UNIT 8 : WRITING FOR COLUMN, SCIENCE AND PRESS RELEASE

UNIT STRUCTURE

8.1 Learning Objectives

8.2 Introduction

8.3 Column writing

8.4 Science write- up

8.5 Press Release

8.6 Let Us Sum Up

8.7 Further Reading

8.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

8.9 Model Questions

8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to :

- familiarize yourself with the skill of column writing,
- understand the techniques of science write-ups,
- develop skill for writing press release

8.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit has been titled writing for column , science and press release . What exactly is a column , science writing and press release ? So in this unit you will be introduced to writing columns , science write up and press release. Nowadays there is a high demand for good newspaper contributions, feature or column writing and science write up . These can be considered one of the most popular forms of writing.

So in this unit , you will follow certain practical principles and methods of writing column , science writing and press release .

8.3 COLUMN WRITING

Let us begin by asking ourselves what a 'column' is. There are several meanings of this word.

(1) It is a standard vertical division of a newspapers page, hence comes the word 'column' measure.

(2) The vertical division of the news page is usually referred to as a column. A standard size newspaper is divided into five to eight columns.

(3) A signed article of opinion or strong personal expression frequently by an authority or expert is also a column. Thus, we have a sports column, a political or social column and so on.

From the word 'column', we get the word columnist. A regular writer on a particular subject is a columnist. He is usually a feature writer.

We use the term 'Feature' in the context of column writing to refer to an article emphasizing the human or subjective aspects of a situation. It is differentiated from straight news. That is, a feature is not meant to deliver news first hand. It usually recaps major news that was reported in a previous issue of a newspaper. It can stand alone or be a corollary to the main story published elsewhere.

One of the important points about a feature is its timeliness. A feature to be read and appreciated must have immediate reference to what the reader knows only sketchily. A feature, in the circumstances must fill in the readers with new information of which he has been hitherto ignorant. It must provide him with all that he wanted to know but did not have time to enquire about.

As an illustration, let us first of all refer to a news item that had appeared in the Assam Tribune. The news is about the death of a whole flock of vultures for repeatedly eating the carcass of a dog that had been killed by poisoning in Chaigaon area in Kamrup District of Assam. A few weeks after this news item appeared, there appeared a feature article titled "Conservation of Wildlife".

Let us take a close look at the structure of this article which, it is expected, will throw light on the techniques of writing a feature in a column. Perhaps the best way to begin a feature is to focus upon the contemporariness of the theme. The author takes this "timeliness" as the springboard to introduce the theme as illustrated below in the opening section of the feature.

Recently there appeared a news-item reporting the death of a flock of twenty-seven or so vultures as a result of feeding on the carcass of a dog that had allegedly been poisoned to death. The question that is uppermost here is not so much about the poisoning of a dog to death. Pariah and mad dogs that abound our streets in towns and villages need to be eliminated and the use of poison as an instrument of elimination of unwanted dogs is well understood. But what one fails to understand is the irresponsible social behaviour of individuals in matters such as disposing off dead animals. It needs hardly be stated that the most natural way of disposing off the dead dog would have been to bury it and not to dispose it off in a field so as to attract vultures and other scavengers. In this case, the irresponsible social behaviour of individuals has become the cause of the slaughter of a whole flock of vultures that have of late been included in the endangered category



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. How does the author focus upon the timeliness of the above feature (Answer in one sentence)

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Q2. Choose the appropriate answer from the alternatives given In the opening section of the feature, the author stresses as

(A) the death of a flock of vultures

(B) irresponsible social behaviour of individuals

(C) killing mad dogs using poison

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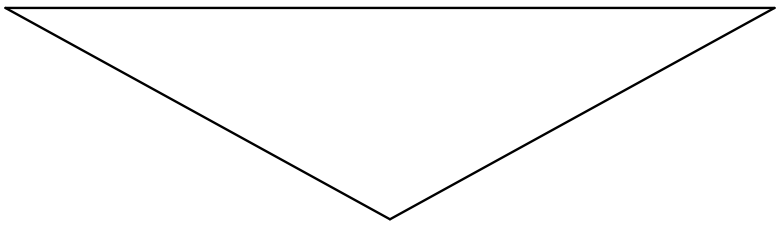
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You will note that in writing a Feature you have to be cautious of the style of presentation of the material. The style is different from – in fact, just opposite to – a news report. Note this difference:

- News-reports are written mostly in the inverted pyramid formal structure and style. On the other hand, features follow the structure a of an essay and discussion.
- News-reports do not present the reporter's distinct point of view but a feature does. In a feature, the author presents his / her point of view.
- Unlike news-reports, features are generally longer and are not constrained by a news-peg although they still need some element of timeliness.
- While hard news attempts to tell what is happening, features have more room to develop why and how something is occurring and provide more perspective.

Let us ponder for a moment. What is meant by the expression "inverted pyramid". Look at this diagram:



This is a figure of a pyramid turned upside down. A news report follows this structure. It begins with the 'lead' in which the entire news-story is given. What follows after the lead is merely illustration of what has been referred to in the lead; hence, the pyramid structure.

While stating that a feature follows the structure of an essay, it is assumed that the essay has a fixed structure. We shall use that structure for features also. Generally, the feature follows a linear structure as follows:

- Introduction
- Main body
- Conclusion

If you are given a word limit – say 500 words – you might split it up as this:

Introduction: around 50 words

- Main body: around 300-350 words
- Conclusion: around 100 words

This is quite a sound plan and reflects a logical approach. You might, for example, need to define your terms or to indicate how you intend to tackle the topic. This would provide appropriate materials for an introduction.

In the main body you could deal with three or four main points, ideas, arguments, or aspects together with illustration and examples.

In the conclusion you could make your final point, recall the issues raised in the introduction, indicate a possible area for further study and review any important further implication.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3 : Fill in the blanks to complete the sentences

(i) A news-report follows the structure of .....

(ii) A feature has a ..... structure.

(iii) The structure of a feature can be described in ..... stages.

(iv) The feature provides the writer with a scope to present his / her .....

(v) A feature is generally ..... than a news-report.

8.4 SCIENCE WRITE- UP

Science and technology is increasingly shaping and revolutionizing our everyday lives. Nowadays, we just cannot possibly think of our lives without the contributions of science and technology. So in that case the common public needs to know what scientists are doing and their inventions and other technological advancements. Science is often hard to comprehend. Science writing is difficult to digest for common people. Most people think that the difficulties of science arise out of necessity and out of the extreme complexity of scientific concepts, data and analysis. Complexity of thought need not lead to impenetrability of expression. As a result, science writing as a different genre has evolved.

Science writing encompasses a wide variety of niches that can include writing for newspapers, mass market magazines, trade publications, university press offices, broadcast media, and newsletters, among many other venues.

Science writing needs special technical skills. The main difference between science writing and writing in other academic fields is the relative importance placed on certain stylistics elements .So in this unit we will look into what is scientific writing and how to write a scientific write-up.

The basic purpose of scientific writing is not the mere presentation of information and thought, but rather its actual communication. It does not matter how pleased an author might be to convert all the right data into sentences and paragraphs ; it matters only whether a large majority of the reading audience accurately perceives what the author had in mind .

There are several different kinds of writing that fall under the umbrella of scientific writing.

- Peer – reviewed journal articles (presenting primary research)
- Grant proposals (You can't do science without funding)
- Literature review articles (summarizing and synthesizing research that has already been carried out)

- Popular Science articles (communicating scientific discoveries to a non –scientific audience)

The main purpose of scientific writing is to present data or ideas with a level of detail that allows a reader to evaluate the validity of the results and conclusions based only on the facts.

Some dos and don'ts in Scientific Writing :

1) **Precision –** You need to be precise in scientific writing. There is no scope for ambiguities as it creates confusion in the minds of the reader.
2) **Clarity –**You need to present your writing clearly .Language should be easy to follow**.**
3) **Objectivity –**Subjectivity needs to be avoided. Any claims that you want to make should be based on facts, not by intuition or emotion.

Certain points that need to be kept in mind while writing a science write up:

1) **Word choice –** Often several words may convey similar meaning, but usually only one word is most appropriate and that needs to be put in the given situation. For example :

   "Population density is positively co-related with SARS transmission rate."

   "Population density is positively related to SARS transmission rate**."**

   So you can see that in some contexts, "correlated" and "related" have similar meanings. But in scientific writing correlated conveys a precise meaning because it states the statistical relationship between the two variables. So, simply pointing out that two variables are related is not enough. Our readers want to know more precise relationship between the two. Therefore, it is important to choose the appropriate word**.**

2) **Phrasing choice**: The above mentioned idea is applicable here also in case of choosing the right phrase. For example, the phrase "writing of an investigative nature" could also be used in sciences. Also it might refer to a police investigation. So in that case a more specific phraseology needs to be used by avoiding ambiguous phraseology. Here it is noticed that repetition is to some extent preferable.

3) **Figurative Language:** Figurative language must be avoided because it is imprecise. For example "experimental subjects were assaulted with a wall of sound" does not convey the precise meaning of " experimental subjects were presented with 20 second pulses of nonspecific mating cells". Exclude similes and metaphors in scientific writing. You just cannot leave anything to imagination.

4) **Level of detail**: You should avoid irrelevant information but do include as much information as required. Whatever information you want to put must be followed by your reader easily without being distracted by irrelevant facts and descriptions.

5) **Quantify:** Whenever possible, use quantitative rather than qualitative descriptions. For instance a phrase like "development rate in the 30^0C temperature treatment was ten percent faster than development rate in the 20^0C temperature treatment " is more precise than the phrase "development rate was fastest in the higher temperature treatment . "

6) **Language use:** Complex ideas and concepts must be conveyed in a lucid manner. You need to distill complicated ideas into simple explanations. Use familiar terms rather than technical or obscure terms. Some expressions are given below with their simple alternatives :

COMPLEX	**SIMPLE**
Efficacious	**Effective**

Utilize	**use**
Elucidate	**explain**
Proximal	**close**

There are some situations where the use of a technical or obscure term is justified. For example , in a paper comparing two different viral strains , the author might use the word “enveloped “ rather than the phrase “surrounded by a membrane “.

