. A degree in any of the basic sciences is not a prerequisite for being a good science writer. Do you agree? Justify your position with solid/valid arguments.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Mencher, M. (2010). ***Mencher's News Writing and Reporting (11th Edition)***. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

Obe, Joseph (2005). ***Reporting Diverse Areas: A Concise Text***. Akure: SMC.

UNIT 2: REPORTING SPORTS

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
    3.1 Role of Sport Reporters
    3.2 Qualities of a Good Sport Reporter
    3.3 Sources of Information for the Sport Reporter
    3.4 Checklist before a Reporter Writes and Submits His Story about a Game
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The sport pages of an average newspaper are amongst the heavily read pages in a place like Nigeria where some Man U fans who may never see the Theatre of Dreams are killing Chelsea fans over arguments of who will win the Premiership. In Nigeria for instance, husbands fight with their children over Premiership clubs. The picture is just crazy. Sport reporting is a core specialized area of coverage in most nations because of the abundance of fans all over the place in almost all the sports.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

This Unit will enable you to demonstrate:

- The techniques of sport reporting.
- The role of sport reporters.
- The qualities of a good sport reporter.
- The sources of information for sport coverage and reporting.
- The checklist before a reporter writes a sport story about a game.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 ROLE OF SPORT REPORTERS

Sport reporters occupy a very unique place in the society because of the popularity of the various sporting activities which reporters help convey to the audience and fans alike. Some other roles of sport writers and

reporters as suggested by Obe (2005:112-113) are:

1. A good sport reporter should be able to bring the players, coaches and administrators closer to the general public and fans in particular. Check out the popular players, coaches and administrators and you will find that their popularity is often connected to favourable media coverage.
2. Sport reporters could also act as watchdog over the players, administrators and coaches to avoid and help expose embarrassing behaviour associated with sportsmen and women.
3. It is one of the primary roles of sport reporters to beam their searchlight on negative boardroom politics that could hamper sport development.
4. Sport reporters must see to the end of a game and make sure accurate and unbiased account of such games is published timely.
5. It is one of the core roles of sport reporters to analyze game situations before and after the games so as to help build excitement and sense of fulfillment respectively in the fans.

3.2 QUALITIES OF A GOOD SPORT REPORTER

1. A good sport reporter must normally possess the qualities of a reporter which has been treated in detail earlier. These qualities are basic. The other ones following these are additional because of the demands of Sport Reporting.
2. A good sport reporter must have a passion for the type of sport he or she is covering.
3. A good sport reporter must have a clear understanding of the rules of the game and be able to interpret results of game to his readers.
4. He or she must also be research savvy and a good historian of sport matters.
5. He or she must have adequate knowledge about the players, coaches and administrators and be able to discuss them comfortably.
6. A good sport reporter must be a good analyst and have a good sense of judgment.
7. A good sport reporter must always respect the triple news virtues of truth, objectivity and accuracy in his reports.
8. The good sport reporter must know how to use few words to tell his story.

3.3 SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR THE SPORT REPORTER

The sport reporter has an array of places he/she could go to verify the facts of his story before going to press. Some of the places include:

1. The venue of the game or meeting.
2. The Local Organizing Committee of the competition or games.
3. The Sports Council.
4. The Ministry of Sports.
5. The controlling Federation of the particular sport.
6. The players and coaches hideouts.
7. Popular sportsmen, women and administrators.
8. Sports library.
9. Online resources etc.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

1. Discuss five reliable places a sport writer may go to verify his facts before publishing.

3.4 CHECKLIST BEFORE A REPORTER WRITES AND SUBMITS HIS/HER STORY FOR A GAME

1. Do I have all the results, the final score, names of teams, type of sport, championship type?
2. Where and when did the game take place?
3. What was the turning point of the game?
4. Who were the outstanding players?
5. Any effect on record standing?
6. Post-game comments.
7. Any press briefing?
8. Any external factors?
9. What was the crowd size?
10. Any injuries?
11. What is the physical condition of players/athletes?
12. Game Statistics and details.
13. Game duration.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Sport reporting has remained a major area of interest for many media audience. This is because it is in sport you can find fanatical fans and men and women who follow the games with passion. Reporters in this area of interest must therefore take their reportorial abilities to the next level. This is very vital so that fans expectation will match reporters'

delivery.

5.0 SUMMARY

This chapter x-rayed sport reporting as another special area of media coverage. It is hoped that you can now describe the intricacies involved in sports reporting as well as the qualities of a good sport reporter.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss five qualities a good sport story should have.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Mencher, M. (2010). ***Mencher's News Writing and Reporting (11th Edition)***. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

Obe, Joseph (2005). ***Reporting Diverse Areas: A Concise Text***. Akure: SMC.

UNIT 3: POLITICAL REPORTING

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
    3.1 Function of a Political Reporter
    3.2 Qualities of a Good Sport Political Reporter
    3.3 Sources of Information for the Political Reporter
    3.4 Challenges Associated with Political Reporting
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Covering politics, according to Obe (2005) requires a broad range of knowledge of political science or at least the basic knowledge of governmental structures and the operational system of government at whatever level. A political reporter must also understand the dynamics of human societies. This is vital for his coverage of the beat because he will sure be dealing with complex human beings called politicians.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Describe political reporting.
- Identify and discuss the functions of a political reporter.
- Identify and discuss the qualities of a political reporter.
- Identify and discuss the problems associated with political and how to overcome them.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 FUNCTION OF A POLITICAL REPORTER

1. The Political reporter interprets the electoral processes to the electorate in manner they will understand the issues better.
2. It is also the duty of the political reporter to monitor, investigate, analyze and report political happenings and events in a language and format the electorate will appreciate.
3. George Hage *et al* cited in Obe (2005) summarized the functions of a political reporter as Reporting and interpreting events;

defining issues; portraying personalities; investigating support; identifying trends; checking and analyzing public opinion.

3.2 QUALITIES OF A GOOD POLITICAL REPORTER

1. A good political reporter must normally possess the qualities of a reporter which has been treated in detail earlier. These qualities are basic. The other ones following these are additional because of the demands of Political Reporting.
2. A good political reporter must have passion for politics.
3. A good political reporter must have a clear understanding of the meaning of politics, political intrigues, power games as well as a first hand familiarity with the electoral processes. He or she must also have an understanding of party politics and report such issues adequately.
4. He or she must also be research savvy and a good historian of political matters and activities.
5. A good political reporter must also have good memory for faces and names.
6. A good political reporter should also have the capacity to understand and interpret the governmental processes to his audience.
7. He should have the ability to memorize and summarize political speeches at short notice.
8. The good political reporter should also have a clear understanding of the laws governing the political process in a country or locality of coverage.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

1. The political reporter must have a degree in political science to make it big in the industry. Discuss.

3.5 SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR THE POLITICAL REPORTER

There are a variety of sources where the political reporter can look up records, verify facts and do other sundry and related matters connected to his beat before going to press. These sources include:

1. The Political Parties
2. The State House or Government House or Government Secretariat
3. The leadership of political parties
4. Ministries and Government Parastatals
5. Powerful politicians and individuals
6. Strong party men and supporters

7. The National Assembly and Houses of Assembly of each state and the official record platforms
8. Credible sources and witness of political events and issues.

