

**Script: Broadcasting News Producing**  
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**SLIDE 2**

TV news producers are in high demand.  
While there are plenty of people who want to be in front of the camera the real power is behind the scenes.

A producer wears many hats, which makes it hard to describe exactly what a producer does. Even though it's a big team effort to build a newscast, ultimately producers decide what the audience gets to watch.

**SLIDE 3**

After watching this video you should be able to: Identify the basic parts of a newscast

**SLIDE 4**

Put stories in order that will make sense to the viewer

**SLIDE 5**

Learn the basics of writing for TV news.  
Before we can talk about building a show you need to get familiar with the elements of the show. Stories can come in different forms. Here's a look at the different types story formats you'll find in a newscast:

**SLIDE 6**

First, a reader. A reader is simply a story without video.  
These types of stories should be no more than 15 to 20 seconds each.  
This type of story format should be used sparingly in a newscast.

**SLIDE 7**

Here's an example of what reader looks like.  
(PLAY VIDEO)

**SLIDE 8**

A V-O is short for voice over.

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It's pronounced "voh" or "vee-oh" – both have the same meaning.

**SLIDE 10**

It's called a voice over because the anchor talks over the video.

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This type of story should be no longer than 30 seconds

**SLIDE 12**

and the script should match the video as much as possible.  
For example, if the anchor is reading a story about car seats –the video should show car seats – and not just cars.

**SLIDE 13**

Here's an example of VO.  
(PLAY VIDEO)

**SLIDE 14**

A VO/SOT or VOB are stories that include video and a part of an interview related to that story.

**SLIDE 15**

Again the VO is a voice over and the SOT stands for sound on tape.  
This is pronounced "voh-sot".

**SLIDE 16**

Sometimes it's called a "vee-oh-bee" and the "b" stands for bite – short for sound bite.  
SOTS and bites are the same. For our purposes here let's just call it a VO/SOT.

**SLIDE 17**

These stories are typically about 45 seconds long.

**SLIDE 18**

The SOTS should be no longer than 15 seconds long. Exceptions are made when the interview is really compelling.

**SLIDE 19**

Here's an example of a vo/sot.  
(PLAY VIDEO)

**SLIDE 20**

Finally, you have a package. A package is where you marry all of these elements in one story.

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Packages follow the same rules: Video should match the script and the sound bites should be relevant and compelling.

**SLIDE 22**

The difference is a package includes a reporter or anchor's voice recording to narrate the story.

**SLIDE 23**

Packages are typically one minute and 30 seconds.

**SLIDE 24**

However, the length of the package is often determined by the content of the story.

**SLIDE 25**

Here is an example of a package.

For the sake of time – I'm only going to play the first 30 seconds.

(PLAY VIDEO)

**SLIDE 26**

The best types of newscasts have a variety of stories. Producers look for a mix of hard news and stories lighter in nature.

In this section I'm going to talk about three types of stories you'll find in a newscast: News, features and sports.

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News stories are typically placed at the top – or beginning – of the newscast.

So how do you determine if a story is considered news? A strong news story has several criteria. I'm going to focus on three in particular.

The first criterion has to do with timeliness. You should ask yourself if your audience has heard this information before.

**SLIDE 28**

As a news manager I often ask my reporters, "Why does your story matter today?"

**SLIDE 29**

What's "new" in your story today?

**SLIDE 30**

Next: a news story should have an impact on the audience. One question to ask is who is affected by this story?

Here's an example. If the city decided to rip up the sidewalk on my street it would impact about 15 people.

But if the state decided to do construction on a major highway it would impact thousands of drivers.

The highway construction is a news story the sidewalk construction is not.

**SLIDE 31**

Conflict, which can also be referred to as controversy, creates interest. Viewers are more interested when one, two, or several sides are at odds. Here's an example. A new gas station is opening on the south side of town. If there's no one opposed to the new gas station, it's not a story. In fact one could argue if the new gas station ends up in a newscast it's a free commercial. Now, if residents in the area complain the new gas station will cause traffic problems. Then you have conflict and the story matters much more to the audience.

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Feature stories have a lot of the same elements as already mentioned but are usually lighter in nature.

**SLIDE 33**

Feature stories are usually in the format of a package.

**SLIDE 34**

These stories do not have the criteria of timeliness.

**SLIDE 35**

And producers place these stories later in the show in hopes the viewers will stick around to watch the story.

