

NEWS EDITING AND DESIGN

MICHAEL O. UKONU © 2013

First published in Nigeria by Grand Heritage Global Communications, Nsukka

ISBN 978-2715-79-4

©Michael O. Ukonu, 2013

All rights reserved: No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without prior permission of the author. For enquires contact the author on 080-33836059; or by e-mail - favouriete@yahoo.com

Printed in Nigeria by Charisma Publishers Ltd. Nsk.
July 2013 07031575873

Foreword

News Editing and Design is a beautiful textbook on newspaper and magazine editing and page planning. It is true to type and aptly justifies its name. Those who complain about confusing and complex design guidelines given in many books and by designers had better pickup this book.

The work is simply the ABC of news editing. It is design made easy. The book portrays the potentials of the newspaper and magazine as visual media, especially in this era when the print media have landed on the electronic platform.

This handy book provides guidelines to editors on building functional news pages. It teaches practical page design in easy-to-comprehend ways. It reflects necessary changes that the print media ought to imbibe to meet the demands of news design.

The author has demonstrated the art and practice of print production in this book. The text offers useful background on the newspaper organization. The many areas of print media course scheme covered make the book a great value to everyone in journalism and mass communication. The author has shown that news processing and design are not an all-comers affair. He makes this point vigorously as a warning to editors that they must set themselves apart from quarks in this era of software design when non-journalists are becoming self-acclaimed designers.

**Professor S.O. Idemili,
Benue State University, Markurdi**

Preface

News Editing and Design is a 14-chapter book written for news editing and page planning. It is directed more to newspaper and magazine editing and planning. The book is written for students who have had a background in principles of newspaper production or graphics of mass communication. This text therefore has a sister publication, **Elements of Graphic Communication**, which also handled many topics seen in **News Editing and Design**. However, the topics in **Elements of Graphic Communication** were written to provide basic knowledge in principles of print production. The topics focus on definitions, functions and explanation of terminology.

Students of graphic communication, news editing, advanced newspaper production, magazine production and news reporting will find this work a treasure. The many illustrations enliven what is in text. The area on online editing will fully prepare the editor for online journalism. The editor is encouraged, challenged and equipped to tap into online editing and design to expand the frontiers of the profession, not just to counter opposition from other media.

The newspaper is an enterprise. This book discusses how to make that enterprise customer-friendly. It is painful and disappointing that many university students cannot navigate newspapers because they cannot understand how stories are arranged on newspaper pages. This problem can be carried online, where news faces even bigger assault from contents of sorts. Design should draw the reader into the page and help them to consume information effortlessly.

Editors thus have been given sufficient guidelines to help them go about design in reader-approved ways. This point needs emphasizing in today's society in which many non-professionals are taking to newspapering.

Non-professional practices have already gone online. No one is saying that traditional design practices have to be taken online without modification. But that does not mean that online design is not being abused. It is. That's why editors should champion a new design revolution online. Editors can interact in new ways with their readers and better appreciate their needs and priorities.

Untrained individuals and other non-news companies will compete with news firms for the news audience. This is a fresh challenge occasioned by the new media revolution. It should, however, result in the audience better defining news and where to look for it. As a result, it depends on editors. The way editors treat news will determine if news - real news - can really be found on any site or on sites run by professional journalists. This text has taken cognizance of the above point and has tailored relevant topics to online needs. The last chapter was wholly devoted to online editing. Read on.

Dr. M.O. Ukonu

Department of Mass Communication,
University of Nigeria,
Nsukka. July 2013.

Acknowledgements

The contributions of a number of persons in oiling the wheels cannot but be recognized with immense gratitude. Foremost among these well-meaning ‘superiors’ are my lecturers who made me in academics.

Prof S.O. Idemil is worthy of commendation. He taught me news editing and here is the fruit of his efforts. I still relish the memories of his wonderful lectures. I am indebted to all my lectures - Dr. N. Okoro, Dr. G. Ezea, Dr. L. Anorue, Dr. P.C. Agba, Profesor S.A. Ekwelie, Dr. R.A. Udeajah, Dr. C.S. Akpan, Ms. E.U. Ohaja, Rev. Fr. Dr. P.O.J. Umechukwu, Mr. T.N. Ogbodo, and Barr. P.N. Nwokolo.

I thank precious, my wife. She is a great support. I have always been in want of appropriate terms to describe her goodness to me.

I thank all my students and friends especially Mr. Ben Agbo, Mr. Callistus Eziokwu and Robert Ezeanwu for urging me on. My father, Ignatius, Sister, Chinwe, and special mummy Mrs. N. Odikpo were also wonderful. All of you are abundantly blessed.

Table of Contents

Foreword	iii
Preface	iv
Acknowledgements	vi
CHAPTER 1: EDITING AND THE NEWS PROCESS	
Introduction	10
The Editor	11
The News Process	13
Functions of the Editor	15
The News Editor and the Copy Editor	17
Review Questions	19
CHAPTER 2: THE NEWSPAPER ORGANIZATION	
Traditional Organization	20
Editorial Division	20
Business Division	24
Production Division	24
Newspaper Organization: Making More of it	27
Words and Art: Parts of the Message	29
Review Questions	31
CHAPTER 3: PAGE MAKEUP	
Introduction	32
What is Makeup?	33
Makeup Structures	34
Review Questions	41
CHAPTER 4: DESIGN	
Introduction	42
Basic Questions	47
Review Questions	53
CHAPTER 5: DESIGNING SPECIAL PAGES	
Preamble	54
Front Page	54
Back Page	57
Sports Page	57

Business Page	59
Editorial Page	60
Feature Page	63
Review Questions	64
CHAPTER 6: MODULAR DESIGN	
Pages in Modules	65
Showing Relationships	67
How to Disassociate Dissimilar Elements	68
Review Questions	71
CHAPTER 7: GOING INTO THE STORY	
Wielding the Surgeon's knife	72
Compiling	72
Cutting Story Length	76
Copy Editing Symbols Still Relevant	79
Review Questions	86
CHAPTER 8: NEWS JUDGMENT	
News	87
News Elements	90
News Presentation	91
Improving the Flow of Meaning	95
Word Difficulty	96
Review Questions	101
CHAPTER 9: WORKING WITH STRAIGHT NEWS STORIES	
Straight News	102
The Time Element in Straight News	105
The Body	106
The Conclusion	109
General Guidelines	109
Proofreading and Problem Words	110
Quotes: When to Use them	112
Attribution	114
Editing Wire News	115
Reporting/Editing Stories on Polls	117

Tips for Feature Editing	120
Review Questions	124
CHAPTER 10: HEADLINE WRITING	
Preamble	125
Quick look at the nature of headlines	125
Basic requirements	126
Skills in headline writing	127
Review Question	146
CHAPTER 11: PHOTOGRAPHS	
Visual Media	147
Types of Photos	148
Photo Treatment	152
Photo Scaling or Sizing	153
Issues in the Photo Use	155
Cutlines	161
Cropping Instructions	164
Review Questions	167
CHAPTER 12: INFORMATION GRAPHICS	
Introduction	168
Functions	168
Before You Prepare a Chart	170
Four Divisionsof Infomation Graphics	171
Review Questions	178
CHAPTER 13: ONLINE EDITING	
Introduction	179
Grading the News and Weighing What to Print	184
Review Questions	186
CHAPTER 14: STYLE	
What is Style?	187
Levels of Style	188
Sample Style Guides	198
Review Questions	205
Glossary	206
Further Reading	214

CHAPTER ONE EDITING AND THE NEWS PROCESS

Introduction

News editing is the journalism craft that involves news processing and packaging. It is a crucial part of the editorial process in which editors convert news reports and illustrations into packaged information. News editing gives direction and meaning to the mass of text and art provided by reporters, photojournalists and graphic artists.

News editing involves selecting copy for publication, editing selected copy, designing news pages for newspapers, magazines, websites, etc. News editing is an outstanding part of the editorial process because it is the stage that prepares the sole newspaper product (i.e., information) for the consumer. If the press rolls out copies of thrash, the newspaper is well on its way to death. Editors ensure that stories are well-written and complete, without offending ethical and legal standards.

When copy editors go to work, they bring with them editing skills. The first of those skills, of course is thinking along with the writer. Writers edit as they write. Editors write as they edit. Editing and writing can hardly be separated.

Even without being an editor, one understands the need for editing. First, any written work can be improved upon. In addition, journalists work at great speed, and they can muddle things up in the rush to beat deadlines. As a result,

there is need to improve the flow and meaning of language, safeguard accuracy and ensure attractive packaging.

Editing is the filtering stage of news processing to ensure that errors that slip through reporting do not escape the editors. As editors prepare copy and art for publication, they are continually selecting, rejecting, determining and arranging what is to appear in the publication.

The Editor

The editor is not directly involved in information gathering. But, as a midwife, he helps reporters get delivered of their story ideas. The editor is not the one pregnant, he is helping the reporter to be safely and thoroughly delivered of their stories. As the baby remains genetically true to its parents, the story remains true to the report's intentions. The editor only ensures that it is so.

According to Emenanjo, (2010, p.13)

An editor is, in essence, a critic, a literary critic and an aesthician. He is a literary ombudsman, midwife, middleman and consultant; a professional hatchet-man and fault-finder. And a literary surgeon.

Emenanjo notes that "irrespective of his qualification(s), specialization(s) or training, status, designation, work schedule, or even type and nature of his outfit, every editor is a literary critic, a gatekeeper, a professional literary fault-finder, an annotator, a literary midwife and middle man, a literary ombudsman and surgeon, an employee and human being, and a writer.

Following these qualities, the editor:

- evaluates the work of reporters, ensures they obey standard usages, and he designs effective news pages.
- filters news to ensure that only the appropriate information gets through to the reader. Errors of all kinds are barred from slipping through editing
- has a knack for detecting faults, and is hungry to detect them.
- remarks error whenever detected, and teaches reporters to care more about making writing free of strain
- does not fetch the story, but stands in-between the reporter and the reader to help the former safely deliver story ideas to the latter.
- making inquiry to know what is wrong with text, and using his editing tools, which, like surgical blades and syringes, cut of wordage here and inject missing detail there to ensure healthy stories.
- a professional hired by a business, and is not immune to occasional mistakes for which he should constantly get updated.
- writes and rewrites. The editor's flair for writing gives into a penchant for improving on any piece of writing.

Adolfo Ochs, an expert in editing, says: The editor is the most important man on the newspaper. The writer does not exist whose work cannot be improved by the constructive vigilance of a sub-editor who is (1) well-versed in what is being written about (2) an expert in language and (3) a flexible and tolerant person capable of appreciating values in the work of others.

A good sub-editor is one who improves an essentially well-written piece or turns a clumsily written one into, at the very least, a readable and literate article and at the very most, a beautifully shaped and effective essay which remains true to the author's intention. The sub-editor:

1. cares about the English language
2. cares about clarity of thought
3. has grace of expression
4. is knowledgeable about the traditions of discourse and argument.

The News Process

Reporters fetch their stories from assignments and type them at the computer. The stories are stored in a computer memory, from where they are called up by the copy editor, who edits and schedules them for publication. A story may be discarded at this point (killed) if found unworthy of publication. It may be stored for future use if it is a *timecopy* - not easily perishable. This decision may be made by the managing editor or news editor. The stories for publication are processed further. Headlines are written, photos are selected and cutlines are written. Space considerations are given for editorial matter and advertising. Space may be left for breaking news or updates of running stories.

Stories then go to the composing room, where high-speed computerized photocomposition machines convert electronic impulses into images and words. Then strips of photographic papers are used in printing the stories. In the camera room, a photograph is taken of the pasteup, which appears like the finished copy. A negative photograph results from this process, and is burned onto a plate, ready for press runs. Here a lithographic machine shines ultra-violet light through the negative onto the plate. The light goes through

the clear parts of the negative, exposing only the printing areas of the plate. The technician attaches the plate to one of the cylinders of a large printing press. The plates are fed into an offset press, capable of producing more than 60,000 copies of a 65-page paper per hour (Pankow, 2003).

Computer software programs have been developed to do the functions just described faster and finer. In the late 1980s a virtual revolution occurred in typesetting with the advent of desktop publishing (DTP) technology. Driven chiefly by the plummeting costs and miniaturization of computer memory, modestly prized personal computers originally developed for word processing are now capable of preparing documents of amazing sophistication. When such documents are prepared with appropriate software, a typographer can create sophisticated layouts and choose from hundreds of typefaces, and can arrange the documents according to predefined formats or change them in a variety of ways.

Leaders in DTP technology include IBM and its Ventura systems and Xerox Corporation with its Star systems, both of which are aimed at corporate markets. Apple Computer's Macintosh line possesses exceptional graphics capabilities and has long been popular with designers and in small offices". Pankow (1993, np). Laser printers can transfer computer images straight to a positive transparent film, which is burned onto an aluminum or plastic plate. Computer-to-plate (CTP) technologies are eliminating the filming procedure. Plates are thus produced from computers, ready for the web offset press.

In a web press, the printing plates are wrapped around revolving cylinders called drums. This press uses the rotary relief process, which has been the most common printing

method for mass-producing newspapers, books, and magazines for many years. Here, an operator adjusts a plate before printing is resumed. Adjustments are made based on sample copies that are printed to check for consistent color and impression, a process called *makeready*. When in operation, a printing press rotates continuously, first coating the plate, then smearing the plate with ink that sticks only to the nonwatered portions of the plate. The cylinders rewater and reink the plate as they spin, pulling a long roll of newsprint, called a web, through the press as they do. When the plates roll over the newsprint, they transfer quick-drying ink to its surface. A typical modern newspaper printing press prints both sides of a newsprint web several pages wide. It also incorporates automatic cutters and folders and may include an inserting machine that arranges sections one inside the other". Pankow (1993: np). The product is the printed newspaper, which is received by the distribution or circulation department for transmission to the reader.

Functions of the editor

According to Westley (1979, p.2) editors have three main functions, namely creative, managerial and police functions.

Creative functions: the editor:

- Judges the day's news and decides how to present it.
- Compiles single stories from materials originating from a variety of sources.
- Checks for errors and corrects faulty language: this demands sense of news judgment, story pace and story polish.
- Writes headlines, captions and cutlines that are clear, vigorous, factual and as complete a summary of the story as possible.

Managerial Functions:

1. He directs the work of art/graphic designers in photo selection and display
2. He is responsible for copy fitting
3. He keeps time copy and filler. Time copy is a story that is not easily perishable, which can be kept for future use (e.g., how to make a good home). When it is used to fill up excess space, it is called filler. Fillers are usually small in quantity.

Police Function: The copy editor:

- ❖ Guards against libelous content
- ❖ Assures objectivity (to guard public confidence), fair play and good taste
- ❖ Clarifies the news and makes it meaningful by improving the flow and correctness of language. He cares about:

○ Spelling	○ Repetition
○ Grammar	○ Unnecessary detail
○ Sentence structure	○ Overlooked facts
○ Style	○ Incongruities
○ Taste	○ Advertising in disguise (puffery)
○ Fact	○ Axe grinding.
○ Reportorial bias	

To perform these functions effectively, the editor needs intelligence, among other qualities. Westley (p.15) says, “Probably the most important of the copy editor’s tools are the intellectual ones”. He presents a tentative list of the intellectual tools the copy desk taps continually.

- A thorough knowledge of English grammar, usage, sentence structure and style.
- A thorough knowledge of copy desk routine. The beginner usually has to learn it on the job because the routine varies from paper to paper.
- Knowledge of how to use the reference materials available to him.
- A broad general awareness and solid educational background.
- Common sense.

Essentially, the copy desk regularizes copy to conform to the newspaper style. He adjusts story length to space requirements. He detects and corrects errors of fact. He simplifies, clarifies and corrects language. He clarifies, amplifies and vivifies meanings. He makes stories objective, fair and legally safe. He restructures stories extensively where necessary. He alters a story's tone if important and he corrects copy to assure good taste.

Newspaper size determines the extent of the copy editor's duties. Some editors do all but report news. In some newspapers (large metro dailies), some editors handle only some kind of stories. Some small newspapers have universal desks (one or two copy editors for all manner of stories). Others have departmentalized desks or semi departmentalized desks (each desk with its own copy editor).

The news editor and the copy editor

The news editor supervises copy editors. In traditional newsrooms, he is the occupant of the hollow space: the U-shaped desk (horseshoe desk), from where he directs the work of copy editors. The hollow space is also called the rim or slot, for which the news editor or chief sub-editor or copy

desk chief who stays there is called the rim man or the slotman. In some cases, the news editor makes decisions subject to the approval of the managing editor. He supervises a “copy-desk chief” who is in the slot but not empowered to make decisions beyond rather routine level.

The news editor receives a story when it first (or via the city editor) reaches the organization from a reporter. He does the following:

- ❖ Judges the news value
- ❖ Assigns headline size and style
- ❖ Decides story placement
- ❖ Passes down the story to one of the copy editors for actual copyediting.

Most large newspapers have specialized desks, with their own reporters and desk editors. Such specialized desks sometimes report directly to the managing editor who is in charge of the day-to-day operation of the newsroom. They edit their own stories and plan their pages.

When the news editor passes the story to the copy editor, the copy editor notes the instructions of the news editor while editing the story. He then returns the story to the news editor for final checking.

There may be several copy editors for various desks, all overseen by the news editor. Even with computers in vogue, most editors prefer editing in hard copy to editing on screen. Editing in hard copy makes it easier to see errors and correct them, leaving the reporter with an opportunity to see what was changed and why. It is said that “the copy desk, in fact can be one of the most powerful teaching influences in the office. When there is time, seasoned editors often show

reporters why their copy was changed. Even if this sort of exchange is impossible, a conscientious writer can learn many of the fine points of his trade by examining the treatment his own copy gets at the desk. But this influence can be found only where genuine editing is the desk's chief concern" Westley (1974, p.3).

Copy editors do the following

- (1) News text editing:
 - (a) improving on news text and writing headlines
 - (b) proofreading, fact checking, grammar checking, spell-checking -usually done by entry- level copy editors
 - (c) editing for style and content
 - (d) editing briefs -briefs are tightly edited stories of two or three paragraphs from local reporters as well as national and global news wires. Briefs are getting popular because readers like them and that's the style on websites.
- (2) Design and layout editing: creating pages, graphic displays on World Wide Web pages, photo and outline writing, laying out pages with copy, headlines and art

Review Questions

1. What is editing?
2. Paint a portrait of the editor.
3. What are the police functions of the editor?
4. Why is the editor rated at par with a manager at times?

CHAPTER 2

THE NEWSPAPER ORGANIZATION

Traditional Organization

All newspapers regardless of size and reach have three major divisions: the editorial, business and production divisions, each with a variety of sub-divisions that may differ from paper to paper, according to size and operations. Overseeing all the sections is the publisher or a chief executive who makes editorial policies and is in charge of the personality of the paper. The editorial section oversees the editorial matter of the newspaper: all else but advertising. The business section is in charge of financial affairs and advertising from which the paper is sustained. The production division is in charge of printing the newspaper.

Editorial Division

Some readers have often wondered how the many stories in newspapers are gathered, processed, published and circulated every day. Without prejudice to any other section of the newspaper, the editorial section is easily and most complex of all, containing the members of staff that make it happen.

Robust, daring and optimistic, the people in the editorial section gather and write stories. This often includes monitoring and subscribing to other media houses and information support agencies such as the News Agency of Nigeria. They make decisions on what appears on the papers in form of editorial matter, and they edit, make up and design newspaper pages. Makeup and design include decisions on photo use, story placement and typographical displays.

Defleur and Dennis (1991) have given a summary of job designations of the people staffing the editorial department.

Editor-in-chief: heads the editorial department. Also called the editor or, with the advent of chain ownership, the executive editor). The editor works directly for the publisher (either the owner or the principal owner's representative), and is responsible for all the paper's content, with the exception of advertising.

Editorial page editor: directly under the editor-in-chief. Also called the associate editor, he is responsible for the editorial page and the "op ed" (opposite the editorial page) page. The editorial page editor reports directly to the editor because newspapers try to separate opinion from news to the greatest extent possible.

Managing editor: Also reporting to the editor-in-chief is the managing editor, who is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the newsroom. The managing editor is a relatively powerful figure who hires and fires staff members and supervises various sub-editors.

City editor: The city editor (or metropolitan editor) works for the managing editor and is responsible for local news coverage, including assignments for local reporters.

Desk editors: Depending on the size of the paper, other news sections such as sports, business, entertainment and features will have editors supervising them. These sections are seen as desks, and their editors are called desk editors, who are indeed copy editors working at special desks. They edit and design their pages subject to the news editor's supervision. The number of separate sections working within a newsroom is determined by the size of the paper more than any other factor.

News editor: Also working for the managing editor is the news editor, who is responsible for preparing copy insertions into the pages. The news editor supervises copyeditors (who edit stories and write headlines), oversees the design of the pages, and decides where stories will be placed. On major stories, the news editor will often consult with the managing editor and other sub-editors before a decision is made.

Wire editor: The wire or news service editor edits and coordinates the national and international news from the wire services, such as the Associated Press (AP) and Reuters. Although smaller papers may not have personnel with these specific titles, someone on the newspaper staff is performing these functions in order to see that a paper gets produced.

Reporters: these are the first gatekeepers in the series of gatekeepers in the editorial department. While on the field, they make decisions on the aspects of a story to spotlight. That is, after their editors may have first given them directions on this. However, the way a reporter carries out the orders of his editor is entirely up to him. Reporters go out to fetch stories and write them. There are three kinds of reporters.

General assignment reporters cover and report various kinds of issues, especially conferences and emergent issues. They are not specialists in any specific field, at least in practice. They may also rewrite stories.

Beat reporters cover definite areas (an organization) such as the courts, police, and the legislature.

Specialist reporters handle more complex subjects (not necessarily an organization) like energy, business, environment and urban issues. Newspapers also use

columnists who write regularly on subjects in which they specialize. Most columnists are not part of newspaper staff. Free lances or stringers are self-employed, and write for newspapers at an agreed price. Newspapers contract them, especially if it will not be profitable to hire a reporter in the area covered by the stringers. Many columnists and free lancers write on specialised subjects for newspapers and magazines.

Special sections or specialized desks in newspapers have editors who may work with a few subordinates. These are the picture editor, the women page editor/fashion editor, features editor, sports editor, etc. Newspapers also employ cartoonists, photojournalists, layout editors or graphic designers.

Staff photographers work with reporters to bring in momentous photos of events and situations. They work under photo editors. There are also freelance photographers, who may help newspapers cover events that occur in distant areas. Newspapers as well subscribe to photographs from a wire service. Photo editors work with news editors. They select and edit photographs that will go with stories. Graphic artists or art directors generate relevant charts, maps, or diagrams.

The structure of newspapers is, however, changing. The computer has become a dominant member of the newsroom, cutting across and fusing functions, creating new ones and killing off some. Defleur and Dennis (1991) capture the continuing changes thus:

During the 1980s a lot of newspapers “repackaged” their product, making greater use of drawings, photo, and color in effort to make the paper more attractive to readers. As a result, many papers now employ art and

design directors who work with editors to design the paper and its special sections. Computers have rapidly become a part of reporters and newsrooms' basic tool-kit. Huge amounts of data on virtually every conceivable subject are available to them through vendors who assemble and manage on-line databases, such as CompuServe, Nexus, BRS, Vu, Text. Large newspapers routinely subscribe to such services, often through merit librarians. Reporters have learned to access on-line databases to assemble background information that can be helpful in developing stories. New occupational roles for computer specialists are becoming increasingly common at newspapers.

Business Division

A general business department handles such things as accounting, personnel, and building maintenance. The business department has the primary responsibility of keeping the paper in good financial stead. Within the business department, duties are generally subdivided into three major areas: advertising, circulation, and promotion.

The advertising division handles local retail advertising, national accounts whose ads are placed by advertising agencies, and classified ads. Since the newspaper will decline or prosper according to its number of readers, the circulation division is an important part of the organization. Typically headed by the circulation manager, this division takes orders, delivers the paper to the local community and surrounding areas, handles mail subscriptions, and keeps up-to-date subscription records. The promotion division is responsible for increasing circulation, building advertiser and readers' interest in the paper, building goodwill, and demonstrating that the paper is interested in community affairs. Newspaper promotion can involve sales and subscription program, or it might take the shape of sponsoring concerts, races, athletic leagues, and other special events. (Dominick 1990, p.121).

Production Division

Also called the back shop, this division is in charge of filming, plating and mechanical press runs; that is, printing out the papers on the press. The old (manual), laborious printing techniques have given way to offset printing and cold type methods. This has led to remarkable changes in the subdivisions of most back shops. The composing room, where high speed computerized systems set type is an old fad. In the composition room, computers and phototypesetters were formerly used to lay out a newspaper page. Personal computers have fused the information gathering and typesetting functions. Reporters now fetch and write (typeset) stories.

There is also the plate-making area as well as the printing room itself, where the paper is churned out in high speed offset press. Some newspapers are using computer-to-plate methods (CTP), bypassing the filming process. The production section merely transfers computer copy to plate prior to press runs.

Fig 2.1 is a simplified diagram of a typical newspaper.



Note that all the editors under the news editor are sub-editors (they are also copy editors apart from the layout editor, reporters, photographers, and photo editor). The news editor is therefore the chief sub-editor.

Ogusinji (1989, p.67) describes the scenario as it obtains in countries like Nigeria, especially with government newspapers. To the foregoing, therefore, he adds the personnel and maintenance departments, which he says are crucial to the existence and smooth running of a newspaper organization. The personnel department is responsible for the recruitment, discipline and firing of staff members. It is the responsibility of the maintenance department to ensure that all the various component parts of the newspaper organization are functioning and properly maintained so that productivity could be substantially increased. Experienced engineers and technicians need to be employed for necessary repair work. All equipment must be kept in perfect condition at all times. Most modern newspaper organizations these days have a public relations department for good organization image making.

There are also administrators such as the managing director, general manager and personnel manager as well as their assistants and subordinates. They make and administer policies. On top of the administrators are the policy makers who constitute the Board of Directors.

Ogunsiji describes them:

Board of Directors is the highest policymaking body in a newspaper organization. The function of the Board of Directors is to make policies for the newspaper organization. The managing director is directly under the control of the Board of Directors while the general manager and the managing editor report directly to the managing director. The primary function of the managing director is to provide raw data for the formulation of policies as well as to provide machinery for the execution of policies made by Board of Directors.

Newspaper Organization: Making More of it.

Newspapers follow the assembly line format of division of labour and specialization. Work is divided into departments. That is, newspaper firms are organized according to functions performed by departments. The advantage is ease of operation: each worker has definite task and each department has specified task. The idea is to divide work into manageable pieces, to make for better supervision and to set benchmark for optimum performance. However, division of labour is forcing media workers to work on their own, leading them into fragmenting the news. The assembly line format fragments the work of reporters because it is possible for a reporter, a photographer and the editor not to see eye-to-eye in the course of developing a story. Therefore, the way newsrooms are organized affects the work of newspaper people leading to disjointed products.

Radio, television, and the Internet and other interpersonal media are taking a large chunk of audience's time. Editors must find better ways to present information in compelling ways - ways that assure complete communication with the reader. The print media need to respond increasingly to the challenges posed by a surge of other faster media. This response must come in the form of structural re-organization

to upturn the prevalent configuration of most newsrooms, which tends to fragment the work of well-trained, specialized journalists. Apart from the challenge of other mass media, the information consumption habits of the audience are a changing fad.

Traditional newsroom organization, according to Moen (1995, p.136), is a barrier to successful communication with the reader. Ever since photographers became a part of the newspaper, the disadvantages of the assembly line process have outweighed the advantages, but few editors recognize the problem. The result is a product that fails to convert data to understanding for the reader. Too often, the system fails to take advantage of the synergy of the reporters, editors, photographers, artists, and designers. Even causal readers are beginning to understand that not everyone is united in purpose. **Moen also notes:**

The traditional newsroom is organized vertically to move the raw materials horizontally ... the decision-making authority follows downward from the editor to the departments. Each department produces its own product: stories from the city desk, photographs from the photography department, graphics from art department, headlines from the copy desk and layout from the news or design desk. This structure creates unnecessary barriers. Reporters often are not consulted about editing changes, and photographers are seldom asked about selection, cropping or display. Artists too often are told to produce illustrations, charts and maps on short notice and with incomplete information. Furthermore, the designer who puts all these efforts together often doesn't know what is coming until it arrives. The managing editor often specifies what should be on page 1 with little regard for the effect on photo size, white space or the number of jumps.

Each of the page elements which attract the eye: the headline, photography, cutline, decks and pullouts should add new information to the sales pitch. The pictures and

headline are the heavyweights; more than any other element, they attract attention. The picture should feed to the cutline, which should explain the photograph and foreshadow what the reader will find in the story. The deck continues with enticing details. The pullouts and blurbs enlarges a quote that strikes the reader. The charts tell part of the story. The copy block explains the graphics and like the cutline, foreshadows the story.

The point is that the newspaper is as much a visual medium as the television. There is need to see messages as whole packages where the packagers unite as specialists who produce parts of the same whole. Newspapermen who blindly divide functions risk presenting pockets of information instead of packages of holistic knowledge, i.e., synergy.

This means that photographers, editors, and reporters should work as a team on each assignment. Each task should be thoroughly understood as a whole before the experts go ahead to work on their beats. Specialism should not be a reason to fragment the news. Those who write the words and those who provide the graphics are part of the same team. Their products should be one in essence.

What we are talking about is synergy wherein the total effect of news becomes more than the sum of the effects of its parts. Although the copy editor writes the headline, the reporter may suggest the headline. The photographer ought to understand the story angle, if he must get shots that will help tell the story. The design editor can be pre-notified about upcoming stories to enable him to create pages that will best sell the stories. This means that editors should hold planning sessions for short and long terms.

Words and Art: Parts of the Message

A story may comprise words, art, cutline, by-line, headline, blurb, subheads, etc. These elements make up the story. Essentially, each of these elements should function interdependently in telling a story. Each element should provide either new information or further clarification. Elements should show a dependence on each other in projecting the sales pitch.

The way a newspaper is packaged can affect story success. This makes packaging an integral part of the news. Readers are known to scan through stories using given elements like headlines, blurbs, subheadings and photographs as signposts to the meat of any story. The designer is expected to use these signposts to point to the unique selling proposition.

If the person who wrote the headline did not see the picture, it would be difficult to write a headline that plays off a picture. A photojournalist who had no idea about the direction of a story as pursued by a reporter may hardly get momentous photos. A cutline may hardly tie the photograph to a story if the writer knew little about the story. If different persons independently wrote the cutline and took the photograph, the result might be a cutline that would state the obvious. The best the copyeditor can write about a photograph he know nothing about it is to identify the people, if he can, but it would be difficult, if he is not told, to say the why and how about anything contained in a photograph. He would neither know the location nor the occasion represented in the picture. Photographs do not always reflect these.

A story ran this headline:

Crack down on crime: police in hot chase of daredevil criminal. A pullout from a police source read: “*he is an interesting criminal. He is Africa’s most wanted and we are closing in on him.*” A picture showed him in a police cell as indicated in the cutline. The cutline also carried his name and added: *His criminal records will shock anyone (this was contained somewhere in the story).* All aspects of the story contained something new to entice the reader to read about the criminal.

Review Questions

- (1) What are the divisions of a newspaper organization?
- (2) Articulate the functions of various editorial staff.
- (3) What are the limitations of the assembly line format?
- (4) Describe what needs to be done to overcome the shortcoming of the assembly line format.

CHAPTER 3 PAGE MAKEUP

Introduction

Readers are often in a hurry and would want to grasp the story in as little time as is possible. There are many other information sources for the audience. This makes it imperative for editors to present information in ways that would attract readership, beautify the page, and quicken message understanding and recall. Layout and design are part of the editor's arsenal to create reader-friendly pages.

It may not matter how well-edited or well-written stories are. If they are not well packaged in appealing layout, readers may not get the whole message. Some stories may never be seen. As earlier noted, packaging is an inherent part of the news process.

At several newspapers and magazines, there are design editors or layout editors who dress up pages. Copy editors edit stories, write headlines, and plan pages especially if they are editors of specialised desks. Copy editors with good design skills may be in charge of page one and other special sections. Computers have made it imperative that newspapers employ skilled design editors who know how to apply all the resources of page planning software.

Good design helps in creating a personality for a newspaper or magazine. Editors use good design as they make judgment on the relative importance of stories. This saves the time of readers who are thus guided on story importance.