3.6 CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH POLITICAL REPORTING

1. The Editorial Policy of the particular media organization may conflict with the political reporter's perception of the issues. This is evident when the media organization becomes partisan or semi-partisan in the political affairs of the nations.
2. In the developing societies, politics is sometimes seen as a do-r-die affair. This perspective makes politics always violent prone in the developing. Many journalists have lost their lives covering politics in the developing nations. This remains a big challenge in political reporting.
3. Another major challenge associated with political reporting is that some reporters have gotten into the habit of becoming "very close" with politicians thereby influencing their judgment of the issues.
4. Some reporters in this beat sometimes find it difficult remain neutral in political issues and party politics. They also find it difficult to remain neutral or hide their political views. So, it is not surprising to have Liberals, Democrats, Republicans etc amongst the journalists. This affects objectivity and fairness in the daily coverage of their beat.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Most things in the day-to-day life of a society or nation starts and ends with politics. Politics is about power and resource allocation. So, it is always a big issue. This is the singular reason why any reporter who is assigned to cover this beat must do it well and with the understanding that a nation life and future revolves around politics.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit focused on political reporting as another primary area of coverage in specialized reporting. The political beat is a unique beat and therefore requires commitment, responsibility and dedication in handling such a beat because of the potential to make or mar a nation's development. It is expected you are now familiar with politics as an area of coverage in the media industry.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Distinguish between power and politics and show the role of the reporter in covering such a beat.
2. How could you as a new breed reporter eradicate or reduce the challenges faced by political reporters in covering the political beats?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Mencher, M. (2010). ***Mencher's News Writing and Reporting (11th Edition)***. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

Obe, Joseph (2005). ***Reporting Diverse Areas: A Concise Text***. Akure: SMC.

UNIT 4: BUSINESS AND ECONOMY REPORTING

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
    3.1 The Role of a Business and Economy Reporter
    3.2 Qualities of a Business and Economy Reporter
    3.3 Sources of Information
    3.4 Tips on how to Cover the Business Beat Better
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Business and the Economy affect lives generally. People are interested in how the economy is doing, what are the business trends, what is happening at the stock market and what is generally happening with their investments, inflation, banks, jobs etc. This means the Business and Economy touch everyone's lives in very unique ways. This also elevates this beat to a serious plane because of its capacity to influence people's reaction to other issues. Therefore, the Business and Economy beat is a serious beat that requires expertise handling. How this special area is covered is the focus of this unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit is about how Business and the Economy beat are handled. Specifically, at the end of this unit, you should be able to:

1. Explain the Business and Economy beat and reporting.
2. Identify and explain the qualities of a good Business and Economy Reporter.
3. Identify and explain the role of Business and Economy reporting in a society like Nigeria.
4. Identify the sources of Business and Economy reports.
5. Know the tips on how best to write a Business and Economy report.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 THE ROLE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMY REPORTS

Every story in the media performs one function or the other. So are also the Business and Economy stories. The following are some of the roles the Business and Economy stories are expected to play in a society:

1. Should present economic data to the populace and interpret them appropriately.
2. Should introduce the human interest angle to its reports whenever possible.
3. Should discuss new business policies and labour laws and how the man on the street is affected.
4. Should do a thorough analysis of business and economic related issues to the appreciation of the ordinary and educated audiences.
5. Should give the audience the latest updates on business and economic issues.
6. Should interpret technical terms related to business and the economy to the audience in a way they will understand the meaning and implications.

3.2 QUALITIES OF A BUSINESS AND ECONOMY REPORTER

1. A good Business and Economy reporter must normally possess the qualities of a reporter which has been treated in detail earlier. These qualities are basic. The other ones following these are additional because of the demands of Business and Economic Reporting.
2. A good Business and Economy Reporter must have passion for business and economic related issues and go in-depth in its coverage.
3. A good Business and Economy Reporter must have a clear understanding of the meaning of economy and business-related issues. He or she must also have an understanding of the Stock market and give the audience detailed explanation about the market happenings.
4. The Business and Economy Reporter is a specialist who feels at home with numbers and is not frightened by lengthy reports and press releases, many of which contain rates, percentages, business and consumer indexes and the jargon of the business world (Mencher, 2010).
5. The Business and Economy Reporter must have the skills and attitudes to recognize the power business exerts and become a tough questioner.

6. He or she must also have a healthy skepticism that keeps him or her from being awed by the muscle and money that business power generates (Mencher, 2010).
7. Even though the Business and Economy Reporter is a specialist, he or she must know much more than the world of finance. He or she must be knowledgeable in related areas and subjects as well.
8. The Business and Economy Reporter should be a Corporate Raider. He should approach the money managers and manipulators with the same objectivity and distance that any reporter takes on an assignment (Mencher, 2010).
9. He or she should have a good knowledge of the working system of the economy and the business world. He or she should be familiar with market forces and the nitty-gritty of the financial circle (Obe, 2005).
10. He or she should have a basic tertiary education in related fields like business administration, economics, accounting, banking and finance and others.
11. A good Business and Economy Reporter must also be research savvy, very analytical, detailed and critical in his or her writings.

3.3 SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Good contacts and sources can be made among the following (compiled by Mencher, 2010):

1. Bank officers and tellers.
2. Savings and loans officials.
3. Chamber of Commerce Secretariats and secretaries.
4. Union leaders.
5. Securities dealers.
6. Financial experts and analysts.
7. Real estate brokers.
8. Trade organization officials.
9. Teachers of business and economy related disciplines.
10. Government ministries and parastatals concerned with business and economy related issues.
11. Employees and former employees of businesses

3.4 TIPS ON HOW TO COVER THE BUSINESS BEAT BETTER

The following are some suggestions from Henry Dubroff, a veteran business editor as cited in Mencher (2010) on how to cover the business beat better:

1. Become a financial news junkie. Pay attention to developments

on your beats even if there is no obvious local or connecting angle to the story.

2. Look for hidden hooks in releases and routine earnings announcements. Hint: Read the last line first.
3. Use your sources for insight, not necessarily quotes.
4. Be comfortable with basic financial terms.
5. Never be afraid to go back to a company or a source two or three times to get the whole story.
6. The best stories often are the ones that break late on your beat.
7. Learn from reading and rereading major publications like *The Wall Street Journal, Forbes* and *Barron*'s not just for content but for how they approach a big research project or how they tell a story.
8. It's always better to get off the phone and get on the streets to actually see what a company looks like up close and personal.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

1. Discuss 10 qualities expected of a good Business and Economy Reporter.
2. How will a reporter cultivate some of the sources presented in this unit for business and economy reporting?

4.0 CONCLUSION

No doubt that the Business and Economy beat is a special area that requires special attention. The reporter covering this beat is therefore expected to be a real professional in this area and be interested in the issues that come up in the course of his assignment. The Business and Economy Reporter is also expected to report on local spot news stories, features and interpretative stories.

5.0 SUMMARY

You have learnt in this unit that the Business and Economy beat is a unique beat. The reporters who work in this special area must therefore take cognizance of this and keep the audience posted on happenings. You also learnt in this unit what it takes to cover the business beat more effectively.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Why is a related degree in management sciences vital to a successful career as a Business and Economy Reporter?
2. Justify the 8-point item on how to cover the Business and Economy beat better as compiled by Henry Dubroff.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Mencher, M. (2010). ***Mencher's News Writing and Reporting (11th Edition)***. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

Obe, Joseph (2005). ***Reporting Diverse Areas: A Concise Text***. Akure: SMC.

UNIT 5: REPORTING CRIME AND THE COURTS

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
    3.1 How to Write Crime Stories
    3.2 What is contained in Police reports?
    3.3 Check List for Writing Crime Stories
    3.4 Reporting Courts: The Basics
    3.5 How a Reporter Can Commit Contempt of Court
    3.6 Check List for Writing Court Stories
    3.7 Tips on Court Reporting
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Crime reporting is another unique special area of coverage in the media business. According to Obe (2005), "the public is in dire need of such news, the editors are very eager to provide it but the lawyers and the police have resolved to limit it. Most newspapers that focus extensively on crime stories stand a better chance of leading the tabloid." The same is applicable to Court stories that also demand special attention. These two areas will be focused on in this unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, you are expected to:

- Demonstrate adequate knowledge about Crime and Court Stories;
- Demonstrate how to report Crime and Court stories;
- Identify the check list for writing stories in this beat and;
- Familiarize yourself with some basic concepts related to Crime and Court Reporting.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 HOW TO WRITE CRIME STORIES

The Crime reporter should be very cautious to avoid having a different story from the Police reports. This is the primary reason Crime reporters are encouraged to closely work with the Police in the course of their

coverage (Obe, 2005). This again is supported by the fact that Crime reporters make use of three major sources information in writing their stories thus: Police reports, the people involved and eye witnesses and account of the event.

