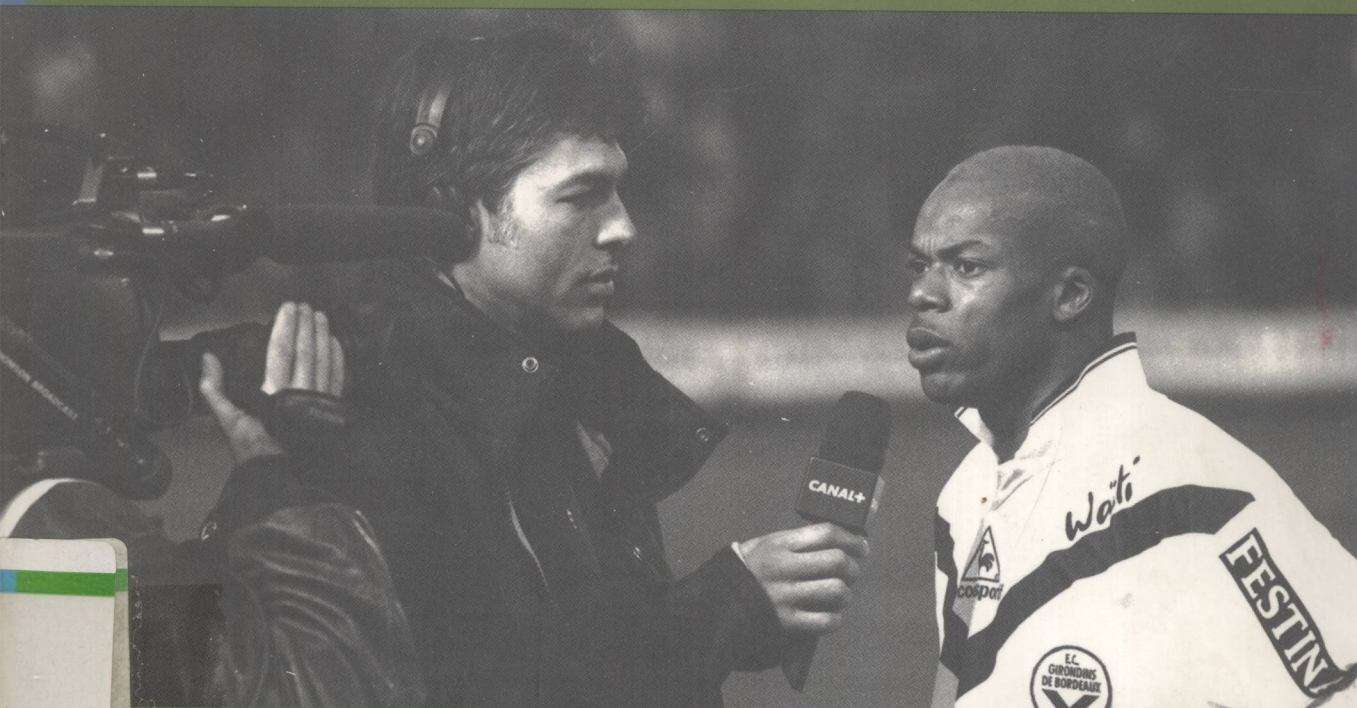




# NEWS WRITING AND REPORTING

FOR TODAY'S MEDIA

BRUCE D. ITULE • DOUGLAS A. ANDERSON



SIXTH EDITION

*News Writing and Reporting for Today's Media*, Sixth Edition, takes students on the beat; into the press box, council chambers, courthouse, to a speech and to a press conference. They are introduced to current issues such as cultural sensitivity and legal and ethical considerations and to reporters and editors who offer their down-to-earth advice. Whenever possible, professional journalists covering actual stories are used as instructional models. Students are exposed to the work of professionals while gathering the tools to follow in their footsteps. New to this edition:

- Improved and expanded examples of broadcast news writing.
- Increased coverage of online journalism in Chapter 11 and throughout the text.
- New section on civic journalism in Chapter 2.
- Expanded coverage of ethics, including "Best Practices," in Chapter 26.
- New examples throughout, including coverage of the *New York Times*' series "How Race Is Lived in America."
- Enhanced chapter on "Qualities of Good Writing," Pulitzer-Prize winning journalist Michael Gartner emphasizes the importance of rhythm and cadence.
- Expanded features chapter. Veteran National Geographic magazine staffers Carol Lutyk and John G. Mitchell offer helpful tips for writing feature stories.
- The "Where to Turn Online" sections are updated and fresh sources have been added.

