Journalism and media

8.1 BREAKING NEWS

In journalism there has always been a tension between getting it first and getting it right. Ellen Goodman (b. 1941) American Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist

SPEAKING

1 In small groups, discuss the following questions.
1 ‘Newspapers will soon be a thing of the past.’ Do you agree with this statement? Why / Why not?
2 Where do you get the news from, e.g. TV, newspapers, radio, the Internet? Why?

2a Complete the gaps in the statements with the words in the box.

bias deadline privacy record scoop sources speculation

A good news journalist …
1 never misses a __________ .
2 respects the __________ of public figures.
3 deals in facts rather than __________ .
4 will do almost anything for a __________ or to break a story.
5 always identifies their __________ .
6 allows people to speak off the __________ to protect themselves.
7 reports honestly, objectively and without __________ .

2b Which statements in Exercise 2a do you agree with? Which are the most important? Discuss your reasons with a partner.

3a What are the following people’s roles in the media? Discuss your ideas with a partner.

a) editor   e) reporter
b) anchor   f) correspondent
c) publisher  g) paparazzo
d) producer h) columnist

3b In your opinion, is working in the news media an attractive profession? Why / Why not?

LISTENING

4 2b Listen to six people working in the media talking about their jobs. Which part of the news media do you think they work in? Why?

a) print media
b) broadcast media (TV / radio)

5a Listen again. What do you think their jobs are?

Choose one of the job titles (a–h) from Exercise 3.

5b What difficulties with their job does each speaker mention?

6 Which job would you most like to do? Why?

READING

7a Look at some of the expressions used by the speakers. What do you think they mean?

a sound bite    broadsheets    chequebook journalism
circulation figures    libel laws media coverage
ratings war    spin the tabloids    viewing figures

7b Match the meanings with the expressions in Exercise 7a.

a) the number of newspapers sold
b) the number of people who watch a broadcast
c) popularity battles with rival channels / networks / programmes
d) official rules governing what you may say about people in print
e) present a positive view of something to influence people
f) paying people for information
g) amount of time / space given to a subject
h) very short part of speech or statement
i) the ‘popular press’
j) quality newspapers / the ‘quality press’

8a Read the newspaper headlines. What do you think the stories are about?

8b Which headlines refer to:
1 a planned reduction in something?
2 an investigation?
3 losing a job?
4 new rules / laws?
5 a rescue?
6 a sound bite?
7 a romance?
8 an argument / fighting?

7b Match the meanings with the expressions in Exercise 7a.

9 Answer the following questions.
1 Which tenses / verb forms are used?
2 Which time do they refer to?
3 What do you notice about the language used in the headlines?

10 Rewrite the headlines as full sentences.
A The government is going to take strong action against crime on the Internet.

SPEAKING

11 Work in groups. You are producers of a 30-minute news programme with an audience demographic of 18–35-year-olds. The headlines below are the possible stories for today’s edition of the programme. Follow the steps below.

1 Discuss the possible content of each story and decide how interesting they would be for your viewers.
2 Choose five for your programme. You may also include one extra item of ‘breaking news’ (your own idea).
3 Decide a running order for the stories.
4 Decide how much time will be spent on each story. Will it contain an interview? If so, who will you interview?
5 Present your ideas to another group.

A GOVT TO CRACK DOWN ON NET CRIME
B FLOODS TOLL RISES
C MINISTER QUITS OVER COVER-UP
D tv stars split to wed
E MOVE TO CURB JUNK FOOD SALES
F NATIONAL SPEED LIMITS SET TO CHANGE
G PM PLEDGES TAX CUT
H CAT Saves owner FROM BLAZE
I Olympic chief in vote rigging row
J MURDER PROBE: POLICE QUIZ MODEL
K FOOTBALL BOSS AXED
L UN urged to act over new clashes
Simon Jenkins, The Guardian

A Journalists are creatures of nature not nurture. The profession develops from instinct, from a peculiar way of seeing and describing the world. It may be objective in practice but it is subjective in motivation.