Certain design practices are basic to every edition of a newspaper. In this way, newspapers achieve a personality for

their publications. Newspapers make prior judgments about typesize (body size and headline size) grid (that is, standard column width size), gutter size or where to use rules to demarcate columns. If a newspaper uses a six-column format, with a grid of 12 pica columns, the designer is better guided in cases they want to collapse columns, that is if they want to make a page three columns, they know how to add up the picas and gutters to know the size of the column in a three-column page. (Gutters should not be allowed to run from top of page to bottom - a head or two has to break that run, else it clutters the page)

Design software also allows editors to create master pages or save already formatted pages, which they call up every day to fit in stories. This helps them use basically the same design format. They make daily choices in size of photographs and length of stories. Newspapers and news sites also have special pages for given content or special spots for menu bars that take readers to stories. This is how editors save the time of readers and help them to navigate pages without confusion.

What is makeup?

Makeup is the arrangement of page elements on each page and on the various pages throughout the newspaper to achieve both a pleasing effect and a page that is a pleasure to read. With the best makeup, readers may be oblivious of layout techniques; they simply enjoy navigating and reading the pages (the terms-makeup, page planning and layout are used interchangeably in this book).

The components of newspaper pages are called page elements. Some newspapers may view a story together with its headline and art as one element. In this form, elements are viewed as blocks containing various page components.

This is usually applicable when editors are concerned with element count on various pages. That is, how many blocks of elements does each page have, with each element block consisting of a story with its headline, picture, cutline, etc. Otherwise page elements include every graphic component of a page-headlines, pictures, text, whitespace, cutline, subhead, riders, kickers, decks, blurb, caption, etc.

In laying out pages, therefore, the editor works with the following elements.

- ❖ Text type: used to set the body of stories
- ❖ Display type: used to set headlines, cutlines and blurbs
- ❖ Rules and borders: Sometimes border and rules are used to enclose headlines. They are also used to set off illustrations and copy. A rule is a plain line, whereas borders are decorative, but the terms are frequently used interchangeably.
- ❖ Photographs: used to illustrate text or used alone to tell a story
- ❖ Line drawing: used in form of cartoons and information graphics (charts, maps, timelines or datelines and diagrams)
- ❖ Whitespace: page elements occur in space, which is used to let in air around elements.
- ❖ Colour: used for aesthetics, to achieve a personality and for emphasis

Makeup structures

Makeup structure refer to the visual outlook of pages following the format adopted by designers in arranging the page elements. A page may be vertical or horizontal in outlook. Most newspapers combine vertical and horizontal structures to package information. Some rely primarily on vertical or horizontal layout.

Vertical makeup

In vertical makeup, stories start at the top of the page, across one or two columns and may exceed half the page, and get near the bottom. On the inside pages the vertical flow may be interrupted by ads. Vertical layout is quicker to compose because there is little for the layout editor to do but fit the stories in the holes/space. Remember, however, that no leg of type, that is, column depth, should run deeper than 12 inches. This is to avoid making the eye work too hard, especially in cases where the reader has to jump from the bottom of a 12-inch deep column to the top of another column.

Advantages: 1. It is possible to get many stories on a vertically structured page.

2. Vertical format is the best choice for a newspaper seeking a high story count on the front page.

Shortcomings: 1. With the vertical structure, the page looks conservative, traditional. 2. Thus, visual excitement and photo display can be better achieved with horizontal format.

Horizontal makeup

Here stories run across three or more columns. Instead of running stories in long columns of type, they are laid out in shorter columns across the page.

Advantages: 1. Most readers see it as more modern and pleasing.

2. The horizontal flow of stories is in tandem readers' inclination to read from left to right.

3. Horizontal makeup permits the layout editor and/or designer to be more flexible when balancing the page.

4. As a result, horizontal makeup offers better photo display.

5. The large, multicolumn headlines used in horizontal makeup not only attract attention but also add weight to the page.

6. There is an optical illusion that results from the horizontal direction of the elements. A 20-inch story would extend from the top of page to the bottom (if laid vertically). It looks long, and because of the limited number of things a designer can do in one column, it looks dull. A reader may need to fold the page before finishing the story. However, if the same story runs horizontally across six columns, it would be $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep. It looks shorter and may attract more readership and better photo display (Moen, 1995).

Disadvantages: 1. Photo display and page balance takes additional time during layout.

2. In vertical layout, the editor just fits the stories, but horizontal layout requires time because it demands that pages be balanced.

As earlier said, many newspapers combine horizontal and vertical formats in dressing up pages. A purely horizontal page is as dull as a purely vertical makeup. So, a combination is needed. Monotony is the enemy of any page. A good horizontal structure needs vertical elements to provide contrast. For e.g. with a horizontal page, nothing is more welcome than a strong vertical photograph (Moen, 1995).

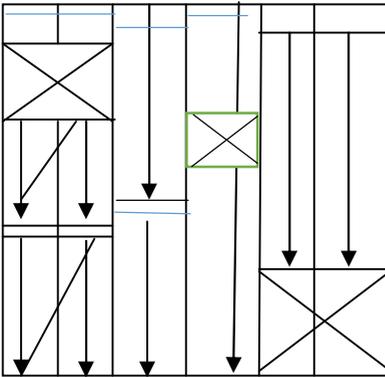


Figure 3.1: Vertical makeup

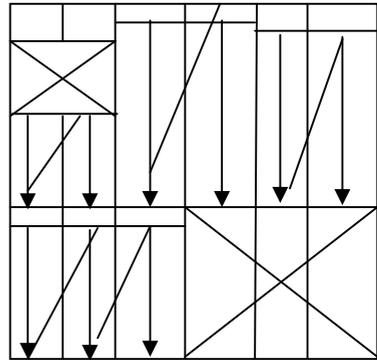


Figure 3.2: Horizontal makeup

Dummy Sheet

Prior to publication, newspapers are designed on a prototype called dummy sheet. A dummy sheet is marked in inches and picas. It helps the editor to preplan before using the plan to build the final page, something like the architect's building plan.

The dummy used to be a plan on which typeset pages are cut and pasted before imaging. With pagination systems, editors can now pre-plan on computer screens, although the many element count on front pages force editors to use dummy sheets.

On dummy sheets:

On dummy sheets, you try out things, and that's why editors use pencil -so they can erase.

- (1) Mark off the space for nameplate or the heading of any section with a horizontal line across the page. Measure the space it (nameplate) occupies on the page-say 2 inches-and start the mark off line there.

The mark off line should include the measurement for the folio line -the line indicating the volume/issue number, price, date of the publication and page number. Some publications run the nameplate on the same line as the folio.

- (2) Denote the spot for art with rectangles crossed with an X. Identify art by using a name or slug. Show also the size of the art (photo or graphics).
- (3) Draw shallow boxes to depict the space for cutlines. Write in the cutline if you can identify the subjects in the photo because you may discover that you need more space for it than allotted especially with comprehensive cutlines. Editors however resize photos to accommodate longer cutlines. Pagination software makes the resizing easy. Remember that cutlines extend the width of photographs: they should not be longer than the width of the picture.
- (4) Horizontal lines can be used in depicting where the heads are to run. Indicate the number of columns, the size and number of lines, what has been called headline order. A headline to appear in two columns, 36pts and three lines will be indicated as 2-36-3.
- (5) Indicate stories by identifying them with a slug where they are to begin. Measure out the space and use copy flow arrows or lines to indicate where copy is to appear. Indicate jumps.
- (6) Stories to be boxed or set off by rules are so indicated on dummy sheets. Small dots or light shading is used to indicate screen, that is, stories with shady or colour background.
- (7) Every leg of type should not be shorter than two inches or longer than 12 inches. This is to help the eye which works extra hard to maintain concentration

while navigating too short column depths or too long ones.

- (8) When pages are without art, the layout pattern is simply to run heads over stories. It is simple enough, but when elements –photo and cutline –enter the page, there are a variety of options or design schemes to layout the page. Friend, Challenger and McAdams (2000) offer four reliable design schemes:

a. **Vertical Stack:** Elements are placed vertically in this order: photo, cutline, headline, text. This scheme, which emphasizes the photo, is more useful when a story is a second major display element in cases in which the lead story does not have art. However, ensure that text is not kept too long to avoid being boring. The downside to this scheme is that there is no visual contact between the photo and story. One of the functions of design is to show the relationship between related elements.

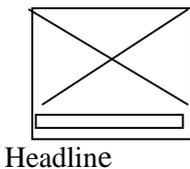
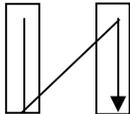


Fig. 3.3: vertical stack



- b. **Side-by-Side:** The story is laid side-by-side the photo and the headline is placed over the photo and the story or over the story. Headlines over both story and photo will show greater visual contact between the two elements. Such headlines can also function as caption; that is, doubling as headline and cutline.

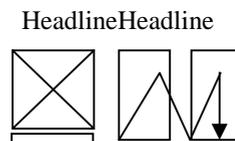
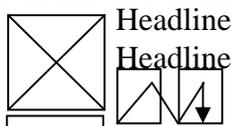


Fig. 3.5: side-by-side – headline over photo and text

Fig. 3.4: side by side – headline over the story

Text under, not above photo. Part of the headline curves to form an “L” shape under the photo. This way the top edge of text should touch the headline to create the visual link. As such, the photo should be placed to the right of columns. This though becomes a problem if the face of the photo looks away from the page- it will draw attention away from the story.



Fig. 3.6 L-wrap

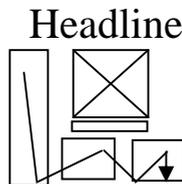


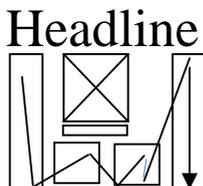
Fig. 3.7 L-wrap in dummy form

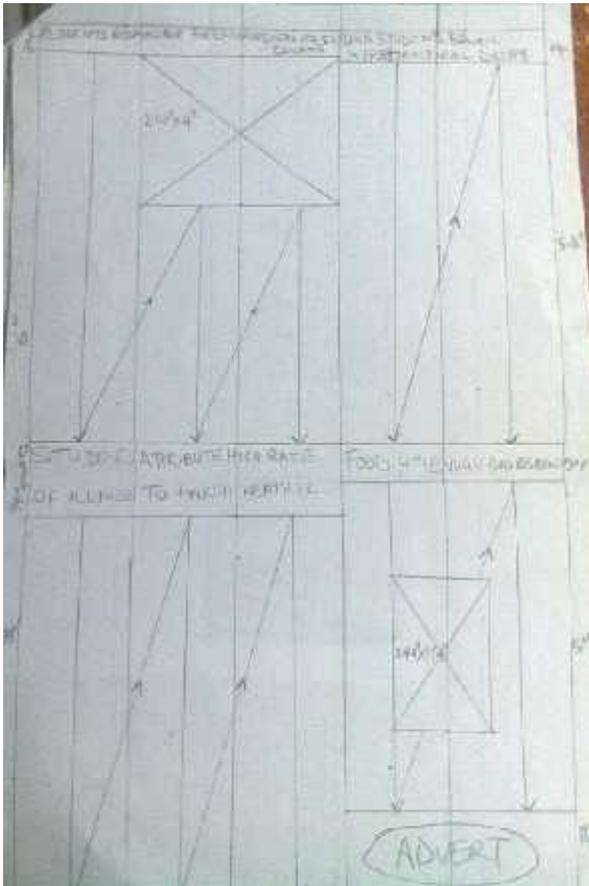
The reverse ‘L’ wrap will have text wrapped above photo. As such, the reader has to jump too high, perhaps in the middle of a sentence and up to 12 inches to get to the top of the second column. That can distract a casual reader.



Fig. 3.8 reverse L-wrap

4. “U” wrap: Text wraps around both sides of the photo. The flow of the wrap should be under the photo for the same reason given above. However, there is a compulsory jump from the last column under the photo to the top of the next column. By its nature, “U” wrap is usually possible with long stories.





Review questions

1. What are the various makeup structures?
2. What are the advantages of the makeup types?
3. In what way can good design creates a personality for a newspaper?
4. Is it ever appropriate to use a dummy now that editors are using the computer more and more?

CHAPTER 4

DESIGN

Principles of design: an introduction

Layout is based on the principles of design. Design principles are basic rules that guide layout. Newspaper layout is therefore expressed in functional design. Some pre-layout decisions need to be taken before a page is laid out. Following are principles of design.

Balance: The design principle of balance is based on the belief that the elements of the newspaper page have visual/optical weight. Weight on pages is not measured, it is simply observed. A circular object looks heavier than a rectangular object. In design, the elements are arranged in such a manner that the page appears settled. Using large headlines and very wide pictures on one side of a page, say top, will lead to a top-heavy page. This is why the designer depends on his human senses to achieve a pleasing balance effect.

Formal and informal balance

There are two kinds of balance, namely, formal and informal balance. Formal balance, also called symmetry, requires that any element that is not positioned on the vertical line dividing a page must be replicated on the other side of the page. Thus, if a two-column headline is used at top left, a two-column headline should also be used at top right. One disadvantage of this is that it forces designers to adapt news to the pattern of layout, instead of the other way round: making layout fit the pattern of the news.

Informal balance or asymmetry entails a systematic approach to balance, which involves halving and quartering the page

and noting and desirable relationships among the several parts. The horizontal line across the centre of the page is a real one: it is actually present in the fold of the page. The vertical one is less real, but nonetheless useful. These lines create two sets of halves, left and right, top and bottom. Wesley (1979:237). With this arrangement, elements at upper left are used to balance those at the lower right. The four quarters of the page should be reasonably balanced. Undue emphasis at the top, because the belief that reading starts there, may concede the lower half to dullness.

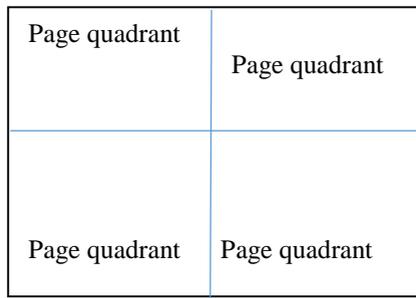
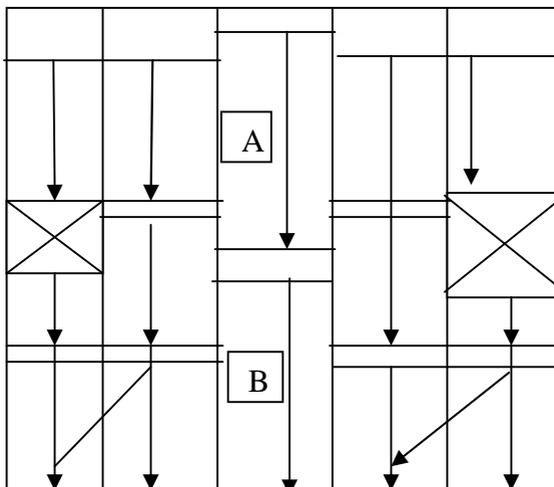


Fig. 4.1 Formal balance



Anything that is not positioned on A and B has to be replicated on either side

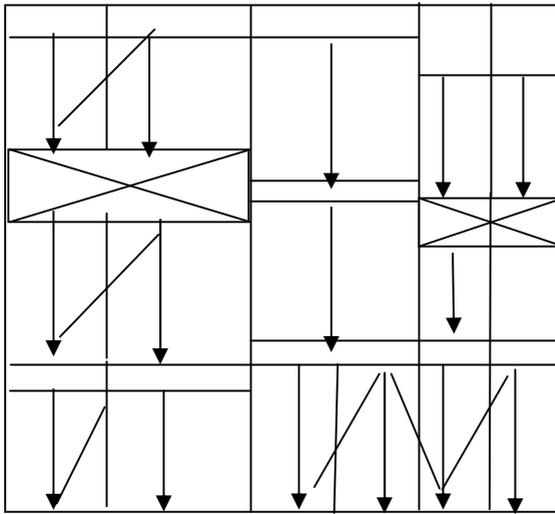


Fig. 4.2
Informal
balance

Contrast: while working with elements, it is good to vary them intelligently to avoid monotony. This implies variety. Headlines and pictures should be of various sizes. Complementary colours can also be used to achieve effective contrast. Therefore, contrast does not mean mutually exclusive opposites. It is used to attract attention within masses of like material. It is also used to make emphasis. Contrast helps a great deal in establishing the relative importance of elements on a page. On any page, large masses of headline and art lead to a mass of black concentration. Large masses of body type create a mass of gray area, while white space can form its own mass. Juxtaposing these and avoiding the masses of each in an area creates contrast. Varying type according to typefaces, type design and weight of type is another good source of contrast as is the variation of headline depths.

Focus: more often than not, readers start a page from top left, and reading follows from top to bottom. Writing in this

part of the world beings from left to right. This has led editors to take the top left corner of the page as a prime point to display the dominant element. This is what some refer to as focus makeup. Some designers, however, create their own focal points by placing the dominant display element thereupon. This, however, depends on the way an element is used to call attention to the focal point. Additionally, editors divide every page into four (upper left, upper right, lower left and lower right) and give each quarter some attention value. This helps to spread the focal points, without giving too much attention to any part.

Proportion: this is the relationship that exists among layout elements in terms of their size. In order to achieve a good proportion, it is important to watch the ratio of the width of an element to its depth (fig. 4.3). A four column story that is two inches deep is obviously too wide for its depth. It is bad proportion. Proportion can also be achieved by judging the size relationship between one element and another, for instance, the headline and the story, or a picture and a story. A two-column headline over a nine-inch deep story is horrible. Here again, the designer needs his common sense, and not just mathematical sense of ratio and proportion.

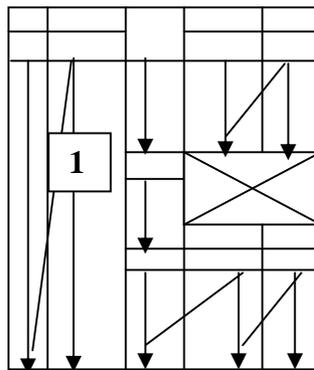


Fig.4.3: Proportion

The story marked 1. is certainly too long for a two column headlines. The headlines and the story depth of other stories are reasonably proportionate to one another. Friend, Challenger and McAdams (2000, p. 442) note as follows:

Huge headlines on small stories and small headlines on big stories confuse both the eyes and the brain. Editors work from flexible but reliable guidelines about how width (number of columns) and depth (the number of lines) should be proportioned so that headlines have enough space to be intelligible, but don't take up so much space that they overwhelm the stories beneath:

- 1-column head: 3 or 4 lines
- 2-column head: 2 or 3 lines
- 3-column head: 1 or 2 lines
- 4- to 6-column head: 1 line.

Unity: one major aim of design is to give the newspaper a personality. Readers should be able to recognize the various sections of the paper each day. Once you see a copy of the *Daily Sun* or *The Guardian* 30 meters away, you are able to recognize it. The same applies to individual pages within the papers. Some newspapers have held onto particular logos, type design and photos on given pages to achieve uniformity over time. Even when they change, perhaps because of a change in policy, they inch up on it such that the reader is carried along quietly into a new style that will become regular. Unity sets limitation on contrast to a level that the reader still recognizes various sections. In fact, consistency with particular kinds of contrast such as the way colour is used to show emphasis can make contrast a handmaid of unity.

Motion or Rhythm: the eye is supposed to glide effortlessly over the page, from element to element throughout the page. Placement of elements should enhance this. Because it is the

eye that moves, not the elements, it is not easy to give guidelines here. The editor can only influence eye movement; he has no definitive control over how a reader will look at a page. The editor is advised to allow weight to extend vertically and horizontally into the various quarters in a page rather than simply distributing the weight within the quadrants. The eye needs to be guided as it moves over a page. Thus, place your pictures such that they would lead into the story they play off (or vice versa) or such that reader can come off the cutline into another story.

Basic Questions

The following questions should be addressed prior to laying out pages (Moen, 1995).

How many elements are there for each page? What would be their sizes/do I have jump stories? Which elements are related and how do we show the relationships among them. These questions are important because a story that would receive an insignificant display may be related to a major element, and grouping them helps to play up the minor story. Yet the reader is better served because he sees the relationship among the material he reads. This has made editors to think in terms of packages instead of in terms of individual stories. Packages means blocks of elements stacked in modules. See the chapter on modular design for more on page modules.

Which is the major display element or elements? The page is supposed to be built around the major display element, which is not necessarily the most important story. The major display element refers to the dominant visual element. A secondary story that has visuals may be given a dominant display if the lead story does not have any photography or artwork. However, even if the most important story does not

have any visuals, it still can be the major display element. The editor can use type and other graphic devices to attract attention to it.

The editor has no problem if the major display element is also the most important story. Of course, most major display elements have visuals. Whether or not the major story has pictures, it should still receive deserved attention, although the page is built around the secondary display element, which should be placed at or near the top of the page. To be dominant, a picture should be large in relation to the page or segment of the page it takes up. For instance, in a tabloid newspaper, the dominant picture ought to be as wide as 40 picas, and in a broadsheet newspaper, 50 picas wide. The size of the dominant picture should be proportionate to the overall space available. However, the size difference between the dominant and subordinate pictures should be apparent to the reader.

Which element is the second major display element (or elements) for the page? This element needs to be positioned as close to the bottom as possible and on a diagonal line from the major display element. This is to counterbalance the top of the page where the major display element is positioned. The reader glides along this diagonal, stopping at some spots of interest, which they may revisit when they finish with the dominant stories. In this way page dynamics or motion is assured.

Is the lead story related to the main photo? It is necessary to show the relationship if they are related. If they are not, show the disassociation. It is in line with the above guidelines that Moen (1995:27) offers the following layout rules:

- ❖ **Avoid Tomb-stoning:** Tomb-stoning is the practice of bumping heads against each other. You should not bump

heads because the consumer might read from one head into the text. Tombstoning also concentrates type masses in one area and thereby clutter and unbalance the page. However, there are four ways to bump heads and still prevent the negative effects of tombstoning:

- Run a large and one-line, multi-column head against a small, one-column head. A reader would hardly read from one to the other.
 - Vary typeface
 - Write the head on the left intentionally short. White space provides the safeguard against tombstoning.
 - Dutchwrap the copy under the related photo or artwork or box the story. A dutchwrap refers to copy that comes out from under the head.
- ❖ **Do not tombstone unrelated photos or artwork.** Bumping photos or artwork concentrates too much weight in one place on the page, and the reader may think or artworks are related because they are adjacent to one another.
- ❖ **On inside pages** avoid placing art, photos or box next to ads because they usually have high noise level, that is, ads contain their own large type, photos or artworks. Similarly, editorial material placed next to ads also unbalances the paper. Because many inside pages have little news space, it is not always possible to avoid bumping editorial art against advertising art. As a general practice, however, it is better to speak with a softer voice (smaller typesize and art relative to ads) on inside pages dominated by advertisement. The contrast this provides is likely to attract more attention than in a case whereby both the news and ad are competing with the same type and size of elements. **Boxed news on top of art, which is also boxed, look like advertising copy.** If it is necessary

to box a story adjacent to an ad, the box should extend into the news space instead of running flush with the ad.

- ❖ **Try to avoid dutchwrap copy situations.** Readers are not accustomed to having the text width exceed that of headline. However, there is no possibility that the reader will become confused by the layout. It is permissible, even advisable, to wrap the copy from underneath the head. This is most often on inside pages where advertising takes up all but the top few inches of the page. If there is only one story, a reader can easily follow the path of the copy. If there are two or more stories above each other, the material must be separated. Sometimes, such is done with a heavy four- or six-point rule or by wrapping copy underneath a related photo.

Size and weight have differentiated the headlines below. A reader is not likely to read from one into the other.

Fire guts national library **Election Result**
Authentic - Jega

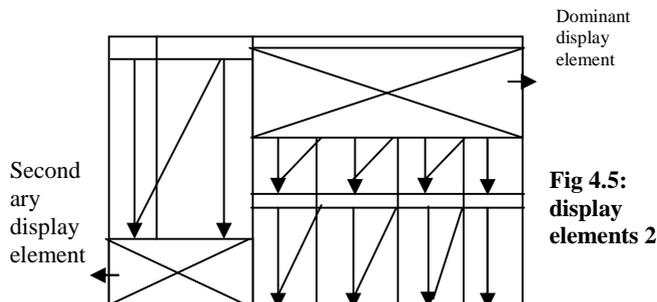
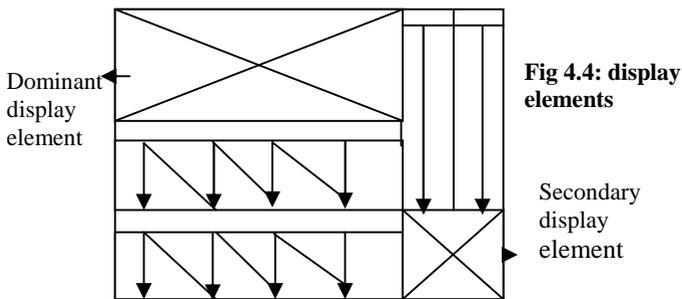




Fig. 4.6: Dominant vs. secondary elements. The first pic top left is the dominant display element. The lower right of the page is anchored with a secondary element. The shoulder shot below the dominant display element draws the eye to a part of the lead story. This may guide the eye towards the secondary display element. However, the size of the dominant element relative to the secondary element makes the design a focus makeup.

Copy Fitting

Computers are largely eliminating the strenuous task of story measurement. However, with the high element count on page one, the editor may need to measure stories to ensure that they fit. Lack of measurement makes some editors to reduce the size of stories indiscriminately (if they do not fit), making the page to appear funny, with various typesizes within the same story. Similarly, the editor may be forced to bite off, and thus damage a story's essence. Pagination software comes with measurements in points and picas as wells inches and millimeters to enable editors measure pictures and stories.

Because of the great flexibility of the computer, a measurement system such as the column inch method will work well. It is simple, fast and has minor inaccuracies. Other more complex methods (character count, word count)

are more accurate but needless in this era of computer precision. Quark Xpress, for instance, enables the user to highlight a story; as one drags, the software automatically increases all characters to make them be in the same size. If a story is more than allotted space, one can highlight and drag back to fit required space.

The Column Inch Method

This system is based on finding out how many typewritten lines of type will fill a column inch of a page when printed. The editor is supposed to know the standard column width of his paper as well as body size. For instance, with the *Record* of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, which uses the six-column format, the following measurements were noted: Taylor and Scher (1951) did the calculation.

Type size (in points) lines per column inch

6	6
7	5
8	4
10	3
12	2

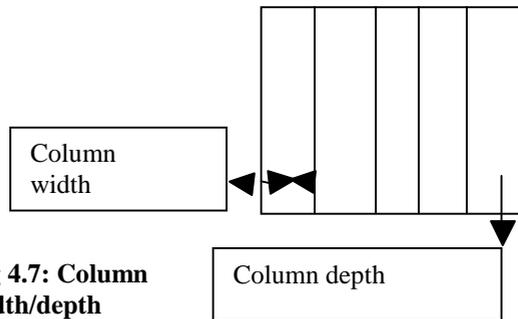


Fig 4.7: Column width/depth

The Record also uses the following measurements, especially for photo display.

- 1 Column or 1.5 inches wide
- 2 Columns or 3.2 inches wide
- 3 Columns or 4.7 inches wide
- 4 Columns 6.6 inches wide

- 5 Columns or 8.00 inches wide
- 6 Columns or 9.8 inches wide

If, for instance, a typewritten story is 30 typewritten lines, and is to be set using 10pts body size, the editor merely divides 30 by three to arrive at 10. The story when set, will occupy 10 inches of page depth. In counting, lines up to half are counted. Any less is ignored. Pagination software allows you to drag a story across the number of columns you wish to work with.

There is also a simple way to calculate the depth of a headline. First, determine the size you want to use in setting the head. Divide it by 12. Multiply the result by the number of lines the head will occupy. For e.g. head size = 36pts. Lines = 2; $36/12 = 3$. $2 \times 3 = 6$ picas. Result is in picas because you have divided by 12. 12pts = 1 pica. It is also good to know when to choose an appropriate headline size. A 72pt head over a one-column story will look wow! When using the 12-14-pica column width range, you are advised as follows: if you choose 18pts, the head will be best over one column; 24pts (one or two); 30pts (one or two); 36pts (one to four); 60pts (two to six); 72pts (two to six).

Review Questions

1. What do you understand by makeup?
2. What is the relationship between makeup and design?
3. Explain proportion with examples.
4. What are the necessary questions to address prior to laying out a page?

CHAPTER FIVE DESIGNING SPECIAL PAGES

Preamble

In order to capture the nature of contents on some pages, and to attract readers, editors give special treatment to some pages of a newspaper, ranging from front pages through fashion to sports. Every section of a newspaper has its own personality, although there would be some design issues common to them all.

The first page and back page are often the most visited. Editorial pages are pages of opinion, and editors want to separate between news pages of fact and editorial pages of opinion. The physical difference in their designs helps to show the line between editorials and news.

Sports and business pages also attract special display because of the nature of the areas. The activity, flamboyance and entertainment in sports on the one hand, and the seriousness in business on the other can all be captured in design.

Front Page

The first page is the face of the newspaper. It is built to attract the reader. It reflects a mood, especially through cover and teaser photos. It grades stories through headline displays and thereby shows the relative importance of stories on both the first page and elsewhere. It declares what is top on the edition's agenda. As a result, many front pages have high element count. This is also the bait, and the designer has to be careful to avoid cluttering the page.

Many front pages are planned vertically since this design works well with the many element count associated with front pages. Experts say that the editor should be more concerned

with element count on front pages. Research shows that readers prefer front pages that bubble with life, that is, activity. Editors should look at the heavy weights-headlines and visuals. Readers often see these eye catchers.

For teasers, the practice often is running them as skyline. That is, title (with pix) across nameplate, logo or flag. Some newspapers run them underneath the flag. Readers are known to scan teasers, but no correlation has been established between such scanning and readership of stories they advertise. Experts advise that the format for running teasers should vary from time to time since familiarity breeds dreariness. The grid ranges from four to six columns. Decks and pullouts are better on narrower columns. The narrower the columns, the higher the element count. But photos get better display on wider columns. Many newspapers have six columns. A three-column pix would be 46 picas wide in a five-column grid, such a display would give 39 picas of width in a six-column grid.

Editors are often unwilling to allow all the space required by photo editors. There ought to be compromise. Good design may begin with, and revolve, around photographs. Many front pages also carry story digests for readers in a hurry. Apart from bringing more activity to front pages because of adding to element count, digests offer a more extensive menu of important information. Front pages also often contain jumps. According to research, readers hate jumps, but newspapers do not appear to notice. Jumps are still the norm in most newspapers. It appears that newspapers want to accommodate many stories on the front page and thus jump them off the pages. However, the following are necessary tips when jumping stories.

1. Continued stories should also be located on the same page and in the same place each issue if possible.
2. One-ward labels over jumped stories are not enough. Few readers visit a jump story directly at the page where it continues. Only the reader that follows a story directly to the jump page will find the story easily using a label head. A reader may even see a jump story before the original story. A full headline will better payoff the jump and entice the reader to look for the original story. A newspaper may use a keyword in the original headline to identify the story. The keyword and the new deck may receive various typographical displays to attract attention (see Moen, 1995).

Fig 5.1: Font page of Daily Independent. Front pages have many elements, and high activity





Fig. 5.2: Back page of Thisday. Like page one, back pages are also active, and contain many elements. They are often news pages.

Back Page

Iyida (2000, p.178) advises that attention should also be given to back pages. He says that back page is second only to the front page and should be made so. It bears a pseudo nameplate (only the name displayed with or without logo) at the top and imprint at the bottom. Imprint is a boxed or ruled matter showing name and address of printers and publishers of the paper, the paper's e-mail and website addresses, post office, telephone and telex numbers, and main office address, editor's name and residential address, instruction for correspondence, date of publication. The lead story at back page gets good display, but not better than front display. Stories may jump from back pages to inside pages to attract attention to the inside pages.

Sports Page

In sports stories, we have hot news (fresh reports) made more appealing with well-displayed photos. Editors must not forget to use the action words, good headline display and action photos that reflect the loudness and excitement of sports stories. Sports pages should get a generous dose of bold photos, pullouts, charts, tables and diagrams. Charts are ready digests of sports statistics, scores and how the teams are doing.

Newspapers have done this so well that the terms - medals table, league table, scores chart - have become popular in the lexicon of sports enthusiasts. Sports data should not take up large space, with legibility intact. At 7-point type and the seven to eight column format and six-point gutters, space is saved, without sacrificing legibility. Readers feel a visual relief when there is a variety of medium and bold type. Since statistics are given in smaller type, sans serifs works better

than serif type. Type may be somewhat condensed with zero leading.



Fig 5.3. Sports page. This sports page is alive, but with many screaming elements, a bit of distraction to the reader



Fig. 5.4 Business Page: serious section

Business Page

Usually business is serious deal: money is involved. Therefore, no one expects the drama of sports pages on the business side. To begin with, business stories hardly yield candid pictures. In fact, business desks fight hard to create their own graphics to go with text. Nevertheless, we know that the page can ill afford to be dull. What the business desk lost in the ready availability of action pictures they gained with information graphics. Readers benefit a lot from the graphics because they are ready digests.