#### Supplements


Instructor's Manual (0-07-249213-9)

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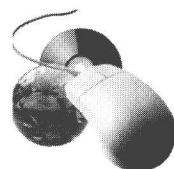
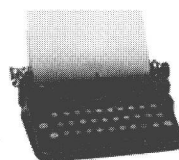
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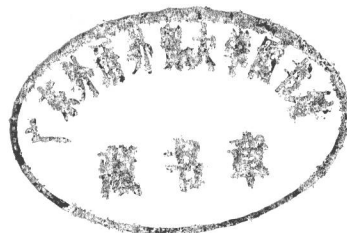
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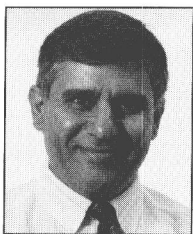
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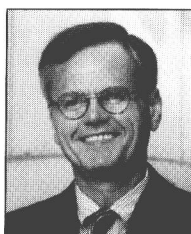
Photo by Frank Hoy



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Photo by Dave Shelly



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## PREFACE

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Five editions of *News Writing and Reporting for Today's Media* have taught students what it is like to be a news reporter and writer. Our goal has always been to make the drama of news reporting come alive, to kindle excitement while painting a realistic picture. New technologies and current events now mandate more emphasis on the impact of online reporting and the importance of media ethics and fairness. In response, we have included many new features in this sixth edition.

### New to the Sixth Edition

---

This sixth edition continues to emphasize real reporters and stories, which serve as instructional models. We have, however, updated the first-person accounts and examples of stories throughout.

We have also revised, expanded and reorganized many sections; and we have updated the Workbook and Instructor's Manual.

In addition to these changes, the sixth edition has these new features:

- *Enhanced chapter on Qualities of Good Writing.* Pulitzer-Prize winning journalist Michael Gartner emphasizes the importance of rhythm and cadence.
- *New section on the circle style of writing.* This popular writing form, particularly for feature stories, is called "writing in a circle" or "coming full circle." It is discussed in Chapter 5, Organizing a News Story.
- *New section on the handling of information and quotes from Internet and e-mail sources.* Guidelines are included in Chapter 7, Quotations and Attribution.
- *Expanded Features chapter.* Veteran *National Geographic* magazine staffers

Carol Lutyk and John G. Mitchell offer helpful tips for writing feature stories.

- *Updated chapter on Speeches and Press Conferences.* The chapter now features U.S. President George W. Bush and his choice for director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.
- *More detailed chapter on Broadcast Writing.* Fresh advice on and examples of news stories for radio are provided.
- *Enlarged chapter on Multicultural Reporting.* The Pulitzer-Prize winning series published in *The New York Times*—"How Race Is Lived in America"—is examined, largely through the eyes of one of the catalysts of the project.
- *Beefed up chapter on Business and Other Specialties.* Longtime environment writer John G. Mitchell of *National Geographic* magazine talks about the "two types of writing about the environment."
- *New sections in the Law chapter.* Material on campus rights and restrictions is included along with a discussion of individuals suing the media who increasingly are focusing their efforts on the news gathering tactics of journalists.
- *Expanded concluding chapter on media ethics and fairness.* A new section features practical advice from Bob Haiman's Best Practices for Newspaper Journalists.
- *Updated and expanded Where to Turn Online sections.* New material throughout the text provides help with online services.
- *New examples throughout reflect recent major stories.*

## Key Retained Features

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Proud as we are of the new features of the sixth edition, we have not compromised features of the text that have appealed to students and instructors for five editions.

- *First-person accounts from reporters and editors.* We enhance the practical aspects of the text with actual reporting situations. We show how concepts and principles work in real situations, and we explore the problems, philosophical questions and issues that journalists face on the job.
- *Numerous current examples of stories from a wide range of print and online newspapers.* We use examples of stories from large metros, medium-circulation dailies, small-circulation dailies and student newspapers from geographically diverse markets of all sizes.
- *Detailed, comprehensive discussions of the rudiments of news writing and reporting.* We provide chapters on leads, story organization, developing a news story from day to day, interviewing, quotes and attribution, qualities of good writing and gathering information.
- *Checklists throughout the text provide practical guidance at a glance.* Material in the checklists is useful on the job.
- *Comprehensive discussions of special kinds of reporting.* After we set forth the rudiments of writing, reporting and gathering information, we provide chapters on writing obituaries and news releases as well as covering speeches and press conferences, weather and disasters, multicultural developments and issues, police and fire departments, local government, courts, sports and business news.
- *Thorough instruction in areas that often receive only cursory treatment in other texts.* We discuss the use of survey

methods to gather information for news stories, electronic retrieval strategies and legal and ethical issues.

## Organization of the Text

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One thing we learned as textbook authors is that virtually every school has a unique approach to teaching news writing and reporting. Because the approaches are so diverse, we wrote a textbook that is flexible enough to meet the needs of most institutions and instructors.