Before you write the report proper, you should find out what type of crime was committed and the circumstances surrounding the crime. This will help determine amongst the three primary sources which to give prominence (Obe, 2005). But you must note that many of the crimes committed do not have eye witnesses. You need to then check out those who probably heard a strange sound or movement or person. This could be the beginning point in writing your story.

You must also be cautious in identifying the arrested in your story. Use special care in doing this because most of the time, those arrested usually give Police fake names and these names may turn out to be the names of movie stars or celebrities. They could sue if their names appear on your newspaper as arrested for a crime.

Be sure to understand the classification of crimes and let this reflect in your reports and stories. Crimes are classified as violations, misdemeanors or felonies. Violations are low level crimes, punishable by small fines or short jail terms. Misdemeanors are more serious and can lead to a jail sentence of less than a year. Felonies are serious crimes punishable by a sentence of more than a year. A reporter should understand this distinction and reflect it appropriately.

3.2 WHAT IS CONTAINED IN POLICE REPORTS?

Brian Brooks *et al* cited in Obe (2005) identify the information contained in Police reports thus:

1. A description of what happened.
2. The location of the incident.
3. The name, age and address of the victim.
4. The name, age and address of the suspect, if any.
5. The exact offence with which the suspect is charged.
6. The extent of injuries, if any.
7. The names, age and addresses of the witnesses.

3.3 CHECKLIST FOR WRITING CRIME STORIES

Checklists are the information a reporter should have before writing his or her stories.

Checklist for Homicide (Crime) as compiled by Mencher (2010):

1. Victim, identification
2. Time, date, place of death
3. Weapon used
4. Official cause of death or authoritative comment
5. Who discovered the body
6. Clues, any identification of slayer
7. Police comments; motivation for crime
8. Comments from neighbours, friends
9. Any police record for victim; any connection with criminal activity
10. Consequences to victim's family, others

Checklist for Homicide (Arrest) as compiled by Mencher (2010):

1. Name, identification of person arrested
2. Victim's name; time, date, place of crime
3. Exact charge
4. Circumstances of arrest
5. Motive
6. Results of tip, investigation
7. Officers involved in investigation, arrest
8. Booking
9. Arraignment; bail, if any
10. Suspect's police record.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

1. How would you approach a crime story that involves rape?
2. Justify five items in the checklist for arrest.

3.4 REPORTING COURTS: THE BASICS

Covering the Courts is a delicate assignment for reporters. The delicate nature comes from the fact that a journalist could easily commit contempt of the courts if proper care is not taken in reporting the beat. To avoid unnecessary contempt cases, a reporter should adequate knowledge of the basics of court processes.

For instance, in the Nigerian Judicial System, there are Superior and Inferior Courts. The appellate courts fall under the Superior Courts while the Magistrate Courts fall under the Inferior Courts.

There are two kinds of law: criminal and civil. In criminal law, the Government is the accuser. In civil law, an individual or group usually initiates the action. The Government can also initiate civil actions. Most criminal cases are also settled before they go to trial by plea bargaining in which the accused agrees to plead guilty in return for a lesser

sentence.

3.5 HOW A REPORTER CAN COMMIT CONTEMPT OF COURT

Most contempt cases against reporters are often about contempt committed outside the courts. This is referred to as contempt ex facie curia. According to Obe (2005:163-164), journalists can commit contempt of court through the following ways:

1. Writing stories to jeopardize a person's chances of receiving fair trial in the court.
2. Taking photographs or drawing sketches in the court room.
3. Misquotation or misrepresentation of the court proceedings by reporters.
4. Any act of disrespect against the court.
5. Mentioning the name of an accused who is a minor in news stories.
6. Offensive and provocative dressing by female journalists in court premises.
7. Smoking or chewing gum aloud in the court room while cases are going on.
8. Unnecessary interruption and distraction of the judge and court proceedings.

3.6 CHECKLIST FOR WRITING COURT STORIES

Checklist for Civil Actions (compiled by Mencher, 2010):

1. Identification of person or organization filing action.
2. Background of plaintiff or petitioner.
3. Defendant; respondent's particulars.
4. Type of damaged alleged.
5. Remedy sought.
6. Date of filing; court of jurisdiction.
7. Special motivation behind action, if any.
8. History of the conflict, disagreement.
9. Could suit lead to landmark decision? Is it a precedent?
10. Possibility of an out-of-court settlement.
11. Significance of action; effect on others.
12. Lawyers on both side; types of firm they are associated with.
13. Date and presiding judge for trial, hearing.
14. Judge's reputation with similar cases

Checklist for Criminal Trials (compiled by Mencher, 2010):

1. Formal charge
2. Full identification of defendant
3. Circumstances surrounding criminal act.
4. Summary of preceding developments
5. Likely next stage.

3.7 THE TRIAL PROCESS

A typical trial process follows this pattern:

1. Opening statement
2. Direct examination
3. Cross-examination
4. Redirect examination
5. Motions
6. Rebuttal
7. Cross-examination by Prosecutor
8. Redirect examination by Defense
9. Rebuttals
10. Summations
11. Charge to jury
12. Jury deliberation
13. Verdict
14. Sentence.

Please note that these 14 stages represent the court trial process in the American judicial system. It is slightly different from the Nigerian context.

3.8 TIPS ON COURT REPORTING (compiled by Obe, 2005)

1. Court reporters should know that the media houses are not law courts. They should therefore desist from trial by newspapers. Notwithstanding the fact that a public has a right to know, the reporters should also know that an accused is entitled to fair hearing. Newspapers and other media organizations should therefore desist from pre-trial coverage and trial by newspapers as the case may be.
2. Make sure your report is fair and accurate. All sides on the case must be given fair hearing and the facts of the case reported as accurately as possible.
3. Focus on the sentence and leave out unnecessary details.
4. Make sure you get the full sentence and then analyze within the context of your audience.

5. Limit your report to what happened in court only.
6. Publish only documents that had been tendered as EXHIBIT in court.
7. Do not take pictures without the express approval by the Judge.
8. Do not comment or write editorials on matters before the courts.
9. Be sure about the particulars of the accused before releasing such information.

4.0 CONCLUSION

More than 60 percent of those in jail are still awaiting trial because the courts have become overwhelmed in recent times with numerous cases. Monitoring all of these is the reporter. The only way a reporter maintains stability in this swelling tide of awaiting trials is through knowledge of the judicial system, good sources and the ability to pick out the significant and interesting cases out from the lot that may not sell.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have been exposed to another special beat: Crime and Court reporting. It is expected that you are now familiar with the intrigues of reporting from such a beat as well as how to write crime and court stories.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss some of the basic information a Crime and Court Reporter should know about a typical judicial system.
2. Should a Crime and Court Reporter require a degree in Law to succeed in this special beat?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Mencher, M. (2010). ***Mencher's News Writing and Reporting (11th Edition)***. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

Obe, Joseph (2005). ***Reporting Diverse Areas: A Concise Text***. Akure: SMC.

MODULE 7: THE REPORTER, THE LAW AND ETHICAL ISSUES

Unit 1: Press Freedom
Unit 2: Basic Press Laws
Unit 3: Ethical Issues in Media Practice.

