



UNIT-01 Introduction to Journalism

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Discuss the six primary questions that form the basis of journalism
- ✓ Define journalism and understand its main objectives
- ✓ Understand the functions of journalism and the main factors that can influence journalism as both a process and a product

Unit 1

Introduction to Journalism

What is the Definition of Journalism?

Journalism is a form of communication that revolves around six questions:

- Who?
- What?
- How?
- Where?
- When?
- Why?

Journalism is defined as anything that helps the press, radio, television, film, cable, and the internet gather, select, and process news and current events in some way.

Journalism is the practise of gathering, analysing, verifying, and disseminating information about current events, trends, issues, and people. Journalists are people who work in the field of journalism.

Journalism is defined by Denis Mc Quail as '**paid writing for public media with reference to actual and ongoing events of public relevance**'.

In addition, journalism can be defined as:

1. News gathering and editing in preparation for media presentation
2. The news media
3. A research project focusing on the gathering and editing of news or the management of a news medium.
4. Writing that is characterised by a straightforward presentation of facts or a description of events with no attempt at interpretation.
5. Writing intended to appeal to popular taste or public interest at the time.

The words 'journalist,' 'journal,' and 'journalism' come from the French 'journal,' which is derived from the Latin term 'diurnal is,' or 'daily.' The Acta Diurna, a daily handwritten bulletin posted in the Forum, ancient Rome's main public square, was possibly the world's first newspaper. Pamphlets, gazettes, news books, news sheets, and letters were later dubbed "newspaper." News writers and later journalists were the terms used to describe those who wrote for them.

It is distinct from other well-established professions such as medicine, law, management, and teaching. While most established professions require some specialised educational qualifications and training in order to be hired, journalism does not.

Anyone, regardless of their educational background or professional experience, is welcome to join the profession. Journalism has always been, and will continue to be, an 'open' profession.

Journalism's Functions

Information disseminators? Watchdogs? Event interpreters? Journalists have a variety of responsibilities.

The press's role is to act as a watchdog and a catalytic agent in society, hastening the process of social and economic change. Journalism is the people's voice when it comes to corruption, the government, and the abuse of power.

Journalism's role is to serve as a bridge between the general public and policymakers. The journalist has always acted as a go-between. When elites spoke, journalists listened, recorded, distilled, and disseminated the information to the general public. The reasoning behind this function is that the general public is unable to deconstruct the ever-increasing and complex flurry of information that exists in modern society, necessitating the use of an intermediary to filter news for the masses.

Lippman put it this way: "The general public is incapable of comprehending complex political issues." Furthermore, the general public was too preoccupied with their daily lives to give complex public policy much thought. As a result, the general public required someone to translate the elite's decisions or concerns into plain English. Journalists played this role.

Influences on Journalism

There are many important – and often decisive – influences that affect both process and product, in addition to the factors identified by Galtung and Ruge.

The following are the primary influences on journalism, according to the majority of scholars and commentators:

Control and ownership. The political, economic, and ideological interests of a few powerful companies and organisations influence the majority of journalistic output. Journalists' work is likely to be 'adjusted' to fit these interests, and even if they start out with high ideals, they will engage in 'self-censorship' in order to gain promotion and favour with the 'bosses.'

Financial: this is related to the previous point. The amount of money spent on journalism will be limited – at least in capitalist enterprises – in order to maximise profits. Journalism is a labour-intensive and expensive profession. The need to make a profit and/or meet audience goals clearly has an impact on the form and content of journalism.

Time, space, and technology. Because all journalism must meet an immovable deadline, work is frequently published or broadcast in a less-than-'perfect' state, and before facts and other material can be thoroughly checked. Journalism must be trimmed to fit the space or time constraints. There is a focus on elite nations and individuals, as seen in the Galtung and Ruge analysis. There is a practical as well as an ideological reason for this: pictures and reports from and about rich industrialised countries are more likely to be available, so a disaster in the United States, for example, is likely to receive more coverage

than one in a remote part of the Indian subcontinent, partly because material from the former is more likely to be available. Moving pictures, in particular, are 'necessary' for television.

Bureaucratic. Journalists must adhere to pre-determined and often rigid requirements in newsrooms. Copy, audio, and pictures must be ready at a specific time and in a specific format, which necessitates fairly rigid organisation and procedures.