*News Writing and Reporting for Today's Media* can be used in one-semester courses in news writing, in second-semester courses in reporting or in two-semester courses in news writing and reporting. Each chapter is self-contained, and the chapters can be used in any combination.

### Part One: The Fourth Estate

Part One, The Fourth Estate introduces the contemporary news media and examines how news is viewed by reporters and editors.

1. A new breed of reporter is emerging: a journalist adept at ferreting out valuable information from electronic sources. Chapter 1 explores how reporters cover the news and examines the primary jobs at newspapers.
2. Chapter 2 describes the evolution of news treatment. It outlines the traditional criteria of newsworthiness, examines the factors that affect news treatment and presents guidelines for pitching news stories to editors.

### Part Two: The Rudiments

Part Two, The Rudiments, is the heart of the text. It provides instruction on the qualities of good writing, writing summary and special leads, organizing stories, developing stories, quoting and attributing, and features.

3. Chapter 3 features advice on writing from Pulitzer-Prize winning Michael Gartner and from Roy Peter Clark of the Poynter Institute for Media Studies in St. Petersburg, Fla. Then, examples are used to illustrate each of Robert Gunning's "Ten Principles of Clear Writing."
4. In Chapter 4, students are shown how to write summary leads. In the first section of this chapter, the underlying principles—including the primary elements *who*, *what*, *why*, *when*, *where* and *how*—are explained. In the second section, specific guidelines for lead paragraphs are given.
5. Chapter 5 discusses alternatives to the summary lead, explaining and providing examples of narrative, contrast, staccato, direct address, question, quote and "none of the above" leads. It also gives specifics on writing these leads, emphasizing the need for strong, vivid verbs.
6. The sixth chapter shows students how to organize news stories. It describes the steps involved in writing inverted-pyramid stories and also takes a look at the hourglass style and circle style of writing.
7. Chapter 7 discusses the development of a news story from day to day or week to week. It explains how editors and reporters determine which stories should or should not be developed beyond a single item, and it describes the phases of a developing story. As an example, the chapter uses a massive manhunt for an escaped convict, which dragged on for 55 days and brought hundreds of police and reporters into Arizona's mountain forests.
8. Students learn from Chapter 8 that strong, vivid quotations can make an ordinary news story special. This chapter describes types of quotations—direct, partial and indirect—and

discusses when and how to quote. It also takes up attribution and punctuation of quotations.

9. Chapter 9 begins by distinguishing between hard news and soft news and describing types of features: personality profiles, human interest stories, trend stories, in-depth stories and backgrounders. It points out that the main function of features is to humanize, add color, educate, entertain, illuminate and analyze. It then provides advice on writing features: finding a theme, developing the story, using effective transitions and so forth.

### Part Three: Gathering Information

Part Three, Gathering Information, gives students instruction in the basics of the reporting process. The chapters in this section explain how to interview, how to make maximum use of electronic databases and how to use surveys to gather information.

10. Chapter 10 underscores the importance of interviewing; it covers doing the related research, setting up interviews and conducting them. It shows students how to structure the interview, ask the right questions at the right times, establish rapport, take notes and so on.
11. Reporters increasingly are mining online databases, searching the Internet, building computer spreadsheets and using e-mail for collaboration and interviews. Chapter 11, written by Steve Doig of Arizona State University and Nora Paul of the University of Minnesota, shows students how they can strengthen their stories by making use of the latest tools. The chapter discusses how to conduct online research and provides tips on applying a healthy skepticism to the information gathered.
12. Chapter 12 explores the important concept of "precision journalism," examining the growth of survey research

as a way of gathering information for news stories. This chapter addresses basic considerations involved in conducting surveys: formulating and testing questions, developing samples, collecting and analyzing data and writing the story. Chapter 12 also presents rules for reporting polls.

## **Part Four: Basic Assignments**

Part Four, Basic Assignments, takes up fundamental stories that reporters often encounter: obituaries, rewriting of news releases, weather, disasters, speeches and press conferences. It also examines the fundamentals of broadcast writing.

13. Chapter 13 stresses that obituaries are among the best-read items in newspapers and that reporters should strive not only to provide the basic facts but also to humanize obits with anecdotes and quotations. This chapter outlines the information typically given in obituaries and examines policies of various newspapers regarding names, nicknames, courtesy titles, ages, addresses and causes of death.
14. Chapter 14 discusses news releases and gives tips on evaluating them—deciding if they are of interest to the audience—and on rewriting them.
15. In Chapter 15, the student is shown how to prepare for speeches and press conferences, how to cover them and how to organize the information into a coherent story.
16. Chapter 16 provides guidelines for writing about weather and disasters. It describes types of weather stories: forecasts, travel conditions and closings, record-breaking weather, unusual weather and seasonal and year-end coverage. It also takes a look at AP style for weather stories. The chapter illustrates disaster coverage by examining reporting of the crash of an airliner in Texas.
17. Chapter 17 stresses that, although broadcast writing differs in several respects from print writing, the same principles of clarity and conciseness apply to both. This chapter looks at the basics of broadcast style and broadcast writing and illustrates how to write for radio and television. It also features advice from working professionals.