UNIT 1: PRESS FREEDOM

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
    3.1 Controversial Issues Involved in the Concept of Press Freedom
        3.1.1 Freedom to Source for information or Free Access to Information
        3.1.2 Freedom to Report Information
    3.2 Threats to Press Freedom
    3.3 Press Freedom in the Three World Divide
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Press freedom, since the beginning of the 20th century, has remained a contentious issue and debate in media and communication circles. This term has also continued to generate heated arguments among mass communication scholars, professional journalists and even the enlightened citizenry wherever it is mentioned. One then wonders why the issue has remained as controversial as ever (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

By way of definition and without sounding simplistic, press freedom is defined as the ability or the freedom given to a country's mass media to practise without undue and unnecessary inhibitions/constraints in whatever form they may appear. Press freedom also presupposes free access to information or information sources or simply, freedom to source for information of whatever nature and the freedom to report such information (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

To bring all these definitions together, we shall in this volume, look at press freedom as the freedom to source for news and information of whatever nature, from anywhere and at anytime; and the freedom to

report such news and information in any form, through any medium to the people in whose name the freedom is being exercised (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of the unit, you are expected to:

- Define Press Freedom in an accepted manner.
- Describe the concept of Press Freedom.
- Identify and explain the threats to Press freedom
- Describe the application of Press Freedom in the three world divide.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES INVOLVED IN THE CONCEPT OF PRESS FREEDOM

Two controversial and distinct issues come up anytime there is a debate on the concept of press freedom. These two distinct issues are:

3.1.1 Freedom to Source for Information or Free Access to Information

This is the first part of the issue involved in the press freedom controversy. Journalists around the world argue that there should be a legislation assisting them to source for information especially in government agencies and establishments. The antagonists to any such legislation are of the opinion that media organization and their personnel should do more than ask for such legislation. They argue that the ability of the journalist to investigate and reveal hidden facts has become the basis for the assessment of the success of the journalist and his media organization (Ekeanyanwu, 2010).

Take the case of the Watergate Scandal that led to the resignation of the former US President, Richard Nixon, as a case in point. The Pulitzer Award was also instituted to reward journalists who excel in investigative journalism as well as in other forms of journalistic practices. Taking cognizance of this practice, the journalists and their media organizations, according to those who oppose their call for legislative support, should not expect news and information to be posted on notice boards for them to copy. They should investigate and reveal what is hidden. What they think should be proper is a legislation that will not prohibit public or private officials from disclosing information.

The idea of a legislation compelling them to reveal information sounds lazy-like and unprofessional (Ekeanyanwu, 2010).

3.1.2 FREEDOM TO REPORT INFORMATION

The second contentious issue under the press freedom debate is the freedom of the journalist and his organization to report news/information. The case here is clear. No government in the world stops its press from reporting/publishing news and information. What is obtainable in some undemocratic or autocratic regimes is a legislation prohibiting the reportage of some government "classified" information or matter. It was the case in Nigeria under Gen. Mohammed Buhari (Retd.). He promulgated Decree No. 4 of 1984 to prohibit the press from publishing government secrets or criticizing government officials. The arguments here are unanimous. Publishers, professional journalists, media scholars and the enlightened citizenry all agree that government should remove impediments to the freedom of media organizations to publish news and information as long as such news and information are factual, objective and of consequence to a majority of the citizens of the country (Ekeanyanwu, 2005).

Apart from these two issues discussed above, the controversial/contentious nature of press freedom also arises due to the nature of the society itself. There is no absolute freedom in the society. Where an individual's freedom begins may be where another individual's ends. Therefore the press cannot be left out or isolated from this 'nature' of things. They must operate within the laws governing their societies. This is to avoid press irresponsibility and abuse of freedom. A country's mass media (press) cannot ordinarily expect freedom more than that allowed the society in which they operate. Therefore, such general laws like libel, slanders, copyright and invasion of privacy that are already in existence in most societies, must also apply to journalists and their organizations as members of such a society (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

3.3 THREATS TO PRESS FREEDOM

1. **Denials or Reduction in the Supply of Newsprint**
   A newspaper's power to publish could be curtailed or censored through the outright denial or reduction in the supply of newsprints. Newsprint is used by the press to print/publish their newspapers and newsmagazines. Scarcity of newsprint usually poses as a threat to printing and when a media organization can no longer print the required number of copies of its newspaper per day, supply suffers. This in turn affects distribution as the number of people who crave for news and information may not

be able to get them as a result of this reduction in supply of newsprints (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

Newsprint is a major raw material used by media houses in the production of newspapers. Like any other company that uses raw materials for production, whenever such materials are in short supply, the ability of that company to satisfy the demands for its products is negatively affected. This is exactly what happens in the newspaper industry (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

2. Illegal Detention, Harassment and Intimidation

This is another major means through which the practice of journalism is threatened. In several countries of the world, especially in the Developing, stories abound about how journalists are illegally detained on flimsy charges or no charges at all. Those who are lucky not to be detained are constantly harassed and intimidated to submission to the will of the oppressors. These harassment and intimidation affect negatively the practice of journalism as most journalists now live in perpetual fear and thus resort to unethical and unprofessional conducts just to satisfy their oppressors (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

3. Seizure of Copies of Press Publications

The seizure of copies of press published materials could also obstruct the smooth operation of any press organization. Security agents and officials acting on behalf of the government of the day usually carry out this action (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

The implications of this are obvious. First, two vital aspects of media work are greatly affected in a negative way. These vital aspects are dissemination and distribution. When copies of newspapers and new magazines, for instance, are seized, the media firm publishing then can no longer disseminate the news or information in those editions. Of course, they cannot distribute what they don't have. Again, there is loss of revenue, which was supposed to accrue to them through the sale of the seized copies. Advertisers could also be on their neck if they fail to meet up with their own part of a contractual agreement. In addition, legal tussles that are very expensive could also result from this (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

4. Outright Closure or Threats of Closure of Media Houses

This is yet another measure adopted by government in their attempts to curb the watchdog role of the press. This particular threat is rife in Developing nations and other nations that have not embraced democratic norms and values (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

On flimsy charges, security agencies and their officials, acting on the orders of a repressive government, can easily and illegally occupy the premises of the so-called "offending" media firms in a bid to prevent them from carrying out their day-to-day operations. This is the zenith of the threats to the practice of journalism anywhere in the world. A lot of negative implications do arise from illegal closures or threats to it. One, most media firms with not-too-strong financial base may not be able to survive long time closures or constant closures. The Concord Newspaper which championed the cause of "June 12" political crisis in Nigeria is a case in point. The media house was closed down several times by the Abacha regime and when eventually it was reopened for normal operations, the centre could no longer hold and things fell apart. The result today is that the newspaper has officially "closed down" operations (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

1. Over-Taxation by Government

A repressive government can also obstruct the practice of journalism through over taxation. When government overtaxes a media firm whether legally or illegally, that organization will surely find it extremely difficult to break even. Newspaper publishing is not a money-spinning business and so, whenever a government introduces all kinds of taxes, then it is trying to force out the publishers out of business, using such subtle means as taxing. Buying of newsprints, payment of salaries and wages, purchase and maintenance of equipment as well as other production cost will obviously suffer. Like we noted earlier, it will be a matter of time before the firm closes down (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

2. Withdrawal of Licences/Threats to Withdrawal

The government could also threaten the practice of press freedom through threats to withdraw or actual withdrawal of operating licenses. This type of intimidation and threat is usually obtainable in countries where media houses are required by their governments to register with them so as to be issued operating licenses. This practice is not healthy for the growth of the profession because any one who pays the piper ultimately calls the tune (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

3. Withdrawal of Advertisement and Grants

This is another major and subtle means of curbing the practice of journalism and the freedom of the press. Governments and multinational companies can through this means, persuade media organizations to do their wishes. They achieve this through

threats to withdraw grants (for government-owned media firms) and advertisements (for non-government-owned/price, profit making media firms) (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

Media houses survive mostly on revenue from sale of copies of published materials, grants/subsides from owners and then, advertisements, which shores up the profit margin. Withdrawal of these grants/subsides and advertisements by government can affect the financial base of the affected media houses. For profit-oriented media firms, they have little or no choice at all. They either do the wishes of those pseudo-financiers or face liquidation as a result of poor financial status (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

4. Enactment Of Anti-Press Laws

This type of threat to the practice of press freedom is obtainable in nations pretending to be practicing democracy while in actual practice the leadership is autocratic and corrupt. To inhibit the practice of journalism and cover up their corrupt and autocratic practices, they result to promulgating anti-press laws so as to give their actions against the press a human face. These anti-press laws are found most in countries of the Developing where the press is an appendage of government (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

