

A2 LEVEL

FACT FILES

Journalism

For first teaching from September 2013

For first AS award in Summer 2014

For first A2 award in Summer 2015

Broadcast Journalism
Conventions



journalism

in the Media and Communications Industry (JMC)

Broadcast Journalism Conventions



Course Content

Language, Forms and Conventions in Online, Print and Broadcast Journalism

(pg 12-14 of specification)

The purpose of broadcast journalism is to simplify complex issues and make them easily understandable to a listening or viewing audience. The role of the broadcast journalist is to do this, using skills of succinct writing, actuality selection and articulate delivery.

In order to do this, conventions should be followed:

- Words spoken in an item of broadcast journalism should be an accurate reflection of the facts and should be neither confusing nor misleading;
- Words spoken in an item of broadcast journalism should comply with legal and ethical guidelines on what can and cannot be broadcast in terms of the law, taste and decency;
- Actuality used in broadcast journalism should be a true reflection of what interviewees/speakers have said. Edited versions should reflect the spirit of the fully recorded version;
- Broadcast journalists should not assume prior knowledge by the audience and should always give context in relation to occurrences, people and events, e.g. Nicola Sturgeon should be accompanied with the label "Scottish First Minister";
- Adherence to the journalistic rules of balance and fairness should be maintained either in a broadcast news programme or across a series.

Radio



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Radio news bulletins should contain a mix of stories, a mix of voices and be up to date.

A news reader will introduce actuality within items or recorded contributions from other journalists summarising stories with scripts (termed voicepieces).

Radio news items should be between 15 seconds and a minute long. The duration allowed will depend on house style and the duration of the overall bulletin.

The standard news bulletin is 3 minutes long. However there are exceptions such as BBC Radio 4's longest bulletin which is the News at Six O'Clock which is 28 minutes long.

The order in which stories are presented, is called the Running Order. Judgement is to be applied as to where in the bulletin stories will sit, with the most important decision being what the first or "lead" story is.

Audiences want weather updates/forecasts/reports at the end of the bulletin.

Cues into radio pieces should encapsulate the crux of the story and make sense if read on their own. Cues into pieces of recorded actuality should never say what the first words will be in the actuality but should reference either the tenor of what is to be said in the actuality or a phrase after the first sentence. E.g. A cue should never say, Tony Blair says *the Palestinian problem will never be solved by Israel*, only

for the insert to begin with the words from Mr Blair “the Palestinian problem will never be solved by Israel.”

Language used in ‘reads’ and ‘cues’ should be both understandable, common place and deliverable.

Broadcast journalism readers must take time to both prepare, print and rehearse before live broadcasting, being aware of the tone, inclination or words and order of stories.

Station policy will dictate whether programmes/bulletins are to include foreign and sports stories. Major foreign stories of import should be assessed in terms of its news value and appeal to the station’s specific target audience, such as the Japanese nuclear disaster.

If recorded items do not go to air because of technical problems, have enough written material in reserve to make up the air time. It is the norm to apologise if a series of items fail to “fire” to air.

Television



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Many of the radio conventions are applicable to TV.

In TV pictures are everything. Pictures make Television news. You must gather or source the pictures first and then write stories around the available pictures.

Most stories have a definable structure even before any filming is done and location filming should be done against the background of a proposition of how the story is to be told.

Shoot material in the field in a focused manner with the edit in mind. Too much means a lengthy edit, too little means nothing to edit with.

Material needs to be shot which will build a sequence allowing for definable edit transitions, covering issues like moves from location to location, introductions to

interviewees and scene setting.

Pieces to camera by the reporter giving some ‘in vision’ script should be short and where possible include relevant background visual references.

Great pictures should be used especially if they show events unfolding of an unusual and newsworthy nature.

In Television it is a convention to state the core fact of the story three times, once in the intro, and twice in the body of the piece. This is because people’s attention is split between the pictures and listening to the script which makes understanding a little more challenging than listening or reading alone.

Television reporters and presenters are being invited into people’s living rooms and kitchens by the viewer. It is therefore good manners to be dressed appropriately and in keeping with the stories being reported on.

Reporters should not become distractions from the story and attention should be paid to issues like prevention of hair blowing in wind or offensive behaviour in the background.



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Television reports should be a blend of visually interesting pictures and a well-crafted script which enhances and highlights elements of the pictures. It should be economical with wordage. Complex issues such as statistics should be explained with the assistance of built graphics which make it easier for the viewer to grasp. Graphics need thought, and time should be given to think about them.

Television Journalism programmes should be delivered with warmth and authority. Those presenting them should work to gain the trust of the audience as it is the trust on which the programme is founded. Tone should be appropriate to each story but each programme should end with a smile and pleasant parting. The audience should never be made to feel “ the news is their fault”.

Weather is a big audience driver and should be included.

Sport is a highly visual spectacle and TV broadcast journalism should exploit it.



Activity

Identify the various roles and personnel which combine to produce the type of report/package described in this fact file.



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