## **Part Five: Beats**

Part Five, Beats, takes a look at the writing and reporting techniques that are necessary for covering typical beats: multicultural affairs, city government, police and fire departments, courts and sports.

18. Chapter 18 stresses how important it is for students to be sensitive to cultures, ethnic groups, religions and lifestyles different from their own. Reporters and editors provide plenty of useful advice on how journalists can improve coverage of minority affairs.
19. In Chapter 19, coverage of city government is explored. This chapter describes forms of municipal governments (mayor-council, council-manager and commission) and provides advice on covering city council meetings and the city budget process.
20. Chapter 20 presents strategies for effective coverage of police and fire departments. It emphasizes the importance of understanding how these organizations are structured, developing sources within them and reading and using departmental records. Advice on writing stories about arrests, accidents and rapes is given. A reporter's day on the police and fire beat—a day that includes coverage of a major fire—is described. Chapter 20 ends with suggestions for beat reporters.

21. Our next beat is the courts. In Chapter 21, students are introduced to the federal and state judicial systems and to the importance of mastering judicial structures, learning terminology and writing stories in understandable language. The basic criminal process and the basic civil process are described, and a criminal case is traced, step by step, from arrest to verdict. Advice is given on reporting both criminal and civil cases.
22. The final beat in Part Five is sports. Chapter 22 explores the evolution of sports writing and contemporary trends in sports coverage and writing styles. It gives practical advice on reporting sports—working with statistics and writing games up for critical readers—but it emphasizes that sports writing extends beyond merely reporting games to coverage of contract negotiations, courtroom battles and boardroom decisions.

## Part Six: Advanced Assignments

Part Six, Advanced Assignments, looks at in-depth and investigative reporting, business news and other specialized reporting.

23. Chapter 23 explains that in-depth and investigative articles provide comprehensive accounts that go well beyond a basic news story. Students are shown, first, how to investigate these stories—how to “smell” a story, research it, conduct interviews and if necessary go undercover. Then they are shown how to write the story—how to find the best lead, how to use anecdotes and observations and how to tie the story together with a logical thread.
24. Chapter 24 explores business news and other special reporting areas. Students are given instruction on writing news and feature stories in business, technology and the environment, three areas that are representative of specialty reporting.

## Part Seven: Beyond the Writing

Part Seven, Beyond the Writing, examines legal and ethical ramifications of reporting.

25. Chapter 25 introduces students to several legal issues that are of particular concern to reporters. After a discussion of the First Amendment and the press, it considers libel, protection of sources and the question of fair trial versus free press. Landmark cases are discussed, and practical guidelines are provided.
26. Our final chapter—Chapter 26—focuses on journalistic ethics and fairness; it stresses that, increasingly, society is calling for accountability in journalism. This chapter notes that, as technology has advanced at warp speed, journalists have found themselves on the hot seat of public opinion and that the movement to extricate them from the swamp of public opinion has taken on a sense of urgency. The chapter emphasizes that the country’s newspaper editors have placed credibility and fairness at the top of their agendas. The chapter includes a discussion of authoritarian and libertarian press systems and the “social responsibility” theory, and then takes up public criticism of the press and the response of the press to that criticism. It examines codes of ethics and some of the most important ethical issues facing journalists today: fairness and objectivity, misrepresentation by reporters, privacy versus the public’s right to know, conflicts of interest and journalistic arrogance.

## Appendixes

We provide three important features as appendixes. Appendix A provides the Gannett Newspaper Division’s Principles of Ethical Conduct for Newsrooms. Appendix B gives many of the style rules of The Associated

Press. And the Glossary (Appendix C) defines key terms used in the text.

## Supplements

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We have written an accompanying Workbook with exercises based on real news events. In addition to providing writing exercises, each chapter of the Workbook contains review questions for the corresponding chapter in the text. For instructors whose students are using the Workbook, we have also written an Instructor's Manual. Interlink, Internet and Web Online Resources for Mass Communication Students, by Joseph Bridges, Ph.D., Malone College, is a resource guide available at the McGraw-Hill Mass Communication home page: [www.mhhe.com/media](http://www.mhhe.com/media).

## Acknowledgments

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Some of the journalists interviewed for this book have moved to other jobs. References to them, however, remain within the context of their jobs at the time their articles were published or at the time they were interviewed.

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*Bruce D. Itule*

*Douglas A. Anderson*

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