7) **Sentence Structure:** Science writing must always be precise. It should be written in simple sentences rather than complex sentences. Precision requires a fine level of detail. Careful description of objects, forces, organisms, methodology etc. can easily lead to framing of complex sentences without pause which may cause difficulty for learners. So usually simple sentence is preferred.

For example : The osmoregulatory organ , which is located at the base of the third dorsal spine on the outer margin of the terminal papillae and functions by expelling excess sodium ions , activates only under hypertonic conditions . This sentence is too long and complex . A learner has to wait a longtime to get the main idea. So instead of that sentence a more simple sentence can be used like “Located on the outer margin of the terminal papillae at the base of the third dorsal spine , the osmoregulatory organ expels excess sodium ions under hypertonic conditions”. So you can see that a simpler sentence is easy to comprehend. Hence sentence structure needs adequate care in scientific writing .

8) **Verbosity** : Use concise writing .Most of the scientific writing is space limited. Grant proposals, journal articles, and abstracts all have word limits .So you need to concisely write your scientific writing. Common phrases like “the fact that,” “it should be noted that,” and “it is interesting that” are cumbersome and unnecessary in scientific writing.

Miracle MOLECULE

THE ODD BEHAVIOR OF a molecule in an experimental silicon computer chip has led to a discovery that opens the door to quantum computing in semiconductors.

In a *Nature Physics* journal paper currently online, the researchers describe how they have created a new, hybrid molecule in which its quantum state can be intentionally manipulated – a required step in the building of quantum computers.

"Up to now large-scale quantum computing has been a dream," says Gerhard Klimeck, professor of electrical and computer engineering at Purdue University and associate director for technology for the national Network for Computational Nanotechnology.

"This development may not bring us a quantum computer 10 years faster, but our dreams about these machines are now more realistic."

The workings of traditional computers haven't changed since they were room-sized behemoths 50 years ago; they still use bits of information, 1s and 0s, to store and process information. Quantum computers would harness the strange behaviors found in quantum physics to create computers that would carry information using quantum bits, or qubits. Computers would be able to process exponentially more information.

If a traditional computer were given the task of looking up a person's phone number in a telephone book, it would look at each name in order until it found the right number. Computers can do this much faster than people, but it is still a sequential task. A quantum computer, however, could look at all of the names in the telephone book simultaneously.

Quantum computers also could take advantage of the bizarre behaviors of quantum mechanics – some of which are counterintuitive even to physicists – in ways that are hard to fathom. For example, two quantum computers could, in concept, communicate instantaneously across any distance imaginable, even across solar systems.

Albert Einstein, in a letter to Erwin Schrödinger in the 1930s, wrote that in a quantum state a keg of gunpowder would have both exploded and unexploded molecules within it (a notion that led Schrödinger to create his famous cat-in-a-box thought experiment).

This "neither here nor there" quantum state is what can be controlled in this new molecule simply by altering the voltage of the transistor.

Until now, the challenge had been to create a computer semiconductor in which the quantum state could be controlled, creating a qubit.

"If you want to build a quantum computer, you have to be able to control the occupancy of the quantum states," Klimeck says. "We can control the location of the electron in this artificial atom and, therefore, control the quantum state with an externally applied electrical field."

The discovery began when Sven Rogge and his colleagues at Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands were experimenting with nano-scale transistors that show the effects of unintentional impurities, or dopants. The researchers found properties in the current-voltage characteristics of the transistor that indicated electrons were being transported by a single atom, but it was unclear what impurity was causing this effect.

Physicist Lloyd Hollenberg and colleagues at the University of Melbourne in Australia were able to construct a theoretical silicon-based quantum computer chip based on the concept of using an individual impurity.

"The team found that the measurements only made sense if the molecule was considered to be made of two parts," Hollenberg says. "One end comprised the arsenic atom embedded in the silicon, while the 'artificial' end of the molecule forms near the silicon surface of the transistor. A single electron was spread across both ends.

"What is strange about the 'surface' end of the molecule is that it occurs as an artifact when we apply electrical current across the transistor and hence can be considered 'manmade.' We have no equivalent form existing naturally in this world around us."

Klimeck, along with graduate student Rajib Rahman, developed an updated version of the nano-electronics modeling program NEMO 3-D to simulate the material at the size of 3 million atoms.

"We needed to model such a large number of atoms to see the new, extended quantum characteristics," Klimeck says.

The simulation showed that the new molecule is a hybrid, with the naturally occurring arsenic at one end in a normal spherical shape and a new, artificial atom at the other end in a flattened, 2-D shape. By controlling the voltage, the researchers found that they could make an electron go to either end of the molecule or exist in an intermediate, quantum, state.

This model was then made into an image by David Ebert, a professor of electrical and computer engineering at Purdue, and graduate student Insoo Woo.

Delft's Rogge says the discovery also highlights the current capabilities of designing electronic machines.

"Our experiment made us realize that industrial electronic devices have now reached the level where we can study and manipulate the state of a single atom," Rogge says. "This is the ultimate limit, you can not get smaller than that."

Source: Physorg

9) Use of Passive Voice: Generally in science write up passive voice is used to enhance objectivity .But this again depends upon the reviewer who would instruct you whether to use passive voice or active voice. Just follow few guidelines below while using active voice :

- Avoid starting sentences with "I " OR "WE " because this pulls you out of the focus from the scientific topic at hand
- Avoid using "I " OR "WE " when you are making a conjecture ,whether it's substantiated or not .Everything that you want to say should follow from logic , not from personal bias or subjectivity. Never use any emotive words in conjunction with "I" OR "WE". For example "I believe", or "we believe ".
- Never use "we" in a way that includes the reader.

10) **Use of illustration** : Tables, boxes, figures and diagrams referred to here as illustrations should always be used where they will save words or make your argument clearer .

SOME GUIDELINES TO BE FOLLOWED WHILE WRITING A SCIENTIFIC WRITING :

There are three fundamental aspects to good science writing - planning the structure , thinking about your reader , and choosing your words . Always remember the following points when you write a science write up .

- Be concise. Clear thinking and careful planning lead to economy of expression and avoidance of repetition and padding.
- Use simple words. Good style doesn't require you to be pompous or flamboyant.
- Write short sentences. Avoid long sentences as it becomes difficult for the reader to comprehend.
- Take care with your grammar.
- Beware of fashion. Words and phrases can become fashionable and over used, and their meaning often becomes uncertain.
- Use your own words as far as possible so that it because it will be more understandable to readers.
- Use words correctly .Always write with a good dictionary at hand.
- Use words that your reader will understand. Always remember knowledge of technical expressions (jargon) is often limited to a comparatively small group of people.
- Spell correctly. Use a good dictionary.

- Take care with the use of 'I' as I have mentioned earlier.

So by now you must have graduated to the level of becoming a science reporter. Just remember that a science reporter need not necessarily be a specialist in science. What is essential is a background in science and a scientific temperament. A science reporter must update himself with the latest developments of science and be aware of the major scientific research. So your job is to write the highly technical scientific news for common reader in an understandable and readable way. So enjoy writing science write ups.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.4. What are the three fundamental aspects of good science writing?

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Q.5. What are the different kinds of writing that fall under the umbrella of scientific writing?

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8.5 PRESS RELEASE

A press release is a written statement of an organisation distributed to the media. It is a fundamental tool of public relations. Press releases are usually sent via newswire service (such as PR Newswire or Business Wire) to media outlets, where journalists may pick them up and use them as they seem fit.

The text of a release is usually written as a news story with an eye-catching headline and text written in standard journalistic style with inverted pyramid structure. This style of news writing makes it easier for reporters to quickly grasp the message.

Some journalists believe that to copy from a press release may be unethical — they believe it is a lapse of good judgment. Ethical reporters prefer to try soliciting an individual quote from the speaker before filing their story. Public relations professionals believe that press releases and other collateral material aid a journalist's job.

Since press releases reflect the organization's preferred interpretation or positive packaging of a story, journalists are often skeptical about their contents. The level of skepticism depends on what the story is and who's telling it. Newsrooms receive so many press releases that, unless it is a story that the media are already paying attention to, a press release alone often isn't enough to catch a journalist's attention.

With the advent of modern media and new technology, press releases are to be found in the form of video news releases and audio news releases.

The workhorse of public relations, the press release, was invented in the late 1800s. Written in the form of a conventional news story, a release presents the point of view of the organization that disseminates it. Newspaper editors and reporters often use facts, quotes and other information from releases to amplify their stories or support their accuracy and credibility. Press releases were first used by the country's big railroads, although they rapidly became the norm in all corporations and large organizations, both for-profit and nonprofit. Early in the 20th century, Ohio Bell Telephone discovered that if it handed out "canned" news in this form, newspaper reporters would stop going to telephone rate hearings to get the information in person, thereby minimizing uncomfortable inquiries about the rates and related matters. More often, releases were used, and continue to be used, to attract the media to attend press briefings or to request follow-up interviews. Initially it was considered a form of advertising because of their

self-serving content. Releases quickly became accepted for what they are today – a free source of news and information that can be used by media. The traditional format (one or two pages of double-spaced text with standardized spelling and punctuation) was developed to satisfy the needs of editors for space in which to edit the text, and typesetters who required certain kinds of editorial markings in order to follow the flow of individual pages while typesetting the text. With more and more releases distributed via e-mail and more and more print media moving to digital printing, the format of press releases has become far less important for recipients. Many public relations practitioners also disseminate their releases far beyond the media to key audiences such as employees and investors who are as interested as the media in what the organizations they support are doing.