The Elements of Journalism

There are nine elements of journalism, according to Bill Kovach and Tom Rosensteel's book *The Elements of Journalism*. These guidelines must be followed by journalists, in order to fulfil their responsibility of providing people with the information they need to be free and self-governing:

1. **Journalism's first obligation is to the truth.**
2. **Its first loyalty is to the citizens.**
3. **Its essence is discipline of verification.**
4. **Its practitioners must maintain an independence from those they cover.**
5. **It must serve as an independent monitor of power.**
6. **It must provide a forum for public criticism and compromise.**
7. **It must strive to make the significant interesting and relevant.**
8. **It must keep the news comprehensive and proportional.**
9. **Its practitioners must be allowed to exercise their personal conscience.**

What is News?

News is a noun that is clearly associated with journalism and thus serves as a good starting point for delving into the concept of journalism as a whole.

News is typically defined as something that is "new, interesting, and true." However, that definition is insufficient to classify journalism, and it becomes increasingly problematic. The easiest is new; there is unlikely to be a disagreement over whether something happened recently or recently.

It's a little more difficult to be interesting because the obvious question arises: 'interesting to whom?' Where we live, as well as our economic and social status, are likely to influence our interest in a story. Nonetheless, there will almost certainly be widespread agreement on some stories.

For example, no one would seriously argue that the fact that hundreds of jumbo jets took off, flew, and landed without incident is not news, whereas a jumbo jet that crashes, killing hundreds of people, is.

Even so, why is it that only a small percentage of the billions of events that occur around the world every day that meet the basic criteria – and would undoubtedly be 'new' and 'interesting' to at least the direct participants in the 'story' – make it into even local news media, with even fewer making it into national and international news media?

According to academics Galtung and Ruge (van Ginneken, 1998: 28–29), there are 11 factors that influence whether an event is considered news and, if so, how much weight it is given (table. 1.2).

1.	Frequency	When the event happened related to the frequency of publication.
2.	Threshold	The event must be of a certain size – two people killed in a road accident would be less newsworthy than the deaths of 12.
3.	Clarity	It must be clear and easy to understand what happened.
4.	Meaningful	It must relate to the culture of the society in which it is reported.
5.	Consonance	Perhaps surprisingly, if the news is predictable and even expected it has more chance of being included in journalistic media – except when it is:
6.	Unexpected	and rare.
7.	Continuity	Once it is news it will continue to be news.
8.	Composition	News overall is balanced so that there is a range of stories to interest the consumer depending on the readership or audience profile and particularly on the demands of advertisers.
9.	Concentration	On elite nations and individuals (the most obvious example being the President of the USA who clearly fits both categories).
10.	Person-centred	Sometimes called human interest.
11.	Negativity	Bad news is 'better' than good.

The Characteristics of News

It is expected that all journalists, whether they are on the ground reporting or working at the news desk, have a thorough understanding of all the values that make up news.

Let's take a look at each of the characteristics of news one by one:

Timeliness

The news must be fresh, current, and timely. Old news is stale news, and as a result, it has no value. However, the publication cycle of the news medium in which the information will appear determines its timeliness.

- For a weekly news magazine, the events of the previous week are relevant.
- For a daily newspaper, however, events that occurred within the previous 24 hours are considered timely.
- Events that occurred within the last few hours up to the last half hour are timely for broadcast media.
- A timely presentation of events and happenings is something that every journalist strives for. Otherwise, news loses its value and credibility.

Importance

Important events that affect the general public must be considered news. Any significant event, such as the presentation of a railway or fiscal budget to Parliament, the announcement of any type of

development project by the government, visits by Foreign Ministers or vice versa, a military threat by neighbouring countries, crime-related stories, and so on, are all significant events that require immediate dissemination of information to the public.

Conflict

Conflict is a natural part of life in every society. Conflicts are inevitable when a society contains multiple ideologies, organs, ethnic communities, languages, and geographical terrains, among other things.

Nuclear war, terrorist activities, communal clashes, political turmoil, and identity struggles have all become sources of concern for societies around the world, with excessive coverage of such incidents in the news media. Reports on such events are widely covered by local and national media because they are newsworthy and elicit strong emotions in the public. When reporting conflict, however, one must exercise extreme caution and restraint because these are highly sensitive issues.

Media reports that portray the incident incorrectly can exacerbate the situation and cause more harm. In order to help maintain peace, the media is sometimes required to withhold certain information.

Proximity

Local news, like relevance, is always interesting for the masses, regardless of where they live. Readers find it engrossing when a local event is featured in newspapers or electronic media news bulletins because local events affect their immediate lives and surroundings – weather, events, traffic, communication, market, health facility, and so on. People have a natural desire to stay informed about what is going on in their community, in their local markets, in their neighbourhood, and among their neighbours. That is why all newspapers devote a significant amount of space to regional issues.