The daily grist of the business section is numbers. Charts and tables are not only useful, but also essential. Diagrams help explain how the economy works better than long blocks of text do. In fact, charts and tables are so useful that business editors must resist the temptation to fill the pages with boilerplate graphics – syndicated graphics with no local angle and often questionable connections to the story they accompany. Just because information graphics are so obvious doesn't mean that other forms of storytelling aren't available. Editors can use illustrations to draw the people they are writing about, or they can do photographic portraiture. Good portraiture photography goes far beyond the usual newspaper head-and-shoulders shot. Although editors should use all these forms of storytelling, one should come to dominate the pages and establish the personality of the section. (Moen 1995, p.206)

Depending on the level of data, grids of up to five or six columns work well. Bold type or rule may be used to organize or segment tables of stock listings to enable readers find them easily.

Editorial Page

The design of the editorial page makes it markedly different from news and feature pages. The design helps some readers appreciate the difference between news and opinion. This is because some readers who cannot make the distinction have accused editors of slanting the news. Editorial pages ought to be appetizing, and improved from time to time to sustain reader interest. This is in addition to having well-written editorials and other opinion stories.

When an editorial issue merits front-page placement, the usual practice is to box it and clearly label it 'Editorial'. Most editorials - whether front page or editorial page - are boxed, set in bigger body size, wider column width, and separated by black lines (or a pica of white space in ruled publications) instead of white space or gutters.

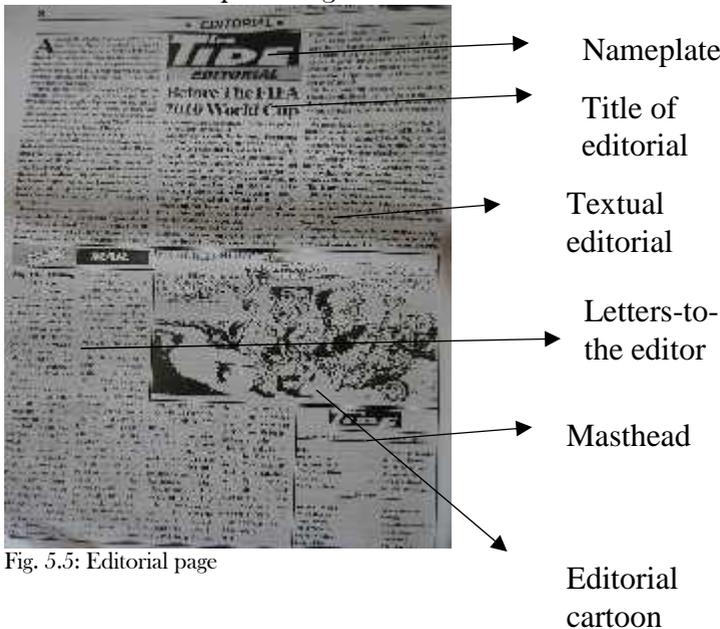


Fig. 5.5: Editorial page

The following are some devices used by editors to draw reader's attention to the editorial page.

1. **Typography.** Typographic treatment makes the editorial page different and attractive at the same time. Body type for editorials ought to be considerably larger than that of straight news. If news is set in 10 points, editorial should be set at least 12 points or 10 points bold. The typography of the editorial page has two functions: - to attract the reader and to help him differentiate between the editorial page and news pages. Rising or inset caps (first letter of first paragraph rising or falling below other letters in a line) in bold face are used in first and middle paragraphs. Thick black horizontal lines can be used to break up long editorials. Sub-heads in bold face are also be used to achieve such breaks.
2. **Grid.** This means the column structure for editorial pages. The column width of editorial pages is wider than that of news pages. Editorials are always run in wider columns, and this makes it all the more necessary to use larger type, since too-wide column width decreases legibility. Air is the most important ingredient in displaying the editorial.
3. **ColumnRules/White Space.** Editorial pages can use column rules or white space to mark gutters (the space in between columns). Column rules should be used if white space is used in news pages, and vice versa.
4. **Leading.** Generous leading at least six points between paragraphs is essential. A pica of white space above and below heads is desirable. Bullets and similar devices can be used to separate paragraphs. Radically indented paragraphs are used to lend variety. These devices all build in air.
5. **TheMasthead.** The masthead is the column in newspapers where editors and crew put down their names and designation as a way to identify the people whose opinion have been

represented in the editorial. Traditionally, the masthead is run in the upper left corner. Today the trend is to take it to the bottom of the page (mostly right) and to move the editorials top left, which is considered a focal point. When the masthead is long enough, it can take the right half of the page. Again, no newspaper is constricted to keep the masthead at a place. Some newspapers open up space in between two columns of the editorial and place the masthead there.

6. **Standing Heads.** At times, newspapers create line drawings or typographic tags they use in identifying pages. The drawing or typographic display, called standing head, appears at that spot every issue to identify the page. Before the advent of the computer, standing heads were so called because they were created and kept stand by to be reused each issue to avoid recreating them over and over. Today, they exist as part of templates or master pages. If standing heads are used for columns, the style in which line drawings are contained with type is most attractive. The contrast between such line drawing and photographs predominant elsewhere in the paper emphasizes the difference between the opinion and news pages. At the same time, line drawings harmonize with page tone set by the dominance of the editorial cartoon. The authors' portraits are frequently set into the body type in columns (write-up from columnists). Some newspapers draw the portrait using line art, instead of having the photograph of the columnists. This is because such newspapers do not want to have photographs on the editorial page. However, the value of most columnists depends upon the personalized quality of their work, and this is increased if the reader has a clear physical as well as mental image of the writer.

Logos. Striking logos are used to identify the stories or pages into which they are set. Thus, the logos bear the names of the pages such as Editorial/Comment/Viewpoint, Politics, Foreign Affairs, Parliament, Defense, Investigation and Congress etc. This helps readers to know the subject matter

of any page they open. Logos not only give immediate identification but also are important as typographic display. Logo is also understood as the symbol of newspapers (see Ukonu, 2013, pp.59-64).

Feature Page

Feature pages contain much fewer stories than news pages and are therefore usually adapted to the horizontal structure. Many feature pages have no more than three stories. In cases where the page contains two stories, one is placed atop, the other below. Feature stories are more flexible than news. The title may be a punning title or any other figure of speech. The title, which may be written in news style, can be placed anywhere: top, centre or even at the bottom. Decks can be flushed left or right, and may be set in reverse type. There is also better photo display on feature pages. Bleeding can be done to create mood, and one photo may be displayed more than once, especially in interview feature. Feature stories are often much longer than news. They should be segmented into text, charts, illustration and summary boxes. Blurbs can be used as heads when stories jump to another page.

Subheads are good in relieving grayness. The reader pauses before going on to a new subhead, and this is usually refreshing. Rising and inset caps also offer visual relief (large initial capitals at the beginning of a story: when the first line of type comes off the top of the capital, it is referred to as inset cap; conversely, when the first line of copy comes off the bottom of the capital, it becomes rising capital).

When the first line of copy comes off the top of the capital, it is referred to as inset cap; conversely, when the first line of

<p>The bold letter is inset cap.</p>

copy comes off the bottom of the capital, it becomes rising capital)

When the first line of copy comes off the top of the capital, it is referred to as inset cap; conversely, when the first line of copy comes off the bottom of the capital, it becomes rising capita

**The
bold
letter is
rising
cap.**



Fig. 5.6:
Feature
page.

Review Questions

1. What is the need for special designs?
2. What treatments are necessary for the front page?
3. The treatment of the editorial page helps to distinguish between the content of the editorial page and news pages. Discuss?

4. How should photographs be handled on a feature page?

CHAPTER 6 MODULAR DESIGN

Pages in Modules

Readers want to understand the relationship among the elements on a page. This is simply to make a way out of the mass of messages in a page, and without much ado. Modular planning means grouping related elements in square and rectangular blocks that ensure that every block of related elements start at the same point and end at the same point. Every block is contained in the same area so that the reader can identify where another block of related elements begins.

Planning in modules helps to establish relationships fast. The reader's time is saved when ambiguities are removed from pages. Simply enough, the editor needs to treat a picture in ways that show whether or not it is related to a story. Many Nigerian newspapers have pictures positioned on the centre of pages whereas the pictures do not relate to any story on the pages. In many cases, however, the editors set off the pictures with heavy rules or thick borders, and carefully plan the page around the pictures. This is the general design practice in the *DailyIndependent*.

Modular design requires that every page should show stories in form of single packages. Related stories and/or packages are placed near each other to establish relationships that facilitate reading. That is, placing copy packages (text, pix, sidebar, information graphics) in rectangular or square blocks or units. A page is then an assemblage of modules (Fig 6.1). This is better than a page in which copy wraps irregularly around related and unrelated stories and pictures. This is called dogleg format.

Dogleg makes it more difficult to make corrections or to add/remove lines of type because of irregular shapes of type blocks. This is also why it is more difficult to substitute one type block for another in dogleg format than with a modular page. Uneven wraps of copy hardly allows smooth replacement of copy blocks. These difficulties are almost non-existent with modular planning.

In addition to its clean, simple look, Moen (1995, p.42) says modular layout saves time in the production process, adapts quickly to technological changes, permits better packaging of related elements, provides opportunity for contrast on the page and serves reader preferences. Irregular readers want to know which stories are related and prefer to have similar stories grouped by subject matter (Clark, 1979, p.30). Irregular wraps are more time-consuming in both traditional paste-up and electronic systems. Often advertisements become intrusive on the simplicity of modular layout. Newspapers have the option of stacking ads top left or right and using the remaining pages for news. Ads can also be placed in modular stacks to make pages less cluttered. They should be stacked left or right in order not to appear chaotic around news with large headlines. Remember that ads are high noise zones.

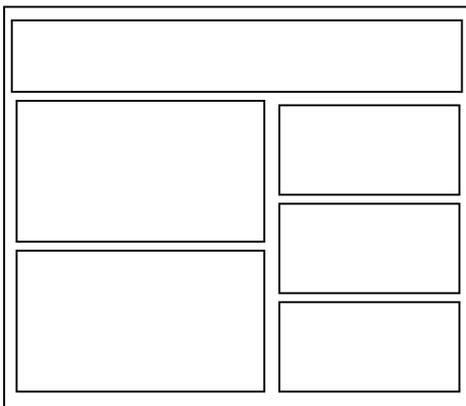


Fig. 6.1: Modular page. Pages are much less clumsy in modular planning. The blocks represent stories (with their pix, heads, etc.) with each block containing related editorial matter.

Showing Relationships

By merely placing several elements in a modular block, some sort of relationship is created. That is not sufficient. Editors, according to Moen (1995), have five ways to establish relationship: placing related elements in a vertical module; boxing related elements; running a headline over related elements; running a copy alongside and under a related story, picture or graphic; and using icons, colour or some other unifying device to identify elements on the same topic.

- Placing related elements in a vertical module. The natural order is photograph, cutline, headline and story. The eye is first attracted to the photograph. Most readers come out of the bottom of a picture to look for cutline information. The natural move is then to large headline under the photograph. To successfully show relationship, the headline should begin at a lower left hand corner of the picture and extend the width of picture.
- Boxing related elements. Elements within a box must be on the same topic. A box that pulls elements together also separates. For instance, it is inappropriate to run a main story and box a sidebar outside the module of the main package. Short sidebars can be boxed if they are contained within the large unit. However, if the same story runs outside the package, the box disassociates the two stories.
- Running the story alongside and under related elements. Confusion, and sometimes embarrassment, can result when a headline runs over unrelated elements. That ambiguity occurs because readers have been taught that the headline creates relationships among the elements under it. A story in the Guardian of Wednesday, January 10, 2007 ran this headline under an unrelated photo: **Idah Peterside Grabs Eagles Job.**

Incidentally, the photo was a scene of the fight between two boxers: the Nigerian Samuel Peters and James Toney. The headline contained the name ‘Peterside’, which readily tempts the reader (especially if he is not sure) to think that the name of the Nigerian is now Peterside or that the headline was talking about the photograph. However, the headline was referring to something radically different.

- Running the story alongside and under related elements. Sometimes you do not wish to run a headline over a story and picture because of other elements surrounding it or because the story deserved only a one-or-two-column headline. Your solution then is to “L” the story under the related picture.
- Using icons, colour or other elements to show relationships. When you work in modules, stories stacked on or alongside each other are technically in the same module even when they are not related. To show the relationship of adjacent stories, you can use a repeating element. Icons, a small graphic representation, can be inset into the beginning of related stories. Same-colour bars can be represented with related stories. In fact, any repetition of design elements helps communicate relationships.

How to Disassociate Dissimilar Elements

Simply, unrelated elements should be dissociated, at least by not observing the above guidelines. There are, however, additional steps that will help the editor dissociate unrelated elements. Moen explains them:

1. Boxes associate; they also disassociate. Boxes can be used to set stories apart.
2. Vertical and horizontal rules are like fences; they separate stories. The risk you run is having the reader overlook them. Vertical rules between unrelated

stories and elements can dissociate them. If they are used consistently, regular readers will understand them. If they are used inconsistently, readers may not understand. Horizontal rules are called cutoff rules. That is because they are intended to cut off the reader from reading from one element into the next.

3. Almost all newspapers run stand-alone pictures. Unless the picture is sitting on the bottom of the page, it immediately creates a challenge to disassociate the copy that appears under it. Many newspapers properly box stand-alone pictures. That may not solve the problem. The rule may not be heavy enough. If you show a relationship between a picture and story by running a headline from the lower left hand corner of the picture to the width of the picture, it follows that you should not run a headline the width of the picture, if they are not related.

The editor should also know that he would win reader interest if he tells a story in various segments. A story on census can be told in text, pictures, charts and box summaries. A reader goes from one segment to another usually with a sense of pause and relief that will be absent when the whole story is contained in vast text and in speechless aware photos. Additionally, subheads, drop caps (rising and inset caps), blurbs, whitespace, varying column widths for text-heavy pages, and gray screens over copy are other ways to build air into a page, and provide relief from what would have been a scary ocean of gray type area. Blurb can be given a distinctive background with type bigger than bodysize. Blurbs with pictures may attract greater attention, which may force the reader over to a story. This is more so when a blurb contains an enticing quote.

Modular planning facilitates copy flow and page motion. Columns start and end at the same height, making the reader to start at the same height. This boosts type legibility. As earlier noted, when a picture interferes with the block of type, the story can be shaped 'L' under the picture (see fig. 3.6 in chapter three).



Fig 6.2: Breaking into text with pix. The jump from underneath the right arm is a long one. That is, if the reader even sees that text. The smaller pix is not interfering with text.

Copy flow problem also exists when text is wrapped around a wavy or zigzag element. Some sports photos show runners whose hands and legs stretch far into copy blocks, forcing readers to jump the illustrations more than nine times in some instances. In the above photograph, the reader is forced to jump the footballer six times. Readers jump into the wrong columns at times, sigh and jump over to another page. Editors should not break across the middle of two or more columns of page setting with any element, blurb or

illustration. Blurbs should be placed on top of leg of type, never across columns within type. When they must, the editor should ensure that the placement would not mislead a reader to jump into a wrong column after reading the blurb.

The pullout quote labelled **A** breaks across two columns and obstructs the flow of text. The one labelled **B** is at the foot of text where it does not obstruct text, and draws attention to that part of the page.

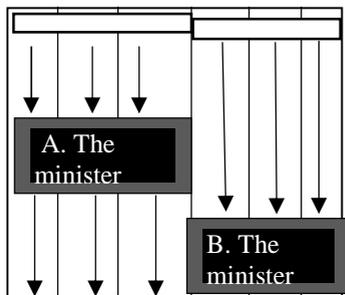


Fig. 6.3:
Breaking across
columns with
pullout quote

Review Questions

1. What is the need for modular planning?
2. How should elements be associated?
3. When and why should some elements be dissociated?
4. How should dissimilar elements be dissociated?

CHAPTER 7 GOING INTO THE STORY

Wielding the Surgeon's knife

The time-tested news elements (what, who where, when why, how) remain the substance of the story. They are the genetic makeup of the reporter's story. But it is the consistency of details, completeness, accuracy, clarity and relevance of these elements that make the reader care to read on. That is what the copy editor achieves in the delivery room, the copy desk.

There are different surgical activities the editor can bring to bear on stories. At times, the editor merges two stories to form one story; that is, compiling. The editor can also reduce a long or verbose story in a number of ways. The surgical activity can involve a caesarian section in which the editor cuts into a cluttered story to pull the main ideas from where they are buried in the belly of weak writing. In journalism terms, this refers to cutting, slashing or boiling.

Compiling

Radio and television compete a lot more favourably on speed than newspapers. Newspapers cannot compete with the faster media on the last-minute news flash. Therefore, for the news editor, an easy way to worsen a disadvantage would be to offer readers the same information they have heard on radio. The job of the editor is to amplify, synthesize and interpret the details as flashed by radio and television. To do this, at times, requires pinning together various reports on the same topic to provide a seamless, more comprehensive story, a process known as compiling.

Therefore, the editor faces the task of assembling a single copy from various related sources. In other words, he ought

to understand each copy in detail in order to produce a seamless piece as the final copy. This means he needs a sense of news value, story movement and story refinement. The job of compiling transcends ordinary copyediting: straightening grammar and ensuring conformity with house style.

Compiling becomes important when stories on the same issue are received from various news sources, especially news agencies. The same need arises if one report is needed on one convention covered by three reporters. In addition, when there are local, state and national versions of the same story, there is often need for compiling. However, the reasons are not a sufficient condition for compiling. The editor still needs to make the following judgments.

Can the stories be run separately due to their different values? A local story on census may stand alone while a census story from a national angle also stands. Each story portrays various values. One story may talk about logistics, and the conduct of the people; the other may talk about counting in given remote localities of the state. If the compilation story would be too long because of effort to reflect all the ingredients of the versions, then the editor may run them separately or otherwise use devices like subheads to break large gray type area.

Readers are known to ignore very long stories. Are there versions that should be ignored? If one of the versions of a story deals with just the hard facts/information, the editor may decide to ignore it because the faster media may have since flashed that aspect. He may choose to dwell on the version dealing with interpretation.

Tips on Compiling

When the story originates from more than one place, ignore the datelines, put the main facts from the various stories into a new lead, and construct the details together in the body. If two versions of a story on the war on Iraq are received from various sources, the editor should make the story into one by weaving the facts together into smooth running story. Trying to show datelines and using parenthesis to insert a counter version to a statement will end up producing fragmented report. Readers are wont to jump parenthesis, especially when it contains too much detail. However, the *where* of an action should be made clear each time it becomes imperative.

Time and place should be put straight in compilations. The various stories may contain different dates and places. As a result, the editor must be careful to report each time and place correctly, especially also in relation to the time the report will reach the reader. “Even when the time element doesn’t change radically, the editor must be watchful of ‘when’ in a story, which involves a chronological sequence of events not necessarily reassembled in chronological order. He must be careful in shifting from one event to another that the does not confuse the order in which the events took place. He often clarifies the time element in this kind of story by means of transitions” (Westley 1972, p.113). Transitions such as ‘Therefore, Moreover’, on the ‘Western front’ will help the reader know how the last issue, time or place discussed is linked to the present one.

Transitions help to define time and place:

- ✓ If there are two versions of a story, with one dealing with opinion or explanation, and the other dealing with straight news, it means the versions are on various levels of objectivity. To produce one objective story or a story fair to both versions, the editor can throw in a phrase of attribution now and again, and eliminate brazen opinions here and there. Though an arduous task, the compilation that results is usually worth the energy spent.

- ✓ If the stories talk of the same kind of incident, say flooding in various centres in Nigeria, an unwary editor may unknowingly run them separately. He need not be crucified for this. Nevertheless, a better job can be done if the stories are compiled into one. All the editors need do is provide a lead paragraph or two that tie the stories and then merely paste the other stories underneath. For instance if three correspondents filed in reports about flooding in the states they cover, the editor can use a lead as follows in the compilation story: **No fewer than 25 people have been reported dead, while property worth more than N200 million has been destroyed in separate floods that occurred in various centres across Northern Nigeria last week.**

The reader already knows the story is on floods. He does not expect to read about fire or about flood in eastern Nigeria. This means the editor has to read the stories properly to fine tune details that may contradict the lead. If there is a line or two about fire, he may, for instance, find a transition to tell the reader that **'in addition to widespread flooding in Kano, a high rise building was destroyed by fire in the morning of last Tuesday, before the city of Kano was bathed in deadly floods'**.

- ✓ Two versions of a story may contain conflicting details. Even if they are run separately, the conflict is not resolved. In a report

of train crash, one version may put casualty figure at 10 and condemn government for poor emergency readiness. Another report may peg the figure at below or above 10 and commend or simply report the efforts of a rescue team. In this case, a parenthetical insert is useful. It does not resolve the conflict, but as one story, it creates the impression that the story is yet unfolding. As two stories it may portray the newspaper as inconsistent with facts. Consider the following:

A Boeing 727 aircraft belonging to Zozolizo airways crashed Monday on the Jeba Mountain in Nigeria, killing 110 out of 120 passengers on board. (A BCC report on Tuesday pegged the causality figure at 70 and added that a German rescue team has dug up five persons alive from beneath crash rubbles. The report also says rescue efforts are still on for more survivor). The Nigerian government has, however, come under serious fire for poor emergency readiness...

Cutting Story Length

Wordiness does not only make reading difficult, it also costs space. Research on the relationship between story length and readership indicates that a long story is less likely to be read than a short one. The fifth paragraph of a five-paragraph story is more likely to be read than the fifth paragraph of a 10-paragraph story. Editors think it wise to cut stories when they are needlessly lengthy. The idea is to attract and encourage readership.

The following terms are associated with reducing the length of stories. The terms are generally applied to trimming a story.

- ✓ Biting off/cutting
- ✓ Boiling
- ✓ Slashing

Biting Off: The straight news story is usually written in the inverted pyramid structure not only because of reader convenience, but also because it lends itself readily to reduction in length. Biting off means eliminating paragraphs at the bottom of a story when the story is written in inverted pyramid form. Be careful not to chop off at a point where the reader will start asking questions. One story ended this way: *After the debates on the number of political parties to be adopted by Nigeria, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has finally registered three political parties out of the over 40 associations seeking registration.* Which are the parties? The reader expected to be told. It seemed one needed to see the copy editor to ask him.

Boiling: This entails reducing wordage when a story is verbose: words that do not add to the meaning of a story and get in the way of telling the story. When a story is written in pyramid form or contains internal details (if in inverted pyramid) that will be affected if a paragraph is chopped off at the end, boiling takes effect. Perhaps, the reporter failed to arrange facts in good order of priority. Thus, the story cannot be chopped anywhere. However, the editor goes into the story, reduces wordage and makes effort to make the copy more direct, simpler, easier to read and easier to understand. For instance, “The bridge, according to experts, is generally expected to have been completed by the time the world cup kicks off in Brazil this summer”. This sentence can be rewritten simply: The bridge is expected to be ready before the world cup kicks off in June.

Slashing: When a story contains too many pieces of information (about many communities, churches, or people) all of equal news value, length can be reduced by bringing

out the subjects to be treated for each community, church or person. E.g. if a story is on the way each electoral constituency in a state would undertake voters' registration, the editor might decide to have a slot for the name of each constituency, venue of registration and time, making all the constituencies get the same treatment. Biting off indiscriminately may leave some constituencies much better covered than others. Trying to say everything in separate paragraphs for each constituency might lead to unnecessary repetition.

Butchering: a story is butchered if it is edited in a way that leaves the story incomplete. Sometimes a story is incomplete, especially when the reporter had played up many points in the lead, but made little effort to give further details (on the points) in the body. Butchering may stem from the editor if he bites off the details (played up in the lead) in the body, making the story incomplete. At times, too, important questions that are thrown up by a story may be left unanswered, making the reader frustrated.

First, the editor must ensure that when chopping off, he does not delete important information, which makes the story incomplete. The editor must be concerned with the total impact of the story on the reader as well as make sound judgments on what details can be sacrificed. In this light Westley p. 71 offers the following guides:

- Do your cutting in such a way as to preserve the essential facts plus just enough detail to answer the reader's most pressing questions.
- Don't assume that a story can be chopped off anywhere just because it seems to be arranged in inverted pyramid form.
- Try to preserve the broad outline of the story where the structure is not the routine inverted pyramid form.

- Try to preserve the flavour of the story where it is built around a feature treatment.
- Read the new version carefully. The process of cutting may have introduced new problems. Read past the cuts to determine whether changes are necessary in what remains. The new structure may require the insertion of new connective words and phrases. Supply them where they are needed.
- Remove excess wordage at any time whether or not you have been given the general instruction to reduce the story in length.
- Try to preserve or supply an ending, which fittingly closes the story.

Copy editing symbols still relevant

Because editors still correct copy in hard form, they need editing symbols, not necessarily to guide compositors (the editors will make the changes themselves prior to computer typesetting), but to help reporters see what was changed and why. Corrected copy may be returned to the reporter to clarify confusing or unclear details. Book proofreaders still have need for the symbols. Many proofreaders work for authors, and they (proofreaders) need to make marks that suggest to authors what manner of correction need be done at any instance. The marks are for correcting copy. Any symbol that does not serve that purpose anymore should be ignored. Westley p. 6-12 has given the following as the symbols.

Paragraphs and indentations: Editors mark all paragraphs, whether or not the conventional indentation has been made on the copy.

- The common paragraph mark is this one:
 └Pittsburgh, Pa. - The United Mine Workers
 announced today.

- Where two elements are to be connected within the same paragraph, smooth, curving, firm line is drawn from the end of the first element to the beginning of the second. Such a line should cut across, rather than tour around, deleted elements. The same mark is used to make two paragraphs one or to connect elements, which have been separated by extensive deletions:

There would be no strike

□ The UMW spokesman said the non-gassy mines were

- To bring together two elements which have been separated by distance or extensive deletions but which are to remain as separate paragraphs, draw the same sort of line as above but tip it with an arrowhead to indicate “new paragraph”.

There would be no strike

~~The UMW spokesperson said the non-gassy mines were not involved~~

→ Referring to the West Virginia fields, he said.

- To indent a line, a paragraph, or even an entire story, the same symbol is used throughout, but separate marks must be made for left and right indentations. The mark is like a bracket in reverse. To indent from the left, use this mark to the left of the copy:

5 fell] (The Associated Press said the well was more than jeep.)

To indent from the right, use the reverse bracket on the right of the story.

(The Associated Press said the well was more than 50 feet deep). □

Thus the ordinary indentation (left and right) involves a pair of marks:

] (The Associated Press said the well was more than 50 feet deep). [

- The same set of marks is used to indicate that a line is to be centered, as in the subhead.

]Set Free [

Capitals and small letters 6. Where the copy is already in caps and lower case, no mark need be made. The traditional mark for a capital letter is three underlines.

Washington- the defense department today gave

Also traditionally, a double underline means small capitals and a single underline means italics. However, neither small capitals nor italics are commonly used in newspapers, so a great many copy desks allow their editors to indicate capitals with one underline.

7. Where a letter is capitalized in the copy and the editor wants a small letter instead, he simply draws a diagonal line through the letter from right to left:

The ~~P~~resident said the budget...

Spacing, deletions, insertions, subtractions 8. To indicate that a space is desired, draw a vertical line.

Over the weekend.

9. To indicate that no space is desired use the following symbol:

Then National League All stars.

10. To delete a character, draw a bold vertical line through it. Then, if it appears inside a word (neither at the beginning

nor at the end), “close it up” as shown above. If it appears at the beginning or end of a word, use the arc above only:

His judgement was without parallel

12-13 to delete more than one or two letters or an entire word or more, draw a firm horizontal line through the entire deletion and close it up or not depending on whether a space is desired.

The superintendent ~~independent and~~ said that he was very ~~much disgusted and~~ annoyed with the boys.

The purpose of the arcs shown above is to help the compositor follow the deletions speedily. They guide his eyes across the copy. Hence, the arc is not ordinarily used at the end of a line; there is no point in guiding his eye into the margin or down to the next line.

14. Connection lines should follow the logical path of his eye to the next element he is to set.

The superintendent turned ~~to look out the window~~ and said he was annoyed with the boys.

The same sweeping connective mark is made to indicate that matter standing in tabular form is to be set in paragraphs style.

Countries which showed gains were as follows:

→	Grant,	5 per cent;
→	Sherman,	3 percent;
→	Lee,	/percent;

15. But when such tabulations are lengthy, it is not necessary to draw dozens of these lines. The trick is to set the style (comma, semicolon, and etc), draw a couple of connectors and mark in the margin the legend “run in”: countries which showed gains were as follows:

	Grant,	5 per cent;
	Sherman,	3 per cent;
	Lee,	7 per cent;
	Sheridan	4 per cent
	Jackson	8 per cent

Run in

Note that the words “run in” are circled. In general, all notations that are not to be set as a part of the copy are circled.

16. To substitute one letter for another, it is ordinarily enough to draw a vertical line through the offending letter and write the correct letter above it.

17. Where a letter is to be inserted, it is “drawn into” the line and a caret is put below the line at the exact point where the insertion is to be made. Several letters, a word, or a phrase are inserted or substituted in the same way:

Firemen Smith and Jones reported that two policemen

In a matter

appeared ~~a~~ of minutes and held back the throng...

Any element, which has been deleted can be restored by marking it “stet,” provided, of course, that the words are still visible under the deletion mark. When it is not clear where the passage to be restored begins and ends, a light broken line is drawn beneath it. This is a convenient device but is easily abused. When in doubt, editors prefer to erase.

Editors rarely make more than one mark in a single word since doing so many mean the operator will have to stop a moment to puzzle over markings. If a word has more than one error, the sensible thing is to line it out and write it in correctly above. This is also true to changes in any figure, such as sum of money. It saves time for both the editor and the compositor. Copy editor’s marks are dedicated to speed

and convenience. But carried to extremes, they can actually get in the way of efficiency.

18. Transposition. Adjacent elements can be transposed thus. 

Their gear was also stowed away.

Be sure to shift or insert punctuation marks where necessary.

Superintendent of Schools, 

Elements which appear on different lines cannot be transposed by this device. They must be lined out and written in. nor is a compositor like to understand transposition marks attempting to change elements in a single line which are not adjacent, for example the change from “blue and black”.

Ordinarily, the editor is not allowed to transpose entire paragraphs by any pencil device. Some desks permit the editor to circle to the point at which the paragraph is to be inserted, using an arrow at the end. That sort of thing is a nuisance to the compositor, however, and the customary method of transposing paragraphs is to cut and paste.

Figures and abbreviations 19. A figure to be written out is circles.

20. An abbreviation to be written out is circled, too.

21. Conversely, a word to be abbreviated is circled.

22. A written-out number to be made a figure is also circled.

In other words, circling an element means “do the opposite”. 

 27 person appeared at the community Bldg. 
 312S Wendworth  p.m.
 Avenue between 7 and nine

Punctuation. Punctuation marks which appear in their proper place ordinarily need not be marked, with one exception.

23. Quotation marks are often bracketed to indicate whether they are opening or closing quotes. (the typewriter dose not distinguish them but type does computers now makes the distinction).

Dickens wrote “A Tale of Two Cities.”

Punctuation marks can usually be changed by printing the correct mark over the incorrect one with a firmly held pencil. Punctuation can ordinarily be inserted by drawing in the appropriate mark at the appropriate place. However, copy editors use special marks for the three items of punctuation—the period, the hyphen, and the dash.

24. The period is indicated by drawing at the base of the line a very small “x”. (Some desks prefer a dot with a small circle around it, although this practice is more common to book editing).

25. A hyphen is indicated by drawing a small “equals” sign at the appropriate place.

26. The dash is drawn to exaggerated length.

27-28. If any doubt exists as to whether a comma or an apostrophe is intended, they are distinguished by drawing a caret above the comma and an inverted caret below the apostrophe.

Here, then, is the lineup on punctuation:

Opening quote	“	Closing quote	”
Period	x		
Hyphen	=	Dash	-
Comma	,	Apostrophe	'
Question mark	?	Exclamation point	!
Semicolon	;	Colon	:
Parenthesis	()		

Other devices 29. It is sometimes to be able to say to compositors “Yes” that’s right, believe it or not.” Deliberately misspelled words and unusually spelling of names are case in point. The customary device is to “square” such a word – simply to draw a rectangle around it. Then the operator knows he is to “follow copy”. Another trick is to write a circled “ok” or “eg” above the word.

He wrote “)Dere Mable(“

When a story has such word, they need not be handled separately – the page can simply be marked “follow copy” the compositor will set it “as is”.

30. Although one underline originally stood for italics and wavy line was used to indicate boldface, the tendency today is to use a sweeping underline to indicate boldface, even where a firm underline stands for capital letters. (Some desks cling to the way line, however).

“Jones is no communist,” he exclaimed.

