

Covering a Breaking News Story

Second course, First grading period, Week 4

Covering events as they unfold is a service broadcasters are uniquely equipped to provide. In an emergency or crisis, the ability to go live can bring needed information instantly. Dramatic live events also can become shared cultural experiences, from sports competitions to events as somber as 9/11. Students who learn to cover a breaking story will learn to apply sound news judgment to events, develop their analytical and reportorial skills, and become better critics of what they see and hear from the media.

The core lesson was written and provided by Kitty Eisele, NPR producer.



Enduring Understanding

Students need to be able to evaluate the significance of an event to determine what information the public needs or may want to know immediately. As journalists they need to know how to find accurate facts and sources and how to present these in a way that is credible, useful and appropriate to the situation.



Essential Question

How does one gather and present information as a story unfolds?



Objectives and Outcome

- Students will learn to assess events for immediate news value.
- Students will understand the unplanned nature and the elements of a “breaking news” story.
- Students will practice the process of gathering and presenting information as a story unfolds.
- Students will develop a list of contacts for future reporting.



Suggested Time

One week



Resources and Materials

Teacher script of “Ethical Decisions and Pressing Deadlines,” an unfolding, breaking news story. If an actual unfolding news story is not available to use, this script may be used to simulate the discovery process and stimulate discussion.

Pre-recorded video or audiotape of a breaking news story or a timely story that can be treated as “breaking.”

Taped press conference or news event. C-SPAN (www.c-span.org/) has live streams of C-SPAN radio and archives, including Lyndon Johnson White House Tapes and American Political Archives). NPR (www.npr.org) often archives White House and Pentagon press conferences as well as regular breaking news and updates; BBC (www.bbc.co.uk/) provides news alerts for breaking news as well as archived stories; and the CNN Web site sometimes archives stories produced during breaking or significant events – 2006 London bombings, Supreme Court nominations, mine disasters.

Web sites for local government, as well as Fox-TV, CNN, local radio and NPR member stations, as resources for information and as examples of what is considered “breaking news” in different media and news organizations.

Today’s Front Pages (www.newseum.org/todaysfrontpages/) from 38 countries and every state are provided by the Newseum. A selection of U.S. and international front page coverage of breaking news events is in the archives, arranged by event. These might be used as a comparison with radio coverage or as a source of information for students to use to practice script writing.

News and Audio in 33 Languages (www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/languages) from the British Broadcasting Corporation’s World Service. Radio broadcasts in Arabic, Persian, Portuguese, Spanish and Urdu as well as English.



Procedure

Distinguishing and Defining “Breaking News”

1. Review the qualities that make a story news. See “What Is News?” student handout, in “All That’s News,” First course, First grading period.
2. Play an audio or videotape of a breaking news event and ask students what is happening, what is important about the story, and to whom the information would be important. Why is the story handled in a different manner than a typical news story? Clarify the distinction between “breaking news” and “news coverage.” “Breaking or non-routine news is defined as hard, unplanned news that takes the newsroom by surprise, such as a plane crash or earthquake,” according to NewsLab. “Breaking news cannot be predicted.”

Ask students to identify breaking news stories they remember seeing or hearing. These stories may include an accident of great magnitude (oil spill, coal mine collapse), the death of a prominent person, an outbreak of violence, a great flood or an approaching tornado. What about Presidential announcements and press conferences?

Ask students was the most important information given in the breaking stories they heard. What kind of information do people need in an emergency? Is a “breaking news” story always about an emergency? Can it be a happy story? Although good news is less likely to be “breaking news,” examples include announcements of peace accords, the election of a new president or pope and the end of a storm watch.

3. What makes an event worth “going live” or treating in real time? What are the characteristics of a breaking news story? Ask students to suggest qualities. Some characteristics include:

- An event that is ongoing or dramatic, happening now;
- News that immediately advances an on-going story;
- The need to convey information immediately to the public;
- The story’s significance to a wide group of people;
- News of such interest that it cannot or should not hold because of its potential consequences.