Nobody is against the press being subject to the already existing general laws governing society. But to hide under legality to perpetrate illegality through the promulgation of anti-press and anti-people laws is obviously unacceptable. These anti-press laws differ from nation to nation. In Nigeria, the obnoxious Decree No. 4 of 1984 is a case in point (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

5. Pressures From Families And Employers

Journalists also face undue pressures from friends, relatives and employers. Since the profession of journalism is not too rewarding financially, friends and family members could put pressure on the journalist to accept financial gratification (popularly referred to as “Brown Envelopes” in media parlance) so that he can live a more comfortable life with his relatives and friends. If the journalist succumbs to such pressures, then he is obliged to do the wishes of whoever gave him the “gratification” or “Brown Envelope” (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

Friends and relatives could also pressurize the journalists, not just to accept brown envelops, but to do the bidding of their personal friends and relatives. A wife of a journalist, for instance, could put pressure on her husband (through whatever

means she deems necessary) not to expose the dirty deals of her father (the journalist's father in-law) who is a government official. These examples are not hypothetical, they do happen. Unfortunately, when they do happen the public's right to know suffers as a result. Employers of journalists could also pressure their employees to carry out their egoistic wishes and protect their interests (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

6. Unwarranted Government Secrecy

Most government agencies and officials also use this method to obstruct the job of journalists and the practice of press freedom. Government is the greatest source of news because its actions or inactions are of consequence to a great number of people (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

Therefore, whenever it carries out its activities in utmost secrecy, the journalist will be left with little or no news to report. And the newspaper firms and broadcast stations must have enough news and information before the public patronizes them. When the public feels there is nothing worth reading in the newspapers or news magazines, they don't buy. If the public does not patronize these firms, they fold up. This way, the practice of journalism and press freedom particularly suffers a serious setback (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

3.3 PRESS FREEDOM IN THE THREE-WORLD DIVIDE (adapted from Ekeanyanwu, 2008)

The practice of press freedom in the world will be discussed under the three world groups that were in existence before the end of Cold War. The reason is that even after the end of the Cold War, these world divisions still exist and the ideological differences have not really been wiped out from their subliminal.

The world divisions that will be discussed in this section include:

a. The Western World which will also be referred to as the West or the First World
b. The Eastern World which will also be referred to as the East or the Second World
c. The Developing nations, which will also be referred to as the South Nations.

1. Press Freedom in the Western World

The Western World is made up of the developed capitalist nations of Europe and North America. Some of the prominent

nations under this group are the United States of America, Great Britain, France, Canada, the Republic of Germany and Australia. There are other countries in this group but their press system is not as well organized and developed as the ones mentioned above. Even the ones mentioned above are not all in the same pedigree but we chose to use them, as prototype of what is obtainable in their world. In fact, only US, Britain and France have a near perfect media system to be referred to as the First World in the hierarchy of developed media systems (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

In this group, however, capitalism is the main economic ideology propelling the development of the nations that make up the group. Democracy is also the major political ideology, which obviously influences the practice of press freedom as a journalistic virtue.

Capitalism and democracy, as the main economic cum political ideologies in the First World encourage the application of press freedom in this world's media system. Capitalism stimulates private ownership of the media while democracy allows for freedom to operate without threats and anti-people rules and regulation.

Generally, there is press freedom in the Western World although there are remarkable differences in the different countries that make up the group. The threats to the practice of journalism are almost non-existence and where they exist, they barely raise their ugly heads because the society here is governed by freedom. However, the journalists and their media organizations are subject to the ordinary laws of the land, like any other body or institution. The Press in the West can also carry out their "watch dog" and "crusade dog" roles without any form of fears or favour. The United States and Britain are the two group leaders in the developed world (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).
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In the United States, for instance, the American press is free to constructively criticize the government and get away with it. The Watergate Scandal which led to the resignation of Richard Nixon - the first ever resident of that country to do so is a typical example of journalistic freedom. The Clinton – Monica Sex Scandal is another example were the press published and be dammed. During the 2000 US Presidential Election, some newspapers published a report on the Republican candidate, George Bush, who eventually won, on how he was caught and

sentenced for drunken driving. In some Developing African nations, those reporters would have been dead now or languishing in jail. But in the West, they are regarded as heroes (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

The same goes for Britain. The press is independent of government and can openly and constructively criticizes it in the interest of the public. The BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) row with the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, over a report on the radio network that the British Government under Blair "sexed up" the nuclear report on Iraq just to rationalize their going to war against Iraq in 2003 is a typical case in point. The BBC stood its ground amidst pressure to retract the report. The controversy even led to the death of a foremost scientist Robert Kelly – who was fingered as the source of the report by the BBC. Our interest here is that the BBC was not proscribed afterwards and the reporter involved was not sacked as a result of pressure from "above" as could have been his lot if he was a Nigerian and practicing in Nigeria Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

This radical journalism is flourishing in the West because the entire citizenry cherish freedom especially freedom of expression and to hold dissenting views. These freedoms are also entrenched in their various constitutions. Infact, the First Amendment to the American Constitution states that the Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of the press. The American people, like the other peoples of the West or First World are politically, economically and culturally emancipated. Therefore, the press, which is a subset of that free society, cannot be left out without the same level of freedom. It goes to say that the freedom enjoyed by the Press in the First World is directly derivable from the very nature of the Western societies – which are also free. A society can only offer what it has (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

However, we must also note that the western press operates under democratic laws already in existence in the western societies. These laws guard against press irresponsibility, abuse of power and freedom. This is a clear indication that press freedom is not absolute in the West and nowhere in the world is freedom absolute. Even individual freedoms must be checked otherwise they will conflict with the freedom of others. This could lead to chaos and lawlessness in the society, opposite of what freedom was supposed to help achieve (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

In conclusion, libertarianism is the guiding press theory in the Western World but social responsibility press theory is what is actually in practice. However, the major ingredients of a free and virile press include:

1. Capitalism
2. Democratic Governance and Practices
3. Economic Development and Emancipation
4. Constitutional Guarantees of Freedom
5. Cultural emancipation
6. Political emancipation.

2. Press Freedom in the Eastern World

The Eastern world is made up of the former nations under USSR (Soviet Union), Poland, Hungary, Romania, Czech's Republic, Slovenia, Yugoslavia, China and the other nations in part of Asia where socialism is practiced. The Eastern World is sometimes referred to as the Second World because the nations in this group are next to the West in sociopolitical cum economic development or simply the East (from the Cold War era) (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

In contrast to the Western World, capitalism and democracy do not survive easily in the Eastern World. Therefore, the media in this part of the globe are not really free. People are not too free to express dissenting views because the socialist's ideology does not support such freedom (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

Although democracy is practiced in the East, it is however, tainted by socialism which as an economic cum political ideology, does not encourage individualism or the pursuit of individual initiatives and philosophy. Socialism advocates for collective ownership of resources and this cardinal principle overrides any other considerations including freedom. Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, private/individual ownership of the media was prohibited. The ones that were in existence were owned and controlled by the government. The media are used by the government as an instrument to propagate its ideology and showcase its activities (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

In addition, the people of the Eastern World, unlike those of the West, are not socially, culturally, economically and politically emancipated. They are still trying to embrace "home-made" ideologies and not wanting to be accused of borrowing Western values and ideologies. Because of these, their societies are not truly free and this reflects in the press system too.