**SLIDE 36**

Feature stories are some of the most memorable.

**SLIDE 37**

Here's an example of a feature story. It's about an overweight cat and the people helping him shed some pounds. Again – in the interest of time –we are only showing a portion of this story. (PLAY VIDEO)

**SLIDE 38**

Sports is self-explanatory. This covers local and professional teams– depending on where you live. Sports typically has its own segment close to the end of the show. But sports can also end up at the top of the newscast depending on what's happening. In October of 2015 the Kansas City Royals made it to the World Series for the second year in a row. You can bet this sports story made it to the top of the newscasts in Kansas City.

**SLIDE 39**

There's an art to stacking a show. Producers want to make sure the order of the stories make sense. To do that similar stories are placed next to each other. This is called flow.

So if you have a story about a car accident on the north side of the city and another accident on the south side, it would make sense to put those stories together. If you have a story about the opening of a new high school and then a separate story about newly released SAT scores, those stories would also make sense to be placed next to each other.

#### **SLIDE 40**

Pacing is another factor to consider when stacking a show. Having a show full of VO's and readers really slows down the feel of the show. On the other hand a show with nothing but packages would also slow the tempo. Having a good mix of different story types helps with the pacing.

#### **SLIDE 41**

Sound bites and packages give life to the newscast by introducing the audience to interesting characters from the community.

#### **SLIDE 42**

On the other hand a show with nothing but packages would also slow the tempo.

#### **SLIDE 43**

Having a good mix of different story types helps with the pacing.

#### **SLIDE 44**

One of the biggest selling points of a newscast is the talent. In order to show some personality in a very short amount of time – it's a good idea to build in moments within the newscast allowing the anchors to interact with each other.

#### **SLIDE 45**

This is called anchor chat and it helps build a rapport with the audience.

#### **SLIDE 46**

These interactions can happen at the end of a weather segment, at the end of sports, or even at the end of an interesting story.

#### **SLIDE 47**

You often don't need more than 10 to 15 seconds. Honestly – that's probably all the time you'll have.

#### **SLIDE 48**

Morning shows in particular usually have more time for anchor chat.

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Here's an example from KOMU's morning show.

A mouse fell out of the ceiling in the middle of the newscast but our anchors played it cool on air.

(Press play)

**SLIDE 50**

Most newscasts begin with an element called a headline.  
A broadcast headline and a print headline both have the same purpose- to get the audiences' attention.

**SLIDE 51**

The key difference is that broadcast headlines have video and possibly even sound. Also, broadcast headlines can feature several major stories of the day.

**SLIDE 52**

Print headlines only feature one story – the big story.

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Headlines and teases are often confused because they seem like they serve the same purpose.

However, they are very different.

Headlines air at the beginning of the newscast.

Headlines are short news stories and provide the viewer with key details about the story.

Headlines also usually feature stories that air in the A-block, which is the first block of the newscast.

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Here's an example of headlines  
(PLAY VIDEO)

**SLIDE 55**

On the other hand – teases air at the end of each segment.

Teases are promotions for stories airing later in the newscast so you only give part of the story.

Just enough to create some interest in hopes the viewer will not change the channel during the commercial break.

**SLIDE 56**

And here's an example of a tease.  
(PLAY VIDEO)

**SLIDE 57**

So where do you start when writing a headline?

First your script should include what's new about that particular story.

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Be specific – you won't want your viewers to be confused.

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You also want to use compelling video and sound whenever possible.

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And don't forget you must keep the script short.

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Now let's talk about teases.

The most interesting stories make the best teases.

You'll want to focus on the most interesting part of the story. Is it the information? Is it the video?

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What's the nugget that will keep the viewer around for another segment?

**SLIDE 63**

Then – you'll want to consider if you can make your audience a promise.

Can you promise to show or tell a viewer something they haven't heard before?

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Here's are a few examples:

We'll show you how this new device works.

**SLIDE 65**

We'll tell you how long you can expect to wait in line at the post office this holiday season.

**SLIDE 66**

Find out why this convicted felon is no longer behind bars.

**SLIDE 67**

And don't forget – your words, video, sound and graphics should all work together.

**SLIDE 68**

If you write a tease saying "We'll have your thanksgiving day forecast coming up." But you have a banner that says "Rainy forecast" – you've given away your tease – and the viewer doesn't need to stick around.

**SLIDE 69**

Most importantly – great tease writing takes practice!