The abbreviation “bf” (boldface), “ff” (fullface, another term for boldface), and “bfc” for: bold face caps” are also useful in this connection.

31. Anything written in longhand needs special treatment to help distinguish certain troublesome letters. In longhand, the “a” looks much like the “o” the “m” like the “w” etc. it is customary to:

Overscore: o, m, n

Underscore: a, w, u,

The copyreader’s “shorthand” is not an end in itself. The beginning must master quickly – then use it so. Automatically that he can devote his full attention to what to do, rather than how to do it. He should guard against using copy marks for their own sake. Copy marks have one purpose and only one:

to make speedy changes in such a way that compositors can perceive instantly what is meant.

Review Questions

- What is editing?
- What does editing do to a story?
- Describe the copy editor.
- What is compiling?
- Copy editing symbols are still relevant in editing. Do you agree?

CHAPTER 8

NEWS JUDGMENT

News

News is mass media report about any event, idea or situation that is timely, and is of relevance to a large number of people. Reporting is gathering, processing and disseminating of relevant information to a defined audience who needs the information for decisions.

A synthesis of the characteristics of all what newsmen present as news shows that news is the account or report about an event, personality or thing which holds some relevance for a large number of people. This is hard news. Such a report that explains the meaning of events to people's lives and which almost entertains as much as it informs is termed soft news. Soft news, also called feature, often appeals to given segment of the audience in accordance with the type of subject treated.

While hard news is given straight, deadpan reporting, soft news is more flexible and tolerates analysis, and to some extent, judgment. News is timely, accurate, concise, objective and fact-oriented. All news, whether soft or hard, revolves around audience interest. The news values of oddity and prominence are major considerations in choosing the hard news approach, while human interest and significance come into play in soft news. The reporter though relies on his discretion, intuition and sense of judgment to decide whether to use the hard or soft news approach.

News that has a more urgent character is reported as hard news, while the one with less immediacy attracts the soft format. Soft news is more entertaining than it informs.

Therefore, serious occurrences are reported as hard news while stories on the softer side of life are written as soft news. For instance, a story on an earthquake would be given a hard news treatment, while a story on a market survey for prices of foodstuff may attract the soft format. Reporting is ultimately the gathering, processing and presenting of news and other information that are significant and of consequence to a defined target audience. Reporting is basic to journalism. All media of mass communication engage in reporting of sorts.

News Judgment

In news judgment, the editor is primarily concerned with three factors, namely, news values, news elements and news presentation.

News values are those attributes of news events that make them (news events) newsworthy, and which may give them priority over other newsworthy stories. Overthrow of a government, death of a serving president, fire outbreak in a residential area, and natural disasters are usually weighty enough to attract front-page placement. The poor and ignorant people of Somalia would have had nothing to do with *Times International*, but for tales of pestilence and famine, which many international audiences relish.

The reporter is guided by a set of values that determine what he covers and reports. These values are:

Conflict: News is for the most part something that looks like quarrel, fallout that produces disagreement, arguments, injury or damage. Events that are disruptive of social order often attract reporters: wars, riots, murders and violence etc.

Progress and Disaster: Inventions/discoveries often make news. When an invention that was greeted with much joy becomes the cause of disaster, it is also newsworthy. For instance, a tranquilizer, thalidomide, introduced in 1957, was hailed and embraced by pregnant women who used it to address early morning sickness. It, however, made big news when it was withdrawn in 1962 after it was found to cause birth defects. Natural disasters like earthquakes, volcanoes, floods and the like also attract news reports.

Timeliness and Proximity: These values in themselves do not suffice to make an event newsworthy. They are however values that help reporters in distinguishing news from non-news. Every news is timely or fresh, but not every timely event is news. Timeliness deals with the freshness of an occurrence, while proximity deals with the place where an event took place.

The nearer the place of occurrence of an event (geographic proximity) to the audience the more it is likely to either concern them or attract their sympathy and as a result their interest. However, Nigerians can take interest in news about African Americans due to psychographic proximity rather than geographic proximity as a result of closeness in complexion.

Novelty/Oddity: A catchphrase in journalism, which is attributed to John Bogart, has it that when a dog bites a man, it is no news because it happens so often, but if a man bites a dog, that is news. By this, Bogart means newsworthy events are often bizarre, extraordinary or unusual. News is always what is unusually new.

Consequence: this refers to the impact of news: the extent of its effects on people and things. News is often about

something of great importance, magnitude or outcome. News affects a goodly number of people or things in dire ways. In addition to other factors that might make an event newsworthy, there is always the consequence aspect. This is why consequence is more a yardstick for measuring other news values than it is a news value in itself. In using conflict, disaster, prominence or oddity as news values, the reporter frequently sees himself asking: how odd, prominent, disastrous or controversial? The answer can make him to choose one news event over another. For instance, a fire that burns part of the stadium is smaller in consequence than a fire that guts the university library.

Eminence and Prominence: News centers on big names. But the names must have done what is newsworthy. A reporter is sure to take the minister of information more serious than a school principal on the same academic matter. There are more than seven billion people on earth, all products of pregnancies, but when the Duchess of Cambridge and wife of Prince William, Catherine, becomes pregnant, it's on major international news media.

Human Interest: Humans-interest stories evoke emotions and relate what happens to another person. Such a story may lack other news values.

Significance: News must have some significance to those who hear it. It must be capable of solving a problem. Significance here means that news shows the impact or relevance of events in people's lives, often in measurable terms.

News Elements

When a news item has been selected, the editor depends on news elements in deciding what to play up in the headline

and in the lead as well as how the facts should be arranged. That is, after the reporter has made part of these judgments in his writing. If the reporter exercised good judgment in this regard, the editor's task is simplified. The editor then reads the story to know which element to spotlight in the headline.

News elements refer to the contents of a given story, something like a story's particulars, the essentials of portrayed facts. A story about an earthquake will definitely say first where, how many lives lost and the intensity of the tremor. News elements are as follows:

What

Why

When

Who

Where

How

For any chosen story, the editor plays up any element the reader would want to know about first. If not first then certainly sufficient attention to satisfy readers' curiosity. Is it a plane crash? What type of plane was involved, where, killing how many people and leaving how many survivors or unhurt (or *how* many have died in *what* type of plane that crashed *where* and *when...*). An election - who won? With that margin? An arrest of a notorious criminal: how? Kick off of Nigeria's space project: when? Annulment of free and fair election: why? Aso Rock favours a candidate to succeed the president: who?

News Presentation

News presentation deals with the manner of organizing points in a story to achieve, for instance, coherence, objectivity/fairness, conciseness, credibility, accuracy,

readability, clarity/meaningfulness, authenticity, human interest etc.

The basic advice to the editor has been:

1. read through the reporter's work thoroughly
2. be sure you have functional knowledge on the topic being handled
3. know what to doubt
4. make language concise and clear
5. know what is probable and what is possible
6. correct what you know is certainly incorrect - if you can
7. if not, go to the reporter
8. delete the suspicious information especially if there is no time to check and if it will do no violence to the story
9. be sure of your facts
10. reference materials should be handy to clarify confusing details

Accuracy - the foremost commandment in the newsroom is accuracy. It is also the last. Accuracy is a cardinal point, which the editor must keep uppermost in mind. There is usually no excuse for inaccuracy. Since telling the truth to the reader is the newspaper's primary function, the newspaper must get it right to keep reader's trust, which must not be taken for granted.

"The only way to keep winning and maintaining reader's trust is to struggle constantly against all sources of error - even typographical errors - for every error justifies the mistrust of everyone. Facts from any source should be considered suspect until verified" Westley (1979, p.71). But is it possible to check every fact? The quality that makes it

possible for an editor to detect and correct errors is a combination of alertness, skepticism and a passionate desire for accuracy. The editor may not check all facts, but he must develop a sixth sense for inconsistencies. The skill lies in knowing what to doubt. The fault may be with wrong statistics given.

A reporter may write that an increment in the prices of petroleum products amounts to 25% rise in price. At another paragraph, he may say that the former price of ₦50 per litre of petrol was already a hard blow, according to market analysts, who are saying that ₦85 for a litre of petrol is unacceptable. The above implies that an increment to ₦85 from ₦50 represents 25% raise. That is not true, even if the reporter were quoting a market analyst.

Objectivity:

The proponents of objectivity say that the editor ought to represent all shades of opinion, without bias. Objectivity is a subject of immense debate. The same thing is happening to accuracy. Some believe that an accurate report of a lying official statement is still not the truth. The real objectivity, therefore, is covering all shades of opinion and providing contexts, with interpretation and investigation, to help the reader know the truth. However, straight news does not tolerate interpretation beyond related events of a news story. Without delving too deeply into the seemingly irresolvable debate, objectivity is better seen in the following light as portrayed by Westley (1979, p.75):

Philosophically and emotionally, newspapers objectivity is many things, a state of mind on the reporter's and the editor's part that includes a conscious effort not to prejudge what he sees; not to be influenced by his own personal preconceptions, predilections, allegiances, and biases; not to be swayed

by the rhetoric of partisans; always to assume there is “another side” and to make an effort to see to it that the other side has a chance to be heard.

Objectivity may also be seen in the light of its effects: the ability of new information to modify the reader’s perceptions of the event. Do not assign ‘good or bad’ labels (valuation statements) to events, persons or ideas. Adjectives easily portray bias. Statements of fact should be attributed. Identify people mentioned in stories, readers now know the tricks used by reporters when using statements they cannot, or do not want to, attribute to anyone: ‘*according to unimpeachable sources*’; ‘*it was gathered*’; ‘*sources close to Aso Rock say...*’. Most times the unimpeachable sources are the reporters themselves.

Backgrounding in news: Backgrounding should be done within the context of straight news. It should not be speculative or make valuation statements about a person or ideas. To give background in news, for instance, is to remind the reader of a related event that happened in the past. A crime story may include a line or paragraph on the past crime record of the suspect thus: “Haggel was arrested in June 2006 for illegal possession of firearm. He was also convicted and jailed for three years in October 1992 for leaking government information to an unnamed Russian intelligence agency.” Unless from attributed sources, do not make predictions or state the causes or consequences of any act. Even in interpretative stories, valuation and unsubstantiated predictions and consequence statements are not allowed.

Fairness: this does not mean being kind to people about whom you report. It means reporting what ought to be

reported - neither sparing evil doers nor maliciously maligning people in reports. Some newspapers do not report the names of juvenile criminals even when not so directed by law. News can be withheld in the interest of law enforcement, security and court adjudication. Unfairness results when the reader is given false or incomplete information calculated to deceive.

Authenticity - don't report hoaxes. Editors should check against inconsistencies and careless untruths that get into reports mainly because of reporters' carelessness. To stay away from avoidable litigation, editors must be on the lookout for even attributed statements that are clear untruth. As earlier said, quoting falsehood verbatim and attributing it to a source does not make it any truer.

Clarity - editors must not assume that readers understand the meaning of words used. Newspaper writers and editors must keep finding new ways of telling the story completely in terms readers can easily understand. Written communication requires not only impeccably correct writing, but also readable writing. Writing should be both readable and meaningful. Readable writing need not be incorrect, and correct writing need not be pompous. Simplicity, directness and conciseness make writing clear.

Improving the Flow of Meaning

A. Readability

The major task of the editor is to make news readable. This point can hardly be overstretched because editors easily forget the point. In a complex world as ours, many things clamour for the interest of the average person. Interest in itself is a complex concept. Sometimes it seems unlikely the average person would be enticed by nothing else but ocean

of gray type. Nonetheless, the drive to acquire information is in all men. This is what works for the newspaper trade.

Many newspapers, however, compete for the attention of the same audience. Over 80 different general-interest newspapers come to the various newsstands every day in Lagos. Newspaper information must be presented in interesting ways to attract meaningful readership. Readable writing is easily the most captivating way to hold a reader spellbound.

For ages, writers have been guided along the same lines such as this one handed down to reporters and editors at the *New York Sun*. "Use simple words and simple sentences and remember you are writing and editing for people." Writing coaches and books over the years have not stopped preaching this sermon. Many editors are also paying attention to the guide, but it is easy to forget. In addition, editors handle the work of reporters whose reports may be riddled with difficult and unfamiliar words. Even simple sentences still contain difficult words.

B. Word Difficulty

In measuring level of word difficulty, researchers found that a word that is not frequently used by writers would generally be difficult to understand. For instance, the word *harangue* appears much less frequently than *criticize*, just as *effervescence* appears much less often than *sparkle*.

Another measure of word difficulty is: the more a word has many affixes and suffixes (that is, the longer and more complex a word is) the more difficult it is to understand it. For instance, *transubstantiation* is long and complex just as

semi-indistinctiveness. A word such as ball is easily simple to understand.

Some researchers believe it is better to look at what graphic image a word creates when mentioned, instead of merely looking at word length. This is because it would be easier for readers to grasp the meaning of concrete expressions, than abstract ones. Not many readers know the meaning of *ilk*, but many more quickly understand *transfiguration*.

Researchers have found that using familiar words all the time would mean telling people the things they know. This triggers redundancy that appears to cheapen writing. The argument here is that reading usually consists of glancing over already known words - redundancy; and what is unexpected - new information. Too much of one is at the expense of the other. The advice is that new information can still be presented in readable language. Experts call it *optimal level of redundancy*; that is, a level of readability that is high, but not lacking in ability to carry information.

If there is too little redundancy, (unfamiliar words) it will also be at the expense of information because the message will become vulnerable to semantic noise. Noise from everywhere affects communication, and more so if there is word and sentence difficulty. However, it is equally said that a writer does not help convey meaning by talking down to his audience, but he helps their comprehension by talking in their language. Simply, you can speak to people in their own language while conveying new information. Unfamiliar information can be expressed in their own terms. That is why communication means using agreed-on symbols to share meaning in a process where parties acquire newer, uncommon symbols.

C. Reading with scepticism

When reporters do their job well, they simplify the work of editors. Doing well means that the reporter understood what he was writing about, and told the story in a meaningful way. Given the pressure of work on the part of reporters and the complexity of the facts flowing across newsroom desks, the editor has to ensure that the reporter knows what he is saying. Perhaps the editor should become a superman to know when the reporter is confusing facts.

It seems difficult because if the editor did not attend the press conference or conduct the interview, how would he know that the reporter is confusing facts? How would he be more correct than the one who attended a briefing? Only one thing - skepticism with all kinds of stories - but more with complex ones. The editor needs to read with skepticism. This is how he can recognize signs that portray a confusion of facts and signs that show that a speaker quoted could not have said what he was quoted as saying.

However, the editor ought not to be too quick to make changes as soon as he suspects any inconsistency in a report. He only has cues, not evidence. He needs to confer with the reporter before making certain corrections, not as a matter of order, but as a matter of clarifying seemingly confusing points.

If, for instance, the US president was quoted as saying that America is likely to negotiate with North Korea on the latter's nuclear arms deal. Merely inserting 'not' before likely may be all that is needed. An editor that carries suspicion too far may delete the entire sentence and this will injure the story. Of course, the reader needs to know the reaction of

the US to the nuclear arms deal of North Korea. Just because the editor thought no US president would negotiate with North Korea does not suffice to make him delete the sentence without seeing the reporter.

However, if the reporter cannot provide satisfactory clarification, he may need to recheck with the source. The level of editing being described belongs to both the copy editor and the city editor. The latter is usually the first to put the reporter's story to this level of scrutiny. The copy editor is interested in the broad outline of the story just as in the logic of the content. The copy editor is no less culpable than anyone else if funny errors find their way into stories.

D. Meaning and completeness of facts

The editor needs to read the story not only for consistency of facts, but also for meaning. He can find out if the story makes meaning by reading it and knowing if he can make sense of it. If not, the story will probably not make meaning to other readers. Well, the editor is far better equipped in language than the ordinary reader. The ordinary reader may not have the ability to understand complex statistics and court jargons the way an editor can.

As such, the editor still has further tests to apply to the copy: The editor should also ask himself: Can the average reader understand the terms used in this report? To be meaningful, it is worth re-emphasizing that the report must be in words readers can understand, contain experiences he can identify and ideas he can grasp.

Another crucial area is story completeness. Because the reporter is too close to his story, added to the pressure of work, he often leaves off when he has yet to answer all

necessary questions. Because he covered the event, he fills the context in his mind unwarily presuming that the reader should know. Yet, the reader cannot know, he was not at the briefing and it would be difficult for him to read that the ‘chairman would have made a better offer to the employees’ when he does not know why the chairman did not make the offer.

The editor, as a result, should watch for missing details. If a story on a new foreign technical adviser for the national team does not include the likely names for the job, the editor should call the attention of the reporter. If the reporter is not readily available and cannot be contacted on phone, the editor should use his discretion to plug the hole by looking for evidence in the story to clear up the missing fact. The editor can use his discretion, for instance, in a situation as follows:

A team of the National Football League (NFL) members headed by the Nigerian Football Association (NFA) Chairman, Sani Lulu, left Abuja Tuesday for Berlin, Germany, to interview a number of foreign football technical experts being contacted to take up the post of technical adviser for the Super Eagles of Nigeria.

If the report ends without mentioning the names of likely technical advisers, the reader is left unsatisfied. An editor who cannot do anything else about the situation may for instance add thus: ‘The list of likely names will be made available subsequently.’ The reader is likely not to ask questions about who might get the job. Yet the dilemma of the editor is if the reader gets the names elsewhere; that would diminish the credibility of the newspaper. The best

remains anything the editor can do to complete the story. If the story can wait, let it wait, if the editor can make contacts himself, he can do that.

The editor also faces another task of finding any piece of information necessary to convey meaning when there are missing angles to a story. Another side to a story may not just be there, or a word or two may have been confused or not used at all and thus obscured an essential angle to a story. A political angle to a story may be needed to fully tell the story of religious uprising by a Muslim group.

Also, if an official declined comment, and it was reported that he evaded questions or ignored reporters, it will create another impression of the official. The missing fact may be some explanatory information that clarifies a point, answers a question or points the way to the future. The editor must constantly make use of the tools at his disposal to look for all the facts of a story that will ensure its completeness and meaningfulness. The important thing is to find out where the fault lies - misjudged news values, missing angle, scattered group of related matter, incoherent paragraphs - the correction ought to be made accordingly. The story may be restructured altogether.

Review Questions

- (1) What is news judgment?
- (2) Explain the major considerations in news selection.
- (3) How do news elements count in news selection?
- (4) Mention and explain any five news values.
- (5) Contribute to the debate on news objectivity and fairness.
- (6) Discuss the need for attribution in news stories.

CHAPTER 9

WORKING WITH STRAIGHT NEWS STORIES

Straight news

Copy editors often work on straight news handed in by reporters. The copy editor himself needs to know the structure of straight news in order to know what to expect from the reporter. Many reporters learn their trade by listening to copy editors, making it imperative that copy editors know their onions. Of course, in many newspapers, copy editors have worked up to five years as reporters and rose through the ranks to qualify to edit stories. The following forms a guide against which the copy editor can check straight news stories submitted by reporters.

- when news worthy events break, reporters report them in form of summaries for their readers, especially catastrophes.
- Such summaries often capture the 5Ws and H.
- more indepth stories may be written later, but reporters usually gather the essential facts and write their stories as quickly as possible, mainly to beat deadlines. Therefore the editor tries to find out the type and stage of the story submitted: breaking or developing story or a one off - a story that ends once it is reported.
- each time there are new developments on an unfolding story, reporters can capture them, and put the initial events in context.
- The Lead: Hard news also called straight news usually begins with a summary lead, which is a terse

opening that gives the gist of the story, and draws the reader inside.

- the lead, as a summary, should be brief, generally no more than 35 words. It can be a single sentence, or broken into more than one sentence.
- news stories are usually told from the end down to the beginning. Thus they begin from the end, with paragraphs stacked in descending order of priority.
- the lead summarises the principal items of a news story.
- succeeding paragraphs contain secondary or supporting details in descending order of significance.
- the most important of the 5ws and h go into the summary lead.
- a beginning reporter may itemize the elements of a news story to identify the elements to go into the summary lead as well as how to stack them in subsequent paragraphs (see Itule & Anderson, (2007); and Brooks, George, Moen, & Ranly, (2010). Consider the example below:
 - **Lead1:** A deafening half-ton bomb tore through the UN headquarters, Abuja on Christmas eve, killing 150 people, injuring 50 and deeply denting Nigeria's reputation as a peaceful country.
 - for instance, what: a half-ton bomb
 - where: UN headquarters

- when: christmas eve
- who (victims: 150 dead, 50 injured, mostly women and children)
- how? not given
- why? not given

Do not try to cram all the elements into the lead. It will clutter the lead. A second paragraph can highlight other elements.

No two reporters can write the same leads. Each constructs his lead according to news judgment, editor's request, audience interest, etc. The reporter decides the number of elements to play up in the lead. The editors ensures that the decision is right.

- If possible, before reporting an event, conduct preliminary research about the subject and people involved to know the freshest news and the angle to take: you need to know what has been reported about the event, what you already know and think about the subject (so as to control your prejudices)
- During the actual reporting in the field, try to look for the important elements, underline the most important ones. Doing this will help the reporter avoid burying the lead, i.e. hiding the most important element in the story, instead of playing it up in the lead.
- Editors (even if the city editor) should discuss stories with reporters before the stories are covered.

- Some stories readily specify the most important element, e.g. an election victory: who?, president refuses to sign an appropriation bill, why?
- Editors should ensure that the lead is written in the active voice, unless the person or thing receiving the action is more important than the person or thing doing the acting.

A lead can contain multiple elements, especially when the reporter wants to show that more than one event was occurring at a time for example:

Lead2: The Secretary General of the UN, Ban KI Moon, has condemned the bombing of the UN headquarters in Abuja, even as the Nigerian FG Tuesday set up an investigation team to fish out the culprits.

The time element in straight news

The time element can interfere with the flow of the lead if improperly placed.

- The best position for the time element is immediately after the verb. e.g Two fire fighters were killed Friday as they battled to contain the worst forest fire to hit Australia in 50 years.
- The time element can come after an object: Forest fires destroyed more than 50 homes Monday in what has been labelled the worst disaster of the new year in Australia.
- Time can be indicated after an adverb or prepositional phrase: after an adverb: Stocks rose sharply Monday after the European Union failed

to agree a deal for Greece bail out.

- after a prepositional phrase: Nigeria clawed back into the debt club Monday as the FG took another \$500 billion loan from the IMF.
- at the end of the lead: After a long battle to avoid being sacked, Femi Oyinlola lost his position as PDP secretary Monday (see Itule & Anderson (2007); and Brooks *et al*, 2010)).

The body

The body of the story elaborates on the lead and highlights other elements in descending order. Each paragraph further explains or complements the paragraph above it.

While considering the story, consider also the general idea of the story- are there sufficient ideas in the paragraphs to make the story complete. Can you easily see the ideas in the paragraphs? Are the paragraphs confused and mixed in the ideas they develop. It is better to develop single ideas in each paragraph. Ensure that connectives/transitions are used to make the paragraphs sequentially connected. Some inside paragraphs contain important ideas that can go in the lead (what editor's call buried leads).

Consider the following story:

Governor Chibuike Amaechi was Tuesday elected the chairman of the Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF), in a surprise victory to many Nigerians who thought that President Jonathan's anointed candidate, Governor Jonah Jang of Plateau State, would be elected. Governor Amaechi has however hit back at those accusing him of having a row with President Jonathan. 'I do not have any misunderstanding with Mr. President; we are working together on everything' governor Amaechi told reporters after emerging from the election venue at Aso Villa, Abuja. Governor

Jonah Jang came a close second, with 16 votes to Amaechi's 18 governor. Thendore Orji of Abia state scored only 2 votes to place a distant third. Governor Siriake Dickson of Bayelsa was a front runner weeks before the election until he was disqualified because he hailed from the same state as Mr. the president. "That's PDP'S rule," said like Tunji Oseni, spokesman of governor Dickson. "The chairman of the NGF and Mr President should not come from the same state," Tunji said.

The story is not very bad as it is, but too many ideas have been crammed in one paragraph. If the story is organized into five paragraphs, a neater story structure will emerge:

Governor Chibuike Amaechi was Tuesday elected the chairman of the Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF), a victory, which came as a surprise to many Nigerians who thought that President Jonathan had anointed Governor Jonah Jang of Plateau State for the post.

Governor Amaechi has however hit back at those accusing him of having a row with President Jonathan. "I do not have any misunderstanding with Mr. President. We are working together on everything," governor Amaechi told reporters after emerging from the election venue at Aso Villa, Abuja.

Governor Jonah Jang came a close second, with 16 votes to Amaechi's 18 governor. Thendore Orji of Abia state scored only 2 votes to place a distant third. Governor Jang has however refused to concede victory, claiming he was instead the one elected in the Aso Rock election.

Governor Siriake Dickson of Bayelsa State did not show up during the election after campaigning for weeks. He was a front runner weeks before the election until he curiously opted out. "That's because of PDP'S rule," according to Tunji Oseni, Chieftain of the PDP. "The chairman of the NGF and Mr President should not come from the same state," Oseni said.

The story makes better sense now. The lead is 40 words. Generally, 35 words is taken to be the upper limit. If the lead is broken into two sentences, it will be easier to understand the ideas, e.g. *Governor Chibuike Amaechi was Tuesday elected the chairman of the Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF). The victory came as a surprise to many Nigerians who thought that President Jonathan had anointed Governor Jonah Jang of Plateau State for the post.*

Notice that the last part of second sentence in the lead now reads: ... *who thought that President Jonathan had anointed Governor Jonah Jang of Plateau State for the post.* In the original sentence, it was not clear who said that Governor Jang was Jonathan's anointed candidate -Nigerian's or the reporter.

In the second paragraph, the editor can redirect the first sentence to make it non-confrontational. At least, the governor wants to create the impression that there is no problem between him and the president. The sentence can read: Governor Amaechi has however made it clear that he has no misunderstanding with President Jonathan. "We are working together on everything," Governor Amaechi told reporters after emerging from the election venue at Aso Villa, Abuja.

A second look at names and places will reveal inconsistencies in the name of governor Amaechi: or Amechi. Someone was quoted as saying that "The chairman of the NGF and Mr President should not come from the same state." That is not true even if it is a quote. The editor should crosscheck with the reporter or other more reliable sources. A PDP chieftain, whose name no one even knows is not an authoritative source of such statements.

Notice that in paragraph 4, the word *curiously* is not needed. It appears to be the reporter's addition, and the reader is not told why it was *curious* for the governor to opt out. In fact, the quote from Tunji Oseni shows that the opting out could not have been curious, but justifiable. The reporter needs to be sure that it is either frontrunner or front runner as matter of style.

The Conclusion: there is no ending invented by the reporter. The end of a news story usually does not signify the end of an event or the people involved in it. When the facts finish, the reporter ends the story. However, the reporter can end in a way to let the ending tie readers emotionally to the story. A story can end with the reporter allowing a source to speak directly to the reader in a direct quote (Itule & Anderson, 2007; and Friend, Challenger and McAdams, 2000).

General Guidelines:

- write a terse lead, i.e. the lead paragraph. This can be followed by another paragraph that provides other elements that could not fit into the lead. Some call this the bridge.
- provide background. A third paragraph can give the background, even in breaking stories. This can come from a source.
- Present the news in descending order of significance
- Use quotes early and throughout. Use a quote after the major news and background. Separate

quotes with paraphrases and supplementary news. Do not lump quotes together.

- Use transitions: a background, a quote, a paraphrase can move the reader smoothly from one paragraph to another. Transitions help the audience to anticipate a change in the movement of the story. Transition can be used in the following ways: itemizing (e.g. first), time (e.g. by noon, earlier), naming places (e.g. in Enugu) and adverbials (e.g. additionally) can be used to introduce transitions (Itule & Anderson, 2007).
- Do not editorialize or opionate
- Avoid the 'end'

Proofreading and problem words

During proofreading, the editor pays attention almost solely to the words, not content. Beer/bear, order/other, besides/beside, capital/capitol are words that can slip through the editor's watch when they are not what is meant. The editor needs to ferventwith his desire for accuracy to catch many spelling errors and inaccurate terms that are hardly noticed as errors.

Friend, Challenger and McAdams (2000, p. 157) advise:

Know your problem words. You have been writing long enough to know which words you regularly misspell. Does that second i) in liaison always trip you up? Is it harass and embarrass or harras and embarass? Sports headline writers know how to watch out for downhillsking during coverage of the Winter Olympics, mentally inserting the full-*ing* ending to make it skiing. Begin to make a list of words that cause you problems. When another

reader or even your spell check program CATCHES YOU IN AN error, add the word to the list. With little diligence you will begin to recognize your problem words and blind spots. You can't learn how to spell everything but you can learn to master the headful of words that regularly give you headaches.

The editor need be very careful with names of people, places and things. When any of these is misspelt, it can mean giving the wrong person prominence, denying the right person mention and in the end misspelling a name.

Using percentages: When you use percentages, ensure you relate them to real numbers so that the reader will understand the figures used. A drop from 4% to 3.5% may be .5% drop in unemployment rate. But how many people actually gained employment over a period? A reporter can say that a president's approval rating rose 10% in the last 2 months. Perhaps, the number of those who approve of the president only rose from 450 to 500 in a country of 100 million people. Using 10% may appear an appreciable number in just two months, yet it tells nothing of the actual number of people who approve of the president's performance.

Simplicity: Follow it. You'll rarely offend anyone. Editors of news know that they cannot help but insist on simple writing. It's the easiest way to assure clarity of thought. Simple words do not need many modifiers. They create concrete impressions. You can see, picture or imagine them. You know what they mean. They are have widely shared meaning. Readers are familiar with them and the brain easily recognizes them as it glides over phrases and groups of words. Consider the following paragraph of a news story:

Having laid siege for hours, reporters swiftly swooped on the political technocrat as he reared his head, apparently brimming with suppressed giggles from his abode. He was trying to put on a smile. He had apparently gone into hiding using many subterfuges to appear in public gatherings as he sought to maintain a low profile having been invited by the EFCC for stashing away money in foreign coffers and subpoenaed by the court for culpable homicide.

The reporter, to answer him in his own terms, has wasted time on pomposity and grandiloquence. What do the following words mean? Can they be replaced with other simpler, more meaningful words?

siege	swiftly	swooped	technocrat
reared	brimming	suppressed smile	abode
apparently	subterfuge	low profile	stashing
coffers	subpoenaed	culpable	homicide

Consider a different version of the same text:

Reporters hurried to interview the governorship candidate as he came out of his house. He had not been seen in public for two weeks. As he smiled at reporters, he faced questions on his invitation by the EFCC in connection with money laundering accusations. He also spoke about a court summons to defend himself on charges of man slaughter.

Without using any of the ambiguous words, the story is clearer and shorter. In addition, the story was arranged to provide contexts that helped to understand certain actions of the reporters and the candidate. Modifiers portray bias in news and elongate sentences. Someone can't be *apparently*

brimming with a suppressed giggle as used in the first report. The notion of *brimming* and *suppressed* appear illogical.

In news, you can hardly explain precisely what it means to *try to put on a smile*. Did the candidate say so or the reporter assumed so, thereby interfering with the news through his judgment of a person?

The first report also noted: *He had apparently gone into hiding using many subterfuges to appear in public gatherings as he sought to maintain a low profile having been indicated by the EFCC...* The reporter has concluded on why the candidate went into hiding without quoting anyone. That's his opinion, which is not needed in hard news.

It is better to write that some was invited by the EFCC in connection with accusations of money laundering. The way it was written in the first report suggests the candidate was guilty before he had even appeared before the EFCC. Remember that the EFCC is not a court, which has the authority to declare someone guilty or not guilty.

William Strunk Jr, quoted in Friend, Challenger and McAdams (2000, p.158) noted:

Vigorous writing is concise. A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts. This requires not that the writer make all his sentences short or that he avoid all detail and treat his subjects only in outline, but that every word tell.

Lack of brevity leads to redundancy. One reporter was writing about a church service and said in a paragraph: "The

priest's sermon was 'flawlessly poetic, effortlessly rhythmic, a deliberate and quintessential piece of well-rendered oratorical excellence". One wonders the function of flawlessly, effortlessly well-rendered, quintessential, deliberate.

Another problem with overuse of modifiers is that it frequently leads to misuse of words. That is, using words that do not fit in the contexts they are used or words that appear like another one and are mistakenly used. Someone who has been sued has not been subpoenaed by the court. Reporters make the mistake, but editors have the duty of using dictionaries and other tools to look for precise meaning of words as well as the appropriateness of words in the contexts of use.