Prominence

People who are well-known, events that are well-known, and places that are well-known are always in the news. You must have always wondered why the same faces — the same politicians, celebrities, or places — always seem to make their way into the newspaper space and bulletin time. Politicians, actors, athletes, celebrities, and socialites all make headlines on a regular basis. This is due to the fact that the readers or viewers like them and want to learn more about them, their lifestyles, and their likes and dislikes.

Impact or Consequence

Another feature of news is the impact that an event will have on people's minds. An event that causes or has the potential to cause a large series of events affecting a large number of people is obviously newsworthy. Massive disasters, earthquakes, floods, natural calamities, political debacles, economic turmoil, major accidents, crashes, inflation, fuel price hikes, political parties gaining or losing power, union budgets, reservation policies, and other policy shifts can all have a significant impact on the lives of ordinary people.

Progress

Information about a country's growth and prosperity is always in the news. Every society has problems

and issues that the media should highlight. This type of information is always interesting to the public. As a result, individual or societal success stories, victories, and progress all make the news.

Disaster

Any disaster makes headlines. Earthquakes, floods, fires, erosions, volcanic eruptions, cyclones, and other natural disasters make the news because they affect the majority of people's lives. When such incidents occur, human lives are lost, property is damaged, and the ecological balance is disrupted. Such incidents elicit strong reactions from the general public.

Human Interest

These are stories that elicit strong emotions in the audience, such as ironic, bizarre, uplifting, or dramatic stories. For example, it is newsworthy when a person saves another's life while risking his own, or when a person achieves great success despite a handicap.

There are Two Types of News: Hard News and Soft News.

Hard News

A hard news story is one in which the facts are stated plainly and simply as they occurred. It usually responds to the basic 5W's and H's questions.

1. Who?
2. What?
3. When?
4. Where?
5. Why?
6. How?

When writing hard news, a standard technique is usually used. The inverted pyramid style is used in print media, where the most important information is placed near the beginning of the story and the less important information is placed later. The less important information is simply ignored in the broadcast media. When reporting on major public events, government actions, international events, economic and social affairs, crime, science and technology, the environment, and so on, the hard news writing style is typically used.

If a fire breaks out in any part of the country, causing significant damage to residents' property, including human lives, immediate notification of this devastation is required. Who, what, when, where, why, and how are the questions.

Soft News

Soft news refers to a wide range of news stories. This includes features, editorials, and articles, among other things. Soft news includes opinions and reactions in addition to the facts. Soft news is a term that describes stories that deal with human interest topics. The majority of soft news comes from hard news.

These are usually the follow-up stories to a major event, highlighting angles not covered in the hard news, usually the human interest angle.

More than just Reporting 'News'

One of the most common claims made about journalism is that it serves as a watchdog: journalists serve as the public's eyes and ears, ensuring that people, particularly those in positions of power, act properly and honestly. While few people have the time or interest to attend meetings of law courts, councils, and other government bodies, the presence of a journalist ensures that business is conducted correctly and fairly.

Furthermore, it is claimed that knowing that journalists are present and will scrutinise how decisions are made 'encourages' anyone who is considering acting inappropriately to reconsider.

The message may or may not be the medium (of transmission), but it is critical. When a story is written for a newspaper, it should be presented differently than when it is broadcast on radio, television, or the internet. Despite the fact that there is a lot of talk about convergence, different media have different requirements, conventions, and techniques. Multimedia story presentations necessitate multimodal approaches and techniques.

1.	Selection, assessing and editing information.
2.	Describing events, which are of legitimate public interest or which are entertaining/non-serious, but are interesting to a defined audience.
3.	Probing and testing claims and statements – especially those of authority figures (political, social, economic elites)
4.	Acting as 'watchdog' for the public benefit and investigating issues of concern and claims of wrong-doing that appear to be against the public interest.
5.	Provide outlets for, and stimulating comment and opinion.
ALL	
6.	Presented in an engaging way and appropriate to the medium of transmission

The Qualities of an Ideal Reporter

The qualities of an ideal reporter are as follows:

- A natural inquisitiveness
- A sense of uncertainty, but also of fun and excitement.
- Passion for the job
- A keen sense of the news
- The ability to make sound decisions quickly
- The ability to assess the news objectively
- The ability to remain unaffected or offended by what other people say and do (Criticism).
- Naturally capable of telling an interesting story to others
- When dealing with a story, the reporter and sub-editor should strive for objectivity. They should

not let their own prejudices or ideas influence a story

- The ability to work fast, as speed is crucial in almost every situation
- Willingness to arrive on time and wait - not arrive late and ask others
- Having a clear vision of the future is beneficial to journalists
- A reporter should enjoy getting out and about and should not be afraid to travel long distances to gather information when necessary
- A journalist must maintain a healthy level of scepticism. This entails double-checking information, which is critical because every story is built on facts and evidence
- The ability to make contacts and develop sources
- Ability to deal with pressure from both the outside and the inside of the news organisation
- Knowledge of a foreign language where possible
- Intuition and courage
- Experience working with media equipment
- An extrovert personality
- The ability to interpret and analyse data
- Not giving up when faced with bureaucratic issues or outright opposition in obtaining information
- Excellent communicative abilities
- Well-versed in a wide range of topics
- Ability to work in a team environment and on a sporadic schedule

What Drives a News Journalist?

In his successful career as a reporter and editor, Byron Calame, cited in Mencher (2010), identified several motivating factors while working and competing with more than a hundred reporters. Being the first to learn new facts or gain new insights is vital, so every reporter aspires to be the first to report breaking news. Even in today's media industry, so-called old-fashioned 'scoops' are still popular. Being the first gives them a feeling of accomplishment and uniqueness.

Looking for stories that can make a difference.

Successful reporters are usually driven by a desire to change the course of history with their work. Reporters in this class include Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, both of whom were involved in the infamous Watergate scandal.

Wining Prizes

Most journalists argue that their stories were not motivated by prizes or awards, so this is a touchy subject. However, a close examination of journalistic work suggests that this is one of the motivating factors.

Impressing Sources

According to Byron Calame, cited in Mencher (2010), most journalists are still driven by the desire to impress their sources with their work's accuracy, fairness, and depth.

Getting to the bottom of what's going on

"A fundamental motivation of reporters is the curiosity that drives them to get to the bottom of a confusing or complicated situation and to find patterns that help explain it to readers," according to Byron Calame, cited in Mencher (2010). Many reporters find it rewarding to make sense of chaos, especially when they can do it first."

Storytelling in an Engaging Manner

Most journalists who aspire to the top are compelled to tell their stories in such a way that their listeners or audiences are compelled to see them through to the end.

Getting on the Front Page of the Newspaper

Any reporter who works for five months in a media organisation, such as a newspaper, and does not make the front page may be considered unsuccessful. Editors consider front-page stories to be significant. As a result, reporters strive to feel satisfied that their story was important enough to make the front page.

Reporting

The main activities of journalism are to state who, what, when, where, why, and how, as well explain as the significance and effects of specific events or trends. Newspapers, television, radio, magazines, and, most recently, the Internet, are all examples of journalism.

Journalism covers a wide range of topics, including international, national, provincial, and local politics, economics and business, health and medicine, education, sports, hobbies and recreation, lifestyles, clothing, food, pets, sex and relationships; journalists cover anything that news organisations believe consumers will read.

Journalists can work for general interest news outlets such as newspapers, magazines, and broadcast sources; general circulation specialty publications such as trade and hobby magazines; or niche news publications and outlets. Journalists are frequently expected and required to go to the scene of a story to gather information for their reports, and they may even write their reports while on location. They also gather information using the telephone, computer, and the internet.

Those reports, on the other hand, are almost always written and edited in newsrooms, which are offices where journalists and editors collaborate to prepare news content. Journalists are expected to cultivate sources, people in the subject or area, with whom they can communicate, either to explain the details of a story or to provide leads to other subjects of stories yet to be reported, especially if they cover a specific subject or area (a "beat"). They must also improve their investigative skills in order to better research and report on stories.

What is the Distinction Between Soft and Hard News?

Journalism is divided into two categories, from online journalism to print media and all other mediums besides:

- Politics and business are examples of **hard news**. Breaking news and up-to-the-minute news about serious, timely, or hard-hitting topics that are timely and urgent, usually based on facts and rigorous research, is referred to as hard news journalism. Hard news includes political journalism, business journalism, and watchdog journalism.
- Entertainment is the primary focus of **soft news**. Soft news journalism focuses on lifestyle and entertainment, with a focus on culture, art, and human interest stories. Sports journalism, entertainment journalism, and celebrity coverage are examples of soft news.

Journalism Styles

The following are the most common career paths in journalism:

Print Journalism

Newspapers, news magazines, general interest magazines, trade magazines, hobby magazines, newsletters, private publications, online news pages, and others are all examples of print journalism. Each genre may have its own set of requirements for research and report writing. Newspaper journalists in the United States, for example, have long used the inverted pyramid style to write reports, though this style is reserved for straight or hard news reports rather than features.