B Journalism is expressed in the written or spoken word, but I have never regarded that as its essence. The technical skill is that of creating clear and succinct sentences, which any profession should inculcate. This can be taught and should be part of any core curriculum. Its absence from so much of written English nowadays, from users’ manuals to student exam questions to government white papers, is deplorable. I sometimes think a well-produced newspaper is that last redoubt of clear English. There is no talent for such technique. While some people pick it up quickly, it must be acquired, as must a skill at playing the piano. Like many ingénue journalists, I acquired it first in the trial and error of a student newsroom and then went on to a more formal training, in my case with the Times Newspapers.

C The latter’s Educational Supplement, then integrated with the main paper, possessed two invaluable bits of equipment. One was a source of stories, the politics of education, to which little was punctuality, truancy and bad behaviour. Another was a source of stories, the politics of education, to which little could be done by my reporting. The other was a ferocious Irish sub-editor. He would score through superfluous words, underline bad grammar and mercilessly spike articles, leaning back in his chair, removing his glasses and asking the classic question of any journalism teacher: ‘Now, what is it you are really trying to tell me?’

D I absorbed his maxims like mother’s milk. Never begin a sentence with ‘it’. Make every paragraph a single idea. Nouns and verbs are the workhorses of a sentence, never qualifiers. Delete every adjective and adverb from your story and reinsert only those that appear essential. Never use sloppy words such as supply, problem, accommodate and interesting and try to use concrete not abstract nouns. The best punctuation is a full stop.

E That training was a privilege greater than anything I acquired at school or university. It was the toolkit for a career; always to be kept oiled and polished. I watched colleagues floundering as they sought to fashion stories in ignorance of its framework.

F I used to ask aspiring journalists whether they kept a diary. What was their instinctive response to meeting an exciting person or visiting a beautiful place, to any highly charged emotion? Did they crave to communicate their experience through the written word? It is the best indicator I know of a natural reporter.

G The qualities essential to journalism thus extend far beyond an ability to write. They are those of curiosity, an uninhibited mind, native cunning and an eagerness to communicate, summed up in the gift to narrate. Such is the raw material on which the story depends and without which there is nothing to say. There can be a story without journalism, but no journalism without a story.

4 Find and underline adjectives in the text which mean the following:
   1 based on opinions and feelings rather than on facts (paragraph A)
   2 clearly expressed with no wasted words (para. B)
   3 very bad (para. B)
   4 extremely useful (para. C)
   5 unnecessary (para. C)
   6 carelessly expressed (para. D)
   7 hoping to be successful at something (para. F)
   8 not restrained in any way (para. G)

5 Paraphrase the following sentences from the article in simple English.
   1 I absorbed his maxims like mother’s milk.
   2 I watched colleagues floundering as they sought to fashion stories …

LISTENING

6a 6b 2.16 Listen to an experienced journalist talking to a group of students and answer the questions.
   1 What advice is given to those who want to go into journalism by:
      a) Joseph Pulitzer?
      b) the speaker?
   2 What current topic in journalism is the speaker going to look at towards the end of the talk?

6b Listen again and complete the gaps in the extracts.
   1 I’d like to congratulate you on receiving the ‘Best …
   2 First of all, I’m not going to apologise for being a journalist, even though we are not …
   3 I can’t stand listening to complaints about …
   4 ‘Put it before them briefly …’; clearly so they will … picturesquely so … and above all, accurately so they will …
   5 Always treat the reader with … and don’t …

6c Check your answers in Track 2.16 on page 182.

GRAMMAR: verb patterns

7 Look at the following list of common verb patterns. Look at Track 2.16 on page 182 and underline the different verb patterns.
   1 Verb + infinitive with to
   2 Verb (+ object) + infinitive
   3 Verb + infinitive without to
   4 Verb + -ing
   5 Verb + preposition + -ing
   6 Verb + object + preposition + -ing

8 What is the difference in meaning between the two sentences?
   1 You don’t want them to stop reading.
   2 You don’t want them to stop to read.