Quotes: when to use them:

- If there are too many paraphrases
- To make an emphasis
- To portray the personality of a speaker
- To allow sources to speak directly to readers
- To add to a story's credibility
- To intersperse with paraphrases and to strike a balance between paraphrases and quotes
- To allow readers feel the exact emotions of speakers, especially on controversial issues

Do not bother about quote marks when:

- what is said is not striking or special
- what is said can easily be paraphrased without losing the aggression, the frankness, the nuances and the subtleties of a source's words

How to use partial quotes: (a partial quote means to partly paraphrase a speaker and to partly use his actual words in the same sentence, or a sentence whose part contains a direct quote):

- The paraphrased portions must be in a context that agrees with portions where exact quotes are used. If the reporter says: the governor said that “he will resist his mum’s arrest” when he was informed of the EFCC’s attempt to arrest her. Truly, if the governor were speaking, he would say: “I will resist my mum’s arrest,” not his mum’s arrest.

Partial quotes often create problems and should be avoided whenever possible. In some cases, a quote is unnecessary. He said the election was “rigged.” If the quotes around *rigged* were removed, nothing would change. Rigging is rigging to everyone, and it is not an extraordinary thing to say about an election. The election was “a premeditated deceit.” What is in quotes is alright because it is a unique and strong way to describe an election.

A quote should not repeat what a paraphrase just implied. For instance: *The governor vowed to stop the EFCC from arresting his mother. “I will make sure they do not arrest my mother,” the governor said.* Both sentences are the same. Quotes should introduce a new dimension or add to a story’s appeal or drama. For e.g. *The governor vowed to resist EFCC’s attempt to arrest his mother. “I will use the courts and every democratic means to stop them,” he said.* The quote supplied something new, that is, the means the governor hoped to use to stop the EFCC.

Errors and vulgar language in quotes

Newspapers usually have ways to address errors, profanities, slang and other informalities, especially when a news source uses them. A speaker might even be unhappy that a newspaper wrote everything he said (in the heat of the moment). Readers will be no less alarmed. Some newspapers correct minor errors that do not damage meaning. Others prefer to write out what they think the speaker meant. But profanities are often removed. In addition, no editor should put words in the mouth of a news source.

Attribution

Every quote needs attribution. In most cases, paraphrases should be attributed. When a statement of fact is obvious to everyone or if the reporter was privy to an occurrence or situation, attribution is not needed. A reporter does not need the confirmation of the owner of a house to write that a house was gutted by fire.

Unless when another word (such as declared, averred, objected, admitted, claimed) is more suitable, attribution should use the word *said*. It's neutral and does not bring in the editor or reporter into the quote, such as *'I will resist my mum's arrest, the governor vowed, affirmed, insisted, declared, threatened or retorted.* Appropriateness, not variety, should be the guide in the choice of the word to use.

Reporters and editors can use 'told' if the speaker was addressing a public. 'According to' is suitable in cases a speech was summarized or paraphrased, e.g. "*My administration will partner three NGOs to combat polio in the state,*" according to a statement released last week by the governor. Always put attribution after the quote.

Use the form: the *mayor said* instead of *said the mayor*. But the following is okay: *The state will partner three NGOs in combating polio, said Ahmed Okeke, country director for WHO Step II polio initiative for Africa and the Caribbean.* It has solved the problem of writing: *Ahmed Okeke, country director for WHO Step II polio initiative for Africa and the Caribbean, said.* Thus, *said* can follow the name of the speaker if other descriptions or actions of the speaker follow his/her name.

Unless the speaker is more important than what is said and unless attribution is used as a transition to signal a new speaker, attribution is better placed after a quote or paraphrase. For e.g. *The house owner said, "I will not allow him." Ike replied, "Please forgive him." Ada added, "The man is our friend."*

In long quotes, avoid ellipsis that damages meaning or changes the meaning of what was quoted. Consider the following:

...it is important not to take the horribly evil actions of some Roman Catholic priests and attribute them to the entire Roman Catholic priesthood....we have no doubt that many Roman Catholic priests truly love the Lord Jesus Christ, truly desire to minister to people, and would absolutely never molest a child. It is impossible to discover how many "pedophile priests" have been, or still are, active in the Roman Catholic Church. Whatever the number is, it is surely an exceedingly small percentage. The vast majority of Catholic priests has never, and would never, molest or harm a child in any way.

The ellipsis at the beginning of the quote is suspect. It removes relevant context to understand why a writer

began to speak. The second ellipsis also removed something that made it impossible to understand who was speaking. Consider what was actually in the second ellipsis: *even though I am not a catholic and actually do not believe in many catholic teachings*. Having removed that, it was no longer obvious that the writer was commenting as a non-Catholic. The quote appeared as if a catholic was defending many non-pedophile priests.

Editing Wire News

Wire stories are stories from wire services or news agencies. Such news stories concern distant places. News agencies have reporters. They also have editors. However, newspapers employ editors for stories from wire services. The major concern of newspapers is to tailor wire news to the values, tastes and interests of local audiences. Wire stories rarely carry information that bear directly on the life and decisions of local audiences. They can't because they come from distant places. The editor's job is to tailor wire stories to appeal to local audiences.

When news broke about Farouk Abdulmutallab's failed attempt to bomb an airline on Christmas eve in 2009, the story, being first international in scope, was rewritten to inform Nigerians of certain implications in the story. For instance, the suspect was a Nigerian for which the US immediately blacklisted Nigeria. Nigeria was up on the US terror watchlist. That means international travels will become tougher and there will more embarrassments for Nigerians at international airports, etc.

Wire services editors do the following, according to Friend, Challenger and McAdams (2000):

- Monitoring and organizing the stories sent by each wire service
- Deciding which stories to use
- Editing the stories to make them clear and compelling
- In many cases, localizing, combining, shortening, and writing headlines for these stories

The last function is often the major task because the editor can have various wire stories on the same issue, some of them updates on earlier received stories.

Wire editors download wire service news budgets- that is, details provided by each wire service daily on its major stories (length, illustrations, release time etc.). From the downloads, wire editors pick the stories their newspapers or magazines, radio or TV wishes to use.

This systematic approach to wire news is important because sometimes a wire story may be paramount and merit front page placement. In that case, the wire editor should say so during editorial meetings. Many newspapers have pages for wire news or international news. But when such news merits the front page, the wire editor will need to work with other editors, most likely the layout editor.

For instance, Farouk Abdulmutallab's attempt to bomb a US-bound airplane was given front page display by many Nigerian newspapers. Because a great number of news stories keep flowing across wire desks, and because news updates can occur anytime, wire editors develop systems that keep them monitoring wire news to the last minute before going to press. This is especially in cases of (big) breaking or developing news.

Wire editors can decide to look at the wire agencies news line up every hour. Document files can be created for each type of news on the computer especially in cases where a news organization subscribes to many wire services. In all cases, the amount of news hole apportioned to the wire desk each day will determine the amount of news or even type of wire stories chosen. On some days, it might be just news briefs that will interest the home audience. News hole refers to the space allotted to news. Computerized systems are also helping wire editors to create directories into which different types of wire news automatically filter once they reach the newsroom via the computer.

Reporting/Editing Stories on Polls

In reporting the result of a poll, one reporter concluded that the electorate did not want the president to come back for a second term. The source of his statement was answers to one of the questions he used in the poll. He asked: Do you think that the president should come again for second term given his approval rating?⁹

The question did not state the approval rating. That was the first problem. The respondent, if not well-informed, may think the journalist believes that the rating is poor and his answers may come from that perspective.

This means that poll questions can be major sources of error. Many things about questions used in polls can negatively affect poll results, including timing, place and condition of mind of respondents. Words always have their emotional or value dimensions. The editor has to ensure that questions come as close as possible to neutrality.

The above question can become two questions to solve the problem introduced by the first:

- How would you rate the president on security?
- Based on this rating, do you think he should contest a second time? Notice that the first question is more specific on security: approval rating used alone is a bit problematic. The respondent may not know on what to rate Mr. President.
- In reporting the results, the approval rating can be compared with how much respondents want the president to recontest.
 - The journalist should use words that have clear meanings, and may repeat questions in different forms to test respondent consistency and to fully understand what respondents are saying.
 - When editors are confronted with results of polls in reporter's stories, editors can ask to know who sponsored the polls, the type of questions asked, error margins and generalizability of results. Editors should also ensure that the ordering and wording of questions do not affect answers. For example:
 - Do you score the president high or low on security?
 - Do you think he should contest again?

Once the respondent has a negative view of the president's performance on security, he is likely to toe the same line in the second question. Yet, if a president scores low on security, it may not be enough reason not to recontest.

It is the job of editors to ensure that poll results are as accurate and as scientific as possible. This is more so with polls asking how election candidates are doing. It is widely believed that such polls affect voters in three ways, especially when they are done days or a day before elections. The effects are: Such polls create the bandwagon effect; that is,

voters may abandon candidates that are reportedly not doing well at the polls for more popular candidates. The polls may increase financial support for candidates doing well at the polls. Such polls trigger the spiral of silence. People become reluctant to voice their views when the views are considered unpopular following poll results. Such views, no matter their merits, continue to lose support and eventually die.

Some countries such as France have restrictions on polling days before an election or on election days. Other countries recognize the effects of polls that are close to elections days or on election days. Some other countries like the US and Britain recognize that journalists must publish the news daily and that many different things shape people's view and thoughts including news reports. Some media houses have their own restrictions on reporting poll results during elections days or days close to an election. Editors should ensure the accuracy of results published. They should be wary of unsystematic polls as well as those sponsored by election candidates (see Friend, Challenge and McAdams, 2000).

Tips for Feature Editing: A Hard News-Feature Comparison Approach

Some feature editors grew through the ranks as hard news reporters or editors. Some of them came away with too much familiarity with news, which works against news reporters who also write feature. In some newspapers and magazines the same people write news and feature. Treatment of feature is, as a result, not markedly different from news. It ought not to be so.

Therefore, many editors face the problem of ensuring that what they have been handed to edit is even feature not news. At that level, the problem is complicated; that is, having to make a piece first to look like feature, before dealing with grammar, proofreading, fact-checking and other editing tests.

The following discussion is on feature editing done in comparison with hard news.

1. News is dramatic and fast: the news values that are most important are timeliness, conflict, impact, proximity. News is focused on the facts of an event.

2. Feature seeks out the people involved in an event. News is about events, feature is about people as parts of events (people are in front, events are in the background). As such, the values that are most important in feature are prominence, human interest, novelty.

A hard news story about a fire incident might look at the building and causes of the fire, including hard facts about when the fire started and efforts to save people and the building.

Feature can focus on those affected by the fire as owners, the injured or a child whose fireworks started the fire, and thus trigger debate about the use of fireworks. The editor may ask the reporter to refocus a story, or do the refocusing himself. Hard news is therefore about major events, ideas or topics that are introduced to the audience in the lead or shortly after. Key points are summarized in the lead.

3. Features often take a longer route to the main points, keeping the audience engaged along the way with a strong

narrative, a sense of drama, humour or an otherwise compelling prose style. In a few instances, features may have no obvious point at all, but instead try to capture a personality or the texture of life, or simply entertain. It propels the audience through a series of developments, each of which is a mini-story. They may be anecdotes, quotes or bits of background. Each should move the story from the initial complication to the end. The resolution comes at the end if at all. There may be strictly no resolution, but an ending that shows that the struggle continues

Feature captures more details. The language is richer, and the story organization is compelling. That's why the editor needs to interact with the reporter more than is the case in news. Editors do not just correct grammar, they improve on ideas, language, vision and purpose. It's not just about hard facts, but also about the telling. The editor asks deeper questions about how to communicate meaning and insight to an audience (Friend, Challenger and McAdams, 2010):

What does the writer want to say?

What is the best way of saying it?

To whom is the story speaking?

Feature editing requires:

- attention to detail
- longer writing than news
- intensive research

Organization of feature is less rigid and more subtle than the inverted pyramid. Feature depends on tone, voice and rhythm (often difficult for writers to sustain). Writers ought therefore to work days, weeks and months on stories

The editor:

1. Should not get too immersed in sweet storyline to lose sight of holes in a story
2. Should ensure that the story is clear, appealing and speak to readers
3. Should help in providing perspective
4. Should ensure that leads are not overly long. No more than 40 words.
 - A feature can focus on a point of view, but it should be placed in a larger context to give it balance
 - Language should be simple, clear, direct and free of jargon
 - Paragraphs should not be longer than 3 or 4 sentences
 - Transitions should be fluid and unobtrusive
 - Quotes should be used generous: many features emphasize human interest angles and conversational approaches
 - When many issues are raised, be wary of leaving questions unanswered.

Within 5 to 6 paras, the reader should know what the story is about. Suspense should not be too much, so also length and tone. Opinion is better restricted to editorials. Therefore, feature is news, but not hard news. It is based on fact. The writer's opinion are not needed. Remember that opinion is not the same as obvious implications that result from interpretation or explanation of facts.

Consider the following lead of a hard news as well as another feature lead:

1. **Hard news:** President Goodluck Jonathan Tuesday nominated former UNN VC, Professor Chinedu Nebo, as minister of power. The post was vacated by Professor Barth Nnaji last October.

The nomination now awaits possible Senate ratification. Uka Okili, a permanent secretary in the power ministry Tuesday told journalists that Professor Nebo will likely get a positive nod from the Senate. “He will, no doubt, face tough questions about experience and strategy to deal with the many power blocks and interests that are responsible for most of the set backs in the power sector,” Okili said.

2. **Story two: feature:** When, on Tuesday June 4, President Goodluck Jonathan announced Professor Chinedu Nebo as the new power minister, Nwamaka Udeh, a 4th-year student of Biochemistry in UNN felt that a new beginning had dawned for the PHCN. Like most other peers, Nwamaka prepared for, and had four examinations with kerosene lantern in June.

There was no way to energize her rechargeable lantern after it lost steam the first day she used it. Her university did not have power supply in the first two weeks in June. She therefore imagined that Professor Nebo would bring to the power sector the same ingenuity that made him save UNN from the brink of the lowest levels of academic and administrative degeneration.

The first story focused on the hard facts of the appointment of new power minister as an event, including the event of his ratification by senate. The second, which is feature treatment, built the appointment of Professor Nebo on the effects it may have on

the life of university students who cannot buy or use electricity generators in hostels.

Review questions

1. Provide guidelines on how to use quote in news.
2. What are the tips in feature editing?
3. Write notes on attribution and simplicity.
4. Discuss the challenges associated with editing containing polls results.

CHAPTER 10 HEADLINE WRITING

Preamble

A headline is a line or collection of lines of display type that precedes a news story and summarises it. Writing good headlines is a skill with very high premium. Nobody ever easily achieves perfection. Yet it is a skill basic to print journalism and as such deserves careful attention from journalism students. Because heads are usually short and terse, learning to write them can help beginners sharpen their general writing skill.

It needs to be pointed out that headline writers should use language people can understand. It is misleading, therefore, to talk about headline English. What some have mistaken for headline English are some words that are popular in headlines. They are short, punchy and full of meaning: vow, order, nab, rap, flay, nab, hit, count, slap. They help the editor construct succinct headlines without sacrificing meaning. It is therefore useful if the beginning editor acquires a store of these words.

Quick look at the nature of headlines:

- headlines caption hard news stories
- headlines are summaries (of leads, of stories)
- but they can sell a unique part of a story
- they tap the benefit of sentences to convey complete thought
- headline sentences are often skeletonized (they are stripped of non essentials: a, an, the, and) to save space and make them forceful
- be verbs and auxiliaries are not usually forceful
- they show editors' sense of news judgement

- they help readers to easily identify stories that are of interest to them
- they are elements of page design: they give weight, create a personality and bring beauty to news pages.

Basic requirements

The following are some prerequisites for writing good headlines (see Westley 1979):

1. Deep understanding of the story: The headline writer should recognize what part of the story are newsworthy, dramatic, significant and new. A headline may read- **Joe approves budget** However, the real story may be that it was fear of veto from the parliament that forced President Joe to approve the budget. The headline will be more apt if it reads: **Fear of veto forces Joe to approve 2014 budget**

Understanding the story will, therefore, help you to know where the news lies. Consider the following example:

Headline: FG accused of allowing terrorism to thrive Another headline might dwell on a more interesting aspect of the story as follows: **'Unlike Sharia, boko haram will not die naturally - Ribadu'**

2. A vocabulary that is far-reaching and deep

3. A sharp sense of sentence structure – writers need flexibility both in the choice of words and sentence structure so that they can switch word order without damaging meaning.

4. An aptitude for detecting ambiguity and inconsistencies

Most editors prefer to read the story first, before writing the headline. This is to get a full grasp of the story. It is easy to write ambiguous and inconsistent headlines such as: **Motorcyclists shun crash helmet dictate** The meaning of

dictate in the headline is unclear, and it makes the headline confusing. Even if the reader is able to figure out what the writer meant, the word *dictate* still needs clarifying. Did the motorcyclists shun the helmets because it was a needless order or command as the word *dictate* can suggest in some contexts?

Another headline read: ***Vaccine for treatment of breast cancer discovered*** The lead read that: *Medical researchers have discovered a vaccine, though untested, for breast cancer...* This made the headline inconsistent with the lead. It is illogical to talk about a discovery that is untested. If so, nothing has been discovered. The implications or side effects of a drug or vaccine may not be fully known at the time of announcement of its discovery, and researchers usually acknowledge this. If that is what the writer of the story meant, then the writer did not express it accurately. The headline writer, in addition, failed to clear the inconsistency in the lead. He eventually extended it to the headline.

Skills in headline writing

1. Tell the story's essentials- Headlines are usually based on the lead. That, though, is not a rule. Inverted pyramid stories contain the major points in the lead. News features may ignore this approach. If a story is organized the way it happened, the editor may look inwards to find the newsy aspect to spotlight in the headline.

If you follow the lead format, ask yourself: what verb carries the meat: what is the aspect of the news the verb advances? This helps to strip the head of non-essentials. When you have found the aspect of the lead that carries the meat, try constructing a terse sentence to reflect what that aspect says. Seek out the verb. Construct the headline around the verb.

Consider the following lead:

A human rights activist, Azo Uzi, has condemned what he termed ‘systematic delisting of Imo and Abia States’ from the Niger Delta development plan. He also expressed concern that Igbo leaders, especially political office holders, were quiet over the anomaly. He said that it was such marginalisation and inaction of leaders that led to youth restiveness in the Niger Delta. “A repeat of the unfortunate history of militancy in the south east is possible if government does not reverse the delisting of the two States, he cautioned.

It is easy to write a headline such as: **Rights Activist condemns Imo, Abia delisting from NDDC plan**

That is not wrong. But the aspect that carries the meat of the story is the consequence of the delisting. A headline can thus read: **Imo, Abia delisting from NDDC to trigger violence if..... — Rights Activist. OR: Youth restiveness imminent in Imo, Abia, Rights Activist warns**

2. Isolate the past from what is new. Newspapers have to signpost. That is, they ought to tell the reader where a story is leading. This can help newspapers to stay ahead of the electronic media, who often rush off with breaking news.

For instance, **Lead:** Two men (names withheld) have been caught vandalizing a petroleum pipeline at Isolo area of Lagos State. They have been taken to Apapa Police station. The two men, according to the Police Public Relations Officers, Tunde Agboola....

Headline may read:

Two nabbed over pipeline vandalization

But that is not the newest thing about the story. What is new is: **Two face trial over pipeline vandalization** The second headline subsumes the arrest of the two men and points the way forward: their arraignment.

Another example: (summary headline) **Death at funeral: Yakowa, Azazi, aides killed in plane crash**

Looking ahead: Yakowa plane crash: 'there is foul play' - Southern Kaduna cleric Readers who have since heard about the crash on radio or television may be excited by the new aspect raised by the cleric who may not have reacted to the crash by the time the radio news came.

In pointing to the future, some headlines make predictions. When the centre right withdrew support from the Italian prime minister in 2011, newspapers did not just sing: **Centre right withdraws support from Italian prime minister**. They added a new dimension: **Center right withdraws support from Italian PM, new elections likely in April**

Headline (Past): Oyinlola kicked out by PDP

Headline (future): Oyinlola vows to overturn his sack
(implies the sacking)

3. **Headlines should not only tell the bare facts.** The angle can do the magic. It might even be the *who* element. Certain routine events can become news because of the angle. Instead of just saying that: **Two nabbed for cocaine peddling** A headline decided to show that one of the two was a prince whose desire for high brow wedding led him into drug trafficking: **Prince wants high brow wedding, to face trial for drug trafficking**

A head as follows would be dull: **Wife divorces husband.** What is the reason? Is the husband anybody that will add

interest to the headline? Consider: **Wife divorces dentist for snoring**. Also: **Girls apprehended for shoplifting** can be recast:

Minister's daughter nabbed stealing makeup

4. **Put the key facts at the top.** Put the emphasis -hottest words - first. That is where they belong. When attributions are not the news, they need not go first. The attribution goes first when it has everything to do with the story.

China Radio Says

Israeli Youth Killed at Gaza Strip

NOT

Israeli Youth Killed at Gaza Strip

China Radio Says.

However, the following head is right: **Zuma to be reinstated Monday, says CJ**. The reinstatement is more important to the story than the one who said it.

5. **Put the headline in sentence form:** write: **500 die in pipeline explosion:** instead of: **500 deaths as pipeline explodes** If death were rewritten dead, the headline would stand, though not the best in past form. The verb *are* would be implied, but not mentioned.

6. **Build heads around verbs** - vigorous, active, colourful verbs. Generally, *to be* and *to have* verbs are anything but forceful, e.g. **Kegite Club has meeting** Use action verbs - to want something is much less forceful than to ask. Some desks do not allow *to be* verbs at all even when they appear as auxiliaries rather than as main verbs.

7. **Don't repeat words in heads.** Don't use two forms of the same word (e.g. two and twice). The rule has exceptions. In

feature heads particularly, words are sometime deliberately repeated to produce special effects. The rule is also less rigidly applied to prepositions and other connector words (alliteration may be used deliberately in feature heads to produce arresting effect).

8. Avoid structural repetition- putting two decks of the head in precisely the same sentence structure.

**Resources control: National Assembly to hold joint session
Dokubo to address joint session**

The underlined expressions are in the same sentence structure. The second line can appear as follows:

**Resources control: National Assembly to hold joint session
As Dokubo takes case to Senate, House of Reprs session**

9. Tell the story in specific Terms

Pipeline explosion kills many should be recast to read

500 die in pipeline explosion

**Torrential downpour trigger Landslide in northern India
two die, three injured**

10. Make line and thought break at the same time. This can be done in two ways:

(1) Don't break a line inside a verb. Verbs, even in headlines, often consist of more than one word; when they appear as such, keep them on one line. Don't say:

*Israeli, Syrian prime ministers to
hold talks in Beijing*

Although the main verb (is) is implied, to hold, as a verbal should remain on the same line

(2) Don't detach a modifier whether it is an adjective-noun, adverb-adjective or adverb-verb combination- the modifier should not be separated from the word it modifies.

Don't say

**Court begins Mubarak's
Probe Monday**

Say

**Mubarak's Trial
begins Monday**

Mubarak's modifies probe and should be on the same line as probe.

(3) Don't break a preposition away from the phrase it introduces (don't end a line with a preposition). However, when a preposition is united by usage with a verb, the rule breaks down.

It is not correct to write

**Labour, civil society groups ask
for wage increase** When such headlines appear in one or two columns, their meanings tend to change as the reader tries to connect between *ask* and *for*:

It is correct, however, to write:

**House caves in
under tank pressure** *In* is attached to the verb cave.

The rule for preposition phrases also applies to adverbial clauses. Therefore, writers should be wise to note the rules as well as their exceptions.

11. In order to overcome bias, the headline writer needs some self-disciplinary practices that help him write good

headlines. In telling the facts, the writer can convey a sense of detachment from the story by observing the following.

1. Attributing facts
2. Choosing the specific fact
3. Watching the tone equality of words
4. Technical and specialized terms
5. Abbreviations.

1. Observable facts ought to be distinguished from statements that must be attributed to their sources.

Most often, attribution in headlines plainly tells who and what: **Nebo promises ₦1million aid to SUG**

“Nigeria in grave danger” says Soyinka “I will resist my mum’s arrest” - Kalu

(*Vanguard*, Tuesday, October 17, 2006). Use only well-known names in the headlines, unless there is a way to further identify the person in a second deck. That’s why editors use *man*, *royal father*, *cleric*, etc. instead of stating names that will turn the reader off.

Sometimes, attribution is implied or anonymous especially when the writer wants to portray the statement made as opinion.

Corruption seen as bane of Nigeria

Experts say cure for HIV/AIDs out soon When the attribution has everything to do with the story itself it has to go first, right into the top line of the head.

**Radio Nigeria says
famine likely in Nigeria**

However, when the credibility of what the headline says is strong, attribution may come last. Where attributions is placed depends on the credibility of the statement attributed.

Nigeria's debt repayment not yet over says Iweala

Editors sometimes enclose statements in quotation marks to indicate they are statements of opinion, not facts.

North Korea: sanctions 'not the best option'

When the source of a statement is official or if the situation as described would have been clear to anyone around the scene, there would be no need for attribution.

UNN students protest raise in fees

2. Choosing the specific fact: it is better to be precise in headlines. Apart from creating more vigorous pictures, the writer allows the reader to judge the facts themselves, e.g. **Nebo promises aid to SUG** One may ask, what kind of aid? Even if the writer says big monetary aid, he would not only have taken up too much space, but would also have shown lack of detachment. How does he know that what he considers big monetary aid would be considered the same by the reader?

The headlines should read:

Nebo promises ₦2 million aid to SUG

It is left to the reader to decide whether the amount is big or anything.

3. Watching the tone quality of words: Words have both denotative and connotative meanings. The use of a given word may colour the news undesirably and create undesired impressions. Watch the verb in the

following heads. They have greater force than the verbs in the second group of heads.

- **Don tasks banks on ethics**
- **INEC to nullify election results in violent centers**
- **Royal father condemns okada ban**
- **River Assembly summons Total, Elf over pipeline explosion**
 - **Don advises banks on ethics**
 - **Royal father regrets ban of Okada**
 - **INEC to reject election results in violence centres**
 - **Delta Assembly invites Total, Elf for talks**
 - **Groups wants review of fees**

Summon, for instance, has far greater force than invite and conveys the sense of higher authority commanding a lower authority to appear before it.

4. Abbreviations- as in names, use those that can be understood by readers. Abbreviation that can be allowed in the body can be allowed in headlines.

(5) **Technical and specialized terms** – Such terms are not allowed in headlines unless they are adequately explained in the headline itself. A writer may be pardoned if, in the body, he thoroughly explains technical words in a headline. One newspaper once ran this headline: **Forest CO₂ market in the balance, says report** Another ran this one: **NSE may sanction firms for listing fees default** No effort was made to explain listing fees to the ordinary reader. Perhaps specialized topics appeal to those who have interest therein and who understand terms used in a field of interest. But how does the newspaper win more readers over to a specialized field if it uses unexplained technical terms?

12. Tense and mood-

Remember that headlines are written in present tense to give currency to what took place in the last full news cycle – there is only a shift from the past tense to the present. It will therefore be senseless to write a headline in the present tense when an action has yet to take place or if it belongs in the distant past. Present tense can be used to describe a future event only when the action is impending and when the time elements is indicated in the same deck.

It will not sound right to write: **Drogba scores hat trick Tuesday in premiership clash; Court Monday sentences king to Death.** In fact, if Tuesday and Monday were removed, the headlines would make sense. But trying to indicate time (past) and putting the tense in the present appears illogical. This error should also be avoided in cutlines. But it is okay to write: **Court begins king's trial Monday**

Past forms: past form of verbs are unusual in headlines. It is the same with putting headlines in present continuous and present perfect forms. However, when the currency is indicated in something else other the verb, the verb may then be put in the past. For example, **How Ibori escaped arrest** Here, the verb is *escaped* and it is in the past form. But the news is not that he escaped arrest. Rather, it is in 'how' he escaped arrest. **Why Kano election was nullified** Here again, the news is not conveyed by the verb- *was nullified* – which is in the past. But the news is contained in the 'why'. That is what is current.

13. Sometime the verb, especially the 'be verbs' are eliminated in headlines: this makes headlines shorter and terse.

Census result out today

Commissioner cleared of bribery allegation

PDP convention likely in DecemberIn the above examples, the complete sentence would have read: census result will be out today; or PDP convention is likely in December.

Commissioner is cleared of allegation of bribery.

In the last example, the verb is 'is cleared'. 'Is' functions as an auxiliary, helping 'cleared' to complete the sense in the expression. The headlines are correct, because they truly have verbs, only that the verbs are implied.

14. It is advised to write headlines in the active voice because they convey a sense of immediacy and make the head concrete. However, when the doer of the action is not what makes the news, it becomes necessary -even better - to use the passive form of the verb. Thus, passive forms are better when the action is more important than the actor. This is almost the same reasons for their placing attribution first or last.

For instance:

Police arrest two for shoplifting

This is active voice. What if the two involved are daughters of a minister? Then that is the news and it should be given prominence. However, since the daughters are receivers of the actions of arrest, the lead structure would become passive.

Minister's daughter arrested for shoplifting. (Minister's daughter arrested by police for shoplifting). Here the person who made the arrest is not even mentioned. The head could as well read: **Minister's daughter in police net over shoplifting**

The passive form is underplayed here.

15. The period and semi-colon are almost non-existent in headlines. However, punctuation marks appear in headlines. Headlines are skeletonized sentences. Seeing them as such helps the editor tap from the benefits offered by sentence in making the headlines meaningful. The comma is the most used of punctuation marks in headlines. It is often used to convey ellipsis and an omission which place it takes.

In newspaper headlines, the comma takes the place of “and.” For example:

Obasanjo, Atiku trade words on corruption charges

The comma is used in place of ‘and’ in a group

**Rice, Kupolokun to sign
pact on trade deal, military aid**

Instead of Rice and Kupolokun are to sign a pact on trade deal and military aid.

Apart from using the comma to replace the ‘and’ in nominal groups in a series, the comma can also be used to replace conjunctions in compound sentences.

e.g **Enyimba battle Zamalek, promises to win CAF championship; Boeing 727 crash lands, kills pilot, four others**

The full version would be: *Eyimba will battle Zamalek today and promises to win [the] CAF championship.*

16. Words should be used in contexts where their intended meanings are unmistakable. This is to avoid ambiguity. The following head appeared in a national daily in Nigeria: **FG loses ₦300b over sale of houses in Abuja** (*Sunday Champion*, August 13, 2006 pg.5). According to the story: *The federal government has said that ongoing sale of some of its over 32,000 housing units to civil servant located in the*

federal capital territory (FCT) at 30 percent discount, will lead to a revenue loss of ₦300 billion to government.

What does ‘over’ mean in the above headline? Is it that merely selling the houses led to a loss of ₦ 38 billion naira? Was the money stolen or was there a fraud? These are likely interpretations. From the lead, it is clear the writer meant: because the FG sales at a discount of 30%, it loses ₦ 300 billion. A recast would then read:

FG building sales: 30% discount causes ₦300 billion loss.

The word over does not convey the cause of the loss.

Consider this headlines (in the Daily Sun, Wednesday, October 18, 2006): **Plateau speaker’s security details withdrawn.** From the lead, it was clear that security details referred to security aides/men attached to the speaker of the Plateau State House of Assembly. The term *details* has been so used that it may make meaning to many people outside the military. However, it still does not make sense to all readers. Additionally, in the context it was used, one can read it to mean the withdrawing of details of security activities or issues as given by the speaker. Such an interpretation may seem naïve, though. But is that the issue? The headline isn’t clear at once, at least to the non-military minded.

The same story appeared in the *The Nation* newspaper of October 18, 2006, with this headline. **Plateau crisis worsens: police withdraw speaker, deputy’s security men.** In fact, the lead of the story ran thus: Security details attached to the speaker, Plateau State House of Assembly Hon. Simon Lalong and his Deputy Hon. Usman have been withdrawn. The word *detail* did not appear in the headline. Interestingly, the context in which it was used would help the reader decipher its meaning as used in the lead. Better still, the head

was instantly clear. Effort to save space should not force the editor to sacrifice meaning.

17. Editors should also avoid over-generalizations in headlines e.g. Ndi Igbo Adopt Kalu for 2007 presidency 2007: Arewa Youth root for Egwu (*Sunday Champion*, July 23, 2006 p. 3). Such sweeping generalizations insult readers' intelligence.

18. Headline writers are advised to read headlines thoroughly especially after a rewrite. In order to get headlines to fit limited space, headlines are re-written over and over. Ambiguity may creep in after a re-write. Consider the following headline.

Lalong says Nigeria Air Forces deserves capacity building

The writer, perhaps, thought such headlines too long and wrote another head: **Capacity building: boost for Air force**

The lead shows that Lalong made the statement in a meeting with an air force chief. But a reader saw the re-written headline and thought the governor (Lalong) was commending the Air Force on a just concluded capacity building workshop. It is generally believed that readers would read the stories and relate them to their headlines to fully comprehend all. However, research indicates that headlines can shape understanding of the body of the story.