The usual way of issuing information to the press is by writing a press release. A press release is an official, authorized statement about the policies and activities of an organization. As the company or the government has to stand by it, the press release must be factual, and correct and must project the policy clearly and without ambiguity. It should leave no scope for misreporting. This is then sent by post or by hand to various newspapers and periodicals as well as to radio and television news offices. It should also be communicated to the news agencies, who have direct tele-printer contact with the main newspaper offices in the country. The news agencies edit the release and do not send it out in its entirety. So it is always worthwhile sending out the full release as widely as possible.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.6. What do you mean by a press release?

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Q. 7. How do we issue information to the press?

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HOW TO WRITE A PRESS RELEASE

TIPS TO WRITE A PRESS RELEASE

- The press release should be written in journalistic style. It should follow the principles of news reporting.
- The introduction or the 'lead' should be in a summary format. It should answer the five W's and one H as in a news story.
- The second and the subsequent paragraphs should elucidate and elaborate the points. It should provide facts or information of interest to the readers and should attempt to cover all the aspects of a specific subject.
- The release should not generally be lengthy. It should be concise and to the point. The release is a piece of clear writing without any ambiguity, without any effort towards colour or ornamentation. As far as possible each story should be complete in itself.
- Public memory is short and people are not likely to remember what had been said on the subject a couple of months ago, or even the previous fortnight. Moreover, repetitive publicity is the essence of selling an idea.
- It should have a consistent format. Generally, the name of the agency from where the release emanates is given on the top. The

date and place are indicated on the top right side. The release should have a title or sub-title also, if necessary. In the case of releases from non-official organizations, it is desirable also to mention the designation of the person issuing the release and his telephone number.

FORMAT OF A PRESS RELEASE

WRITING A PRESS RELEASE

Press releases are broadly categorized into the following types–

a) general news releases
b) event releases
c) product press releases
d) social media press releases

The writing style of the press releases is common. Some of these common structural elements include:

Headline — used to grab the attention of journalists and briefly summarize the news.

Dateline — contains the release date and usually the originating city of the press release.

Introduction — first paragraph in a press release, that generally gives basic answers to the questions of who, what, when, where and why.

Body — further explanation, statistics, background, or other details relevant to the news.

Media Contact Information — name, phone number, email address, mailing address, or other contact information for the PR or other media relations contact person. The following is an example of a press release issued by the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Now let us write a press release using the above mentioned format.

EXAMPLE :

Press Release

PRESIDENT CALLS UPON IAS PROBATIONERS

TO ADMINISTER WITH A HUMANE TOUCH

09-05-2008 : Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi

The President, Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil, while addressing the IAS probationers of the 2007 batch who called on her at Rashtrapati Bhavan today, said that they should administer with a humane touch and implement schemes in their true spirit.

The President said that as the heads of their districts in the early phase of their career, they should not only make use of the law and the power at their disposal but also deal with the people with a humane touch.

Describing the officers as 'blessed ones', as they had the benefit of good education and now being selected for this elite service, the President said they should use their education and training for the betterment of the people and to be their friend, philosopher and guide. Referring to India's rapid development with an average GDP growth rate of 9 percent, Smt. Patil emphasized on the requirement of an inclusive growth and emphasis on the importance of education in a "knowledge economy".

The President also speaking about the social evils in society such as child marriage, female foeticide and dowry, urged the young officers to play an active role in implementation of laws and schemes so that such evils would slowly disappear. Smt. Patil also strongly encouraged the officers to play a pro-active role in helping in the empowerment of the first generation of women stepping into Panchayati Raj Institutions.



8.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you have learnt what column writing , science writing up and press release is . A press release is a written statement distributed to the media. It is an important tool of public relations.By now you must have understood the nuances of writing column and science writing . We have

also given few examples of column writing , science writing and also press release for your clarity. So by the end of this unit we assume that you will be able to write column , science writing and press release following the tips given in this unit.



8.7 FURTHER READING

1. Black, Sam (1970).Practical Public Relations.New Delhi : Universal Book Stall
2. Moore, H.F , Kalupa, F.B (1985). Public Relations Principles, Cases and Problems. New Delhi : Surjeet Publications
3. Manipal Academy of Higher Education (2002). Communication Skills in English Manipal
4. Sharma, R.C., Mohan Krishna (2002), Business Correspondence and Report Writing . New Delhi : Tata McGraw -Hill Publishing Company.
5. Taylor ,Shirley (2006) Model Business Letters, e-mails and other Business Documents .Pearson Education .



8.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans. to Q. No. 2: (B)

Ans. to Q. No. 3: Inverted pyramid formal structure and style

(ii) Linear

(ii) Three

(iv) Point of view.

(v) Longer

Ans. to Q. No. 4: planning the structure , thinking about your reader , and choosing your words

Ans. to Q. No. 5: latest developments of science and the major scientific research.

Ans. to Q. No. 6: A press release is a written statement of an organisation distributed to the media. It is a fundamental tool of public relations.

Ans. to Q. No. 7: The usual way of issuing information to the press is by writing a press release. A press release is an official, authorized statement about the policies and activities of an organization. As the company or the government has to stand by it, the press release must be factual, and correct and must project the policy clearly and without ambiguity. It should leave no scope for misreporting. This is then sent by post or by hand to various newspapers and periodicals as well as to radio and television news offices. It should also be communicated to the news agencies, who have direct tele-printer contact with the main newspaper offices in the country.



8.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

(A) Very Short Questions

Q.1: Who is a columnist or a feature writer?

Q.2: What structure does a feature follow?

Q.3: What is a science write-up?

Q.4: What structure is followed while writing a press release?

(B) Short Questions (Answer in about 150 words)

Q.1: Discuss in brief the guidelines to be followed while writing a science write up.

Q.2: What is the importance and need of a press release for a media organization?

Q.3: Discuss the structure of a press release.

(C) Long Questions (Answer in about 300-500 words)

Q.1: Write a press release with a backgrounder for the organization with which you are associated .

Q. 2. Write Features articles on the following topics .

a) Global Warming

b) The flood problem of Assam

c) Vocational Education – Issues and Prospects .

d) Global terrorism and what it means in India .

e) Tourism and Assam : Issues

Q. 3. Write a science write up of India's space programme.

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UNIT - 9 : EDITING

UNIT STRUCTURE

9.1 Learning Objectives

9.2 Introduction

9.3 Meaning of Editeng

9.4 Language Editing

9.5 Writing and Editing Photo Caption

9.6 Language for explaining graphs, charts, maps

9.7 Proof Reading

9.8 Let Us Sum Up

9.9 Further Reading

9.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

9.11 Model Questions

9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- describe the intricacies of editing
- discuss the skill of writing photo caption
- explain the art of illustration and proof reading.

9.2 INTRODUCTION

In a news organization, editing plays a vital role. News reports written in a hurry by reporters have to be checked and improved by a team of editors. These copies are checked for grammar, syntax, facts, figures and sense. Editing is tailoring news items or a news story to the required shape and size using the right kind of expressions and symbols. A copy is edited to highlight the 'news sense' in a story and to bring uniformity of language and style in an issue of a newspaper. Editors look out for certain news values in a copy like proximity, timeliness, prominence, consequence and human interest while selecting a news item for publication. A news item is

selected keeping in view its interest to a large number of readers and its impact on them. in this unit our main focus is on language editing.

In the editing process, each newspaper has its own set of rules that are enforced. These rules are contained in a small book called the stylebook. The copy editor handling a news copy also has to write the headline for it, using limited words within the allotted space. Similarly, layout editors have to allot space for photographs, maps, charts and graphs to go along with the news items. The language of photo captions, maps, graphs and charts are different from the language used in the text and headline and have to be mastered. A copy editor has to be well-versed in editing symbols to correct the copy, besides, he should be capable of rewriting a poorly written story if it is of interest to the readers.

9.3 MEANING OF EDITING

As you know that editing is tailoring news items or a news story to the required shape and size using the right kind of expressions and symbols., so let us now take a quick recap on editing and its intricacies . On the new desk all incoming news items are sorted by a senior journalist to achieve a balance between news originating within the organisation and those pouring in from outside. In the process, unwanted copies get weeded out. Only copies having news value are selected. These are checked for grammar, syntax, facts, figures, sense and are improved upon and condensed for economy of space.A copy is edited to highlight the 'news sense' in a story and to bring uniformity of language and style.

If you refresh your learning of the previous courses, you may recall that news has a number of characteristic elements. Five conventional determinants of news values are:

(i)Proximity : The nearer the origin of news, that is, the closer it is to home, the more is its impact.

(ii)Timeliness: News grows old quickly. The more recent its occurrence, the more worthy it is.

(iii)Prominence: Names make news and newspapers like to use as many local names as possible. News about public figures and celebrities make more, interesting reading.

(iv)Consequence: A reader's interest is aroused if an event or occurrence affects him. He is eager to know how it will affect him and his family. Say for instance a news item on proposed hike in fuel prices.

(v)Human interest: Any interesting story about people and their peculiarities make for wider readership.

A news story has to be newsworthy and interest a large member of readers. A story's worth is determined by its impact on the readers. All these factors have to be kept in mind while editing. In the next section, we will discuss about editing from the point of view of language.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: What are the characteristics of news?

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Q.2: Define editing.

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9.4 LANGUAGE EDITING

Words are the basic building blocks of journalism. One should respect the words and follow the way these are arranged and strung together. Misplaced words could twist the meaning of a sentence. Hence, one should

pay attention to punctuation marks, grammar and syntax. All these are important in sentence construction.

The comma plays an important role in punctuation. This little mark causes more trouble than the rest put together. Consider these examples :

Ram says Raj is an idiot.

Ram, says Raj, is an idiot.

Observe how the placement of the comma has changed the meaning of the sentence. We should remember that commas define relationships within a sentence.

Punctuation marks bring in clarity and make a piece of writing readable. However, too many punctuation marks may clutter up a story. There should be no comma after a verb, unless it is immediately followed by a parenthesis.