You may wish to play a segment from a breaking news event that retains a place in history. Classic examples include the Hindenburg disaster broadcast on radio, the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and related televised events and coverage of September 11, 2001, by all media. The Newseum Web site provides *Running Toward Danger: Stories Behind the Breaking News of 9/11* (www.newseum.org/runningtowarddanger/) that includes radio coverage. If you use the tape of Herb Morrison reporting on the 1938 Hindenburg disaster found on Old Time Radio (www.otr.com/hindenburg.html), note his word pictures.

Recap elements that make a story worth treating as “breaking news.”

What can you report when the story is still happening?

4. Ask students to recall, either from the tape or from memory, what they saw and heard during a breaking news story. What was shown? What was said? Who was interviewed? Did they get adequate information? What information might be missing? What could not be shown on television?

5. Ask for an example of an event in the community or school that would deserve breaking news treatment. Perhaps it’s a severe storm or flood, a visit by the president, announcement of a new principal or your school’s National Merit finalists, an accident in the chemistry lab, collapse of an athlete during practice, food poisoning in the cafeteria or a military send-off. Choose the story and ask students what questions they would need to answer first, before deciding to go live.

Students need practice in assessing the significance of a story, the audience to whom it matters, and the information a report should provide. Questions might include:

- Do they have the facts?
- Have they confirmed them with a second source?
- Does the story involve the safety of all students or only one group or an individual?
- Do parents need this information immediately?

This practice gives them experience in making judgments about news value, and generates a list of basic questions they can apply in all situations. (Who, what, where of the story. Why does this matter? Where is the story going next?)

If a breaking news story is not available, use the script (“Ethical Decisions and Pressing Deadlines”) provided for teachers. Follow the suggested steps for revealing new information. Students will determine what should be broadcast or what requires more research/interviews/confirmation. Students will practice writing news scripts and short news spots.

6. The instructor should assign a different breaking event to four or five groups of students. Members of each group should define how they would cover the imaginary story: Sources they could call for information (government officials, relevant individuals), whom they should interview, what questions they should ask, Web sites they should check, and where they should send a reporter to cover the story

Have students present their answers to each other. Compare what kinds of experts and questions different stories require. What follow-up do others suggest? How can they add more depth to the story?

On the Ground

7. Students should share the steps they defined, and together, create a list of steps to follow for effective breaking coverage.

One important element is where a reporter can go to be near a story. Ask each group where they would position a staff reporter. Consider the reporter's safety, her access to officials, her ability to relay information (i.e., weather conditions may interrupt phone signals) and what an audience will get from having a reporter on the scene. Where is the best place from which to tell the story? [Safety concerns are very real. If a student journalist is injured while covering a story for the school radio station or class, is she insured? One family threatened to sue a school and adviser when their son, a student photographer, was injured on the 50-yard line covering a football game.]

Students could interview a journalist who covered a story. How did he or she deal with the dangers involved?

8. Working in small groups again, ask students to create a plan to cover the story they were assigned. There are several configurations for these groups. One way to organize them to role-play is:

- Group A — The managing editor, a producer, two editors
- Group B — Two to three reporters, one or two researchers
- Group C — One or two anchors at the network, one or two researchers
- Group D — Two or three audio engineers (if working with a TV station, two or three videographers).

Depending on the size of your class, other students could be assigned to be the listeners – serving as a reminder of what the public would want to know.

Each group should discuss how it will report the event: Who will write copy for the anchors? Who will decide where the reporters should go? Who will be interviewed? What questions do they need to answer? Where else could reporters go to flesh out the story? Who takes in all the information? Who fact-checks? If conditions in the field are dangerous, who should be concerned about the safety of reporters and engineers/videographers? Does the public want to see a reporter at an active crime scene or standing in the middle of hurricane-force winds?