However, between the last decade of the last century and the beginning of this century (the 21st century), the Eastern World has undergone a lot of socio-cultural, economic and political changes. The end of the Cold War marked the political death of Communism/Socialism in the world. Democracy has now been fully embraced in the Republics that sprang up from the former USSR. A lot of other nations within this group have also broken up into new independent nations while others have merged to form one stronger entity (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

These radical changes and development also affected the practice of journalism and press freedom. The issue of free flow of information has really improved tremendously in the present nations that constitute the Eastern or Second World. Pseudo-media bodies and organizations are now springing up in these nations and journalists are becoming relatively free to operate. The governments in their nations are also becoming receptive to public and press criticism, all thanks to the adoption of democratic values and norms (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

3. Press Freedom in the Developing World

The Developing World is also referred to as the South (in international communication parlance) and is made up of "underdeveloped or the "developing" nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The Developing World major problem which affects every other aspects of its living is acute underdevelopment which has given rise to poverty and hunger. This underdevelopment cuts across all spheres of the South's existence including the practice of journalism. Another major problem that affects and influences the practice of press freedom in the Developing World is political and socio-economical instability. Some nations in this region claim to be practicing democracy while others claim they are socialist oriented. The Developing World's region is also replete with coups and counter coups and it is in this region that political leaders will prefer to die in office than vacate when public opinion is against their continued stay in power. Wars and conflicts of various natures also abound in this region and have taken their toll in both human and sociopolitical development. How can the press be really free against all these catalogue of woes (Ekeanyanwu, 2008)?

The developing nations, however, offer a mixed picture with regards to press freedom. As there are different nations at their

different levels of development; so also are the different media systems in their different levels of development. Ogunsiji (1989: 162) has this to say on the controversy:

> Compared to communist countries, the developing nations offer a mixed picture. In some developing countries, such as Tanzania, Benin, Libya and Cuba, mass media are owned and directly controlled by the State within countries such as Nigeria, Libya and Ghana; news media are partly controlled by the State. In some countries, rulers have taken action to curb the press. Some have gone as far as to make treasonable any form of criticism of governments. In many more countries, while professing freedom of the press, governments have let it be known that they expect the press to toe the time to a great extent.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the press in the Developing World are almost in the hands of the government, and therefore, not truly free to operate. Most developing nations subscribe to the Social Responsibility media theory and the Development Media theory. These theoretical paradigms encourage the use of the mass media for local developmental purposes as well as hold the press responsible for consequences arising from their practice. The argument here is that the mass media can sometimes jettison journalistic ethics and virtue just to support the government of the day in the development of the hinterlands. The media can also deny the public their right to know by withholding facts and information from them if they feel the release of such facts and information can jeopardize public peace and unity. These are the principles contained in the social responsibility and development media theories. These theories are offshoots of libertarianism practices in the West (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

However, in some developing countries like Nigeria and Ghana where private ownership of the media is allowed, the mass media are not completely caged. Some degree of freedom still exists especially now that these countries have fully embraced democracy. In Nigeria (presently), the press can criticize government and its officials without any fear as long as the criticisms are based on facts and constructively carried out. The frequent arrest, detention, assaults and all other forms of harassments and intimidation of journalists have become history.

Proscription/closure of media houses have stopped with the end of the Abacha regime. The government is also now more tolerant to opposition views and its officials are no longer above the law and criticism. There is also a legislative initiative to repeal all anti-press laws enacted by past military regimes. This, it is hoped will remove the final legal impediments to the practice of press freedom and the protection of human rights in the country (Ekeanyanwu, 2008).

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

1. Why is the concept of Press Freedom controversial?
2. Discuss five threats to the practice of Press Freedom in a society.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The issue of press freedom will continue to be discussed in mass communication circles around the world until every nation and government embrace democracy in its true form. It is only under a democratically elected government that is guided by democratic norms and values will freedom to form, hold and express opinions and ideologies be protected and genuinely guaranteed. Anything short of this will not guarantee press freedom; and the people's right to know will continue to suffer. No matter the benevolence of any undemocratic regime, if it is not democracy, it can never be like democracy.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt the meaning of Press Freedom, its controversial nature, the potential threats to it and how the concept applies to the developing divide.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss the depth of application of the concept of Press Freedom in the notable three world divides.
2. Why is democracy strategic to the practice of Press Freedom in a given society?

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UNIT 2: BASIC PRESS LAWS

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction
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3.0 Main Content
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

One recurring decimal about order in society and profession is the rule of law. Hornby (1984:476) defines law as a ‘‘rule made by authority for the proper regulation of a community or society, or for correct conduct in life’’. Law is also defined as laid down rules that guides peoples behaviour in a state or society, and disobedience of which attracts sanctions from the state. One issue is absolute about laws. This is its ability to bring people to order. Again, it must be noted that such laws in a society can be culled out of the norms, values and shared experiences of members of the society. A society that is without law is in a state of anarchy. Such a state will be prone to deceit, destruction, criminality and other forms of abnormalities. That is why law is related to justice, fair play, honour, peace and tranquility. This is captured in the maxims ‘‘Ubisocietie ibi jus – where there is society, there is law’’ and ‘‘Ubi jus, ibi remedium – where there is law, there is a remedy’’

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- identify some of the basic laws like defamation, sedition, copyright, and contempt of court
- explain their defenses and how they affect media practice.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 DEFAMATION

Defamation can be defined as the transmission to a third party, either orally or in writing, of information which tends to damage the reputation of another person. It is the publication of a statement, which exposes a person to hatred, ridicule, contempt and/or causes him to be shunned or avoided by right thinking members of society.

Experts (e.g Ewelukwa, 2004: 209; Malemi 1999:74, etc cited in Okoye, 2008) are all agreed that for a statement to be defamatory of a person, that statement must be false and calculated to:

(a) Lower him in the estimation of right-thinking men; or
(b) Cause him to be shunned or avoided, or
(c) Expose him to hatred, contempt or ridicule, or
(d) Conveys an imputation on him disparaging or injurious to him in his office, profession, calling, trade or business.
(e) Injures his financial credit

Similarly, the Penal Code states in Section 391, under Defamation, as follows:

Whoever by words either spoken or reproduced by mechanical means or intended to be read or signs or by representations, makes or publishes any imputation concerning any person, intending to harm the reputation of such person, is said … to defame that person.

3.1.1 Essentials of Defamation

The following points must be proved for an action of defamation to succeed in court.

1. Publication

The offending statement must have been published. Publication means that the statement was communicated to a third party, other than the plaintiff. Furthermore, communication of defamatory matter by husband to wife and vice versa, does not amount to publication since they are regarded as one person, for that practical purpose (Okoro, 2008).

2. Malice

Another essential ingredient of defamation is that the offending statement must have a malicious intent. Malice is evil motive or spite. If the plaintiff can prove the existence of a malicious intention, the defence of fair comment by the defendant will be defeated (Okoro, 2008).

3. Damage

Damage is quantifiable loss as a result of defamation. In a situation where the defamatory statement is not actionable per se on mere publication, the plaintiff must prove some special or actual damage to succeed in his claim (Okoro, 2008).

4. Repetition

Though it is not an essential condition for defamation, every repetition of a defamatory statement in writing, orally or in any other form, amounts to a fresh publication. And this may create a fresh cause of legal action. Repetition and dissemination of defamatory matter may necessitate the suing of the printer, publisher, author and vendor news agent, in the case of books, newspapers and magazines (Okoro, 2008).

3.1.2 TYPES OF DEFAMATION

There are basically two types of defamation: Libel and Slander.
Thus, Ewelukwa (2004:212) defines libel as defamation by means of writing or by any other permanent form such as video tapes, pictures, was work, effigy etc. Malemi (1999:77) also defines libel as a defamatory statement made in a visible or permanent form such as written or printed statements as in books, newspapers, notes, circular, letter, or by way of effigy, caricature, painting, photograph, film, radio, and television broadcasts, any recorded audio – visual material and so forth (Okoro, 2008).

Ewelukwa (2004) identifies the following as the conditions for libel:

(a) The publication must be in writing.
(b) The publication must be false.
(c) The publication must be published to some other person aside from the plaintiff and the defendant.
(d) The publication must refer to the plaintiff and must be defamatory of him.
(e) The publication must be by the defendant.

Slander on the other hand is defamation through the spoken word or gesture. It is not generally actionable upon mere publication. However, there are instances where slander could be actionable per se, that is, without proof of special damage (Okoro, 2008). They include:

1. Allegation of a criminal offence punishable with imprisonment, such as theft, rape etc.

2. Imputation or allegation of a contagious disease which may necessitate the exclusion of the sufferer from other members of society e.g. AIDS, leprosy etc.
3. Allegation of unchastely conduct against a young woman.
4. Imputation of incompetence or unfitness against a workman, which can injure him in his trade, office, or profession.