In one study, three readers were given the same story, each with a different, but objective headline. In a subsequent survey, the readers showed signs of having been influenced by the headlines. From responses given by one reader, it was discovered he believed that the main character in the story was guilty of an alleged crime. But that character hadn't even been tried. Consider the following headlines:

1. Dokubo's trial: court delivers judgment today
2. Treason charge: court decides Dokubo's fate today
3. Dokubo to know fate today

Two in six of those who read the story with the second headline thought that Dokubo was guilty of the treason charge. This ratio was by far higher than results of the others. Perhaps that was because the headline was already doing the trial by letting the expression *treason charge* and *court* come directly in front of the name *Dokubo*. Of all who read the story with the first headline, only one person said that he thought that Dokubo was guilty (one in forty). For those who read the story with the third headline no one adjudged Dokubo guilty. They had to read the story to know the fate that Dokubo might soon get to know.

19. Creativity in headline writing: After every guideline, editors are urged to show some sign of creativity in writing headlines by adapting some attributes of features titles, especially pun. Following the contents of a story, the writer may find literary devices to capture the dramatic point in the story, e.g. in the wake of the Plateau State religious crisis, a headline in a national daily ran thus-**Plateau no longer flat area-Anenih**

The reference is to Plateau State, but flat is used to refer to the crisis. The curiosity in one may be aroused when one reads that Plateau-literarily a flat area- is no long flat. Could that be geographical miscalculation?

Ka'oje's son rises in the East This was a headline used to refer to the son of former sports minister whose soccer profiles was on the rise in the Far East. *Son* is, however, used as a pun as if it were the sun that rises in the east.

Key Words for Headlines

All said, the editor should remember that the tone of the headline should reflect the spirit of the story. It is better for key terms in headlines to come straight out of the events of a story rather than from forms adapted from others headlines. However, because there are stories on similar situations, editors like to borrow from the 'regular' key words used to explain the action in such situations. It saves time.

Crowell listed some key words for headlines in his book - *Creative New Editing*. Some of the key words are reproduced below (in Ogunsiji 1989, pp. 103-106).

ACCIDENT	BEAT	DISCUSS	FIRE
Collide	Batter	Talk	Blaze
Crash	crush	debate	Burn
hit	defeat	Trade words	Light
Ram	knock	consider	Spark
Smash	edge	parley	Ignite
Strike	Jolt	argue	Raze
bump	Excel	Take up	
	Again		
ACCUSE	BEAT	BELITTLE	CHOOSE
Allege	bow	Ignore	Elect
Involve	pound	malign	Pick
Arraign	sink	shun	Select
Name	Spank	spurn	Vote
Blame	Upset	Shirk	Name
Change	win		
Indict			
ESCAPE	FLOOD	ACQUIT	DAMAGE
Elude	Inundate	Absolve	Cripple
Dodge	Cover	Clear	Destroy
Bolt	sink	defend	Harm

flee	Wash	Free	Injure
Slip	overflow	Released	Mar
Get away	Submerge	Vindicate	Wreck
Hide	Delude	uphold	Ravage

Raze

FALL	MEETING	ARREST	DENY
Collapse	Assemble	Capture	Disclaim
Decline	confer	catch	Disown
Deflate	Meet	Hold	Refute
Depress	Gather	Jail	Renounce
Drop	Unite	Net	Retract
Reduce	Rally	Seize	Recount
Slash	unite	Trap	Refuse
Slump	Mobilize	Take	Withhold
Dip	Reunite	Round up	Reject

FIND	LOSE	RESIGN	KILL	PROBE
Detect	bow	Abdicate	Die	Delve
Dig out	Fail	Depose	Drown	Scan
Discover	Give in	Desert	Execute	Study
Unearth	Give up	Retire	Murder	Analyze
Show	Submit	Quit	perish	Pry
Prove	Surrender	Expel	Slay	Sift
Discern	Yield	Flee	Stab	Plumb
	slump	Abandon	Succumb	Weigh

HONOUR	MISSING	PEACE	STEAL
Award	abduct	Agree	Cheat
Cheer	depart	Arbitrate	Defraud
Cite	Disappear	Conciliate	Dupe

Exalt	Elope	Pacify	Embezzle
Great	Kidnap	Settle	Rob
Name	Vanish	Reconcile	Swindle
			Seize

HONOUR

Solute
Welcome
Receive
Extol

MISSING

Fade
Go
Quit
Drop

PEACE

Harmonize
Heal
Patch
Sign

PROMISE

Assure
Pledge
Swear
Vow
Shake
Agree

FIGHT

Argue
Assail
attack
Battle
blast
Clash
Contest
Differ
Dispute
Slap
Jolt
Disagree
Hit
quarrel
rebuff
Rebuke
Reject
Repel
Protest

SAY

Address
Affirm
Claim
Chat
Declare
Feel
Hint
proclaim
quote
insist
Declare
Charge
contend
Maintain
Hold
Regard
Cite
Decide
Deem

STOP

Abolish
Avoid
Ban
Bar
Block
Cease
Check
Close
Cripple
Forbid
Halt
Impede
Limit
Repel
Refrain
Curb
Avert
Advert
end

SEEK

Beg

RITE

Greet

PERIL

Brave

PLAN

Agree

PUSH

Act

Appeal	Hail	Caution	Aim	Goal
Ask	Hold	Concern	Arrange	Impel
Plead	Mark	dare	Decide	Jog
Pray	fete	defend	design	Press
Solicit	perform	fear	draft	Prod
Implore	Read	Frighten	draw	Push
Demand	recite	guard	Fashion	Speed
Call for	Say	Imperil	Fix	Speed
Urge	Stage	risk	Map s	Stir
Bid	Observe	Threaten	Outline	Urge

GET	RISE	STORM	VIOLENCE
Acquire	Add	Break	Battle
Earn	Arise	Grip	Brawl
Enlist	Ascend	Lash	Clamour
Given	Broaden	Pound	Clash
Grab	climb	rage	Fight
Take	develop	Smash	Mutiny
Steal	Enhance	strike	Parade

PUZZLE	RISE	STORM	VIOLENCE
Amaze	Enlarge	Sweep	Protest
Awe	Extend		
Baffle	Mount	SNOW	START
Bewilder	Lift	Bare	Act
Confound	Rocket	Display	Begin
Confuse	Soar	List	Create
Perplex	Swell	Issues	Enter
Surprise	Widen	Expose	Found
	Lump	Publish	Move
	Exceed	Reveal	Open

Test
Unfold

Set

Review Question

1. Mention and explain any two skills of headline writing.
2. The bare facts of a story are not necessarily its essential facts. Why?
3. Why is the present tense popular with headline writing?
4. Headline sells and tells a story's essentials. How so?
5. Why is it argued that there ought not to be any such thing as headline English?

CHAPTER 11

PHOTOGRAPHS

Visual Media

Photographs are key elements of newspaper layout. They explain a point for easier than pages of type. Photos are heavy weights, beauty spots, and they attract god display. They are often the dominant display element in makeup. Photographs not only draw the reader quickly, they are powerful visual media. Photographs can tell their own stories. However, more often they are used as part of textual matter to shed light on it and to help tell the story. Unfortunately, many newspapers, especially in this era of software-breed designers, and not using photos to good advantage.

The successful use of photos and words in tandem is a realization of the powerful potential of the newspaper as a visual medium. Photos are the most-looked-at items in newspaper (Moen 1995; Garcia and Stark 1991). Photographs are the stop signs in the designer's traffic pattern. Stories with pictures command better readership and hold the reader's attention longer than stories without pictures (Bain and Weaver 1979).

A photograph is a reproduction of an image using a still camera. An artwork includes all other illustrations but photograph. A line drawing or line art is not shot with a screen, but as the name implies consists of lines joined together. Charts and graphs are line art. However, when they contain tone, they must be shot as halftone photos; that is, screened. A halftone is a reproduction wherein tones have been photographed via a screen to break up the areas into dots whose size determines the dark and light areas.

Some refer to pictures as all illustration apart from photo. But such distinction is not helpful. Picture and photograph are better used interchangeably. Photographs are also referred to as cut or illustration. All artwork and photographs are illustrations, and must be sized and cropped to fit space. Computers are making this task easier.

Large newspaper employ photo editors, usually trained photographers, whose job is to select and display all photos. A layout editor may perform the same job at a small newspaper. The layout editor normally had grown through the ranks as a former copy editor.

Types of Photos

Teasers: small photos usually at the front or back pages used to direct attention to inside stories. They are used to whet readers' appetite and to direct attention to given pages.

Single photo: one picture frame, which may stand alone to tell its own story or to amplify another story.

Picture series: A series is a group of related photos taken at different times and discussing the same issue. A series is photographed from more than one viewpoint and covering a long span. A newspaper can use a series on a picture page to tell a story about the scourge of an epidemic. The various frames will contain shots about the epidemic taken at different times, spanning even over years. Picture series should have continuity that enhances impact. Pictures should be arranged coherently to bring out their relationship and entertainment.

Photo sequence: a group of related photos taken from the same viewpoint and covering a short span. A sequence can

be used to report one conference, with all the photos taken at the venue of the conference. Single frame pictures no longer serve the ideal of good photo selection. This is why editors are turning to sequences. One-frame photos capture only one aspect photo display in given conditions. Moen (1995, p.58) notes some common situations:

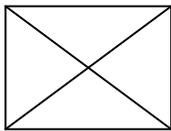
1. Contrast. Looking for dissimilarities in like subjects and subtle similarities in the subjects (Hurley and MacDougal 1971, p.5).
2. Close-up and context. When the photographer has to back off to show where the action is occurring, the picture makes a general statement. A second shot can give close-up look at a small portion of the overall scene.
3. Sequence. One frame captures just one moment in the series; two or more frames permit the action to unfold. However, when displaying sequences, keep the same vantage point in the cropping.
4. In photograph, one and one make three. Although each photo has its own story, pairing offers a third story that results from the interplay of the two photos. Properly used, the paring principles tell a story quickly and dramatically. However, when the words say two and there is only one picture, there is an obvious hole in the package. If a package contains three or more pictures, there are four additional guidelines: interior margins should be consistent, excess whitespace should bleed to the outside of the package, sizing should be proportionate to the space of the total package, and there should be variety of shapes.

The picture story is a series or sequences used to tell a story. It is a narrative. The pictures represent exactly what happened, without the editor's additions(Fig. 11.1).

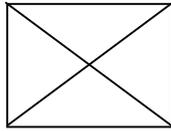
Picture essay: this is also a series or sequences. It expresses a point of view. While the picture story merely narrates without the narrator trying to adduce a personal point of view, the picture essay tries to make a point either with a series or a sequences of photos. The difference between the two is like the difference between a news story and a feature story(Fig 11.2).

Fig. 11.1: Pictures story: the last days of a patient of cervical cancer

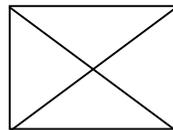
Cervical cancer: slow killer



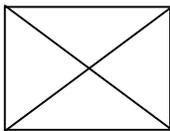
Iwe in his days of good health



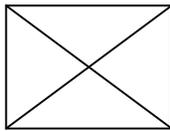
Iwe with rashes. He feels his body and suspects malaria



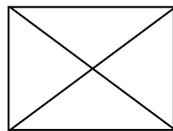
Critically ill in hospital, Iwe is diagnosed of cervical cancer



Doctors battle to save his life



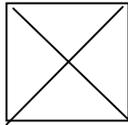
Last moments of Iwe as he is stretched into a theatre for surgery. He did not survive.



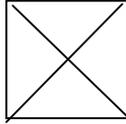
Chief medical officers, AkaHospital, Enugu, IziUze, speaking with Iwe's elder brother, Uche. He advised men to go for early checkup if they notice lumps around the waist

Fig. 11.2: Picture essay (Theme: immunization is safe for children)

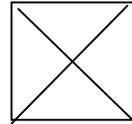
Immunization has no side effects - Uke



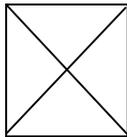
Health minister, ObajiUke, flags off "Roll Back Malaria campaigns" amidst fears that some states are opposed to the campaign



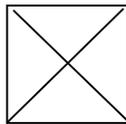
The minister allays fears over the safety of immunization. He needs to do more to get women in rural areas, says health reporters



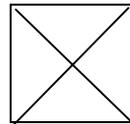
Imo Health Commissioner, ObiKalu immunizes her one-year old son before reporters. She later addressed journalism on immunization



The commissioner smiles to ovation from mothers. 'You need not be afraid,' she told the women



President Aremu also immunizes a child in Ogun state. Ogun health minister Laloko, right, asks by-standers: 'could he have if it were dangerous?'



A cross-section of immunized children. A survey has revealed that there was no correlation between immunization and child convulsion, says health minister, ObajiUke, second right

A picture story has beginning, a middle and end. A picture essay stresses a theme. A good way to make a picture essay is to interview subjects along the line of the theme of your essay and record their responses as part of the outline. Assignment can be planned such that outline text may be developed to reflect certain dramatic angles developed by the photographer, and sometime photos are selected to follow text. Both text and photos should work in tandem. The pictures should have a good title that explain what is in both text and outline (Moen 1995).

Photo treatment

Bleeding: this is blowing a photograph off the grids to the margins. The normal practice is to surround photos with grids or border, but bleeding allows a photo to extend into the margins of the page. Bleedings gives a photo sensational look by physically expanding it. It therefore alters a photo's psychological tone. Large photos are the ones to bleed. When editors want to editorialize, they bleed. No editor, however, would fill a page with bled photos. There should be contrast with smaller, humbler-looking pictures.

Flopping: some photos, by their nature, would look away from a page if pasted, and a photograph should draw the reader into the story, not off the page. The direction of a photograph can, therefore be changed to make it look into a page. Flopping is changing the face or vector of a picture when, by its original direction, it looks away from the page. Before flopping, be sure that certain aspects of the subject will not change in a funny way. As suit may become buttoned the wrong way and the rank on the regalia of a military officers goes out of order.

Doctoring: to interrupt the predominance of square and rectangular photos on the page, editors cut photos into unusual shapes. This creates impact of its own. Photos are thus cut into circles, triangles, star etc.

Slicing: a photograph may be cut into two, and the half bled to give a monstrous look of the subject. The aim is often to cause excitement. Such photos creates a negative impression of the subject.

Photo scaling or sizing

This is the enlargement or reduction of photographs to fit allotted space. Sizing is also done to determine the appropriate way to reduce or enlarge a photo. That is, editors determine what the new width or depth should be in relation to an old width or depth. The sizing of illustrations can be done with simple equations.

The scaling or sizing of illustrations is the equivalent to copy fitting. Common problems includes finding (1) the depth of a reproduced photograph when the width is known; (2) the with when the depth is known; (3) the amount to crop when the depth and the width of a reproduced photograph are known. It is the portion within the crop marks that will be sized or scaled.

Arithmetic method

A rectangle is shaped by the relationship of its adjoining sides. For example, a photograph 8-inch wide and 4 inches deep is the same as a rectangle 4-inches wide and 2inches deep. In both cases, the width is twice the depth. This relationship in a photo can be expressed as a fraction:

$$\frac{\text{Original photo width}}{\text{Original photo depth}} = \frac{\text{reproduced with}}{\text{reproduced depth}}$$

By setting up these fractions as an equation, any missing dimension can be found with simple arithmetic. The following are typical examples

Examples 1: finding the reproduced depth when the width is known: assuming a photo is 8-inches wide and 10 inches deep and the reproduced photo to be 2-inches wide, the equation is $8/10 = 2/x$.

To solve, cross multiply 8 by 10 get $8x$, and 10 by 2 to get 20. If $8x = 20$, then $x = 20/8$ (reproduced depth) = 2.5 inches.

Example 2: Finding the reproduced width when depth is known. Assuming a photo is 7-inches wide and 5-inches deep and the reproduced photo is to be 3-inches deep, the equation is $7/5 = x/3$

To solve, cross multiply 5 by x to get $5x$ and 7 by 3 to get 21. If $5x = 21$ then $x = 21/5$ (reproduced width) = 4.2 inches.

Example 3: finding how much to crop from a photo give a dimension that will reduce to fit a special layout area. Note: a vertical photo is that is to fit a horizontal space has an unknown depth. A horizontal photo that is to fit a vertical space has an unknown width. A vertical photo is longer than it is wide; and a horizontal photo is wider than it is deep.

If a photo 8-inches wide and 10-inches deep is to be made to fit into a layout area 5 inches wide and 4 inches deep, the depth of the photo must be cropped for it is the unknown. Therefore, $8/x = 5/4$: $5x = 32$ and $x = 6.4$ or $6\frac{2}{5}$ inches. The photo's depth must be cropped to $6\frac{2}{5}$ inches from 10 inches deep. The 6.4 inches to be cropped can be taken from the top, bottom or partially from each depending on the content (see Idemili 2002, p.34).

Many editors are no longer using this format because of the ease of reducing and enlarging photographs on computer programs. However, this technique is more about knowing the appropriate way to size a photo rather than about how easy it is to reduce or enlarge. Many editors though believe they can use their discretion to determine the appropriate size of a photo, and go ahead to simply click at the edge of the photo, and drag in or out to reduce or enlarge.

Issues in the photo use

A. Ethics

1. Issues of manipulation - A former catchphrase in journalism says that pictures do not lie. This saying is being put to serious question by contemporary practices in photo display. Computer software today allow photo editors to deal with a photograph in hundreds of ways. Background can be changed, faces can be given a smile, and position can alter dramatically. People who never saw face to face can be made to appear in the same photo frame.

Photos can tell barefaced lies. This leads to question of ethics in photo use. Each publication, therefore, should assess the issue of manipulation vs. reader interest and produce a guideline which will safeguard reader credibility in photos.

2. **Taste** - readers often react negatively when newspapers show picture of people grieving, dead bodies, people in compromised positions. Sometimes editors have reasons for printing whatever picture they print, although some people still protest. Research by experts (Moen 1995, Friend, Challenger and

McAdams, 2000) has revealed the following guideline against which decisions may be checked.

- a. Nearness to the local people - a picture has more impact if it shows people from a newspaper's locality than people from afar off. That is why the international audience relishes pictures of starvation in Sudan, but not in their own countries.
- b. Showing the face of the dead - if the face is showing, the picture of a dead person makes people shudder in disgust.
- c. Showing the face of accident victims - better if the reader is told that the victims will recover. But at press time, it is usually difficult to know. There is also negative reaction if the face is showing.
- d. Spotlighting people in affliction - people consider it invasion of privacy to show the suffering of people.
- e. Photo display - good photos usually get large display, readers may allege sensationalism if a picture of tragedy receives large display.
- f. Placement- it is natural to give pictures of tragedy front page. But the same picture will receive less outburst inside.
- g. Rationale - overall, the editor should ask himself: is there a genuine or imagined social benefit to be gained from running the pictures?

Indeed, some controversial pictures could be run. Others may not. But a newspaper should have guideline on using pictures containing dead persons, people in the nude, and pictures about eccentric cultural elements, etc. Photo editors, relevant desk editors, news editors and photojournalists

ought to confer to decide how to run particular controversial photos, each time there is one even if from the archives.

B. Integrity: Some techniques of running photos point out questions of photo integrity. They are:

1. **Mortising:** this is the overlapping of two or more photos or the overlapping of type and a photo. Sometimes the editor cuts away a part from a photograph and places another photo in the space. This may be done to create space for a headline. Experts say this is rarely effective because when a small headshot, for instance, is mortised to a large picture, it interferes both with the larger story and with the picture.

2. **Inset:** when a smaller picture comes entirely within another photograph. The smaller picture is usually placed upper right or lower left within the large photo. Do not let insets interfere with the content of the larger pictures. Insets are good when you let the reader view the action in the larger picture. Insets are used to show a close-up of the dramatic point in the larger picture or the entire story. This is because the larger picture may too busy to spotlight the face of, for instance, the winner of an eight-man race. As a result, it is enough to crop the inset to the head or as a shoulder shot. If the subject must be shown in full, it should not blur essential parts of the larger picture.

3: **Over printing:** when type is superimposed on a photograph. Again do not let type interfere with photo content. Do not let photo background blur type. Choose type colour that would offer good contrast with photo background to assure legibility. In like manner silhouettes should be done when there is effective contrast between the silhouetted object and its background.

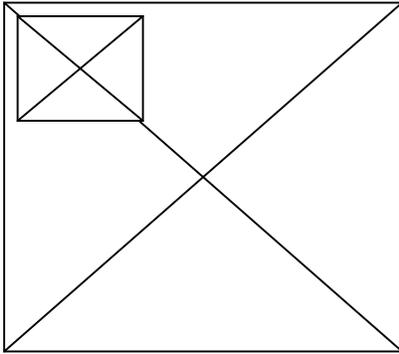


Fig. 11.3: Inset pix.
The small pix is
inset into the larger
pix.

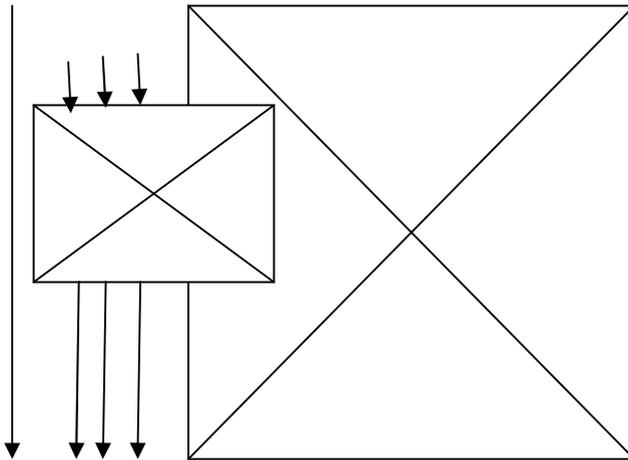


Fig. 11.3: Mortising. The arrows
represent text. They indicate that
the smaller picture extends into
text area.

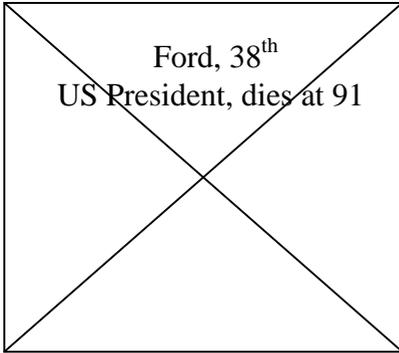


Fig. 11.4
Overprinting

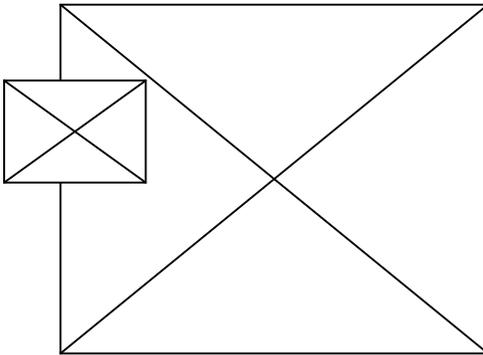


Fig. 11.5:
Overlapping.
The small pix
overlaps the
larger pix

When selecting and displaying photos, says Moen, p.61, observe the following:

1. Select as few pictures as possible so that the ones that are used can be sized adequately.
2. Omit redundancies - do not repeat yours photographically. Tell the story with as few pictures as possible to avoid needless repetitions.
3. Run one photo significantly larger than the others. That photo should be the dramatic moment or emotion, the essence of the story.
4. Maintain consistent interior margins. Whitespace is trapped when margins are not consistent and the

reader notices it for itself rather than as feeling or airiness. Let the extra space bleed to the outside of the package.

5. Write a cutline for each picture and place it under the picture. Ganged or grouped cutlines make readers work extra hard.
6. After you have selected the pictures and determined the length of the text, set the photo before you. The storyline and the flow of action should determine the arrangement of the pictures on the page.
7. Place the copy in a modular block. The title doesn't necessarily have to go directly over the copy but if it doesn't a subhead over the copy is useful. Write a title that plays off a photo and place the title directly over or, preferable, under that photo.

The above is not exhaustible. However, it is sufficient to help a beginner avoid mistakes common on photo pages. A good photo editor has a sense of news as well as balance and flow. Photographers, like reporters, can often make good judgment of their work. Yet a second eye is needed because reporters may become too close to their work to detect the odd. Pictures selection depends on available space and whether there is an accompanying story.

A former photo editor for national geographic formulated the following list of question to ask when selecting photos (Tery 1980)

1. Can you justify your selection on a sound editorial basis?
2. Are you looking for a record or a snap shot of the event or do you want the picture to add depth to the story? This is important because some photographers just cover an event without minding any aspect that will help tell the story.

3. Is the photo more than just technically acceptable and editorially useful?
4. Does the photo have a mood?
5. Do the pix have photographic qualities that make it appealing, such as strong graphics, interesting light and forceful composition.
6. If the photo is unusually good, have you reconsidered the space allotted to it?

A good photo editor can help the reporter put his story in good order. Such an editor can do a lot with photographs because he can discover dramatic angles in them. He can crop to emphasize important points of the picture. He knows when a situation requires close-ups and in fact, what can be done to a photograph to make it spectacular.

Photos have to lead the reader right into the scene. Like in stories, anything that stands in the way of meaning should be removed. But photos should not be manipulated. They should not be cropped in ways that sacrifice meaning. This is because they should communicate, just as texts do. Newspapers pictures should remain true to life.

Cutlines

Cutlines, according to research are read more than stories, and should not be ignored by journalists. One study found that cutlines were read 10 to 15% more than stories. Writing better cutlines requires a system in which the person who edits the story and writes the headlines also writes the cutline (some editors write cutlines without even seeing the photos).

Cutlines, headlines and photos should complement each other in telling and selling the story. The cutline should not only tell readers what they need to know about the photo, but also include something from the text to tease them into

reading the story. Cutlines should not contain what is already in the headline or pullouts.

Cutlines may be only a line, but every newspaper needs a text outline format. A text outline is used when a picture needs larger explanation. Cutlines, like stories, should answer the five Ws and an H. They ought to be concise, direct and simple. Cutlines should specify the dates, and avoid saying today, yesterday. Hardly would a picture appear the day it was taken.

Here are points to consider when writing cutlines (Moen 1995, Okoro and Agba, 1995)

- Cutlines can convey non-visual senses better than photos: hearing, touch, smell, taste.
- Cutlines can tell time, temperature and size better than photos.
- Cutlines can identify people and their relationships, photos can't.
- Cutlines can explain the causes or consequences of what the photos show.
- Cutline can prevent possible misunderstanding of photos.
- Cutlines can call attention to something which might be overlooked in photos.
- Cutlines should explain any techniques used to create special effect. Even if it's a natural phenomenon such as light source, explain it.
- Cutlines should entice people to read the accompanying story but should not repeat information in the headlines or pullouts.

- Cutlines should match the mood of the photo. They should be accurate, check the names, address and numbers in the cutlines against the story. Count the number of names in the cutline against the number of faces in the photo.
- Crop the photo before you write the cutlines. It will save you the embarrassment of identifying someone not in the photo.
- Don't state the obvious: "kisses the trophy" or "grimaces."
- Don't editorialize, don't attribute human characteristic to animals and don't put words into people's mouth or thoughts into their heads ("Jones must have been unhappy.")
- Be succinct. Use 'from left' instead of 'starting from left to right.'
- Omit needless phrases, such as 'pictured here' and 'above'.
- Although journalistic tradition calls for cutlines to be written in the present tense to convey a sense of immediacy, writers are to use the past tense in the sentence in which the date is reported. That is to avoid such nonsensical statements as 'Jordan scores a basket Sunday'. This is a curious jumbling of past with present and readers know that the action must have happened.
- Cutlines types should be larger than text type and should offer contrast of race, serifs or sans serif, or at least form. Because text type is usually serif, sans serif can work well in cutlines.
- The newspaper should use standardized text cutline settings for the width of the picture. Text cutline in the 10 to 12 range, generally, should not exceed 25 picas in

width. Gutter should be the same as that used elsewhere. One way to build whitespaces into the paper is to set cutline narrower than the width of the picture. This permits extra whitespace at either side of the cutline. The cutline can extend the width of picture when it is one-line format-in 13 or 14 type.

- Cutline should be placed underneath the pictures. Occasionally, they are placed to the right or left. In such a case, they should line up with the bottom of the picture to make it easy for readers to find it. Grouped cutlines irritate readers because they have to work harder to match the text information with the appropriate photo. Most readers will not work that hard. Grouped cutlines, therefore, infuriate readers. Placing the cutlines anywhere except underneath the picture should be an exception. Readers read out of the bottom of the photo in search of the cutline Moen (1995, pp.62-63).
- In group photos, identify key figures by name and find a common word that identifies others. For example, the minister of Aviation, Umaru Gida, his wife, Ada and Aviation officials during a tour of
- Mug shots and head shots should not use cutlines that exceed one line of text. If the photo occupies just half a column width, only the last name of the subject in the photo should be used. Photos bigger than mug shots should have credit lines, i.e., the name or identification of the photographer. Credit lines appear below just before or after the cutline usually in small print.

Cropping instructions

Cropping is the removal of unwanted aspects of a photo. Although computers are simplifying this task, the editor still needs guidelines on what to click off or on.

1. Crop tight for emphasis- A tight crop emphasizes both the subjects of the photo and the intensity of action therein. However, crop for relevance. Too tight cropping (close up) may sacrifice relevant background, and too loose cropping may let in irrelevant content.
2. Crop thoroughly- edit the photograph as if it were a written story: remove all irrelevant material.
3. Do not slice any part of the body contained in the photograph. Thus, show well any part you wish to show. This is especially true when a part of the body is in a position that would help tell the story. Cutting the hand that is gesticulating affects content, because the reader needs the hand to catch the action.
4. Do not amputate or behead- every head has a mother. Cropping at some joint in the body leaves a feeling of incompleteness and dissatisfaction: for instance, the fingers, the wrist, elbow, shoulder, leg. If the editor wants a head shot, he should not dare crop at the Adam's apple. The chin is a good stop, but if the neck is to appear in a shot, there should be a little strip of shoulder to serve as the base of the picture.
5. Whitespace should not be neglected, especially in action pictures. Pictures such as those showing runners or footballers need some room. That creates the feelings of space in which action occurs or into which action flows.
6. When cropping portraits, allow sufficient space at the top and sides. Letting the head hit the roof creates a feeling of discomfort.
7. When the sky above a picture would provide distracting details, it should be cropped off. Leave a background that contributes to the scale and sense of the picture.
8. When cropping, find the important parts of the photo. Ensure that they are outstanding. Readers will be drawn to them. Therefore, the editors helps the reader to concentrate

on the important aspect of the photo (see Agba & Okoro, 1995; Moen 1995).



11.6: Single pixas text illustration. The reader needs just the pix and headline to get the gist of the story



Fig 11.7: Crop tight. The level of cropping helped to reveal the seriousness on the faces of the subjects

Judgments to make during cropping

A photograph should be judged as both copy and content. In judging a picture as copy, the concern is with the reproductive quality of the photo. An editor cannot possibly perform magic with a poorly taken photograph, despite the help offered by software. Reproducing a bad photo with the best equipment will yield a finely reproduced bad picture.

A picture may lose some of its details in the process of reproduction. Therefore, the editor looks out for the pictures that will survive the reproduction processes fairly unhurt. While looking at the pictures, he searches for sharp focus and good contrast. At times, however, when a picture contains smudges, the editor may still not discard it. The desire for clean pictures need not be carried too far in some cases. Blurs and distortions in a picture of rioters, fire victims or war front can add to a picture's value; that is indicating the rough and grim nature of the scene.

Generally, the editor knows why he needs clear pictures. Judging a picture for content is examining a picture to determine how much light it throws on a story and how much it helps tell the story. A picture is supposed to amplify a story, to add to its dramatic appeal and personal touch.

Review Questions

1. How can questions of photo integrity be resolved?
2. What are the implications of photo manipulation?
3. Provide general guideline to a beginner on photo use.

4. Give six tips each on cutline writing and photo cropping.

CHAPTER 12

INFORMATION GRAPHICS

Introduction

Information graphics refer to a wide-range of story-telling devices, often used to show relationships between two or more items. In newspapers, those who produce information graphics are called artists or graphic artists.

Functions:

- Graphics are used to picture the meaning in numbers. Maps can show elevations or underground rock formations, etc.
- Numerical data is easier to understand in graphics than in text.
- Readers are more likely to read and remember data in graphs than in stories.
- Information graphics attract slightly higher levels of readership than stories.
- Charts allow readers to grasp the trends among numbers more quickly, but the comprehension of numbers in tables is higher than that of charts
- Some simply scan info graphics, some look at them closely to grasp the information more fully.

Information graphics need headline and copy blocks

To help readers understand info graphics, journalists use headlines and copy blocks (see fig. 12.1).