It is important to think through these roles to prepare for covering an actual situation.

Reporting the Story

9. If time and events allow, complete all of the following steps in the lesson or apply them to the “Ethical Decisions and Pressing Deadlines” scenario. Using the same groups and stories or imagining a new breaking news event in their school or community, students work in groups again. If you have an event in your school or community that calls for breaking news coverage, use it rather than a simulation.

Students should draft a two-minute script that includes text for the anchor, copy for the reporter and a recap of the situation. Students who don’t write for this assignment should role play a news job – editor, researcher – and explain what they will be doing to help produce the story. They might consider off-air activities – preparing graphics, maps and relevant information for posting on the station’s Web site or planning further coverage. Whenever possible use tape in the report.

Another consideration – the tone of the announcer. What do you think is important to convey in an emergency? In a sports victory? In an uncertain situation? Describe how an announcer should sound and what he or she might want to emphasize or avoid during live coverage. What’s important about the delivery? How does the audio or commentary make the story more interesting, more informative or perhaps more frightening? How will students sound in their broadcasts?

10. If time allows, some or all of the groups should present their packages to the class. Give no longer than two class periods to prepare and present each package to make this experience as close to breaking, fast-paced production as possible. After completing group presentations, have other students comment on the accuracy, balance, and depth of coverage as well as technical aspects of production.

Weeks later when real school or accessible local news breaks, have students drop everything to cover it. This keeps their broadcast emergency skills sharp. You prepared them to cover the unexpected.

Alternative Views and Other Approaches to This Assignment

11. Remember the characteristics of breaking news. Now name some stories that might not share these characteristics, but could also be treated as breaking news (Police car chases are commonly covered live in California; extreme weather; sports events; parades). Why are these sometimes important to cover live? What do they provide the public?

12. Why is it important to distinguish “breaking news” from regular news coverage? NewsLab conducted research of 1,008 hours of news coverage over two months in 2004, February (ratings period) and September (non-ratings period) of cable news providers. See “News Alert!” (www.newslab.org/research/newsalert.htm) for the study. NewsLab concluded too many stories were labeled “breaking news”: “Labeling a story as breaking raises a question of credibility for the individual news outlets. Can viewers trust news outlets to emphasize the stories that are immediately important to them? If the practitioners cannot define breaking news for viewers consistently, viewers are sent conflicting messages. The difficulty lies then in viewers trying to establish for themselves what stories are important and relevant.”

It's Breaking – But is it News? On television a “breaking news” banner or crawl on a screen or a sound montage is sometimes used to grab the viewing and listening public’s attention. How do you react when someone says, “We have breaking news”? Is this kind of coverage over-used? What are your guidelines for when live coverage is most important?

13. Give students “Say It Again: We Have Breaking News.” While students wait for their turn to be recorded, have them practice reading the script. After they have rehearsed each statement, they should record three of them. Have groups of 3-5 students listen to each other’s recording. Select the ones that are most effective and “professional.” Ask each group to share their best of the bunch. Why are they good? What tone was appropriate and why?



Homework

Assign students readings in their textbook(s) about breaking news and its coverage.

After groups have been assigned a breaking news story, ask students to prepare for the next day’s class by listing three important steps they need to take to cover a breaking story. These can include questioning the story’s relevance, deciding what segment of their listeners needs information and how soon, fact-checking before going to air, weighing the circumstances around an event, and planning where to station reporters.

There should also be a discussion of the advancing of the story after it breaks. What would you do next and why?



Assessment

Class participation and involvement in the group project preparation should be considered. The final breaking news project should be evaluated for accuracy, balance of sources, voicing and technical skills exhibited.