3.1.3 DEFENCES FOR DEFAMATION

There are many defences for a journalist who is brought to a court on matter of defamation. Some of these defences are major others are minor. We shall discuss only nine of these thus:

1. Justification or Truth

If the publication complained about is true, entirely or even substantially, it can form a solid defence to defamation. But the onus is on the defendant who pleads justification to prove that the publication is true.

2. Fair Comment

It is also a defence against defamation if the defendant can prove that the publication complained about is a fair comment made in the interest of the public. Indeed, since the constitution charges the press to make government accountable and uphold the fundamental objectives of the Nigerian state, it follows that fair comment made in respect of any public officer or public figure on any matter of public interest can form a defence against an action for defamation (Okoro, 2008).

Ewelukwa (2004:224) insists that for a comment to be "fair comment" it must satisfy the following conditions.

A. The matter commented on must be of public interest.
B. The matter commented on must be an expression of opinion by the defendant and not an assertion of fact by him.
C. The comment on the plaintiff must be fair. This means it was made without malice or to spite.

3. Privilege

Privilege means a benefit or immunity enjoyed by someone or a class of people which does not apply to the general public. In communication, privilege is the freedom enjoyed in certain circumstances whereby statements can be made without the bogey of an action of defamation. As a defence against

defamation privilege is in two kinds: absolute and qualified privilege (Okoro, 2008).

4. Consent to Publication or Volenti Non Fit Injuria

If a person willingly invites the press to cover his function or he grants an interview on his own volition, then the press can plead consent if the person turns round to bring an action of defamation. However, if the publication goes beyond the limit of the initial approval, there may be grounds for an action (Okoro, 2008).

5. Death of the Plaintiff

If the person allegedly defamed is dead, it will be difficult to sustain the action because reputation is a personal possession and only the owner of the reputation can sue for it.

6. Res Judicata

If a case of defamation has been tried, lost and won, it will be a waste of time to file a fresh action on the same matter. Res judicata is to say that the case has come to a logical end and had died a natural death. This is simply the plea of a decided case.

7. Accord and Satisfaction

It shall be a defence to defamation if there is a mutual settlement between the two parties to the satisfaction of both of them. This settlement is usually outside the court.

8. Innocent Dissemination

The person circulating the offensive matter can plead that he is ignorant of what he is disseminating and should therefore be excluded from any legal action. The plaintiff and the court usually exonerate this category of persons especially in view of the fact that they cannot pay any damages should the case be awarded against them (Okoro, 2008).

9. Statute of Limitation

This is the time limit upon which someone could bring a defamation action against another person. For libel it is six years and slander is three years. After this time periods had elapsed, you can no longer institute a legal action against an accuse.

3.1.4 REMEDIES FOR DEFAMATION

If a case of defamation has been established and accepted by the court, then the plaintiff is entitled to one or a combination of the following remedies:

(a) Damages
(b) Injunction, which may be interim, interlocutory or perpetual.
(c) Publication of retraction or correction
(d) Publication of apology and offer of amends.

3.2 SEDITION

One of the first laws the British Colonial Administration enacted to check the rising wave of criticism at that time was the Seditious Offences Ordinance of 1909. When the Criminal Code was adopted in 1916, Sedition occupied a prominent place in it and has ever since been part of our statutes (Momoh, 2004:17 cited in Okoro, 2008). Sedition can be defined as any statement or representation which has the intention to stir up treason, defame the person of the head of state or governor of a state or incite one section of the population against another.

Accordingly, Section 50 (1) of the Criminal Code (applicable to Southern Nigeria) defines a seditious publication as a publication having a seditious intention. And Section 50 (2) defines seditious intention as an intention:

(a) To bring into hatred or contempt or to excite disaffection against the person of the Head of the Federal Government, the Governor of a state or the government or Constitution of Nigeria or a state as by law established or against the administration of justice in Nigeria; or

(b) To excite Nigerians to attempt to procure the alteration, otherwise than by lawful means, or any other matter in Nigeria as by law established; or

(c) To raise discontent or disaffection among the inhabitants of Nigeria; or

(d) To promote feelings or ill-will and hostility between different classes of the population of Nigeria.

3.3 COPYRIGHT

Copyright, according to Okoro (2008), is the right which the law gives an author or other originator of an intellectual production whereby he is invested with the sole and exclusive privilege of reproducing and selling copies of his work. It is usually expressed in warnings like the example below in books and phonographic recordings:

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior written permission of the publisher/author.

The essence of the law of Copyright is to protect intellectual property from being reproduced and sold by unauthorized persons, so that the owner of the work can enjoy the fruit of his labour. But the advance in technology is making it increasingly difficult to enforce copyright laws. This is because hundreds of thousands of copies of books and phonographic materials of all kinds can now be easily reproduced by pirates, thanks to the ubiquitous photocopying machines and audio/visual recorders (Okoro, 2008).

Piracy has assumed a worrisome dimension in the developing countries where poverty and the get-rich –quick syndrome, coupled with poor law enforcement, have combined to provide fertile ground for such vices. In schools and universities indigent students photocopy whole books for their use, even where such materials are available and affordable. Also, at the ubiquitous road side markets in the cities it is common to find poor quality reproductions of recommended text books on sale at rock bottom prices – the fruit of piracy (Okoro, 2008).

In Nigeria the widespread violation of copyright, especially in the music industry, led to the enactment of the Copyright Act of 1990. This was to strengthen the existing Copyright Act of 1970.

3.4 CONTEMPT OF COURT

The law of contempt, according to Okoro (2008), is predicated on the absolute necessity to provide an enabling environment for the courts and the legislature to perform their constitutional duties without hindrance. In Nigeria the laws that pertain to contempt of court are the Criminal Code Act, the Penal Code Act and the Constitution itself. Section 133 of the Criminal Code states that any person who:

1. Within the premises in which any judicial proceeding is being heard or taken within the precincts of the same, shows disrespect in speech or manner, to or with reference to such proceedings, or any person before whom such proceeding is being heard or taken; or
2. Having been called upon to give evidence in a judicial proceeding, fails to attend or, having attended refused within

lawful excuse to answer a question or produce a document or prevaricates, or remains in the room in which such proceeding is being heard or taken after the witnesses have been ordered to leave such room; or

3. Causes an obstruction or disturbance in the course of a judicial proceeding; or
4. While a judicial proceeding is pending makes use of any speech or writing misrepresenting such proceeding, or capable of prejudicing any person in favour of or against any party to such proceeding, or calculated to lower the authority of any person before whom such proceeding is being heard or taken; or
5. Publishes a report of the evidence taken in any judicial proceeding which has been directed to be held in private; or
6. Attempts wrongfully to interfere with or influence a witness in a judicial proceeding either before or after he has given evidence in connection with such evidence; or
7. Dismisses a servant because he has given evidence on behalf of a certain party to a judicial proceeding; or
8. Retakes possession of land from any person who has recently obtained possession by a writ of court; or
9. Commits any act of intentional disrespect to any judicial proceeding, or any person before whom such proceeding is being had or taken, is guilty of a simple offence, and liable to imprisonment for three months.

3.4.1 Definition of Contempt

From all the foregoing, contempt of court (as cited in Okoro, 2008), can be defined as: any act which is calculated to embarrass, hinder or obstruct court administration of justice, or which is calculated to lessen its authority or its dignity, committed by a person who does an act in wilful contravention of its authority or dignity, or tending to impede or frustrate the administration of justice or by one who, being under the court's authority as a party to a proceeding wilfully disobeys its lawful orders or fails to comply with an understanding which he has given.