One of the areas of punctuation in which mistakes are often made is the dash and the hyphen. These serve two nearly opposite purposes, but are often mixed up. A dash is used to create a pause for emphasis, or to provide an abrupt change of thought, or to introduce a phrase or clause in parenthesis. Hence, a dash separates and is spaced; whereas, a hyphen joins the two, often unconnected, ideas. It is not spaced, and is half the size of a dash.

Newspaper language has to be simple and precise. A copy editor or sub-editor editing a news story has to remove the rough edges from the copy and polish it to make it presentable. The language has to be adjusted to the style of the newspaper.

Newspapers and news organisations follow their own style. It is used to maintain consistency and credibility of a newspaper. If ‘p’ in the word parliament is written in capital letters at some places and in small letter at other places, it may affect the reader sub-consciously.

For example:

Doom Dooma	Doomdooma
Analyse	Analyze

Only one of the above should be followed consistently.

A newspaper reader in the morning is in a great hurry. A news story should be in a familiar language so that it runs smoothly through the average reader's mind. Simple, direct sentences are more attractive. Long sentences with clauses, exclamations, interjections, quotations, allusions, metaphors etc. should be avoided.

Unfamiliar words and jargon (expressions used in a particular discipline like law, medicine etc) should be avoided as far as possible. Words not commonly used should be explained in simple language.

Some Latin and Greek expressions used in law, medicine, biology etc. have become part of the English vocabulary through usage. If these are readily understood they may be used without explanation, but if they have a popular English equivalent that should be preferred.

Obscene and vulgar language should be totally avoided. They should be cut out even from direct quotations. Slang and colloquialism should at best be avoided.

Active voice is preferred to passive voice in writing as passive voice have a deadening effect. For example, the sentence, 'The directors will meet next week' is preferable to 'A meeting will be held by directors next week'. However, in certain circumstances the passive voice is useful, where the deed is more important than the doer. 'A general strike has been called for tomorrow by …… to protest against ……' is better than 'The …. has called a general strike for tomorrow in protest against…'.

All names in the copy should be properly identified as far as possible. Where the subject of a copy has multiple identification, that is, he or she is currently holding should be mentioned in the first instance, the others can be suitably mentioned in later parts of the copy. If the subject does not hold any office currently, he or she has to be identified by the former office.

Adjectives and epithets should be used in proper context and sparingly. No adjective or any other expression that smacks of bias, involves a value judgement should be used. For example, while reporting a police firing one can say, 'The police had to open fire….', or '…. was forced to open fire'.

The correct way to give a factual narration is, 'The police opened fire'. However, if a minister or an official states that the police had to open fire, it may be reported as such.

Quotations should be used sparingly to highlight important aspects of a story. Sometimes a couple of words within quotation marks are more effective than a whole sentence.

In reporting statements or speeches the safest verb is 'said'. There is no harm if it appears repeatedly in a copy. Verbs that can be substituted for 'said' are : stated, declared, remarked, observed, averred, affirmed, pointed out, told, informed, admitted, alleged, denied, rejected, disclosed, revealed.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.3 : Explain the importance of comma in language editing.

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Q.4: What should be the language of newspaper?

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9.5 WRITING AND EDITING PHOTO CAPTION

It is said that a photograph speaks a thousand words. Even then one should say where and when the incident took place. This is called a caption. Writing caption is an art by itself, and it comes with experience and aptitude. The picture and the caption complement each other. It is important to mention when and where the picture was taken and who the persons seen in the picture are.

Take the case of a picture showing an important person getting down from a car. The caption instead of saying that such and such a person is 'getting down' from the car should rather say so and so is 'arriving' at the particular venue or place for doing a particular activity, as the case might be.

If a picture shows a person eating, there is no need to say in the caption that the person is eating. One should say why, where and what he is eating and on what occasion.

When a photograph is described in the body of the story, then there is no need for a separate caption and the picture could hang in between the paragraphs. Sometimes the News Editor may prefer a box to a powerful picture with just a detailed caption to turn it into photo-story.

Captions for the sports pictures are important. Most photographers simply prefer to say something like 'a melee in the goal mouth', which should actually say who is doing what. For example, it should read as 'X who scored a hattrick, scoring his third goal in a row beating defender Y'. Sometimes the News Editor may prefer not to give any caption and the picture simply hangs under the headline, which itself serves as a caption.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.5: What is caption?

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Q.6: What is a photo story?

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ACTIVITY 9.1

Cut out some photographs from a newspaper and write suitable captions for them. Now compare the caption you have written and the caption given to the photograph in the newspaper. Do you find any difference? Make a note of it.

9.6 LANGUAGE FOR EXPLAINING GRAPHS, CHARTS, MAPS ETC

In most news coverage's, photographers reach the spot only after the incident takes place and is able to take only the result or consequences of what had already happened. In such cases, the newspaper or magazine might have to depend upon graphic illustrations to detail the activities that had taken place at a particular spot earlier.

The news desk, with the help of illustrators or artists, sketches out from the information available, the original sequence, so as to give the reader a clear idea of what the news story is about, such graphic illustrations have been used in depicting incidents of varying degrees like accidents, fire incidents etc. In an assassination case, a graphic illustration could show the position of the assassin, the victim and others in the vicinity. For mountaineering expeditions, the routes taken by the mountaineers could be sketched out, adding all the necessary information regarding the routes. Similar, graphic illustration could be made for space exploration rockets. The language used in such graphics are simple and highlight different aspects of the incident or expedition.

Charts are now widely used in newspapers, magazines and the television to explain the comparative position during elections, to show inflationary trends of rising prices, to depict deteriorating crime situation, production trends of commodities, population growth, sample surveys and different aspects of the society to the readers and viewers.

Maps also serve as an important input for the media to illustrate the spot where clashes have broken out on the international border, to specify the spot of an accident where large number of people have lost their lives and so on.

Graphics come in handy for the tabloids and magazines where detailed stories are published with illustration - pictorially and graphically.

9.7 PROOF READING

Starting from the days when the first printing press came into existence, proof readers have played an important role in ensuring that a clean and correct copy came out of the printing presses. With the advent of the newspaper, proof readers also became an integral part of the newspaper.

The proof readers have to compare the 'printed' copy with the original, to find any possible mistakes. The proof reader's task is to ensure that the proof tallies with the copy. Proofs come in different forms depending on the kind of publication process. Proofs appear as single-columns of type printed on long strips of paper in case of letterpress or offset newspapers using typeset copy. Typed stencil serves as the proof for mimeographed papers, while for offset papers prepared with a computer, the finished job of typing must be proofread. It has to be noted that the methods of marking for the last two processes is different from that used with a printed proof.

Proofreading is usually done by a team of two, a copyholder and a proofreader. The copyholders read aloud from the copy, indicating paragraphs, commas and other punctuation and spelling out proper names. The proofreader follows on the proof, marking corrections.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.7: What is the role of a proofreader?

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Q. 8: When do we use graphics?

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9.8 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you have learnt the intricacies of editing, which plays an important role in bringing out an error-free newspaper which presents an uniformity of style in text, layout and headlines. As language is the mainstay of a newspaper, utmost care has to be taken to ensure that the language used in the newspaper is simple and correct-free from grammatical errors. Moreover, the editorial desk should also take care to see that nothing libelous is published which may attract litigation in the courts. Headlines of news items attract the readers to the story. Care should be taken to write headlines with economy of words within a limited space. Writing photo caption is also an art which has to be learnt to describe the news in the photograph. As the electronic media is today making rapid strides, the importance of photography is also increasing in the print media. Graphs, charts and maps are today being widely used in the print media to help the readers understand better the subject in the news. These are important inputs to counter the challenge posed by the electronic media. Proof Reading which has been an integral part since the days of inception of the printing press is the first stepping stone of editing. You have also learnt the use of editing symbols which is essential for all aspiring journalists.By now you must have developed the skill of editing and its nuances .



9.9 FURTHER READING

1. Aggarwal, Vir Bala (2006) Essentials of Practical Journalism. New Delhi : Concept Publishing Company
2. Chakravarty, Suhas (2006). News Reporting and Editing : *An Overview. New Delhi : Kanishka Publishers and Distributors*
3. Hough, George, H (1995). News Writing. New Delhi **:** *Kanishka Publishers and Distributors*
4. Puri, Manohar .Art of Editing. *New Delhi : Pragun Publications*



9.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans. to Q. no. 1: News has a number of characteristic elements. Five conventional determinants of news values are :

(i) Proximity: The nearer the origin of news, that is, the closer it is to home, the more is its impact.

(ii) Timeliness: News grows old quickly. The more recent its occurrence, the more worthy it is.

(iii) Prominence: Names make news and newspapers like to use as many local names as possible. News about public figures and celebrities make more, interesting reading.

(iv) Consequence : A reader's interest is aroused if an event or occurrence affects him. He is eager to know how it will affect him and his family. Say for instance a news item on proposed hike in fuel prices.

(v) Human interest: Any interesting story about people and their peculiarities make for wider readership.

Ans. to Q. no. 2 : Editing is tailoring news items or a news story to the required shape and size using the right kind of expressions and symbols.

Ans to Q. no. 3 : The comma plays an important role in punctuation. This little mark causes more trouble than the rest put together. For example : Ram says Raj is an idiot.

Ram, says Raj, is an idiot.

Observe how the placement of the comma has changed the meaning of the sentence. We should remember that commas define relationships within a sentence.

Punctuation marks bring in clarity and make a piece of writing readable. However, too many punctuation marks may clutter up a story. There should be no comma after a verb, unless it is immediately followed by a parenthesis.

Ans to Q. no 4 : Newspaper language has to be simple and precise. The language has to be adjusted to the style of the newspaper. Obscene and vulgar language should be totally avoided. They should be cut out even from direct quotations. Slang and colloquialism should at best be avoided.