Academic Content Standards

Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes. (Standard 4, NCTE/IRA Standards for the English Language Arts)

Compare and contrast how media genres (nightly news, newmagazines, documentaries, Internet) cover the same event. (DCPS English Language Arts, Media, 9.M.1)

Analyze visual or aural techniques used in a media message for a particular audience and evaluate their effectiveness. (DCPS English Language Arts, Media, 9.M.2)

Analyze the effect on the reader’s or viewer’s emotions of text and image in print journalism, and images, sound, and text in electronic journalism, distinguishing techniques used in each to achieve these effects. (DCPS English Language Arts, Media, 10.M.2)



Industry Standards and Expectations

Over-the-air radio broadcasters, large and small, representing diverse localities and perspectives, have strived to present programming of the highest quality to their local communities pursuant to standards of excellence and responsibility. (Statement of Principles of Radio and Television Broadcasters Issued by The Board of Directors of The National Association of Broadcasters)

Each broadcaster should exercise responsible and careful judgment in the selection of material for broadcast. At the same time each broadcast licensee must be vigilant in exercising and defending its rights to program according to its own judgments and to the programming choices of its audiences. This often may include the presentation of sensitive or controversial material. (Statement of Principles of Radio and Television Broadcasters Issued by The Board of Directors of The National Association of Broadcasters)

The Broadcast Engineer will guard against conditions that are dangerous or threatening to life, limb or property on work for which he or she is responsible, or if he or she is not responsible, will promptly call such conditions to the attention of those who are responsible. (Section 11, Relations with Clients and Employers, Canons of Ethics, The Society of Broadcast Engineers)

Violence, physical or psychological, should only be portrayed in a responsible manner and should not be used exploitatively. Presentation of the details of violence should avoid the excessive, the gratuitous and the instructional. (Statement of Principles of Radio and Television Broadcasters Issued by The Board of Directors of The National Association of Broadcasters)

Say It Again: We Have Breaking News

Practice reading the sentences, intro phrases and scripts aloud and then record it. Be sure to use the correct pronunciation. After determining the best pace, tone and emphasis for each phrase/sentence, select three of the sentences, two of the intros and one script to record. When you are finished, give your tape to a group of your classmates and teacher to evaluate.

Sentences

1. Virginia schools in Loudoun, Prince William, Fauquier and Rappahannock counties will close today at noon. Early morning rain has rapidly changed to snowfall.
2. Two miners trapped in a Tasmanian mine a half mile underground for 15 days have been rescued.
3. A tornado has just touched down in LaPlata, Maryland. Warnings have been issued for Anne Arundel, Talbot and Dorchester counties.
4. Two American bald eagles have produced a third. The latest addition to their family arrived at 6 a.m. The eagles who built their nest on a branch overlooking Central Park are a big off-Broadway hit.
5. A 14-year-old Baltimore student was electrocuted in a city park after she leaned on a fence to stretch before a baseball game.
6. Two men have just escaped on foot in Annapolis after a van carrying them to prison overturned. They are armed and considered dangerous.
7. Three students have been denied special accommodations to take the SATs. The school is planning an appeal.
8. People are leaving their homes and offices between the inner loop and Glenarden. The evacuation was ordered because of a chemical spill on the Beltway.
9. Wildfires continue to rage this morning in the Sierra Madres. Smoldering brush fires kept one thousand people from their homes last night near Daytona Beach in Florida.
10. President Bush has nominated Samuel Alito to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Intros to Breaking News

1. This just in ...
2. WXYZ has just learned that ...
3. According to a reporter at City High ...
4. We interrupt this program to ...

Scripts

#1

We interrupt this program for breaking news. An accident on the outer loop of the Beltway at the Route 50 West interchange has closed the Beltway from the mixing bowl west and Chain Bridge Road south. The trailer spilled 200 pounds of toxic waste. Residents in a one mile radius are asked to evacuate their homes. Classes have been cancelled at Northern Virginia Community College's Annandale campus. We go now to Mary East for more details.

IN: Cleaning crews have arrived to assess the damage ...