Education budget up by 25% in 5 years

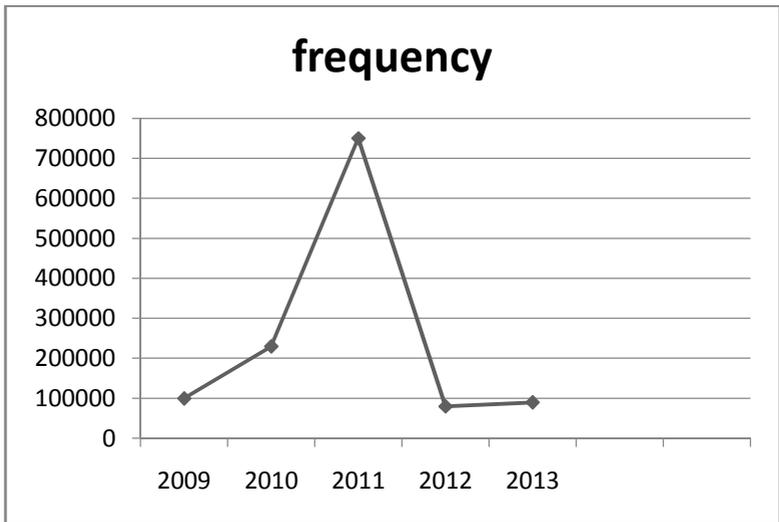


Fig. 12.1 information graphics –line chart

Copyblock: Senate approved a budget Wednesday that increased education appropriation by 25%. The budget will require a reinstatement of tuition in secondary schools. The average government spending on education in the past 5 years is N250,000 although only the 2011 spending exceeded this average. More industrial action across universities are expected in 2013 because the budget falls far short of expectations of ASUU.

- The headline makes a complete thought. It summarises what is in the graphic for the readers. It is not a label or title. E.g, 'Education budget' is a label. 'Education budget up by 25% in 5 years' is a headline.

- The copy block achieves the following: Add details to support the headline. E.g. ‘Senate approved a budget Wednesday that increased education appropriation by 25%.’
- Tell the reader what can’t be or isn’t contained in the graphics. E.g. ‘The budget will require a reinstatement of tuition in secondary schools.’
- Call attention to something that might be overlooked in the graphic. E.g. the average government spending on education in the past 5 years is N250,000 although only the 2011 spending exceeded this average.
- In stand-alone charts, explain the causes or consequences of the information. E.g. more industrial action across schools are expected in 2014 because the budget falls far short of expectations of ASUU.
- When using charts to report polls, provide information that helps readers to evaluate the survey: how many polled, when and where the poll was done and the margin of error.
- Tease or direct the reader to the story for more information
- The headline and copy block should perform the same function as the headline and the lead of a straight news story. Graphs should combine art and journalism: the use of numbers to convey information.

Before you prepare a chart:

- What is the point of the story. Is it a stand-alone or part of a story. Even as a stand alone, the graphic should make sense by itself because some readers may not look at a story after seeing a graphic.
- Do the story and graphic agree. Compare the data in the graphic and the story: time, place, etc.
- Can the story take care of information in the graphic? If yes, creating a graphic is useless.
- At times, the figures you provide would need to be compared to something else or other figures. Therefore, you need to find out such figures.
- In column and line charts, there is the x-axis, i.e. the horizontal scale that contains the independent variable, and the y-axis, the vertical axis that contains the dependent variable. E.g. when charting inflation rates over time, the rates would be the dependent variable appearing on the y-axis, and time would be the independent variable appearing on the x-axis (see Moen, 1995).

Four divisions of information graphics

- Charts
- Datelines
- Maps
- Diagrams

Kinds of charts

1. Column and Bar charts

- A column charts has vertical columns and a bar chart has horizontal bars.

- Column charts emphasize numbers, line charts emphasize trends/movement. Therefore, line charts are used when there is unbroken string of data at even intervals. If there is missing trend in the data, a line chart is no longer appropriate. Using a line chart will deceive the reader because the flow of the line should indicate a continuous trend of data. The reader may not appreciate the fact that there is a missing trend.
- Column and bar charts are best used to compare two or more items. In two layered column bars, two items can be charted in one column (using colour or any sign to separate the layers) to save space. Bars can be arranged by size, alphabet or location.

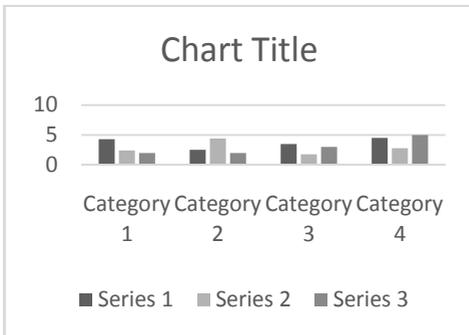


Fig. 12.2
Column
chart

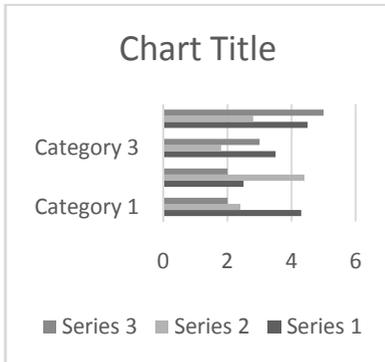


Fig. 12.3
Bar chart

Line chart (see fig. 12.1)

- Show variations in numbers overtime
- Used to chart temperature fluctuations
- Too many lines can confuse. If you use colour, you can have more than three lines.
- Do no exceed three lines if you use black and white lines, especially if the lines cross

Pie chart

- Used to show parts of a whole.
- It's usually circular, but not always
- Divisions are often expressed in percentages
- Too many divisions will cause problems: hard to see, label and differentiate, especially in black and white

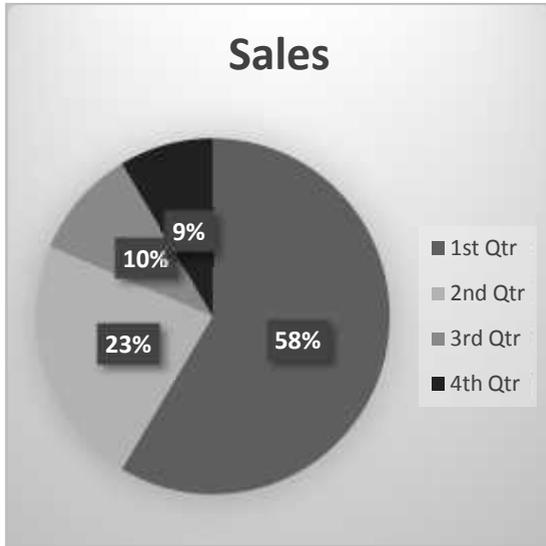


Fig. 12.4 Pie chart

Tables

Tables are column listings of numbers or names or both. Tables are used to organise and relate several categories of information.

- Use tables when there are too many numbers to chart

When using different measurements for something like a school (comparing a group of schools by more than one measurement.)

Basic Values Stressed in Stories	Newspapers					
	The Guardian	Daily Sun	Vanguard	Thisday	Total	%
Impact	16	7	7	15	45	21.6
Prominence	15		11	5	31	14.9

Proximity	13		4	4	21	10.1
Oddity					0	0
Human interest	7	2	6	6	21	10.1
Novelty	6	2	1	3	12	5.75
Conflict	12	6	1	8	27	13.0
Significance	6			6	12	5.75
Progress	22	3		14	39	18.8
OTHER						
Total	97	26	30	61	208	100

Table 12. 1: Values Stressed in Stories

Datelines

- Show patterns or relationships among dates and events
- They help you see the relationships you cannot detect by looking at the information separately.
- For example: 3000 BC wall paintings 3500 BC pictographics 4000 BC sound writing 5000 BC paper.....
- This means it took more than 7000 years from wall paintings to the use of paper.

Maps

- Keep us in touch with our world.

- There are 7 kinds of maps, although cartographers can identify more

1. Locator maps should show the location, some context and have a directional indicator

- Remember to identify north
- Remove sites and streets that are not needed to locate the place featured.
- But include enough of the surrounding territory to identify the location.

2. Data maps

- Show geographical spread of data, patterns and trends.
- They are used to show the attributes of a people or things happening or likely to happen to people residing in an area (hunger, disease, danger).

3. Distribution maps

- Show the distribution of items such as natural resources

4. Geologic maps: show the areas underneath the ground: layers of soil, rock formations, and underground streams.

5. Topographic maps

- Used to show land formations above the surface, usually including elevation information.

6. Land use maps: show how a given area is being used, e.g by zoning designations or classifications

7. Weather maps

- Used to indicate or forecast the atmospheric conditions of a place or number of places.
- They should contain symbols that identify cold, warm, etc conditions.

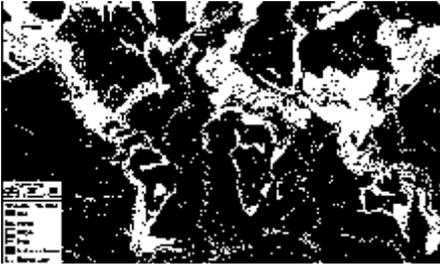


Fig. 12.5
Geologic map

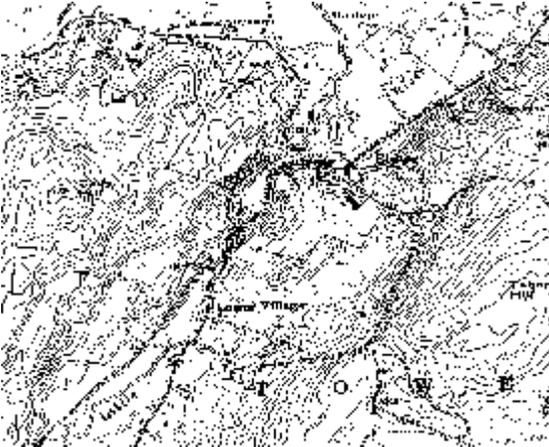


Fig. 12.6
Locator map

- **Diagrams** take many forms.
- They combine various forms of graphics to tell a story - art work, photograph, charts.

- A race scene, accident or race routes can be explained in diagrams.
- Diagrams should have headlines.
- Copy blocks may or may not be needed because there are textblocks throughout with various units of graphics within the diagram. For example, a diagram about how to locate a place may be a combination of maps, line drawings, arrows, text explanations, house etc. all in one graphic.

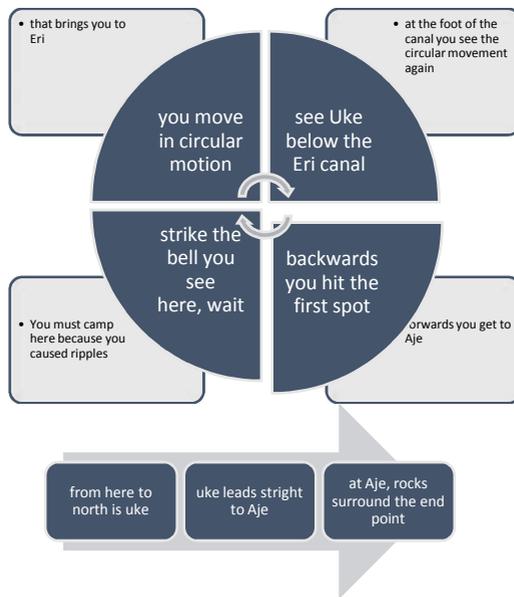


Fig. 12.7
A simple direction diagram

Review Questions

- 1) What is information graphics?
- 2) What are the divisions of information graphics?
- 3) Advise an intending graphic artists on how to choose appropriate information graphics in given circumstances.
- 4) List and explain the functions of information graphics.

CHAPTER 13

ONLINE EDITING

Introduction

Print news has leapt from the news print to the computer screen. At first, editors felt threatened by an emerging new media platform that meant the print media had to become electronic. However, many editors are focusing more on how to exploit the new medium to good advantage instead of feeling threatened. So, it is the exception to see any newspaper or magazine that is not online. At present, they are still contending with the changes occasioned by the emerging news platform.

For instance, in traditional print media, news is placed in columns. TV and radio have prime time for news. Advertisements in newspapers and magazines are set off by rules, and instead of competing for attention with news, ads are given their own page or spot on a page. TV and radio have commercial breaks in between news and other programmes.

Online news is not getting this type of respect. Online ads threaten news often. Advertisements pop up ever so menacingly on most news sites. Because non-news based sites such as bank sites can have ads (even news) news sites cannot solely determine how to deal with the assault of online ads on news.

Online ads compete not only with news, but also with news photos, and are often indistinguishable from news. Editors, as of necessity, need to keep the news visually focused, making it distinct from and within ads. This is especially true

in cases where ads appear on the homepage (remember ads rarely appeared on the front page -at least not big ads- before the online era)

Distinction also needs to be made between news and other non-news content. Placement is important. Do not place news where they are close to commercial stories that contain links to other online sources. Such links are endless and can take readers far from the news site to areas that have absolutely nothing to do with the news site.

Again, editors have little control over how users navigate news sites. Editors however must make the said distinctions and make news ever more appealing visually.

Online news has also dented the sanctity of traditional media in terms of the control they have over the ethical quality of news and ads. Many non-news sites also carry ads. Some of them have links with news sites and share content. Users can move from a news site to a non-news site, looking for information shared by both sites. Many users are not able to tell when they have gone from a news site to something else.

Editors have no control over the quality of ads carried on sites to which their online news sites are linked. In some cases, a news site may drop a story because it is damaging to a company that has ad links with another non-news site, which has links with a news site. There are many questions on what an editor should do. The answer lies in options that protect readers in the short term and protect the sanctity of news in the long-term.

Increasingly, editors are faced with the multimedia orientation of news. News accounts are done in video, audio,

text and photos/graphics. Users can opt for any aspect of the news at any time. Someone may decide to read text. Another may click to enlarge the video, while still another may glance up at the photo and turn on the audio to hear eye witnesses and interviewees.

Each of these converging platforms should contain enough information on their own to satisfy readers who decide to use only a given platform. It is unlike the magazine, where the sidebar contains only secondary information about the subjects in a cover story; or in a television news where sound bites from interviews are cued in as part of a running bulletin.

To be self-contained means that each platform will somehow repeat what is contained in other platforms. But this can be done in ways to avoid being overly repetitive.

Editors should use hypertext (a coding system within text that can be used by readers to move electronically from one site to another or from one page to another page within a site). Hypermedia is to photos, graphics, audio and video what hypertext is to text. Hypermedia provide links from one graphic to another in a different location.

Web editing software exists that helps editors automatically create hypertext media. What is essential is that editors understand the degree to which hypertext linking changes the way audiences approach and comprehend the news. “Hypertext not only links related news stories and images to one another to give users a variety of perspectives on an event or issue, it also enables editors to provide extensive background information, context and historical data” (Friend, Challenger and McAdams, 2000, p. 571).

Many editors resort to using news briefs to captivate readers and use hyperlinks to lure them to more extensive coverage. As long as the editor knows all the areas a reader can go to get more information apart from the area provided by his news site, he can help the reader through hypertext to those sources. Thus, the amount of information accessible on a news subject is no longer limited by the print editor's space or the broadcast editor's time. Information now exists in a seamless web of hyperlinks and hypermedia.

The convergence of print, video, sound and graphics on news sites means that online editors now require multi skill in editing text, audio, and illustration -in video and still photographs and graphics. The online editor has a new team to work with: web designers, other site owners and specialists in video and graphics. He has to be a team player. The other specialists can direct the editor on how to place text, headline, ads and video.

Visuals are commanding a huge online presence, and in fact, relegating text to the fringes on the page. Text, photos, video and sound are relevant depending on how they relate with other elements on a news site page or hyperlinks.

Editors- especially print editors- must learn a new re-alignment in the way they operate. Web masters or designers now design or layout web news pages before editors come in with content. The editor's content are to fit the space determined by the webmaster. While print editors tailor design to news, design-minded web masters are forcing editors to tailor content to web page design. But no editor should compromise the time-tested skills required of a copy editor. New technology is yet to change the age old standards

of journalism -truth, accuracy, meaningfulness, brevity, clarity and simplicity.

However, the speed, versatility and interactivity introduced by online news have changed the way editors present news. The traditional, elitist and conservative stacks of legs of type are outmoded online. Therefore, taking a newspaper online does not mean employing a separate bunch of staff who simply transport what is in print online. No. There are contents and design forms that are needed online. News briefs and short stories with interactive hypertext have taken over from stacks of gray news columns. In addition, online design is heavily visual focused.

Editors are increasingly moving towards stories that sell better online. Good old time political and economy stories still do well in traditional media. News about technology, business and entertainment sell online very well. The interactive nature of online news means also that reporters and editors are writing in a more interactive, informal, tell-a-friend style in online news.

The greatest merit of online news -speed- has also become its greatest challenge. Editors face the challenge of reporting breaking stories once it happens. This has sacrificed the editorial meetings and conferences that it took to handle controversial stories before going to press. Stories also have to be updated by the minute, giving editors little time to crosscheck facts. Many online sites speculate and no longer attribute facts to anyone. The implication is that online news is a lot less trusted than news on the conventional media. Yet editors have no reason to abandon the values that make news reliable -accuracy, impartiality, etc.

“One way to reconcile the online need for fast breaking news and the traditional standards of accuracy and reliability is to turn the informal and often roundabout checks and balances of the print newsroom into a precise, efficient code or checklist that web editors can use to evaluate stories quickly” (Friend, Challenger and McAdams, 2000, p. 581).

Such checklist should insist on accuracy, finding out the source of information, attribution, interlink with other news sites to give readers broader perspective, respect for privacy of sources and ensuring that old news is labeled in a way to show it is stale news.

On breaking stories, online editors should emulate the broadcast media. Post stories as they unveil. Give the reader the impression that an event is still unfolding. News about plane crash, building collapse and natural disasters should not sound conclusive on casualty figures.

The needs for immediacy and spontaneity should not suffocate the need for accuracy and reliability. Individual aspects of the scene of an event can be shown until there are enough facts that can be pinned together to show logical movement of events in a scene. At this point, the story can be updated. When all the questions raised by the event - or most of the questions - are answered, a full story can be written and updates given online.

Grading the news and weighing what to print.

Space is barely an issue anymore for the online editor. Many bits of information or briefs can be given on a wide range of subjects. Readers can then follow hyperlinks to stories they want to explore. It's no longer the case to kill, cut, boil, slash or bury a story seen as little in importance.

However, the editor needs to guide the reader through placements, sizes and general treatment of news elements. Menu bars, content guides and site indexes can be used to guide readers around a page. Editors are still turning to the inverted pyramid format to quickly offer readers the paramount facts of a news story.

When news went online, the lifespan of traditional print media was the most threatened. Broadcast media were also threatened, especially in the area advertising money. No doubt, it's easy to own a website and report news. Citizen journalism sites are adding to the professional assault or is it insult/bastardization.

As a response, many TV and radio stations have programmes that require callers to discuss what they read on a TV station's online page. There are radio and TV programmes that discuss online issues generally. The aim is still to make the conventional media a rallying point for social issues, even after they have gone online. At least, online media do not offer the kind of forum offered by radio and TV in raising and directing/discussing social issues.

Indeed, how editors handle online news and news sites have a lot to say about the ultimate impact of online news on traditional mass media. Readers still want news, not gossip and guerilla journalism. Online editors can create an existence and structure for online news that will make readers visit their (newspapers') sites because of news, not just stumble on them enroute other sites. Editors should look at the benefits of online platform, instead of being confrontational with perceived competitors online. They (editors), too, have huge space there. They can interact in

new ways with their readers and better appreciate their needs and priorities. Untrained individuals and other non-news companies will compete with news firms for the news audience. This is a fresh challenge that should result in the audience better defining news and where to look for it. But it depends on editors. The way editors treat news will determine if news - real news - can really be found on any site or on sites run by professional journalists.

Review Questions

1. Compare and contrast traditional news design and online news design.
2. What challenges does the editor face in editing online news in relation to traditional news editing practices.
3. At present, online editors have no absolute control on how to control the interference of ads with news on news sites. How so?
4. Give general guideline to an editor on the use of hyperlinks and hypermedia.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

STYLE

What is style?

After reading one line of a page one write-up in a newspaper (there was no by-line), Emeka, a literary critic, quipped: “It is certainly Wole Soyinka writing or one of those he educated.” One reader also said of a piece he had read: “I like tight, terse writing with impeccable English.” They are formal and serious. A listener answered: “Writing is better conversational sometimes: in fact, not good, if serious at all the times.”

A friend was once clutching a newspaper and burst out: “This paper refers to the deputy governor as simply Mr., what about his *Chief* and *His Royal Highness* titles.” On hearing him, a friend inquired: “Please is that the *Portrait* you are reading?” “Yes, how did you know?” the reader replied, surprised that his friend guessed right. “That’s their style,” his friend offered rather informally.

Style. Yes. That is the most critical point in the experience of the readers just talked about. Every writer or publication has a way of using words and writing devices to convey meaning and create desired (sometimes unintended) meanings. Styles are a manner of doing something. Connected to writing, it is a particular way of writing.

Style is necessary in every piece of writing. The aim is not just to give stamp to anyone’s manner of writing, but also to add colour and life to written communication. Note also that there are standard usages, which every writer is supposed to follow. However, many writers are not certain how they should approach style. The meeting point and/or the divergent point between style and grammar are also disputed

at times. In other words, does style negate grammar? Is style a genetic thing? Is it learnt? Can it be improved upon? The discussion that follows will address these questions.

Levels of style

1. Personal style: Not much research exists to clear the air about whether people are born with given traits part of which manifest in definite writings styles. Some argue that because man developed writing as an art, there is nothing innate about it. Therefore, people learn to write according to their education, exposure and experience/practice with writing. Intelligence, however, is sometimes natural and there is an obvious link between intelligence and skilful writings.

Perhaps, writing skill is a product of nature and nurture. Voracious reading and practicing how to write enhance personal style. Various writers see themselves (naturally) titling to particular ways of using words. Many others, in addition to their personal style, take after other writers who they see as models. Yet, two people can emulate the same model with different results. A particular style therefore works with you because you are you. This is what editors should recognize so that they do not insist that reporters must follow the editor's style all the time. Reporters should be allowed to express and improve on their own writing style to the extent that they do not offend standard usages.

Wole Soyinka mentioned at the outset of this chapter is noted for a particular writing style. Mention Chinua Achebe and the name will throw up images of his writings. Gain Fawehinmi (SAN), fiery lawyer, speaker and writers, is known for using a never-ending succession of adjectives to pour the invective on any act or issue he deems in breach of human rights.

2. General style (grammar and style)

Much of the way people write is dictated by the prevailing way language is used as dictated especially by grammar. There are general rules of grammar and punctuation, which no personal style or newspaper, not even poets, can change. Therefore, writers must conform to guides dictated by stylistic devices: figures of speech as well as other rules of grammar: word choice, punctuation, concord, lexis and structure/syntax, mechanics. At this point, grammarians advise writers to use shorter sentences, simpler words, the active voice, and to avoid superfluous modifiers, jargon and clichés.

General style however changes as language and grammar expand and change in their rules. Yes, language itself is subject to change, and the general writing style, dragged along by grammar, also changes. The English Language, for instance, has changed so much over the years.

Three main stages are usually recognized in the history of the development of the English language. Old English, known formerly as Anglo-Saxon, dates from AD449 to 1066 or 1100. Middle English dates from 1066 to 1100 to 1450 or 1500. Modern English dates from about 1450 or 1500 and is subdivided into Early Modern English, from about 1500 to 1660, and Late Modern English, from about 1660 to the present time'. See Microsoft Encarta Reference Library 2003.

Pick up any Shakespearian play or literature such as Julius Caesar and any other textbook written in 2013 and notice the difference in the style of using the same English Language.

Look at the King James Bible and the Good News Bible and notice the starkly clear difference. Some call the Good News shining example of flowing prose and writing without strain. King James Bible: huh! English written backwards. Writers and speakers of these ages nevertheless understood the versions of their age. Every society has sufficient fuel in its forest or wells to cook their food.

Hicks (1998, p.59) speaks on general style that should be adopted by writers. Writers, though, have to tailor general style to their own individual writing style. According to Hicks, “style is concerned with the way the writer uses words to play on the sensations of the reader. Style adds impact to writing, strengthens contact with the readers and heightens their awareness. Good style has four major attributes: suitability, simplicity, precision and poise.”

Suitability: Story handling ought to match the subject, the mood and the pace of events described as well as the needs of the reader. The style must arouse their interest and maintain it throughout. It must also present the facts and arguments in a way that enables the reader to understand them quickly and easily. Treat serious subjects seriously, and light subjects lightly. On light subjects, the writer may use delayed, drop or punning title.

When describing events that have action and movement, let the style dictate the pace- avoid cynicism. Do not overwrite even when a story involves stark, horrific events. Never engage in over statements. Do not needlessly offend the reader whatever the subject, especially where the topic concerns eccentric beliefs or practices. Write tersely, avoid superfluous adjectives and adverbs; use direct, active verbs, construct crisp, taut sentences.

Simplicity: The point here is directness, concreteness, shorter words, and use of transitive verbs. Avoid pomposity and costs.

Precision: The emphasis is on using words that say exactly what you mean. Avoid ambiguity.

Poise: This is the essence of style. Let your writing have balance, ease of manner and lack of strain. Individual words should fit the context. Sentences should be a pleasure to read if they are balanced and rhythmical. With the best prose, the reader remains unconscious of technique: they simply enjoy the passage.

In the above lines, Hicks has said what to do. But how? In his book, he did not leave without saying how. See Wynford Hicks (1998). *English for Journalists*, second edition).

3. Style of the times: Certain political, economic and cultural situations in a society may give rise to a manner of writing. Revolutionists are chiefly noted for going poetic and philosophical when they oppose government or lead a rebellion. Writing on what he termed timely style, Ekwelie (1992, p.57) notes:

Style of the times turns upon the outgrowth of the economic and political climate. Rousing patriotic speech is hardly possible on empty stomach. Adolf Hitler, the great speaker and rabble-rouser, came on the German Scene after his proud nation had been struck down. The wily Austrian exploited popular emotions and struck the right chord in the numerous speeches, which characterized his bloody rule. Winston Churchill desperate in a nation under siege pitched his war speeches at English Pride recommending “London in

ashes to London in Slavery”. “Fidel Castro fine-tuned his style as Fulgencio Batista denuded Cuba of moral fiber, political freedom and self-respect.

In view of the above, Ekwelie maintains that “language itself does metamorphose, decaying or flowering with moral and phrase-markers. Oppression and supremacy give vent to opposing phraseologies. Colonial domination and self-rule are sources of differing linguistic intensity; the former brings off braggadocio speech while the latter breeds humble speech, perceived well-being gives birth to rhetorical flourish.”

John Milton is remembered today as the usher-in-chief of the freedom of the press. However, he is remembered more for his *Areopagitica*- A defence of the liberty of unlicensed printing- the write up with which he defeated the authoritarian rulers of his day. That piece remains one of the noblest pieces of English prose ever. Many journalists have since memorized some lines in the book: “whoever killed a good book slew reason. Civil liberty could be attained only if complaints were freely heard, deeply considered and speedily reformed.”

The various technologies of communication have also had their impacts on writing style. Books, newspapers and magazines used serious, formal writing style. Writing followed the thought process or ideas. Remember that writing symbols were first developed when humans began to represent thought or ideas using agreed-on symbols. The first writing symbols were called ideograms. Early books and newspapers were used to propagate ideologies or to fight ideologies. John Milton, quoted above, wrote his

Areopagitica in the 16th century when England imposed restrictions on printing.

On the electronic front, the fledgling and unpredictable telegraph of the world war years forced reporters to use the inverted pyramid style in which journalists tried to call in the major points of their story to the newsroom before there is a malfunction or before the enemy cut the lines, or even to let many others on cue have their turn. Radio and TV brought conversational, tell-a-friend style of writing. The internet and allied media are introducing writing in 'briefs' as well as a lot that is informal in style.

4. Newspaper (House) Style: In his "Essay on Poetry," John Sheffield notes: "Of all those arts in which the wise excel, nature's chief masterpiece is writing well." Francis Bacon, the father of English essay, reminds writers that words are like leaves. Where they most abound we cannot find the fruit of the truth beneath. Yet, words are the writers' stock in trade. They are the most important elements in his tools kit. Punctuation marks are next.

Newspapers try to ensure that words and punctuation marks are rightly used. There is, therefore, no such thing as newspaper English as another name for house style. Ekwelie (1992, p.59) puts it more succinctly:

A mastery of the mechanics of presentation is an absolute necessity. A writer for a medium has to follow the medium's rule books on punctuation, spelling, capitalization, diction, syntax and taste. Invariably, each rule book, the style guide, flows from standard language usage but bows to occasionally to idiosyncrasies.

The English Language has well-known punctuation marks on which clear and unambiguous writing depends. For instance, the full stop, question marks and exclamation marks have unmistakable functions, which no stylebook can radically change.

Style is neither an attempt by newspapers to create their own English nor an effort at stifling reporters' originality and creativity. Reporters are at liberty to develop and use their own style. Newspapers only want to ensure proper use of language as well as conformity in writing given words. According to Harris (1975, p.36).

While newspaper language follows accepted rules of English, it also strives for certain qualities of style: simplicity, conciseness, and vividness, directness, emphasis and originality; clarity, brevity and accuracy. These qualities cannot be sharply defined. They afford on specific rules to follow in achieving excellence and distinction.

Almost every newspaper develops a stylebook, which reporters must master and use as guide when writing stories. A style guide deals with mechanical things such as punctuation, spelling, capitalization, sentence structure, use of titles, method of attribution and identification of sources of information, use of abbreviations, use of articles etc.

The purpose is:

1. To help reporters in filing their stories with minimal difficulties. With a style guide, reporters spell words uniformly and enhance their chances of being published.
2. The use of a style guide helps an editor to effect corrections on copy in conformity with

established organizational guide, i.e. the style book. This is different from depending on arbitrarily on what he thinks fit. In that case, editing becomes less tedious and less autocratic.

3. Style guide helps to give a publication personality.

The reporter normally receives the style guide on the first day of his employment, or a little while thereafter. He is expected to memorize it and become certain about disputed or difficult points and some accepted usages, especially as they affect the following:

1) **Spelling.** Sir Winston Churchill once remarked that Britain and the United States are the only countries divided by the same language. Churchill seemed to lament the fact that the English speaking peoples in Britain and USA approach the English Language differently. The countries as we all know show remarkable differences in the way words are spelt or pronounced. Moreover, apart from the Americans and the British, there exist around the world other varieties of English. We have them in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, Pakistan and other former British Colonies- perhaps even Nigerian English. Of all these, American and British English appear to be the ones fighting for popularity around the world.

When editors try to control spelling and diction, they are often interested in which way they want reporters to spell- British or American. Newspapers and indeed all writers are free to choose which type of spelling to use. Consistency, however, is necessary. This is why newspapers decree which type of spelling to use in the rulebooks. Unnecessary excitement is created when a writer makes inexplicable switches between American and British system of spelling.

Nevertheless, when a writer using one system quotes another (verbatim) author who used a different system, the writer should use the system adopted by the one being quoted.

The following are a few of the examples of the differences in spelling between the two systems.

Britain	American
Metre	Meter
Centre	Centre
Blind	Curtain
Trousers	Pants
Parlour	Living room (parlor)
Dialogue	Dialog
Programme	Program
Labour, honour	Labor, Honor.

The computer is forcing people to use American forms more than British forms. Again, it appears the computer is also forcing a uniformity in words used, or at least making many forms more widely acceptable and interchangeable. Programmes refer more to radio and TV contents, while programs refer more to computer operating systems and software. Both words are acceptable nowadays anywhere they appear.

With the point made, one need not over stress the differences. There may be certain parts of the US where the British style is still adopted. As for secondary speakers of English, the most important point regarding the system is consistency in the use of any one.

2) **Capitalization.** The use of capital letters is standard. Proper nouns begin with capital letters and common nouns begin with small letters, unless if they begin a sentence.

However, a group of people, due to any reason (political, religious or emotional), may decide to capitalize (or otherwise) certain words wherever they appear. E.g Bible, Whites, satan, hell, God, Heaven, etc.

3) **Diction.** Newspapers often ask reporters to use simpler words. Apart from this, a newspaper may provide guidelines on the use of foreign/loan words, coinages and jargon. Similarly, the style guide can resolve any uncertainties about which version of a word to use. For instance;

Drug store	Chemist
Trunk	book
Aircraft	aeroplane
Football	soccer.

Some people attribute the words on the left to American English and the ones on the right to British English. Some of the usages are now so commonly used such that they are understood by all especially non-native speakers most of whom no longer know which system owns which one. They are even used interchangeably.

Additionally, the rulebook may forbid or allow the use of hyphens in some compound nouns and adjectives such as vice-chancellor, well-meaning. The book may also forbid or allow the spelling of some words as one or two words e.g. highbreed, stylebook, hard ware. Other areas of hyphenation may attract attention, such as re-organize, co-ordinate, pre-occupied etc.