Ans to Q. no. 5: It is said that a photograph speaks a thousand words. Even then one should say where and when the incident took place. This is called a caption

Ans to Q. no. 6 : When a photograph is described in the body of the story, then there is no need for a separate caption and the picture could hang in between the paragraphs. Sometimes the News Editor may prefer a box to a powerful picture with just a detailed caption to turn it into photo-story.

Ans to Q. no. 7 : Proof readers have played an important role in ensuring that a clean and correct copy came out of the printing presses. With the advent of the newspaper, proof readers also became an integral part of the newspaper.The proof readers have to compare the 'printed' copy with the original, to find any possible mistakes. The proof reader's task is to ensure that the proof tallies with the copy.

Ans to Q. no. 8 : Graphics are used for the tabloids and magazines where detailed stories are published with illustration - pictorially and graphically.



9.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

(A) Very Short Questions

Q.1 : What is Proximity?

Q.2 : What is a photo caption?

Q.3 : What do you understand by proof reading?

(B) Short Questions (Answer in about 150 words)

Q.1: What do you know about timeliness of a news story?

Q.2: Discuss the importance of proof reading.

(C) Long Questions (Answer in about 300-500 words)

Q.1: "Words are the basic building blooks of journalism"- Explain

Q.2: What type of language should be used for explaining graphs and charts in a newspaper or magazine?

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UNIT- 10: WRITING FOR RADIO

UNIT STRUCTURE

10.1 Learning Objectives
10.2 Introduction : Language and Style of Radio
10.3 Writing for Radio News
10.4 Structure of a Radio News Bulletin
10.5 Radio Features and Current Affairs Programmes
10.6 Let Us Sum Up
10.7 Further Reading
10.8 Answers to Check Your Progress
10.9 Model Questions

10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- learn the style of writing for the radio.
- write scripts for different formats of radio programs.

10.2 INTRODUCTION : LANGUAGE AND STYLE OF RADIO

American author Peggy Noonan says, “TV gives everyone an image, but radio gives birth to a million images in a million brains.”

Radio is a medium that has been popular throughout the ages since its invention, and has developed itself keeping in tandem with the changing times. And one of the reasons why it is popular as a mass-medium is because of its ability to reach out to diverse listeners, thanks to its simple language. It is a key principle of radio programme producers to keep their language short and simple. After all, unlike any other audio-visual medium like television radio cannot be seen- that is, an image is not provided. Also, unlike a newspaper, it cannot be held in the hand and read over and over again. All radio has is the language of sound. But instead of this being

a limitation, the power of the human imagination liberated by radio is considered far greater than the visual stimuli of other media.

Thus, a carefully constructed amalgamation of words, sound effects, music and even silence constitutes the language of radio. Since words spoken on a radio programme can be heard only once, it is important for the language to be very simple, easy to understand and colloqual.

Again radio is a medium that is easily reachable to all sections of people because of its unique characteristics. Since, it is inexpensive; it can be accessed by people of low economic status. Even people who cannot read can listen to the radio and benefit from it. Hence, this makes for another reason why radio content needs to be delivered in a simple and easy language.

While radio can still be regarded as a mass medium, the appeal to the imagination of each person makes it a very personal medium. The process of listening to the radio is 'inward' and intimate - like reading a book. Radio encourages intimacy by directly addressing itself to the individual. Radio's intimacy has increased over the years. Earlier people in a village used to gather around one radio set to listen to the news or commentary of a cricket match. Now, people listen to radio individually, in their cars, on personal stereos and even at work. The experience of listening to radio is now largely an individual one. Thus, the language of radio needs to be personal as well.

10.3 WRITING FOR RADIO NEWS

Although some of the key features remain the same, writing news for radio is fairly different from writing news for television or newspaper. Here are a few fundamental points to keep in mind while writing news stories for radio:

Clarity

A print news story can be read repeatedly, but the same is not in the case of radio news. Thus, the sentences in a radio news report must have enough clarity such that the meaning could be grasped as soon as it is heard.

Use indirect speech

It is advised to frame sentences in the indirect speech when referring to something someone has quoted. For example, instead of using a direct

quote- *The Prime Minister announced, "New dams are going to be built soon."*, it is ideal to use the sentence *The Prime Minister announced that new dams are going to be built soon*.

Avoid complicated sentences

While writing radio news scripts, one should avoid sentences that are complicated in construction. For example, avoid a sentence like- *A man, who was a doctor by profession, met with an accident at Park Street today*. Instead write- *A doctor met with an accident at Park Street today*.

Avoid Jargons

Jargons are specific terms and terminologies which only experts or the related people of a field can understand. Since radio audiences constitute of lay people, it is best to use colloqual equivalents of those terms.

For instance:

Spinal chord = back bone

Inflation = price hike

Avoid abbreviations

Abbreviations should be avoided in the language of radio content, as it is difficult for the listeners to register the full form in such a situation, and might disrupt their understanding of the entire message of the content. If a terminology having an abbreviation is used more than one time in a particular content, then the full form should be mentioned on the first time.

10.4 STRUCTURE OF A RADIO NEWS BULLETIN

A radio news bulletin consists of a number of news stories summed up briefly in about 15 minutes. Some bulletins may run up to 30 minutes duration as well.

A radio news story usually comprises of three main elements-

- written stories in the form of a **script**;
- voice reports from journalists, either recorded or live;
- recorded sound called **actuality**. This is usually the sound of someone speaking, could be taken from an interview or a speech.

A short segment of actuality is called a **grab**. Grabs are used in a similar way to how quotes are used in a newspaper story. In some countries, grabs are called **cuts** or **inserts**.

Two main factors you have to consider while structuring your news bulletin are the overall order or **balance** of the bulletin and the **pace** of it.

A news bulletin is not simply a collection of individual, self contained stories. Thus, you have to make sure that there is a proper balance of diverse topics so that your listeners' interest is maintained. Listeners expect a balance of items, some heavy and some light, some about major political events and some about ordinary people.

You must also make sure that your entire bulletin gets the right pace- that is; the length and tone of the stories must appeal to the interest of the listeners. Some stories, like the report of an accident taking place will require short sentences and a faster pace while a story about a political controversy may need slightly longer sentences with words expressing more complicated ideas. The story itself may need to be slightly longer. The whole effect is one of a slower pace.

Too many long complicated stories will slow the pace of the whole bulletin and allow the attention of your listeners to wander. Too many short, sharp stories may leave listeners confused, unable to keep up with the pace of changing stories.

Your ideal bulletin will have a steady pace throughout to maintain interest, with variations in pace during certain sections; slower at times to let your listeners catch their breath or faster at other times to pick up their lagging interest.

Thus, in order to have a good balance of items and variations in pace in your bulletin, you should rank your stories in order of importance. Also, make sure that each of the stories are covered in approximately equal duration.

So, once you have understood these two basic principles, you can structure your news bulletin by arranging the news stories as per their strength,

importance and level of interest.

The **lead story** is the most important story in your bulletin. This is also the story that will determine whether the listeners will stay tuned throughout the bulletin or not.

Once you have decided on the order of stories, you should write a **headline** for the leading stories in the bulletin. It is usual to start a long bulletin by headlining the major stories. This may not be necessary for a short, three-minute bulletin, but for longer bulletins your listeners will want to know what kind of stories they can expect. Your listeners will use the headlines to judge whether or not the bulletin is worth listening to, so write your headlines to promote the stories in the most powerful way possible.



A short segment of actuality is called a **grab**. Grabs are used in a similar way to how quotes are used in a newspaper story. In some countries, grabs are called **cuts** or **inserts**.

Keep the headline short, free of jargons and abbreviations. Also, just like newspaper headlines, radio news headlines should be written in the present tense.

For example:

Petrol prices to rise again from tomorrow.

Former President of India, Pranab Mukherjee receives the prestigious Bharat Ratna award.

Each news story can be structured in a written script describing the key points or the 5Ws and 1H, accompanied by appropriate voice reports or actuality grabs. Actuality grabs are a powerful element of the news story. Apart from breaking the monotony of a single voice (of the newsreader), it also adds to the credibility of the news. Actuality grabs should be kept short (between 20 and 40 seconds), clear and well-edited. A minute-long grab of a dull voice will slow the pace of your bulletin and may force listeners to switch off. Avoid repeating the same information that is in the actuality grab, in the announcer's narration.

The bulletin is usually opened with a short music theme followed by the newsreader introducing himself/herself. A significant pause or a very short musical signal (2-3 seconds) can be added in between each story to signify

the shift to the next story or segment. Such short music inserts are called **stabs** or **stings.**



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1 : What do you mean by jargon?

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Q.2: What are the key elements of a radio news story?

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Once all the stories are read out, the headlines are once again repeated before closing the bulletin with another short music insert. This is how a news bulletin is structured.

10.5 WRITING FOR RADIO FEATURES

Radio feature is another popular radio programme format in which different aspects of a topic, person, organisation, place, event or issue is described in detail in the form of a script narrated by a narrator and accompanied with music, sound bytes and other sound effects.

The first step of writing the script for a radio feature is doing proper research on the topic chosen. Whether it is a famous personality, a unique organisation, a place famous as a tourist spot, a dramatic or important event or a significant social cause- without gathering all possible information on the topic, we cannot move ahead.

So, once the research is done, you must decide the angle of your feature. Angle is the perspective from which you are going to present the topic.

By now, you must have a fairly good idea about the tone of the feature. It is now time to start writing the script.

As you write your narration, try to tell a story with a beginning, middle, and end. Draw listeners into the story by setting a scene, raising a question, playing a weird noise, or introducing a character. Let us take for example, you are writing the script for a feature on a famous personality like Amitabh Bachchan. So, you will start the script with a brief description of him- introducing who he is and what is he famous for. Similarly, if it is a feature on an institution or an organisation- the Barpeta Kirtan Ghar, for example, then the narration begins with a brief introduction about the place, where it is located and what it signifies.