#2 Legislators in Topeka voted today to prohibit the marriage of anyone under the age of 15. Now Kansans will have to get permission from a district court judge if they are 15. Forget it if you are younger. Sixteen and 17-year-olds can marry with the permission of a parent OR if they can get a legal guardian and a judge to consent OR if they can persuade both parents and any legal guardian to agree that marriage is in their best interest.

#3 ... (MUSIC: SPANISH THEME SONG ["NO MORE," A TANGO] ... FADES)

ANNOUNCER THREE: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. From the Meridian Room in the Park Plaza Hotel in New York City, we bring you the music of Ramón Raquello and his orchestra. With a touch of the Spanish, Ramón Raquello leads off with "La Cumparsita."

("LA CUMPARSITA" STARTS PLAYING, THEN QUICKLY FADES OUT)

ANNOUNCER TWO: Ladies and gentlemen, we interrupt our program of dance music to bring you a special bulletin from the Intercontinental Radio News. At twenty minutes before eight, central time, Professor Farrell of the Mount Jennings Observatory, Chicago, Illinois, reports observing several explosions of incandescent gas, occurring at regular intervals on the planet Mars. The spectroscope indicates the gas to be hydrogen and moving towards the earth with enormous velocity. Professor Pierson of the Observatory at Princeton confirms Farrell's observation, and describes the phenomenon as, quote, "like a jet of blue flame shot from a gun," unquote. We now return you to the music of Ramón Raquello, playing for you in the Meridian Room of the Park Plaza Hotel, situated in downtown New York.

(MUSIC PLAYS FOR A FEW MOMENTS UNTIL PIECE ENDS... SOUND OF APPLAUSE)

From The War of the Worlds by H.G. Wells as performed by Orson Welles and the Mercury Theatre on the Air, October 30, 1938.

Ethical Decisions and Pressing Deadlines

Step One. *Present the following scenario to the class:*

You are a reporter for your high school radio station. You are friends with the editor of your school's newspaper. She shares a story that they will run in the next day's newspaper. Do you confirm the story, get more information and broadcast it as a breaking news story in your late afternoon news show?

Questions that may be discussed include:

1. Do you consider the newspaper as your competition?
2. Is it an ethical breach if you use information given to you by a fellow journalist to scoop them?
3. Is your duty to your friend, the school's radio station or to the student body?

Step Two. *After discussion of Step One, present this information to students.*

The editor of the student newspaper related these sketchy details of the story the newspaper planned to print in its next issue (to be printed that night and distributed the next day to the student body):

1. A member of the school's football/basketball/field hockey/tennis team and two other seniors went to a nearby lake after winning the most recent game/match.
2. They drank beer.
3. Another student who happened to be at the lake took pictures of them wading in the lake and waving the beer bottles.
4. Swimming in the lake is forbidden after sunset.
5. What other information do you need before you will consider airing the story?
6. Do you think the story should be aired? Is this news? Why or why not?

Step Three. *After discussion of Step Two, present this information to students.*

The newspaper runs its story with a picture. Newspapers are placed in distribution boxes throughout the school for students to get their copies. Students who pick up a copy are talking about the picture and wondering if the students will get in trouble for swimming in the lake and/or drinking beer. You hear several students talking in the halls that they plan to steal copies of the newspapers from the distribution boxes because they think the story and accompanying picture are unfair.

1. Do you tell anyone of their conversation?
2. When the principal comes on the school intercom to announce that approximately 800 copies of the student newspaper have been taken and asks for information, do you talk with the principal? Do you go to the students you overheard and confront them?
3. Do you report the theft on your afternoon news show? If yes, who will you interview?
4. If yes, what information do you need? For example, is taking more than one copy of the student newspaper "theft"? How much does it cost to print 800 copies of the student newspaper?
5. Do you report the overheard conversation on your afternoon news show? Do you report names, if you do report the conversation?
6. If someone tells you who took the newspapers, do you air that information?