9a Which of the verb patterns in Exercise 7 above do the following groups of verbs belong to?
   a) likes or dislikes
   b) recommendations
   c) intentions
   d) thought

9b Can you think of any other verbs which belong to the four groups in Exercise 9a?

Language reference and extra practice, pages 148–149

10 Use the correct verb pattern to complete sentences 1–9 in your own words. Then compare your sentences with those of a partner.
   1 [I don’t mind]
   2 My parents persuaded [I]
   3 I promised [we]
   4 Next year I really want [us]
   5 My parents always encouraged [they]
   6 I can’t stand [you]
   7 Once I blamed my friend [we]
   8 I remember [me, you]
   9 When you go out, you must remember

SPeaking

11 In groups, discuss the following statements:
   1 ‘People in the public eye should not expect to have private lives.’
   2 ‘Journalism is not a respectable profession.’
1 What do you know about Twitter, Flickr and other forms of new social media?

2 Read the article quickly and say which ‘mainstream media’ and which ‘social media’ are mentioned.

3 Read the article again and answer the following questions.

1 How were the following social media used in Mumbai?
   a) Twitter
   b) Metroblog
   c) Flickr
   d) Google
   e) Wikipedia

2 Which words does the writer use to make the text exciting?

3 Why does the ‘mainstream media’ use ‘social media’?

4a Match words 1–5 with words a–e to make collocations from the article.

1 eyewitness
2 background
3 media
4 mainstream
5 video
da) information
b) accounts
c) media
d) footage
e) analyst

4b Make sentences using the collocations above.

5a Work in groups. Which of the social media formats mentioned in the article have you used?

5b How do you feel about the use of social media for news gathering? Do you think they will replace the mainstream media in the future? Discuss your ideas.

6a Match idioms 1–6 with their meanings (a–f).

1 keep a close eye on
2 keep a low profile
3 keep an open mind
4 keep your wits about you
5 keep your fingers crossed
6 keep in with

a) get all the facts before making a judgment
b) stay alert
c) avoid attracting attention to yourself
d) stay friendly with
e) monitor very carefully
f) hope for a positive outcome

6b Complete the gaps in the sentences with the idioms from Exercise 6a.

1 Try to ________ the editor. He could help your career.
2 When you’re reporting from a war zone, you’ve got to ________.
3 We need to ________ this story. Things are changing fast.
4 Just ________ that we are the first ones to get this story.
5 It’s not clear yet if he’s guilty. We need to ________.
6 It will be hard to interview her. She tends to ________.

7a Look at the highlighted prepositional verbs in the article and complete the rule.

Prepositional verbs are the combination of a verb and a ________. 

7b Does the verb look have the same meaning in these sentences?

If not, what changes the meaning?

a) I haven’t had time to look at the news on the Internet.
b) Police are looking into the disappearance of two children.
c) His dad left him here to look after the business while he’s away.

7c Replace the words in bold with the correct form of prepositional verbs in the box.

come across    come up    get on    get over

1 Anyone who doubts the power of the social web only needs to ________ the activity on Twitter.
2 The event is highly dispersed and affects ________ very large numbers of people, it would be physically impossible for a very large news organisation to keep track of every development.
3 There are signs that the blogosphere is struggling to know what to do for the best when these sort of incidents occur.

8 Put the words in italics in the correct order.

1 The article looked exactly on Twitter that a blog a
2 I thought never much about Twitter until my son showed me how it worked.
3 The media fast-moving had dealing events the problems with.
4 Would mind story you into looking this?
5 People accuse falsely of a lot of things the media.

9 Complete the text with prepositional verbs.

Journalists need to be familiar with technical developments in the media. They shouldn’t just ________ social networking sites, they need to use them because familiarly with the tools is important. They need to ________ their sources from Facebook, MySpace and Twitter and any other type of social media source as carefully as they would verify traditional sources. They need to ________ access to private profile information that they don’t want the general public to ________ by chance. They need to ________ their time efficiently and manage their friends on social networks so they can ________ their tweets, status updates and endless emails. Although blogging and tweets may ________ conversation, journalists must be mindful that they represent more than just themselves.