Written hard news reports are expected to be sparse in their wording and to list the most important information first, so that if the story needs to be cut due to space constraints, the least important facts will be cut from the bottom. Reports are usually written in as few words as possible by editors. Feature stories are usually written in a looser style that varies depending on the report's subject matter, and they are given more space in general (see Feature-writing below).

Articles in news and general interest magazines are typically written in a different style, with a lower emphasis on the inverted pyramid. Trade publications are more likely to focus on breaking news, whereas hobby publications are more likely to focus on features.

Broadcast Journalism (TV/Radio)

This type of journalism is concerned with news broadcasting on television or radio.

Both of these mediums are popular and have distinct characteristics. One of the reasons that television journalism is more popular than print journalism is that it not only provides news for the eyes but also for the ears. The audience is engaged by the audio-visual experience provided by TV journalism.

Radio journalists must not only gather facts in order to present them fairly and accurately, but they must also find and record relevant and interesting sounds to include in their reports, including interviews with people involved in the story as well as background sounds that help characterise it. Radio reporters can also write the introduction to a story that is read by a radio news anchor, as well as answer questions

from the anchor live.

On-camera interviews with people involved in the story, shots of the scene where the story took place, and graphics usually produced at the station to help frame the story are all used by television journalists to illustrate and characterise their reporting. Television reporters, like radio reporters, may write an introductory script that is read by a television news anchor to introduce their story. Radio and television journalists, like print journalists, rarely have as much "space" to present information in their reports.

(Cyber) Journalism on the Internet

Because of the rapid and widespread growth of the Internet and the World Wide Web, online (Cyber) journalism has emerged as the newest form of journalism. The ease with which news can be disseminated on the internet, as well as the fact that anyone with a computer and a web browser can access it, has greatly increased the quantity and variety of news reports available to the average web user.

The majority of online(Cyber) journalism has been the web-based extension of existing print and broadcast media's primary products. New reports that were scheduled to be released at specific times can now be released as soon as they are written and edited, putting more deadline pressure on journalists and increasing their fear of being scooped.

Sports Journalism

Most journalism products, such as newspapers, magazines, and radio and television news broadcasts, include sports journalism, which covers many aspects of human athletic competitions and achievements. While some argue that sports journalism is not true journalism, the importance of sports in Western culture has justified journalists' attention to not only sporting events, but also athletes and the business of sports.

Science Journalism

Science journalism is a relatively new branch of journalism in which journalists use their reporting to inform the public about scientific issues. Science journalists must be able to comprehend and interpret very detailed, technical, and sometimes jargon-filled information in order to turn it into engaging reports that are understandable to news consumers.

Scientific journalists must also decide which scientific developments merit news coverage, as well as cover scientific disputes with a balance of fairness to both sides and a commitment to the facts. Many, but not all, science journalists, receive specialist training in the sciences they cover.

Investigative Journalism

Investigative journalism, in which journalists look into and expose unethical, immoral, and illegal behaviour by individuals, businesses, and government agencies, can be complicated, time-consuming, and costly, requiring teams of journalists, months of research, multiple interviews (sometimes repeated interviews), long-distance travel, computers to analyse public-record databases, or the use of the company's legal staff to secure documents under the freedom of information act.

Other Types of Journalism:

Business journalism aims to keep readers and viewers informed about current events and trends in the business world. It can cover a wide range of topics, such as stock trading, economic policy, mergers and acquisitions, and technological advancements.

Celebrities, films, music, festivals, and award ceremonies are just some of the topics covered by **entertainment journalism**. Celebrity, actor, and musician profiles are also part of this type of journalism.

Opinion journalism is a type of journalism that focuses on the writer's point of view rather than just reporting on new information or events. The majority of opinion journalism pieces focus on a single topic, which the journalist discusses briefly or in depth before offering their opinion on the subject. Opinion journalism encompasses advice columns, op-eds, reviews, and letters to the editor, among other things.

Photojournalism: Rather than using words to tell a story, photojournalism is the art of using photographs to convey information—whether it's a photograph of a burning building, a melting glacier, or a group of people in a war zone. Photojournalism shoots can be candid, in-the-moment reporting or calmer situations in which the journalist documents action such as daily life or environmental changes.

Political journalism keeps the public informed about political events in a specific area, whether it's local government, national government, or international policy.

Further Reading:

- ✓ *Journalism Basics: An Introduction to Print Journalism, by Megan L Horst and Karin Viet | Aug 2, 2017*
- ✓ *Journalism: An Introduction to Reporting and Writing, by Kathryn T. Stofer, James R. Schaffer, et al. | Jan 29, 2019*