Step Four. *After discussion of Step Three, present this information to students.*

The parents of the three students who were photographed are upset. They believe the school newspaper has committed libel and the student radio has committed slander against their sons and daughter.

1. What is libel and what is slander?
2. Was the story accurate? Complete?
3. What information do you have to support that your student media had a right to broadcast and print the information?
4. Does your student radio station broadcast a story about the parents' complaints?

Step Five. *After discussion of Step Four, present this information to students.*

You have confirmed that the three students were drinking beer and were splashing through the water at the edge of the lake after 9 p.m. The lake is part of a public beach. All three students are seventeen years old. You also learn that the student who took the picture later joined the three students in drinking beer and splashing about in the water.

1. Do you have a follow-up story, including this additional information?
2. Should you no longer report on the case since the school administration and local police are considering disciplinary action?
3. Does a responsible student press report a story that may reflect poorly on fellow students?
4. Does a responsible student press have a duty to follow-up on all stories? If not, which ones make the cut?
5. Do you consider any stage of this story worthy of being called "breaking news"?
6. Do you interview every student involved?
7. What do you say if someone declines an interview?

Writing an Intro for a Breaking News Story

Second course, First grading period, Weeks 4-5

Breaking news by definition moves fast. The most up-to-the-minute important information needs to be ascertained and communicated clearly, without hype, and with a sense of calm professionalism. The intro needs to communicate what is happening and it needs to set up more detailed information that will be covered in a news spot or wrap, a host interview, a live feed, or a piece. The intro is often written on a very tight deadline.

We suggest use of this lesson and activity after the “We Have Breaking News” lesson.



Enduring Understanding

Listeners expect news to be accurate and communicated clearly.



Essential Question

What is involved in the production of breaking news? How does its introduction on air, support and update the information available?



Objectives and Outcome

- Students will write an intro to a breaking news story and practice its delivery.
- Students will be able to place the intro to a breaking news story in context of the unfolding nature of breaking news.
- Students will understand the importance of accuracy in all news coverage, including the breaking news story.



Time

Three to four days



Resources and Materials

AP wire copy, CNN, C-Span, NPR newscasts.



Procedure

1. Differentiate between the duties of the anchor (host) and reporter. In larger stations, several individuals may perform these duties. The anchor and/or producer provide coordination for the flow of a newscast. The reporter, as the frontline person who is covering the event, provides accurate details for a specific news story. The reporter often writes the intro that the host uses on air.

2. Review the basic characteristics of spot news (“The News Wrap,” First course, First grading period, Week 7) and the difference between a hard and soft lede (“News Vocabulary”). Divide students into pairs and give each pair a list of story details. This list may be derived from an actual news story that is unfolding or has happened in the past. Ask students to identify the most important facts and discuss this story. What specifically makes this breaking news? How many of the 5 W’s and H (who, what, where, when, why and how) are known? Organize the remaining story details in descending order.
3. Discuss how this story will be covered as a news spot, a wrap, an interview, an audio feed? Be as specific as possible about the content.
 - What resources are available now? The news must go out immediately.
 - Given the time constraints, which choice is best and why?
 - How do you keep up with this unfolding story as the news cycle continues?
4. An intro may be the standard or usual material used to introduce a program or specific segments within a program in a series. In addition to this stock intro, there are intros that in 2-3 sentences summarize the facts, letting listeners know what is taking place. You have the who, what, where and when to define the situation at the top. What do we know about this unexpected event?
5. Ask pairs of students to write an intro for their breaking story. They need to consider the importance of details and relevancy to their audience. You may need to review the difference between print and broadcast ledes.

