

SCIE3001 – JOURNALISM MODULE

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Lecture 1 - August 2013

Assignment 3

Communicating with the media

Type: News article

Due Date: 2 Sep 13 17:00

Weight: 10%

Task Description:

You will write a 600-650 word news story in journalistic style communicating information about your scientific topic of choice to the public media. The story will be suitable for addition to your personal communication tool kit. The story will be assessed on accuracy, structure, impact, effectiveness and grammar.

CRITERIA SCIE3001 Assessment 3	Grade 7	Grade 6	Grade 5	Grade 4	Grade 3-1
<i>Structure</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The story exactly follows standard news reporting journalistic style and structure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The story closely follows standard news reporting and journalistic style and structure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The story basically follows news reporting and journalistic style and structure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The story approximates news reporting and journalistic style and structure, but needs editing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The story does not follow news reporting and journalistic style and structure.
<i>Impact/Effectiveness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The story would clearly appeal to a non-scientific audience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The story is highly likely to appeal to a non-scientific audience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The story might appeal to a non-scientific audience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The story could appeal to a non-scientific audience after further editing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The story would not appeal to a non-scientific audience.
<i>Accuracy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The story translates the information in the scientific report with complete accuracy and in every detail. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The story translates the information in the scientific report with complete accuracy and in almost all detail. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The story translates the information in the scientific report largely accurately and in almost all detail. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The story attempts to translate the information in the scientific report accurately, but is somewhat confusing, lacking in detail or needs further editing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The story does not translate the information in the scientific report accurately and is lacking in important detail.
<i>Grammar/spelling</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no spelling or grammatical errors in your story. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are between one and three spelling or grammatical errors in your story. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are between four and six spelling or grammatical errors in your story. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are seven spelling or grammatical errors in your story. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are more than seven spelling or grammatical or spelling errors in your story.

Some questions for our module:

What does a journalist actually **DO?**

Why should a scientist care?

Can journalists and scientists establish a perfect symbiotic relationship?

How can a scientist benefit from this relationship?

How can a scientist best communicate to a wider general **audience?**

Let's start by looking at journalism through the eyes of a journalist.

Rule 1: Journalism is about **COMMUNICATION**

It is **NOT** about trying to prove how literate you are, or how many adjectives you can cram into a short space.

It is **NOT** about trying to prove how clever you are.

It **IS** about **communicating** either facts (reporting), opinions or knowledge (usually of an expert or source) in a **clear and concise** fashion and in such a way that **as many people as possible** understand what points you are making, and can follow your logic.

And that rule remains valid even if the publication (print or online) in which the information is appearing is for a highly specialised

AUDIENCE.

In other words, it is the opposite of academic or scientific publication. 😊

For starters ...

Rule 2: Journalists only get one chance to make a good first impression

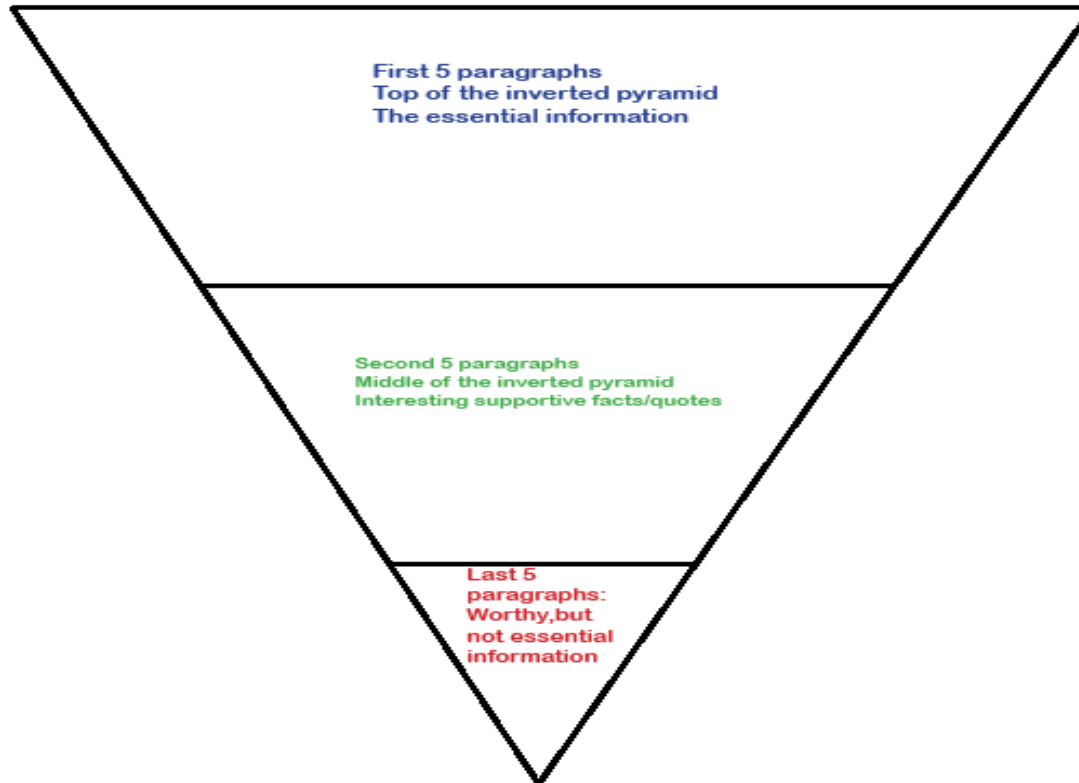
Whether it is the first few frames or 30 seconds of a video or audio, or the first few sentences of a story, the **INTRODUCTION** must be either interesting or compelling.

When you are writing an academic article for a journal, or a research paper, the devil is in the detail; the format, style and the presentation are rigidly enforced.

You might examine and critique literature, be involved in scientific research ... whatever ... but the reader/viewer will in many ways be a **CAPTIVE AUDIENCE** and will keep going to the end because they kind of **HAVE** to ...

If a journalist does not engage the reader/viewer right from the start they will quickly stop reading, disengage, click away ... in which case the story will have been a waste of time.

The Inverted Pyramid used in a 15 paragraph NEWS REPORT



Rule 3: If you don't **KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE**, you won't have one for long

So to start, you need to work out exactly **WHO** your **AUDIENCE** is and tailor all your communications and material to maximise the chance of audience engagement.

You should access the outlet and read/view the content

Thus the major motivation for the journalist is:

Getting the best story they possibly can.

They know both WHAT to write/broadcast/photograph-video and HOW to ensure their audience is most likely to engage with the content/stories they produce

This is how journalists have traditionally made a living, and the better they were at it, the more successful they were

They do this by interviewing sources – and this is partly where you come in

- Well credentialed people and experts are the best sources for most stories.
- If you have proven expertise in an area of science or technology or are involved in a research project you are a valuable source.
- But how valuable the interview is to **YOU** and **YOUR** career (as opposed to that of the journalist) is something we will be exploring further in this module.

Some good reasons

- It helps you to build your profile and your career.
- It spreads information about innovative science and technology.
- Getting the message out also helps in ensuring transparency in the use of public funds.
- It can influence policy and behavioural change.
- It can change the way the world works.
- It can help networking with scientists and those in other disciplines.

Like these scientists

<http://www.davidsuzuki.org/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tim_Flannery

You don't need to look far to see how many scientists at UQ have worked this out

<http://www.uq.edu.au/uqexperts/>

Questions?