4) **Syntax.** A newspaper may decide on the arrangement of words in sentences as regards length, voice, (active and passive) and structure, even tenses, especially in headlines.

There are rules about where attribution will come and where the time element should be incorporated in stories.

5) **Titles.** Some newspapers insist that the only titles to recognize are academic titles or just Mr. and Mrs. and titles legitimately associated with occupation or rank, such as military titles. The Guardian of Nigeria once adopted this style, but later stopped allegedly due to pressure from some political “chiefs.”

Sample Style Guides

The following style guide has been presented by Harris (1975) the guide is conformity with the AP (news agency) rule book, Journalism schools and student are tested extensively on its content. Some general principles of news style, most of them conforming to the AP stylebook, are illustrated as follows:

ENGLISH

1. Eliminate Superiors words

a. Unnecessary articles:

Weak: The club members attended the meeting.

Strong: Club members attended the meeting

Weak: He returned a part of the money.

Strong: He returned part of the money.

(However, only unnecessary articles should be eliminated. For example, the articles in “Club members attended the meeting” cannot be eliminated. The same applies to ‘a’ and ‘an’)

b. Circuitous verb forms:

Weak: The group will hold a meeting.

Strong: The group will meet.

Weak: The judge arrived at a decision

Strong: The judge decided.

c. Adjectives, adverbs, prepositions:

Weak: Both cars were completely destroyed.

Strong: Both cars were destroyed.

Weak: A tall 18-story building.

Strong: An 18-story building

Weak: He stepped off of the train.

Strong: He stepped off the train.

Weak: The club will meet on Friday.

Strong: The club will meet Friday

d. Connectives:

Weak: He said that he would go.

Strong: He said he would go.

(However, when two or more *that* clauses follow a verb, the conjunction should be used with all clauses for purposes of clarity)

e. Well-known place names:

Weak: He came from Chicago III.

Strong: He came from Chicago.

f. Phrases:

Weak: The accident occurred at the corner of Vine and Maple Streets.

Strong: The accident occurred at Vine and Maple.

Weak: The debate lasted for a period of two hours.

Strong: The debate lasted two hours.

g. Clauses:

Weak: All who are interested can vote.

Strong: All those interested can vote.

Weak: The drought which occurred last summer.

Strong: The drought last summer.

h. Redundancies:

Weak: Past experience had taught him the way.

Strong: Experience had taught him the way.

2. Use simple, Accurate and vivid words

a. Short, common words are usually best. The newspaper is written to be read hurriedly by persons of all levels of intellect.

USE	RATHER THAN
Fire	Holocaust, conflagration
Died	Passed away, deceased
Man	Gentleman
Woman	Lady
Left	Departed
Body	Remains
Buried	Interred
Cancer	Carcinoma

b. Superlatives are usually inaccurate. There are a few "catastrophes" "panics" and "fiascos".

	MORE ACCURATE	LESS ACCURATE
A	Beautiful woman	The more beautiful woman
	An exciting game	The most exciting game
	Seldom	Never

Frequently
Probably true
Escape

Always
Absolutely certain
Miraculous escape

c. Caution must be taken in the accurate use of present tense:

Wrong: The policeman grabs the prisoner and pushes him into a cell.

Right: The policemen grabbed the prisoner and pushed him into a cell.

Wrong: Smith says he favours the proposal.

Right: Smith said he favours the proposal.

Right: Smith favours the proposal.

d. Tarnished word ornaments (figures of speech) are not vivid:

AVOID

Charming hostess

Blushing bride

Tastefully decorated

Host of friends

Watery grave

Received an ovation

Busy as bees

Dance divinely

View with alarm

Brutally murdered

Point with pride

Joe College

Stormy session

Mother Earth

b. The active voice is usually more forceful than the passive:

Weak: The man was seen by the students.

Strong: Students saw the man.

Weak: The accident was witnessed by many persons.

Strong: Many persons saw the accident.

Stronger: Eleven persons saw the accident.

But in order to emphasize the proper element, the passive voice must frequently be used:

Weak: The Country Election Committee elected W.P. Jones Chairman.

Strong: W.P. Jones was elected chairman of the Country Election Committee.

Weak: Automobile killed John Brown, county attorney, today.

Strong: John Brown, county attorney, was killed in an automobile accident today.

3. The Reporter Does not Editorialize (Express His Opinion)

He does not render verdicts or pass judgment, but writes from an objective point of view, consequently, he does not use I, me, my, we, us, or our in a news story except when quoting someone (Certain types of by-line stories are also exceptions to the rule), Favourable or unfavourable phrases in a news story about a person, place or thing must be factual, not drawn from the opinion of the reporter.

Improper: He is well qualified for the position.

Proper: He is a graduate of Michigan and has 10 years of experience.

Improper: An interesting program has been prepared.

Proper: The program follows (let the “interesting” things speak for themselves)

Improper: The decision was unjust.

Proper: The prisoner threw his hat on the floor.

Improper: The witness lied.

Proper: The prosecuting attorney said the witness lied.

Improper: He committed suicide by jumping from the window.

Proper: He was killed in a fall from the window, and the coroner ruled it a suicide.

Improper: Little Johnny Black, 6-year- old darling son of Mr. and Mrs. W.R Black, died today.

Proper: Johnny Black, 6, died today. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. W.R. Black.

Improper: The attractive young lady will win the hearts of all visitors when he begins serving as hostess at the chamber of commerce next week.

Proper: The attractive young woman will begin serving as hostess at the chamber of commerce next week (“Attractive young woman” is permissible in some newspapers if she is attractive and young, but many newspaper consider such phrases as puff).

Improper: The judge told me (told this reporter) the case was dismissed.

Proper: The judge said the case was dismissed.

Improper: The speaker said our city was well planned.

Proper: The speaker said Blankville was well planned.

4. Sentences and Paragraphs Should Be Short:

The news paragraph seldom exceeds 50 words and may be composed of from one to about four sentences. Four lines of typewritten material- about 30 to 40 words make a well-proportioned paragraph.

In general, the newspaper paragraph is a mechanical and arbitrary - not a logical and essential -group of words. Its chief purpose is to break up the solid column of words to permit easy reading. As fully as its brevity will permit, however, it should achieve the standard qualities of unity, coherence and emphasis. Short, simple sentences are better than long, involved sentences, but the effort to achieve short sentences should not be result in a choppy style. Variety in the length and in the opening phrasing of both sentences and paragraphs will avoid monotony.

Involved: As invitation to new industries to locate in Blankville was issued by the chamber of commerce yesterday at its annual meeting in the dining room of the Hotel Astor, and a new secretary, Henry Ijams, 221 Belmont St. was elected to promote the industrial program, succeeding James Bulter, resigned.

Better: New industries for Blankville will be a goal of the chamber of commerce, and Henry Ijams, former newspaperman, will be the promoter in this effort. The chamber adopted its industrial development program and elected Mr. Ijams, as secretary at his annual meeting yesterday. Mr. Ijams, 221 Belmont St. succeeds James Bulter, who resigned the secretaryship.

5. Persons Named in News Stories should be identified the "Mayor" in Mayor John Jones is sufficient identification in this and similar cases, of course. If, however, a person named is not

so easily pointed out, the reporter must seek other means to identifying him.

Numerous types of descriptive facts are used in identifying persons named in the news. The most common include nickname, age, home address, occupation, affiliations with social or religious organizations. Public offices held, relationship to local or prominent persons (nephew of Congressman Jones". Achievement ("city golf champion") and infamy ("ex-convict)

The most commonly used identification is the home address. Some newspapers use both age and home address as a general rule. But the reporter is encouraged to use others in addition to, or in lieu of, the home address if better identification is available. "Trent Street grocer, for example, is a much better identification than the home address of Leonard. M. Jones. More persons will know Mr. Jones as a Trent street grocer than as Leonard M. Jones of 340 Trent St. To the extent that the purpose of the identification is to point out a particular person- to him out as he is known by the greatest number of persons- these conventional devices serve well enough.

6. Every news story should reveal or clearly imply its source or authority.

Unless the reporter is an eyewitness of an event, he gets his facts second hand. To overcome this handicap he must state the authority or source (also called the attribution) for every fact in a news story unless that authority is implied. The reporter usually has three options.

- a. He may explicitly state the source of his information; the strike will end at noon Thursday, Mayor Thomas said. (if it is the first reference to the mayor use his complete name)
- b. Or leave the source implied. Ten men escaped from the country jail in the early hours this morning. (The implied source is the sheriff or jailer)
- c. Or purposely conceal the source to protect some individual or maintain a news advantage. A special session of the legislature will be called within 30 days despite the governors denial of a rumor to that effect, it was learned

authoritatively last night. These options apply to ordinary, day-by-day reporting.

Except in unusual cases, editors insist the reporter give the source (authority) of all opinionated items: “Mayor Thomas is not qualified for the high office he holds”, declared Councilman John Hark Wright.

Especially, it is essential for the reporter to give the source or authority for derogatory statement. In doing so, he guards against publishing biased or erroneous statement as his own. As a matter of fact, in some cases he may need to quote several persons in order to avoid presenting one version of the truth. This will alleviate his embarrassment in case he finds that he has been exploited by usually reliable sources which may have ulterior motives in generating certain news stories.

To state his authority throughout a story, the reporter uses both indirect and direct quotations. He employs various devices to alter the “Mr. Blank said” phrase. This authoritative expression commonly is placed in an unemphatic position, usually at the end of the sentences. Even in that position, such synonyms as “declared” “insisted” and “pointed out” may be used to avoid monotony. Variety also is achieved in such a sentence as “the tax is unfair, said Mr. Black” by presenting the authoritative phrase within the sentence.

Mr. Black condemned the tax as “unfair.” That the tax is “unfair” was Mr. Blank’s contention.

Words used in the authoritative or attributive expression must be chosen with care. To write that “Mr. Black pointed out” implies that Mr. Black stated an indisputable fact with which the writer agrees. In some cases the use of “admitted” is an erroneous connotation of admitting guilt to a wrongdoing. “Whispered”, “screamed”, “thundered”, “declared”, “insisted” and other such descriptive words must be used for the sake of accuracy – not for the sake of variety.

7. The Story should be well organized

The incidents of story may actually occur in the greatest chaos and confusion. The written story must analyze and relate these incidents one to another and to the central story theme. A speaker may actually ramble in this fashion.

“Gentlemen, this is a bad bill and ought not to pass. I was talking to Senator Williams last night, and he said the state can’t afford all these welfare payments. I’m just as anxious to help the unfortunate as the next man, but I know down in my section we’ve got more people on welfare than we have people working. Some of them make more money off welfare than they did when they were working. That’s why we shouldn’t increase payments. This state’s practically bankrupt. This bill might just push it over the edge. All we’re doing if we might pass this bill is paying people to rip off the taxpayer some more. You know it’s true”.

But the news story probably would read:

Senator Jones opposed the bill. He argued that the state is nearly broke and cannot afford to increase welfare payment. He warned that his bill might push the state over the edge into bankruptcy.

Review Questions:

1. What is style?
2. What is the relationship between grammar and style?
3. Some reporters argue that house style is an attempt at stifling creativity. What is your view?
4. What does a stylebook cover?

GLOSSARY

These following definitions were provided by the press associations and working reporters and editors. Most of the brief entries are from the New England Daily Newspaper Study, an examination of 105 daily newspapers, edited by Loren Ghiglione (Southbridge, Mass: Southbridge Evening News Inc. 1973; in Mencher 1983)

ADD: An addition to a story already written or in the process of being written.

ASSIGNMENT: Instruction to a reporter to cover an event. An editor keeps an assignment book that contains notations for reporters such as the following:

Jacobs - 10am: Health officials tour new sewage treatment plant.

Klaren - 11am: Interview Ben Western, Possible Democratic congressional candidate.

Mannem - Noon: Rotary Club Luncheon

Speaker, Horlan, the numerologist. A feature?

ATTRIBUTION: Designation of the person being quoted. Also, the source of information in a story. Sometimes, information is given on a not-for-attribution basis.

BACKGROUND: Material in a story that gives the circumstances surrounding or preceding the event.

BANGER: An exclamation point. Avoid. Let the reader do the exclaiming.

BANNER: Heading across or near the top of all or most of a newspaper page. Also called a line, ribbon, streamer, and screamer.

B COPY: Bottom section of a story written ahead of an event that will occur too close to deadline for the entire story to be processed. The B copy usually consists of background material.

BEAT: Area assigned to a reporter for regular coverage. For example, police or city hall. Also an exclusive story.

BODY TYPE: Type in which most of a newspaper is set, usually 8 or 9 point type.

BOLD FACE: Heavy, black typeface, type that is blacker than the text with which it is used. Abbreviation bf.

BREAK: When a news development becomes known and available. Also the point of interruption in a story continued from one page to another.

BRIGHT: Short, amusing story.

BULLDOG: Early edition, usually the first of a newspaper.

BYLINE: Name of the reporter who wrote the story, placed at stop the top of published article. An old timer comments on the current use of bylines. In the old days, a reporter was given a byline if he or she

personally covered an important or unusual story, or the story was an exclusive. Sometimes if the writing was superior, a byline was given. Nowadays, everyone gets a byline. Even if the story is a rewrite and the reporter never saw the event described in the story.

CANNED MATERIAL: See boiler plate.

CAPS: Capital letters; same as uppercase.

CAPS AND LOWER CASE: Initial capital in a word followed by small letters. See lower case.

CLIP: News story clipped from a newspaper usually for future reference.

CLOSE UP (BROADCAST): Shot of the face of the subject that dominates the frame so that little background is visible.

COLD TYPE: In composition, type set photographically or by pasting up letters and pictures on acetate or paper.

COLUMN: The vertical division of the news page. A standard size newspaper is divided into five to eight column. Also, a signed article of opinion or strong personal expression, frequently by an authority or expert - a sports column, a medical column, political or social commentary, and the like.

COPY: Written form in which a news story or other material is prepared.

COPY DESK: The desk, often horseshoe in shape, around which copy editors sit to read copy. The slot man sits inside the horseshoe and is in charge of the desk. For newspapers that use copy paper and edit with pencil.

COPY FLOW: After a reporter finishes a story, it moves to the city desk where the city editor reads it for major errors or problems. If it does not need further work, the story is moved to the copy desk for final editing and a headline. It then moves to the mechanical department.

CORRECTION: Errors that reach publications are retracted or corrected if they are serious or someone demands a correction. Libelous matter is always corrected immediately, often in a separate news story rather than in the standard box assigned to corrections.

CORRESPONDENT: Reporter who sends news from outside a newspaper office. On smaller papers often not a regular fulltime staff member.

CRONY JOURNALISM: Reporting that ignores or treats lightly negative news about friends of a reporter. Beat reporters sometimes have a tendency to protect their informants in order to retain them as sources.

CROP: To cut or mask the unwanted portions, usually of a photograph.

CUT: Printed picture or illustration. Also, to eliminate material from a story. See trim.

CUT LINE: Any descriptive or explanatory material under a picture.

DATELINE: Name of the city or town and sometimes the date at the start of a story that is not of local origin.

DEADLINE: Time at which the copy for an edition must be ready.

DIRTY COPY: Matter for publication that needs extensive correction, usually because the reporter has made indecipherable markings on copy.

EDITION: One version of a newspaper. Some papers have one edition a day. Some several. Not to be confused with issue, which usually refers to all editions under a single date.

EDITORIAL: Article of comment or opinion usually on the editorial page.

EDITORIAL MATERIAL: All material in the newspaper that is not advertising.

ENTERPRISE COPY: Story, often initiated by a reporter that digs deeper than the usual news story.

EXCLUSIVE: Story one reporter has obtained to the exclusion of the competition. A beat. Popularly known as a scoop, a term never used in the newsroom.

FEATURE: Story emphasizing the human or entertaining aspects of a situation. A news story or other material differentiated from straight news. As a verb, it means to give prominence to a story.

FILE: To send a story to the office, usually by wire or telephone, or to put news service stories on the wire.

FILLER: Material used to fill space. Small items used to fill out columns where needed. Also called column closers and shorts.

FLAG: Printed title of a newspaper on page one. Also known as logotype or nameplate.

FREE ADVERTISING: Date book in which story ideas, meetings and activities scheduled for a later occurrence are listed. Also known as a futures book. Kept by city and assignment editors and by careful reporters.

GOOD NIGHT: Before leaving for the day, beat reporters check in with the desk and are given a good night, which means there is nothing further for the reporter from the desk for the day. On some newspapers, the call is made for the lunch break, too. Desks need to know where their reporters are in case of breaking stories.

GRAF: Abbreviation for paragraph.

GUILD: Newspaper Guild, an international union to which reporters and other newspaper workers belong. Newspaper that have contracts with the Guild are said to be "organized".

HANDOUT: Term for written publicity or special interest news sent to a newspaper for publication.

HARD NEWS: Spot news; live and current news in contrast to features.

HEAD OR HEADLINE: The display type over a printed news story.

HEAD SHOT: Picture featuring little more than the head and shoulders of the person shown.

HFR: Abbreviation for “hold for release”, material that cannot be used until it is released by the source or at a designated time. Also known as embargoed material.

IDENTIFICATION: Personal data used to identify a person, name, title (if any), age, address, occupation, education, race, religion, ethnicity. The identifying characteristics used are those relevant to the story. Generally, we use name, age, occupation, address. To lend authority to the observations or statements of sources, we give their background.

RACIAL IDENTIFICATION

One editor’s guidelines:

1. Use racial identification in a story that tells about the achievement of the race or some member of the race.
2. Use racial identification when the point of the news story hinges upon race.
3. Do not use racial identification in minor crime news.
4. Do not use racial identification in news stories that reflect discredit upon the whole race, or tend to discredit the whole race.

Race, religion, and ethnicity are used infrequently and are subject to continuing discussion. In obituaries and crime stories, the readers want as much identification as possible. In general, news stories, logic should indicate relevance. *Toledo* readers are not interested in the home address of the North Cardina senator who collapses in a hotel and dies. But the newspaper in his home town of Raleigh will insert the address in the press association copy.

INSERT: Material placed between copy in a story. Usually a paragraph or more to be placed in material already sent to the desk.

INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING: Technique used to unearth information sources often want hidden. This type of reporting involves examination of documents and records, the cultivation of informants, painstaking and extended research. Investigative reporting usually seeks to expose wrongdoing and has concentrated on public officials and their activities. In recent years, industry and business have been scrutinized. Some journalists contend that the term is redundant, that all good reporting is investigative; that behind every surface fact is the real story that a resourceful, curious and persistent reporter can dig up.

ITALICS: Roman type in which letters and characters slant to be right.

MP: Continuation of a story from one page to another. As a verb to continue material. Also called run over.

KILL: To delete a section from copy or to discard the entire story, also to spike a story.

LEAD (PRONOUNCED LED): First paragraph in news story. In a direct or straight news lead it summarizes the main facts. In a delayed lead, usually used on feature stories, it evokes a scene or sets a mood. Also used to refer to the main idea of a story: An editor will ask a reporter “what’s the lead on the piece?” expecting a quick summary of the main facts.

Also a tip on a story; an idea for a story. A source will tell a reporter. “I have a lead on a story for you”. In turn, the reporter will tell the editor, “I have a lead on a story that may develop”.

LOCALIZE: Emphasizing the names of persons from the local community who are involved in events outside the city or region. A local couple rescued in a Paris hotel fire: the city police chief who speaks at a national conference.

LOWERCASE: Small letters, as contrasted to capitals.

LTK: Designation on copy for “lead to come”, usually placed after the sing. Indicates the written material will be given a lead later.

MAKEUP: Layout or design. The arrangement of body type, headlines and illustrations into pages.

MASTHEAD: Formal statement of a new paper’s name, officers’ place of publications and other descriptive information, usually on the editorial page. Sometimes confused with flag or nameplate.

MORGUE: Newspaper library.

MUG SHOT: See head shot.

NEW LEAD: See running story.

NEWS HOLE: Space in a newspaper allotted to news. Illustrations and other non advertising material.

OBITUARY: Account of a person’s death; also called obit.

OFFSET: Printing process in which an image is transferred from a printing plate to a rubber roller and then set off on paper.

OF THE RECORD: Material offered the reporter in confidence. If the reporter accepts the material with this understanding, it cannot be used except as general background in a later story. Some reporters never accept the material with the provision that if they can obtain the information elsewhere they will use it. Reporters who learn of off-the record material other than the original source can use it. No public official meeting can be off the record, and almost all official documents (count records, police information) are public information. Private

groups can ask that their meetings be kept off the record, but reporters frequently ignore such requests when the meeting is public or large number of persons are present.

OP-ED PAGE: Abbreviation for the page opposite the editorial page. The page is frequently devoted to opinion columns and related illustrations.

OVERNIGHT: Story usually written late at night for the afternoon newspaper of the next day. Most often used by the press services. The overnight or overnighter usually has little new information in it but is cleverly written so that the reader thinks the story is new. Also known as second day stories.

PLAY: Emphasis given to a news story or picture size and place in the newspaper of the story, typeface and size of headline.

P.M.: Afternoon or evening newspaper.

POOL: Arrangement whereby limited number of reporters and photographers are selected to represent all those assigned to a story. Pooling is adopted when a large number of persons would overwhelm the event or alter its nature. The news and film are shared with the rest of the press corps.

PRESS RELEASE: Publicity handout, of a story given to the news media for publication.

PROOF: Reproduction of type on paper for the purpose of making corrections or alterations.

PUFF OR PUFFERY: Publicity handout or a story that contains unwarranted superlatives.

Quotes: Quotation marks; also a part of a story in which someone is directly quoted.

Rewrite: To write for a second time to strengthen a story or to condense it.

Rewrite man: Person who takes the facts of stories over the telephone and then puts them together into a story and who may rewrite reporter's stories.

Row back: a story that attempts to correct a previous story without indicating that the prior story had been in error or without taking responsibility for the error.

Running story: event that develops and is covered over a period of time. For an event covered in subsequent editions of a newspaper or on a single cycle of a wire service, additional material is handled as follows:

New lead: important new information

Add and insert: less important information.

Sub: material that replaces dated material, which is removed.

Sell: presentation a reporter makes to impress the editor with the importance of his or her story, also editors sell stories to their superiors at news conferences.

Shirrtail: short, related story adapted to the end of a longer one.

Short: filler generally of some current news value.

Situationer: story that pulls together a continuing event for the reader who may not have kept track as it unfolded. The situationer is helpful with complex or technical developments or on stories with varied datelines and participants.

Slant: to write a story so as to influence the reader's thinking. To editorialize, to color or misrepresent.

Slug: word or words placed on all copy to identify the story.

Source: person, record, document or event that provides the information for the story.

Split page: front page of an inside section, also known as the break page, second front page.

Stringer: correspondent, not a regular staff member, who is paid by the story or by the number of words written.

Style: rules for capitalization, punctuation and spelling that standardize usage so that the material presented is uniform. Most newspaper and stations have stylebooks. The most frequently used is the common stylebook of the United Press International and the Associated Press.

Stylebook: specific listing of the conventions of spelling abbreviation, punctuation, capitalization used by a particular newspaper, wire service, broadcast stylebooks include pronunciations.

Subhead: one line and sometimes two line head usually in bold face body type inserted in a long story at intervals for emphasis or to break up a long column of type.

Take: page of copy, also known as a book.

Text: verbatim report of a speech or public statement.

Thumbnail: half column wide cut or portrait.

Tight: full, too full, also refers to a paper so crowded with ads that the news space must be reduced. It is the opposite of the wide open paper.

Tip: information passed to a reporter often in confidence. The material usually requires further fact gathering. Occasionally, verification is impossible and the reporter must decide whether to go with the tip on the strength of the insider's knowledge, sometimes the reporter will not want to seek confirmation for fear of alerting sources who will alter the situations or release the information to the competition. Tips often lead to exclusives.

Titles: Mr., Mrs., Miss, Secretary of state. Police chief senator are formal designations and may be used before the person's name. Usage depends upon the station's or newspaper policy. False titles - Vietnam war hero, actress, left fielder - are properly used after the name: for instance. Nale Thurmond, the center ... Instead of Center Nale Thurmond.

Trim: to reduce or condense copy carefully.

Update: story that brings the reader up to date on a situation or personality previously in the news. If the state legislature appropriated additional funds for five new criminal court judges to meet the increased number of cases in the courts an update might be written some months later to see how many more cases were handled after the judges went to work. An update usually has no hard news angle.

VDT: Video display terminal, a part of the electronic system used in news and advertising departments that eliminates typewriters. Copy is written on typewriter like keyboards and words appear on attached television screens rather than on paper. The story is stored on a disc in a computer. Editing is done on the terminals.

Verification: Determination of the truth of the material the reporter gathers or is given. The assertion, sometimes even the actual observation, do not necessarily mean the information is accurate or true. Some of the basic tools of verification are; the city directory, for occupations; Who's who, for biographical information.

Wire services: synonym for press associations, the Associated Press and United Press International. There are foreign owned press services to which some newspapers subscribe, Reuters, Tass, Agence France Presse.

FURTHER READING

- Aaronson, Bernard (1970). *Some effective stereotypes of colour*, Inf. J Symb.
- Agba Paul and Okoro Nnanyelugo (1995). *Fundamentals of graphic communication*, Enugu: ACENA PUBLISHERS.
- Agba, Paul (2001). *Electronic reporting: Heart of the new communication Age*, Nsukka: University of Nigeria Press Limited.
- Alley Palmer et al (2006) The Internet and the print media (<http://www.futureofthenewspaper.com>.) visited 31st July 2006.
- Barren, Fiber (1961). *Creative color*, New York: Reinhold.
- Bittner, John (1989). *Mass communication: An introduction*, Fifth Edition. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Brooks, B., George, K., Moen, D. & Ranly, D. (2010). *News reporting and writing*. Publisher: Bedford/St. Martin's; Tenth Edition edition (November 10, 2010)
- Clark Ruth (1979). Changing needs of changing readers' American society of newspaper editors newspaper readership project.
- Crowell (1969). *Creative news editing*. Iowa: W.M.C. Brown Company Publishers.
- Curley John (1979). Pilot research tailored to unique needs of each newspaper' *Ganneteer*.
- Dair, Cart. (1982). *Design with type*. New York: Watson-Guptill.

- Dominick Joseph (1990). *The dynamics of mass communication*, third edition. New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company.
- Defleur Melvin and Dennis Everett (1991). *Understanding Mass communication* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Defleur, Melvin and Ball Rokeach, Sandra (1989). *Theories of mass communication*, 5th Edition, White Plains, New York: Longman.
- Frienf, C., Challenger, D., and McAdams, K.C. (2000). *Contemporary editing*. Illinois: NTC/Contemporary Publishing Group
- Harold. (1973). *Newspaper design book five*, New York: Rinehart and Winston.
- Gracia, Mario and Don Fry, (eds.) (1986). *Color in American newspapers*. St. Petersburg, Fla: Poynter Institute for Media Studies.
- Garcia, Mario, and Pegie Startk (1991). *Eyes on the news*. St. Petersburg, Fla: Poynter Institute for Media Studies.
- Gracia, Mario (1999). *A revolution in newspaper design*. Paris: Macmillan Publishers Ltd.
- Hare, Thomas (2003). *Hieroglyphs*. Microsoft Encarta Reference Library.
- Harris, Kelly and Stanley Johnson (1963). *Fundamentals of news gathering, writing and editing*, New York: Macmillan Publishers.
- Hicks, Wynford (1998). *English for journalists*. Second Edition. New York: Rutledge.

- Hymes, D. (1958). *Production in advertising and the graphic arts*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.
- Idemili, S. (2002). News editing. In Wilson D. (ed.) *Introduction to the print media*, Ibadan: Sterling-Horden Publishers.
- Igance Jay Gelg and Whiting David. (2003). 'Printing' Microsoft Encarta Reference Library.
- Itule, B. & Anderson, D. (2007). News writing and reporting for today's media. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Lieberman, Phillip (1984). *The biology and evolution of language*. Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Oyida, Onoyima (2000). *News page*. Enugu: Immaculate Publications Ltd.
- Jain R. (1995). *Machine vision*. London: McGraw Hill Books Company Ltd.
- Lieberman, J. Ben. (1978). *Type and type faces*, 2nd ed. New Rochelle, N.Y.: Myriade Press.
- Mauro, John (1986). *Survey of font page colour vs. black and white*. Richmond, Va.: Media General.
- May Evans Conover and Theodore E. (1985). *Graphic communication today*. St. Paul: West.
- Moen, D. (1995). *Newspaper layout and design*. Third Edition, Iowa: Iowa State University.
- Emenanjo, N.E. (2010). *Editing and writing*. Aba: E-Front Publishers.
- Ogunsiji, M.A. (1989). *Introduction to print journalism*. Lagos: Nelson Publishers Limited.

- Pankow David (2003). *Printing and Typefaces*. Microsoft Encarta Reference Library.
- Pek, R.P. (1996). *Trends in newspaper design*. New York: Macmillan Computer Publishing Co.
- Rivers, William (1979). *The mass media: Reporting, writing*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Rob Dean. *The Print Media at Crossroad: An Analysis of the Effects of Internet and Television Broadcasting: Discussion Paper at an Open Website for Editors (<http://www.geocitiesnewseditors.com>)*, visited 31st July, 2006.
- Smith, R.P. and Edward M.R. (1998). *The Internet for editors*. New York: Little Brown and Co.
- Terry, Art (1980). *Photography for Editors*, (Unpublished Master's thesis).
- Turnbull, A.T. and Baird, R.N. (1967). *The Graphics of communication*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.
- Ukonu, Michael (2007). *Specialized journalism: A complete course*. Second Edition, Nsukka: University of Nigeria Press Limited.
- Ukonu, Michael (2007). *Fundamentals of editorial writing*. Second Edition, Nsukka: University of Nigeria Press Limited.
- Westley Bruce (1979). *News editing*. Second Edition, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Index

A

Abbreviation 135
Accuracy 110
Agenda 54
Annotator 11
Appear 136
Appeared 132
Asymmetry 42
Attached 132
Attention 28
Attribution 137
Audience 89
Authoritative 108

B

Back shop 24
Board 26
Business 24
Budgets 126

C

Candidates 119
Cartoonists 23
Chain 21
Change 79
Charge 140
Charts 177
Chocked 78
Clarity 111
Cocaine 129
Columnists 22
Commandant 92
Complementary 44
Components 33
Comprehension 97, 168
Consistency 46

Contrast 62
Convicted 94
Copy 50
Copy block 170
Correction 79
Counterbalance 48
Credibility 133
Credit 164
Criminal 91

D

Databases 24
Deadlines 10
Decision 104
Departmentalized 17
Depth 53
Deputy 139
Describe 136
Desk 63, 117
Developed 106
Developments 121
Display 57, 61
Division 27
Dominant 45
Dramatic 141
DTP 14
Dullness 43
Dummy 37

E

Earthquake 89
Editorial 49
Education 169
Element 39, 43, 68, 80, 109,
129
Energy 22

Essential 102
Exclusive 44
Experts 77
Explosion 131

F

Fault finder 11
Features 120, 127
Fillers 16
Flexible 12, 35
Functions 39

G

Gatekeeper 11
Government 138
Graphic artists 10
Graphics 59
Grids 152

H

Historical 181
Horizontal 34, 43
Horseshoe 17
Hyperlinks 182
Hypermedia 181
Hypertext 181

I

Illusion 35
Immunization 151
Inconsistence 98
Inset cap 64
Interpretation 93

Judgment 88

L

Labour 27
Laser 14
Limitation 46

M

Manipulated 161
Meaningful 95
Measure 51, 109
Metropolitan 21
Middle 70
Multi-column 35
Multiple 105

N

Negative 13
Newsroom 27
News print 15

O

Offset 24
Opposite 44
Organized 127

P

Package 65
Packaging 32
Personality 34
Perspective 122
Photo series 148
Photojournalists 10
Pictographics 175
Plates 12
Portion 153
Portray 112
Premium 125
Priesthood 115
Principal 90

Proposition 30
Publication 155
Publisher 21

Q

Quality 134
Quark 51
Quarter 45

R

Reader 56
Readership 35
Related
Relationships 47
Relevance 165
Reporter 10, 28
Researchers 96
Resources 176
Rights 105
Rising cap 64

S

Secondary 103
Shading 38
Sites 179
Skyline
Sources 118
Specialism 29
Spiral 119
Statement 140
Survivors 91

T

Techniques 33
Technology 14, 182
Television 72
Temperature 162

Text 180
Threatened 115
Time copy 13, 16
Tragedy 156
Transitions 74
Trend 172
Typeset 37
Typewriter 52
Typographer 14

U

Understanding 99
Universal desk 17
Urban 22

V

Variable 171
Vatican 67, 154
Victims 156
Video 180, 182
Visuals 182

W

Web 182
Widespread 75
Width 69