As students write the intro, they need to ask themselves:

- Is the news clearly stated up front?
 - Is the tone correct for what is happening?
 - Is it complete?
 - Does the intro set up clearly what will follow on air for further coverage? (For example, if the intro sets up a live press conference, does it identify clearly what the audience is about to hear, why, where, and who will be speaking.)
 - Have we avoided redundancy? There is not enough time to repeat the same information.
 - Have we used the active voice?
 - Have we followed the one sentence, one idea guideline?
 - Is it written for the ear?
 - Is the reporter correctly identified by full name?
6. When each pair has finished their intros of five to six lines, have them use “Writing an Intro for a Breaking News Story Checklist.”
 7. The intro should be prepared in proper radio script format. Mark the script for on-air broadcast.
 8. After this draft is completed, ask each pair to practice delivery. Both students need to rehearse on-air delivery. Students should practice reading for the ear. While one person is reading, the other should time it. The intro should be between 20 and 30 seconds. If it is too long, when both read it, they must revise and edit the script.

9. When they have the script within the required time range and they have rehearsed it, both members of the pair should record the intro. As the anchor, each should read for understanding.



Homework

Have students listen to TV and radio broadcasts for breaking news. List two stories they heard and the details in the intro that were most important. Describe in a brief paragraph how the story was covered once the intro set it up. Evaluate how well the intro set up the coverage. Have students read the newspaper and select and clip a Page One news story. They should write the intro presentation of that story for radio broadcast then bring the clipping and intro script to class. Students will continue listening for more information on this particular story. They will write a breaking news intro as the story unfolds.



Assessment

Give students a participation grade for the content and broadcast drafts completed in class. Grade the homework. Review students' recorded intros to evaluate their progress in editing to meet the time requirement and oral presentation of the intro.



Academic Content Standards

Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes. (Standard 5, NCTE/IRA Standards for the English Language Arts)



Industry Standards and Expectations

Each broadcaster should exercise responsible and careful judgment in the selection of material for broadcast. At the same time each broadcast licensee must be vigilant in exercising and defending its rights to program according to its own judgments and to the programming choices of its audiences. This often may include the presentation of sensitive or controversial material. (Statement of Principles of Radio and Television Broadcasters Issued by The Board of Directors of The National Association of Broadcasters)

Analyze announcing competence. [Performance indicator: Identify announcing techniques required for a specific format.] (Performance Element, Pathway KS Statement: Demonstrate the ability to deliver a broadcast production. States' Career Clusters, National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium)

Develop written stories for print and broadcast. [Performance indicator: Rewrite a print news story to be used for broadcast.] (Performance Element, Pathway KS Statement: Demonstrate writing processes used for various journalism media. States' Career Clusters, National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium)

Violence, physical or psychological, should only be portrayed in a responsible manner and should not be used exploitatively. Presentation of the details of violence should avoid the excessive, the gratuitous and the instructional. (Statement of Principles of Radio and Television Broadcasters Issued by The Board of Directors of The National Association of Broadcasters)

Writing an Intro for a Breaking News Story Checklist

Lead-in Team _____

Date _____

/ /

Content Draft

1. Identify the 5 W's and H of the news lede that you have chosen for your spot news. For information that is not known, write "unknown."

Who: _____

What: _____

Where: _____

When: _____

Why: _____

How: _____

2. Check the box for each attribute of your intro.

- We have avoided redundancy.
- We have used the active voice.
- We have followed the one sentence, one idea guideline.
- The reporter is correctly identified by full name.
- The reporter's location is identified.
- The intro smoothly transitions into what comes next.

Broadcast Draft

1. After you have prepared the intro for use by the anchor, use this checklist.

- The content is in proper radio script format.
- We have used proper editing marks.
- We have used proper pronunciation keys (phonetics) where needed.
- We have marked the script properly for the best on-air read.

2. After practicing reading the intro, use this checklist.

- The intro is within the required time limit.
- The draft was too long, and we have edited it.
- The intro reads smoothly.
- We feel confident reading it aloud.
- It is written for the ear.

After you have practiced delivery of the intro and recorded it, listen to the recording. Evaluate your success.