10 Write a short paragraph on the following question.

Is it more important to get news fast or accurately?
UNIT 8  Journalism and media

S.C.E.N.A.R.I.O

8.4 Sailing close to the wind

SITUATION

The Daily Chronicle is a daily newspaper in Chicago. Its features articles focus on scandals in government departments or on misconduct by prominent personalities. The newspaper often sails close to the wind to get its stories and its journalists have been accused of invading people’s privacy and showing bias in their reporting. When chasing stories, the newspaper’s editors and reporters inevitably face ethical dilemmas.

1 Read the situation above. What do you think the phrase ‘often sails close to the wind’ means?

2a Read about the following dilemma that the newspaper must resolve.

The editor of the sports section of the Daily Chronicle has been offered copies of confidential emails sent by the head coach of a top baseball team to the owner of the rival team. The source of the emails wishes to be kept secret.

2b In pairs or small groups, discuss the following.

1 What are the advantages and disadvantages of running a story about the head coach based on information from the emails?

2 Should the Sports Editor publish a story about the head coach based on what he has learned?

KEY LANGUAGE: being cautious

3a List the Sports Editor, Dan, discussing the dilemma with the Chief Editor of the Daily Chronicle, Margaret Lawson. Answer the questions.

1 What reason does the Sports Editor give for wanting to buy the emails?

2 What are the Chief Editor’s reasons for not wanting to buy the emails?

3 What is the Sports Editor going to do now?

3b Being cautious List again and complete what the Chief Editor says.

1 We need to be very careful about this one. Dan … If you don’t get your facts right, he could ______________ and get substantial ________ .

2 Dan, there’s a problem with this material. We have no idea how our source got the information. Maybe he did something __________ , and if that’s the case, we could be in very ________ .

3 I don’t think our readers will thank us for running the story. It’s a very ________ issue. If we get our facts wrong, it’ll have a ________ on our reputation. We wouldn’t be able to say where we got our information from, so it would look like pure ________ on our part.

4 No, sorry, we need to __________ . I’ve got a bad feeling about it. It could land us in ________ if the emails are not genuine.

TASK: resolving ethical dilemmas

4a In pairs, read the descriptions of the ethical dilemmas below. Choose one of the situations and decide which role each of you will play.

4b Prepare for your role play. Make notes on what you’ll say. Then, role play the situation and decide what decision should be taken, with your reasons.

5 Join another pair and tell them what decision you made, with your reasons. Ask them if they agree with your decision.

6 As a group, discuss what guidelines you could give journalists faced with the kinds of dilemmas described.

The fashion show

Chief Editor or Investigative Reporter

A group of Daily Chronicle journalists attended a press lunch hosted by the fashion designer, Emilio Conti, to commemorate his 40 years in the fashion business. After the lunch, all the journalists were given a bag that contained a press kit and a box that the journalists did not open until they left the restaurant. The box contained a Rolex watch worth about $5,000, with a certificate of authenticity.

Some of the journalists from other newspapers gave the watches back. The Daily Chronicle journalists have a good relationship with Emilio Conti and don’t want to offend him. The question is: should the Chief Editor or the Chief Editor authorize the journalists to write the features story?

THE NEWSPAPER PROPRIETOR

Chief Editor or Journalist

Journalists from the Business Section of the Daily Chronicle are currently investigating the activities of a powerful international businessman. They have discovered that he is guilty of tax evasion and has also been running his company in an improper way. They wish to expose the businessman’s illegal activities. The Chief Editor, who has only been in the job six months, mentioned this to the owner of the newspaper. The owner said ‘Mr X is a good friend of mine and helped me in my career to make several important deals. I don’t want him to receive any unfavourable publicity.’ The question is: should the Chief Editor authorize the journalists to write the features story?

OTHER USEFUL PHRASES

Considering implications

It could be too risky.