Then move on to adding more details to your topic. In case of Amitabh Bacchan, you can go on to narrate about his childhood, his early days as an actor, his noteworthy performances and his recent as well as upcoming films. You can also add a section on interesting facts about his personal life if those are relevant to your feature. Similarly in case of the Barpeta Kirtan Ghar you can talk about the history associated with the place and what significance it holds in present times.

You can insert sound bytes of relevant people related to the topic of the feature that can act as a complementary element to the feature, wherever necessary. The feature can also be accompanied by other sound effects and musical backgrounds that can paint a picture of the subject in the minds of the listeners. For example, you can add short clippings of Amitabh Bachchan's songs or dialogues to match with the narrative of the feature.

Here are a few points to remember while writing the script of a radio feature.

Be conversational

Your narration should sound as natural as possible, like you're telling a story to a friend instead of sounding too formal. Do not use complicated sentence structures.

Be visual. Enable your listeners to imagine the people, places and things in your story. Create a sense of scene; describe people; include interesting sounds. Avoid making your script full of factual information only.

Be concise. Do not write long sentences using ornamental words. Use short and simple sentences.

Be energetic. Use the active voice. Use punchy verbs and contractions. Mind your tenses – don't switch back and forth between past and present. Most radio stories are done in present tense.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.3: What is a radio feature?

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Q.4: Write true or false:

a. The language of a radio feature should be formal and serious. T/F.

b. A radio feature should not contain any musical insert. T/F.



10.6 LET US SUM UP

- It is a key principle of radio programme producers to keep their language short and simple.
- A carefully constructed amalgamation of words, sound effects, music and even silence constitutes the language of radio.
- A radio news story must have clarity, and must be written in simple, easy language.
- A radio news bulletin usually comprises of three main elements-written stories in the form of a **script**; voice reports from journalists,

either recorded or live; recorded sound called **actuality**.

- A news bulletin must have proper balance and pace to it.
- Lead is the most important story of the bulletin.
- The language of a radio feature should be concise, energetic and conversational.



10.7 FURTHER READING

Kedia, Krishan, K. (2008). *Writing for Radio and Television in India*. Cyber Tech Publications.



10.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q. No. 1. Jargons are specific terms and terminologies which only experts or the related people of a field can understand. Since radio audiences constitute of lay people, it is best to use colloquial equivalents of those terms. Using jargons will only hinder understanding on the part of the listeners.

Ans to Q. No. 2. A radio news story usually comprises of three main elements-

- written stories in the form of a **script**;
- voice reports from journalists, either recorded or live;
- recorded sound called **actuality**. This is usually the sound of someone speaking, could be taken from an interview or a speech.

Ans to Q. No. 3: Radio feature is a popular radio programme format in which different aspects of a topic, person, organisation, place, event or issue is described in detail in the form of a script narrated by a narrator and accompanied with music, sound bytes and other sound effects.

Ans to Q. No. 4 : a. False.

b. False.



10.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions

Q.1. What do you mean by a grab? Where is it used?

B. Short Questions (Answer in about 150 words)

Q.1. What are the key principles that are applied in the language and style of writing radio scripts?

Q.2. What is the structure of a radio news bulletin?

C. Long Questions (Answer in about 300-500 words)

Q.1. "Radio is a medium that is easily reachable to all seetions of people"- Explain.

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UNIT-11: WRITING FOR TELEVISION

UNIT STRUCTURE

11.1 Learning objectives

11.2 Introduction

11.3 Characteristics of Broadcast News

11.4 Broadcast Lead

11.5 Preparing a Broadcast Copy

11.6 Let Us Sum Up

11.7 Further Reading

11.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

11.9 Model Questions

11.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- get acquainted with the characteristics of broadcast news
- develop an idea on how to write broadcast lead and wrap-ups
- haven understanding on how to prepare a broadcast copy.

11.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit has been titled 'Writing for Television'. In this unit we will specifically deal with the art and techniques of television news writing. Television news writing is a part of the larger spectrum of broadcast news that also encompasses radio news broadcasts. However in this unit the term broadcast will only be used with reference to television news broadcast.

In television newscast, video may seem to be the most appealing part; but in reality it's the crisp news writing that brings life to a newscast and draw a bigger audience.The script, used by the presenter or the anchor that complements the visuals and the audio elements in broadcast news is called a broadcast copy. Broadcast news stories are generally shorter than news stories for print and therefore in some ways, they are more difficult to write. Writers have to write for the ears of the audience with the shortest

words possible. The words and sentences must be constructed in an accurate and clear way, complementing the pictures, video and audio that accompany a story. At the same time it should also meet the basic journalistic requirement of accuracy of fact and context.A crisp and engaging broadcast news copy demands a knowhow of the characteristics that contribute to the newsworthiness of broadcast news.

11.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF BROADCAST NEWS

Broadcast news stories are identified by certain features and key elements that contribute to its characteristics. While writing a broadcast copy these characteristics should be kept in mind:

Style of writing

Broadcast writing requires a different and unique style of writing,much distinguished from print because both the medium and the expectations of the audience are different.

Maintain accuracy

The commitment of broadcast writers to maintain accuracy is just as strong as that of print journalists. Broadcast writers attempt to simplify whenever possible, but simplification should not produce inaccuracy.

Conversational nature

Broadcast writing is more conversational than print because it is written to be heard; but the writing has to be well-organized and precise.

Immediacy

Broadcast news stories emphasize on immediacy and the most ‘of the moment’ information.

Time constraint

Broadcast news stories have to abide by a certain time constraint and cannot vary more than a few seconds.

Dramatic unity

The news story structure, used by most broadcast news writers follow, consists of three parts, climax, cause and effect.

Basic characteristics to determine the newsworthiness of broadcast news is same as the news values for print. Certain things contribute to news value, they are:

i) Proximity: Proximity means locality or nearness. Regional news sells more in the regional news broadcasts. As they call it, "cup breaking is more important than Indo-China war."

ii) Pathos: The power or quality of evoking sadness or pity.

iii) Unusualness: It is a human tendency to put emphasis on odds or unusual things.

iv) Prominence: News of prominent people always has more news value.

v) Conflict and adventure: Items of conflict and adventure are always more newsworthy.

vi) Human interest: Matters of human interest have more news value. Stories that lack people always have less newsworthiness.

However, as an audio-visual medium broadcast news has some other characteristics as well. A broadcast news copy writer has to understand these characteristics to make a broadcast copy engaging:

i. **Broadcast news stories are shorter than newspaper stories and must maintain the information level and interest throughout the story.**

ii. Verbs are the basic player in broadcast news. Verbs are the part of speech that adds life and vitality to the news story.

iii. Broadcast news is for eyes to view and ears to listen. They are directed to the viewers.

iv. TV news is timely as opposed to print news.A newscast must sound fresh and 'of the moment'.

v. A Broadcast news story has an element of selling on the contrary to a print news story as people buy only a single news paper; but has the opportunity to surf more than one channel. That means a news writer has to be a salesperson and sell the product as something superior to the competition.

To determine the newsworthiness of a broadcast copy, a writer has to keep four key criterions in mind:

- Does this story affect people?
- How many people does it affect?
- How long will the story affect people?
- Does it have legs?

Following segment will deal with the skill of writing broadcast lead, the first and most important sentence of a broadcast copy.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: What is a broadcast copy?

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Q.2 : What are the characteristics of broadcast news?

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Q.3: Fill in the blannks

(i) News of.....people always has more news value.

(ii) TV news is.....as opposed to print news.

11.4 BROADCAST LEAD

After having an idea on the key characteristics of broadcast news and the criterions of newsworthiness in television, let us learn about the most significant and crucial element of writing a broadcast copy: the

Lead.The Lead is the most important part to any news story. In a simple sense, the first sentence of a news story is called as lead. It captures the essence of the story and catches viewer's attention. Writing for news paper also requires the skill of writing good and crisp lead; but skill of writing a broadcast lead is not the same as writing a newspaper lead. In newspapers the lead captures the entire story with who, what, where, when, why and how. The writer adds all details in descending order of importance; but in broadcast copy, the writer should provide the core of the story without giving much of a detail. Few people read an entire newspaper story, but most people listen to the entire TV and Radio news story, so in order to keep it interesting the lead should capture the essence of the story without giving too much detail.

There are some fundamental rules to write a good lead for an engaging broadcast copy. These rules are as follows:

i. Make the lead simple
ii. Command the attention of the audience by giving them just enough so that they will want to know more.
iii. Use the point that makes the story newsworthy in the lead.
iv. Use Active voice in the lead.
v. To give a sense of immediacy, use present tense.
vi. Use conversational writing. Broadcast news copy is for ears to listen.
vii. Have a focus on New, Now, Next: Who are the participants in the story? What are they doing right now? What will they be doing next?

A broadcast copy writer also has to avoid making certain detailing mistakes while writing a good lead. Following are those factors one should avoid while writing a lead for a broadcast copy:

- Using a person's name in the lead line, unless that person is known to every viewer.
- Using too many facts or numbers in the lead line.
- Assuming the viewers to know about the story.
- Use of Passive voice in writing.

- Use of Past tense which will make the news stale.
- Use of unnecessarily long sentences.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.4: What is a broadcast lead? How does it differ from lead in print news?

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Q.5: What one should keep in mind while writing a broadcast lead?

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Q.6: Write a broadcast lead for the following information

"The Begusarai bank robberies accuse breaks through police barricade to head butt an officer and is arrested on multiple charges."

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11.5 PREPARING A BROADCAST COPY

Broadcast news contains three sound elements to support the visuals: OC, Byte/SOT/VOT and PTC. Any news package contains at least one of these three elements to support the visuals.

OC: OC or on camera refers to whatever the anchor reads in front of the camera. It is the introduction of the news package.

Byte/SOT/VOT: Byte or Sound on Tape, also known as Voice Over on Tape is the piece of interview, which is placed in the news report to provide add on information.