Contempt of court can be in two ways:

(A) **Contempt in the face of the court (*facia curia*)** otherwise known as direct contempt; and

(B) **Indirect contempt or *ex facia curia.*** This is contempt committed outside the court, so to say.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Laws of mass communication or press laws are rules and regulations made by authority, to regulate the activities of mass media professionals so as to ensure correct conduct in mass communication business. Press laws as a means of government control over the media is virtually as old as the press itself. Even in modern times, in spite of the existence of varying degrees of press freedom in many societies, the government of such societies still exercises many direct and legal controls over mass media content. All these legal controls make up the press law in that society. Paradoxically as it may sound, most citizens, including journalists, even in the most democratic of societies, believe it is reasonable and responsible to place certain restrictions on their freedom of speech (McNae, 1979: 2).

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

1. Why are media laws important in the Nigerian society?
2. Discuss the major differences between libel and slander.
3. When will a journalist fall foul of the Law of Sedition?
4. Why is it difficult to enforce Copyright Laws in Nigeria?

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit looked at some basic laws that affect reporters in the daily reportorial activities and how to deal with them. It is our expectation that you are now familiar with some of these legal issues and will therefore attempt to avoid falling victims of them in your professional practice as a journalist and most importantly as a reporter.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss nine solid defenses available to the Reporter who is sued on an alleged case of defamation. How will he apply these defenses?
2. Copyright Law exists in Nigeria but its application is challenging. Discuss.
3. Justify, with valid points and argument why Sedition should be abrogated in Nigerian legal system.

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UNIT 3: ETHICAL ISSUES IN MEDIA PRACTICE

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Generally, ethics is an inclusive term, meaning that it can be understood in a variety of ways. Ethics is associated with morality and deals with matters of right and wrong. Ruch (1980) sees it as set of moral principles or values dealing with what are considered good or bad, right or wrong.

In mass communication, Media Ethics refers to the code of conduct or set of rules and principles which morally govern and guide the mass media and their personnel in the discharge of their functions: Respect for authority, being fair to the audience, quality, equity, moral behaviour and all that constitutes a good life are ethics-orient; and these traits touch on conscience and morality. The ability to judge and behave ethically or otherwise is the function of our conscience and morality. The ethical issues that affect the practice of journalism in Nigeria shall be the focus of this unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to

- define ethics, media ethics,
- identify and explain some ethical issues that are prevalent in the Nigerian media industry.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 ETHICAL ISSUES IN MEDIA PRACTICE

3.1.1 Sycophancy

A sycophant is a "person who tries to win favour by flattering rich or powerful people" (Okunna, 1997). Such excessive and insincere praise is a common ethical problem in journalism. The sycophant journalist flatters political leaders, wealthy citizens and owners of media houses who are employers and have formidable powers over journalists. This is more glaring in the political sphere (Oloruntola, n.d.). Majority of the mass media in Nigeria, as in other developing countries, is owned by the government and as a result the media more often than not are praise singing the activities of government officials and government policies (Oloruntola, n.d.).

3.1.2 Character Assassination

"Closely related to sycophancy is the ethical problem of character assassination. By flattering favoured prominent and powerful people, the sycophant journalist could indulge in vilifying the opponents of such people. When the press makes statements that damage a person's reputation, the press is guilty of character assassination. Whereas there is no legal punishment for sycophancy, character assassination is both unethical and illegal; a journalist could face court action for defamation or damaging somebody's reputation." (Oloruntola, n.d.).

3.1.3 Pressure

Pressure is any force or influence which causes a journalist to feel strongly compelled to act in a manner desirable to the source of such force or influence. This can be internal or external. Internal pressure emanates from within the organization in which the journalist works. The publishers of a newspaper, for instance, could pressurize an editor to write an editorial in a particular way, or even request the editor to publish a canned editorial written by the publisher or his surrogate. External pressure, on the other hand, comes from the wider community

or society. These range from advertisers, politicians, or even friends and families of journalists can constitute sources of this type of pressure (Oloruntola, n.d.).

3.1.4 Afghanistanism

This remains a moral burden because it allows journalists to refuse to comment on issues happening in their vicinity while at the same time condemning the same issues in other countries. Imagine Nigerian editors writing critical editorials about the discredited Zimbabwe and Kenyan Elections as rigged, manipulated and unacceptable when Nigerians barely heard anything about the flawed process that imposed Yar'Adua on the nation.

3.1.5 Bribery

In journalism, the ethical problem of materialism is manifested in the form of bribery and acceptance of gifts. Ogunade (1997) observes that journalists for performing their normal duties of disseminating information usually accept money and other non-monetary gifts. This might compromise the integrity of journalists and media organizations.

3.1.6 Sensationalism

When a newspaper or any other mass medium presents news in a way designed to arouse a quick and excited reaction, it is said to be guilty of sensationalism. This type of reaction is evoked when a newspaper, for instance, seizes on the most sordid disgusting aspect to play up in its news story. Some newspapers and soft sell magazines deliberately encourage this practice and thrive on it in Nigeria (Oloruntola, n.d.).

3.1.7 Moonlighting

To make ends meet, journalists sometimes take two jobs, by working for competing employers, moonlighting is the act of holding two difference jobs simultaneously and being paid for both. This creates room for conflict of interest and divided loyalty, which constitute fertile grounds for unethical behaviour by journalists (Oloruntola, n.d.).

3.1.8 Brown Envelop Syndrome

It is not only reporters who take money from news sources. Sometimes news sources receive money from the news media to give out exclusives. But there is no doubt that money distorts both the news and the news judgment of reporters and editors. If you interview a politician

and he gives you money, can you still maintain objectivity and be fair to his adversaries?

3.1.9 Cocktail Journalism

This is an unethical practice whereby journalists use information gotten from tipsy sources from cocktail parties etc to write stories.

3.1.10 Cartel Journalism

Cartel journalism is the formation of beat associations for the purpose of protecting mutual interests. It is unethical insofar as it leads to the suppression and distortion of information. In fact, it is censorship, which is an impediment to press freedom. But there is hardly any beat where reporters have not formed such associations in Nigeria. Wise counsel is that they can remain as welfare associations, not professional associations.

3.1.11 Disguise Journalism

Is it right to obtain political news in disguise? The rule is that a reporter should always introduce himself before he begins an interview. But are there special occasions when he can break the rule? Many editors think if the story is important to the public; the reporter can obtain facts under cover. But it does not end there. What of those who may lose their jobs for their innocent mistakes of talking to a reporter when they thought they were only discussing with a co-worker or person in need? As a rule people deserve to know if their opinions will be published. Obtaining news under cover is certainly one issue that requires more discussion in today's journalism.

3.1.12 Self-Censorship

This is a socially irresponsible and unprofessional act. It is a situation whereby a journalist believes that writing or publishing certain stories would be offensive to his or her employer or the government of the day and therefore refuses to write or publish the story, even without external pressure not to do so (Oloruntola, n.d.).

4.0 CONCLUSION

Every profession must have a guiding rule for the practice of the profession. Journalism should not in any way be an exception. Because of the delicate nature of the mass media profession, a standardized set of rules for practicing journalists is inevitably necessary so as to help regulate the profession as well as protect the society in which they

operate. Considerable amounts of ambiguity has arisen over how the mass media, the most important public information system, could effectively and satisfactorily generate, process and disseminate information in response to the demands of their professional roles and the critical media environment. The uncertainty is enormous, complex, and not susceptible to easy solution by applying a rule of thumb. Although it is possible to develop a list of 'thou shall' and 'thou shall not' as many professions do, the ultimate responsibility to apply discretionary solution still falls upon the individual. Guidelines and performance codes can offer suggestions, but the final decision stems from the journalist's sense of professionalism and what he or she perceives appropriate for the audience.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Discuss any other five ethical issues in the Nigerian media scene that were not mentioned in this unit.

5.0 SUMMARY

Ethics is a fundamental issue in the Nigerian media industry. This has been the focus of this unit where you were expected to now define ethics, media ethics and some prevalent ethical issues in the Nigerian media industry.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Why will the giving and receiving of transportation fares by reporters constitute an ethical problem?
2. Why is ethics regarded as a controversial concept?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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