It might damage our reputation.

It may be illegal.

They could take us to court.

They might take legal action.

They might sue us.

Proposing solutions

The best thing to do is …

The answer to this is to …

The way to deal with it is to …

The best way forward is to …

A CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT

Chief Editor or Political Correspondent

A politician has given some information to the Daily Chronicle’s Political correspondent about the content of a report on the state of the army’s equipment. The document is classified and the findings of the report have not been made public. Its findings are very controversial and critical of the condition of the army’s equipment. The politician told the reporter not to open the box until they left the restaurant. The box contained a press kit and a document that the journalists did not open until they left the restaurant. The document contained information about the condition of the army’s equipment.

The question is: should the journalist write an article based on such confidential information?
5 **Look at these websites for the American film star, Leonardo DiCaprio.** You are asked to write a profile of him for a film magazine. Which of the following websites do you think would be:

- the most trustworthy?
- the best sources of information for your article?
- probably not worth looking at?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.leonardodicaprio.com">Official Website</a></td>
<td>Official website of the actor with biographical information, news, photos, filmography, awards, information about his environmental causes, art gallery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.theinsider.com/celebrities/Leonardo_DiCaprio">The DiCaprio Zone</a></td>
<td>The #1 place to find everything about Leo. Includes hot pictures, movie reviews.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.theinsider.com/celebrities/Leonardo_DiCaprio">Leonardo DiCaprio at The Insider</a></td>
<td>The Insider has Leonardo DiCaprio celebrity information, news, pictures and more. Get the latest Leonardo DiCaprio news and share your interest with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://j.webring.com/hub?ring=diacapring&amp;id=3;prvw=1">Leonardo Dicaprio</a></td>
<td>The DiCaprings contains fan sites dedicated to Leonardo DiCaprio, one of the greatest actors of his generation. On these sites you will find a great deal of information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6 **What other research would you do before writing the article?**

7 **Writing Skills: a features article for a magazine or newspaper**

7 **Read the description of features articles and answer the questions.** Features articles appear regularly in newspapers and magazines. They are not front page, time-sensitive news stories. They provide information about an event, person or idea and they are usually human interest stories.

1 What features articles have you read recently?
3 Why / Why not?

8 **After choosing a catchy title for a features article, the writer must decide how to grab the reader’s attention and indicate the central idea, sometimes called the ‘angle’, of the article. Look at the four types of leads (opening sentences) below and match them to the extract (A–D) from a features article about Rupert Murdoch.**

- **Anecdote – a lead that tells a story.**
- **Summary – tells who, what, when, where, why, how.**
- **Surprising statement – stimulates interest stories.**
- **Why / Why not?**

9 **Writing Skills: a features article for a magazine or newspaper**

9 **Listen to a journalist giving some tips to a group of students on how to write a features article and make brief notes. Compare your notes with a partner.**

10 **Write a features article for a serious newspaper.** Choose one of the following tasks:

1 **Write about Rupert Murdoch, the Australian newspaper proprietor, for a serious newspaper. Use the notes on page 168. If you have time, do some more research on Rupert Murdoch before you write the article.**

2 **Do some research on a well-known personality.** Write an article on the personality for a newspaper or magazine which reports on current affairs.

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**A** Billionaire Australian, American publishing tycoon, owner of some of Britain’s most popular media and newspapers. He is the boss of News Corporation, one of the largest media organisations in the world. His name is Rupert Murdoch.

**B** Rupert Murdoch once said, ‘Can we change the world? No, but hell, we can all try.’ This is the attitude which has helped him to create one of the largest and most influential media groups in the world.

**C** He works at the age of 77, that’s all Rupert Murdoch really does. He works. That’s what brings meaning to his life. That’s what gives him pleasure.

**D** I met him in his office in New York. He was wearing a smart jacket and tie, and greeted me with great warmth. He spoke fluently and with great authority when he talked about the future of newspapers and his plans for developing his Internet business. I began by asking where his publishing career started.