PTC: PTC or Piece to Camera refers to the reporter or presenter reporting or explaining items to the viewing audience.

A broadcast news package can be half package with either two of the elements or with OC only and also can be aired as a full package with all three of them and visuals. Apart from Byte, other two involve the skill of broadcast news copy writing.

To move a news story forward a broadcast copy writer has to follow certain steps. In this unit we will look at the five steps one can take to move forward a TV News script or a broadcast copy. An example can be taken from Pope Benedict's retirement announcement as it was a historic event. In the story if the visuals focus on the people responding to the Pope's retirement announcement in St. Petersburg Square, one could write the broadcast copy as follows:

1. The first line or the lead will inform the audience about the focal point of the story. And the OC would be, "Pilgrims started arriving at St. Peter's Square on Monday, February 11, following an announcement by Pope Benedict on his resigning at the end of the month."

2. In the second step, the writer will provide some background information with a line or two, adding context to the lead. For example, "The 85-year-old German-born pontiff said he is no longer strong enough to fulfil the duties of his office and thus becoming the first pope since the middle Ages to take such a step."

3. In the Next step, complementing to the visuals being broadcast, writer should provide some additional information and thus has to expand the scene.

4. At last, the writer has to wrap-up the story with concrete information and a follow-up hint. For example, “The Vatican’s spokesman said the pope would step down at 1900 GMT on February 28.”

5. Unlike a newspaper story, broadcast audience only gets one chance to understand a story. Hence after completing, the writer should always read the copy out loud in a conversational tone in order to judge it better from an audience’s perspective.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.7: What are the three sound elements in a news package?

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Q.8: What are the packages of broadcast news broadcasting?

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Q.9: Fill in the blanks :

(i) The lead will inform the audience about the _____ of the story.

(ii) At last, the writer has to wrap-up the story with _____ and a follow-up hint.



11.6 LET US SUM UP

Let us sum up our unit on Writing for Television with the following points:

- In television newscast, visuals often considered being the most appealing part; but the art of crisp news writing plays a crucial part. Broadcast news stories are generally shorter than news stories for

print and therefore in some ways, they are more difficult to write. Writers have to write the script in order to get it heard with the shortest words possible to understand the essence of the news story.

- A Television news broadcast can be identified with certain unique characters, such as unique style of writing, accuracy, conversational nature, immediacy, time constraint and dramatic unity.
- Apart from following the criterions of news value also applicable for print, broadcast news also follows certain other criterions of newsworthiness applicable only for television news broadcast as an audio-visual medium.
- The most significant and crucial element in writing a broadcast copy is writing the read. The first sentence of a news story is called as lead. It captures the essence of the story and catches viewer's attention. On the contrary to print news lead, a broadcast news lead should not give much detail except providing the focal point.
- A broadcast news package may contain three voice-over elements or at least one of them: OC, Byte/SOT/VOT and PTC. Half package of news consists of OC,KAC and one of the other three elements. On the other hand a full package contains all three of them.



11.7 FURTHER READING

- Aronson, Linda (2001). Television Writing. New South Wales : Australian Film Television and Radio School
- Grace, Yvonne (2014). Writing for Television Serials and Soaps.

11.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q. No. 1 : In Television Journalism, the script, that the presenter follows to complement the visuals and the audio elements in a broadcast news story, is called a broadcast copy.

Ans to Q. No. 2 : Broadcast news are signified with their unique set of characteristics. While writing a broadcast copy these characteristics should always be taken care of:

Style of writing : Broadcast writing involves a unique style of writing, which is simple, crisp, short and much distinguished from print.

Maintain accuracy : Accuracy should be maintained also in broadcast news. Copy writer should not harm accuracy while attempting simplification.

Conversational Nature : Broadcast writing is conversational nature.

Immediacy: Broadcast news stories emphasize on immediacy and the'of the moment' information.

Time constraint : Broadcast news stories cannot vary more than a few seconds.

Dramatic unity : The news story structure in broadcast news copy usually consists of three parts, climax, cause and effect.

Ans to Q. No. 3 :

(i) News of prominent peoplepeople always has more news value.

(ii) TV news istimelyas opposed to print news.

Ans to Q. no. 4. In Broadcast news the lead is the first sentence of a news story that captures the essence of the story and immediately catches viewer's attention.

The skill of writing a broadcast lead differs from writing a newspaper lead. In newspapers the lead captures the entire story with five Ws and one H covering all the details and arranging them in a descending order of importance. In broadcast copy lead covers only the focal point providing the space to unfold story in later part of the story. Few people read an entire newspaper story, hence the lead covers

it all; but most people listen to the entire TV and Radio news story, so to keep reader's interest intact, the lead captures only the essence of the story without giving too much detail.

Ans to Q. no. 5. The fundamental rules to write a good lead for an engaging broadcast copy are as follows:

i) Make the lead simple.

ii) Command the attention of the audience by giving them just enough so that they will want to know more.

iii) Use the point that makes the story newsworthy in the lead.

iv) Use Active voice in the lead.

v) To give a sense of immediacy, use present tense.

vi) Use conversational writing. Broadcast news copy is for ears to listen.

vii) Have a focus on New, Now, Next: Who are the participants in the story? What are they doing right now? What will they be doing next?

The copy writer should also avoid certain practices while writing a good lead. They are:

- Using a person's name, unless that person is known to every viewer.
- Using too many facts or numbers.
- Assuming the viewers to know about the story.
- Use of Passive voice in writing.
- Use of Past tense which will make the news stale.
- Use of unnecessarily long sentences.

Ans to Q. No. 6. : The Begusarai bank robbery accused is under arrest after breaking through a police barricade and head-butting an officer.

Ans to Q. No. 7 : The three sound elements in broadcast news are: OC or On Camera, Byte/SOT/VOT or sound on tape/voice over on tape and PTC or Piece to Camera.

Ans to Q. No. 8 : News broadcast packages can be of two types: Half Package and Full Package. Half package includes OC and any one of the other two elements. It can be OC only if there are not enough supporting visuals. And Full package consists of all three of them.

Ans to Q. No. 9 :

(i) The lead will inform the audience about the focal point of the story.

(ii) At last, the writer has to wrap-up the story with concrete information and a follow-up hint.



11.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions:

Q.1. What is broadcast news?

Q. 2. What is broadcast lead?

B. Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words):

Q.1. What are the characteristics of broadcast news?

Q.2. What are the three sound elements in a broadcast news package?

Q.3. How broadcast lead differs from print news lead?

Q.4. What one should avoid while writing a lead?

C. Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words):

Q.1. What are the things a broadcast copy-writer should keep in mind while writing a broadcast lead?

Q.2. What are the steps to be followed while writing a broadcast copy? Discuss.

Q.3. How does a broadcast lead differ from lead in print news? Discuss in detail.

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UNIT-12 : SCRIPTWRITING FOR FILMS

UNIT STRUCTURE

12.1 Learning objectives

12.2 Introduction

12.3 Format, component and styles

12.4 Shooting script and storyboarding

12.5 Steps to follow while writing a script

12.6 Let Us Sum Up

12.7 Further Reading

12.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

12.9 Model Questions

12.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- familiarize yourself withthe art of scriptwriting.
- get acquainted with different types and elements in a script
- develop a understanding of how to write a film script.

12.2 INTRODUCTION

Emergence of scriptwriting started way back in Greek cultures where theatrical drama was very much predominant for regular entertainment of the royals. Shakespeare's famous plays like Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet and Othello laid the foundation for today's art of story writing. With the emergence of TV and films it was possible for entrepreneurs and film makers to make running audio visuals on films captured by camera and lighting technology and showed to the audience as a complete story or film.

This particular unit will focus on the art of script writing for films. While discussing the word 'script' with reference to media writing, it should not get confused with script from 'manuscript' that defines written characters

distinct from print. In media writing script basically refers to any written structure to detail the building of a story or plot to be performed later. Script can be written for any story telling medium of performing arts. It is the skeleton of any kind of production. More often it refers to the written text that forms and supports a narrative for a play, film or broadcast. It involves detail character establishment, dialogues, ambience narration and other elements in order to make a plot ready for performance. Script may refer to:

Script for Comics: The dialogue and story narration of a comic strip.

Script for Video Games: The narrative and text of a video game.

Scripts for Play: The dialogues and suggestive stage direction supporting a story for a theatrical production.

Screenplay: A screenplay is the written work to support the story for a film or a television program. It involves the dialogue, slug or time and space element of the narrative, ambience suggestion etc.

In this unit the word script will be used in reference to screenplay for film. For any good film, the most significant and pivotal element is the writing of script. Script is the backbone of any storytelling medium, including film. It is the blue print of the film. One who writes a script for film is called as scriptwriter or screenwriter. Film script or screenplay can be an original work on a story conceived by the writer or can be an adaptation from already existing piece of writing. The movement, actions, expression and dialogues of the characters are narrated in a screenplay.

12.3 FORMAT, COOMPONENT AND STYLES

After having an idea on what is a film script, let us have an understanding on the basic format, styles and components of a film script.

Format

Although there is no hard and fast structured format for writing a film script; but there exists certain general practices. Film screenplay for mainstream studios all over the world are expected to abide by a standard format known widely as 'studio format' that defines how elements of screenplay such as scene heading, action, transitions, dialogues, character names, shots etc. are to be presented on page with proper font and line spacing.

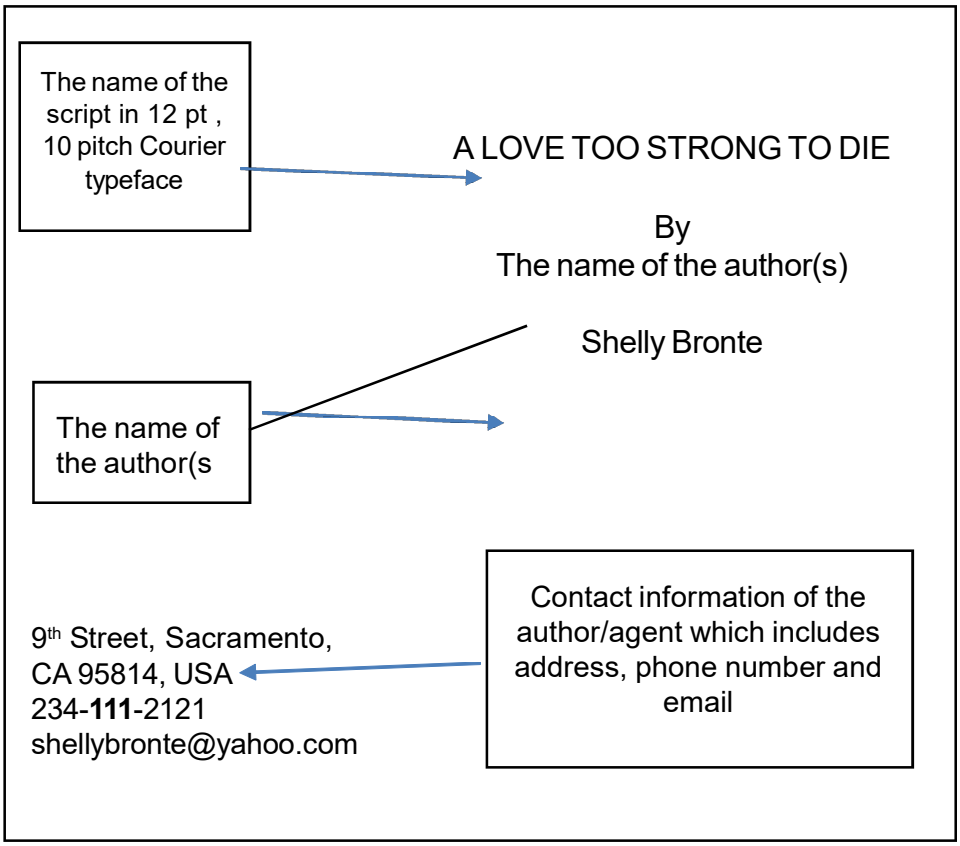
According to the standard practice of script format, one page roughly equates one minute of screen time. However, this practice, used for estimating screen time often bears little resemblance to the final running time. The standard font is 12 point , 10 pitch Courier Typeface.

Let us analyse the basics point wise-

- It is desirable to use 12 point, 10 pitch Courier font
- Letter sized paper should be used which must be of 8.5 x 11 inches
- Left size margin should be of 1.5 inch while it is 1 inch for top, right and bottom margin
- There must be approximately 55 lines per page, regardless of paper size (top and bottom margins adjusted accordingly). However, this does not include the page number, or spaces after it.
- Dialogue ,speaker names (in all CAPS) must be 3.7 inches from left side of page (2.2 from margin)
- Actor parentheticals (aka wrylies) must be 3.1 inches from left side of page (1.6 from margin)
- Dialogue must be 2.5 inches from left side of page (1.5 from margin)
- Pages should be numbered the top right corner, flush to the right margin, a half-inch from the top of the page. Numbers should be followed by a period. The title page along with the first page does not have a page number. The second page and every page thereafter has a page (the send page begins with the numerical "2")

- Finally, it is advisable to keep the total number of pages of a screenplay to 120 pages but not less than 100 pages.

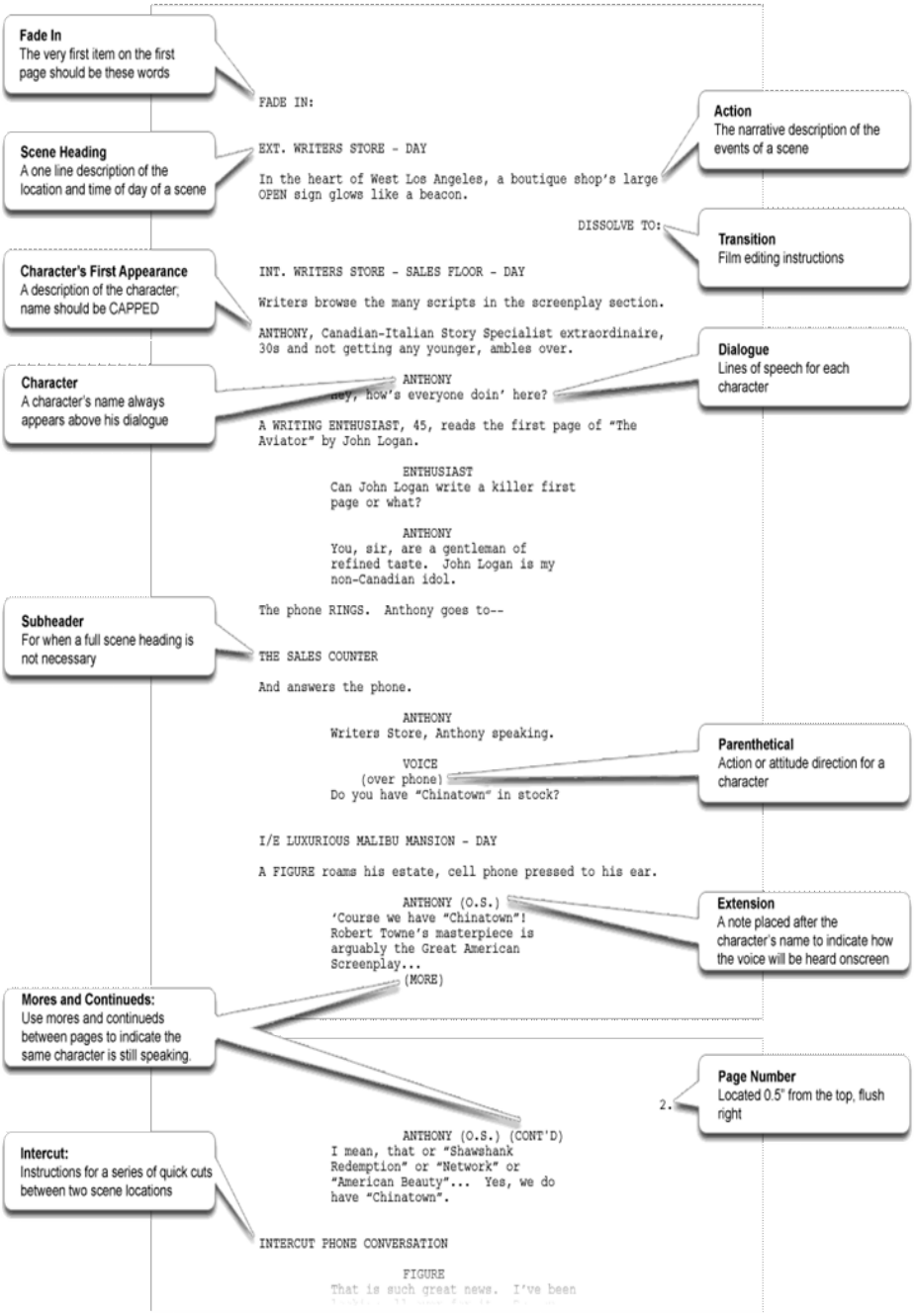
The first page of a script contains title, by-line and contact information. Let us look at a sample title page that will give you a better idea of what we are trying to convey here-



Components

The major components of a film script are action or 'screen direction', 'dialogue' and 'slug line'. Screen direction involves the description of settings, character movement or sound elements. The dialogues are the words that the character speaks and is written in a centre column to distinguish it from screen direction. A 'slug line' or a 'master scene heading' contains three pieces of information: whether the scene is set inside or outside: interior/INT or exterior/EXT, the specific location and the time of the day. Each slug line begins with a new scene.

You will probably get a better idea of the different components of a screenplay by looking at a sample given below-



Source : Moreno, Mario O., Tuxford, Kay How to write a screenplay : Scriptwriting example and screenwriting tips (https://www.writersstore.com/how-to-write-a-screenplay-a-guide-to-scriptwriting/)

In the above mentioned sample screenplay, certain elements have been shown which are an integral part of a script. Although there are some screenplay formatting software like **Final Draft**, **Movie Magic Screenwriter**, **Movie Outline** and **Montage** that automatically format all these elements, yet a basic knowledge of these elements is important in order to better understand the art of storytelling. A **scene heading** is a one-line description of the location and time of day of a scene, also known as a **slugline.** It should always be in capital letters. When a new scene heading is not necessary, but some distinction needs to be made in the action, one can use a **subheader. Action** is the narrative description of the events of a scene, written in the present tense. It is also less commonly known as direction, visual exposition, blackstuff, description or scene direction. When a character is introduced, his or her name should be capitalized within the action. **Dialogue** is usually lines of speech that are created for each character. **A parenthetical** is direction for the character, that is either attitude or action-oriented. **Extension** is usually placed after the character's name, in parentheses. For example, if the character is speaking as a voice-over, it would appear as RISHAB (V.O.). **Transitions** are film editing instructions, and generally only appear in a shooting script. A **shot** tells the reader the focal point within which a scene has changed.

Styles

There are two standard styles of writing script: 'single column script' and 'double column script'.

Single-Column Script: In single-column script, it is written in one part. And before every scene and sequence, slug line and other directions are given. It provides no such scope for incorporating sound elements like ambience sound, background score and music.

Double Column Script: Double column scripts are more elaborative in nature. Documentaries more often use such kind of script style as by the time of writing a script for documentary, the writer gets an idea on the visuals available. Shot direction/components of action or visual direction, and audio elements are divided into two parts.

For example in a particular frame from a movie scene, a small girl's crying face has been shown. Double column script for the same will show,

Shot	Visual Direction	Audio Element
1	CU small girl	Crying sound(sob)



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1 : What is a script?

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Q.2 : What is a screenplay?

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Q.3 : What are the components of screenplay?

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Q.4 : The standard font for film script format is

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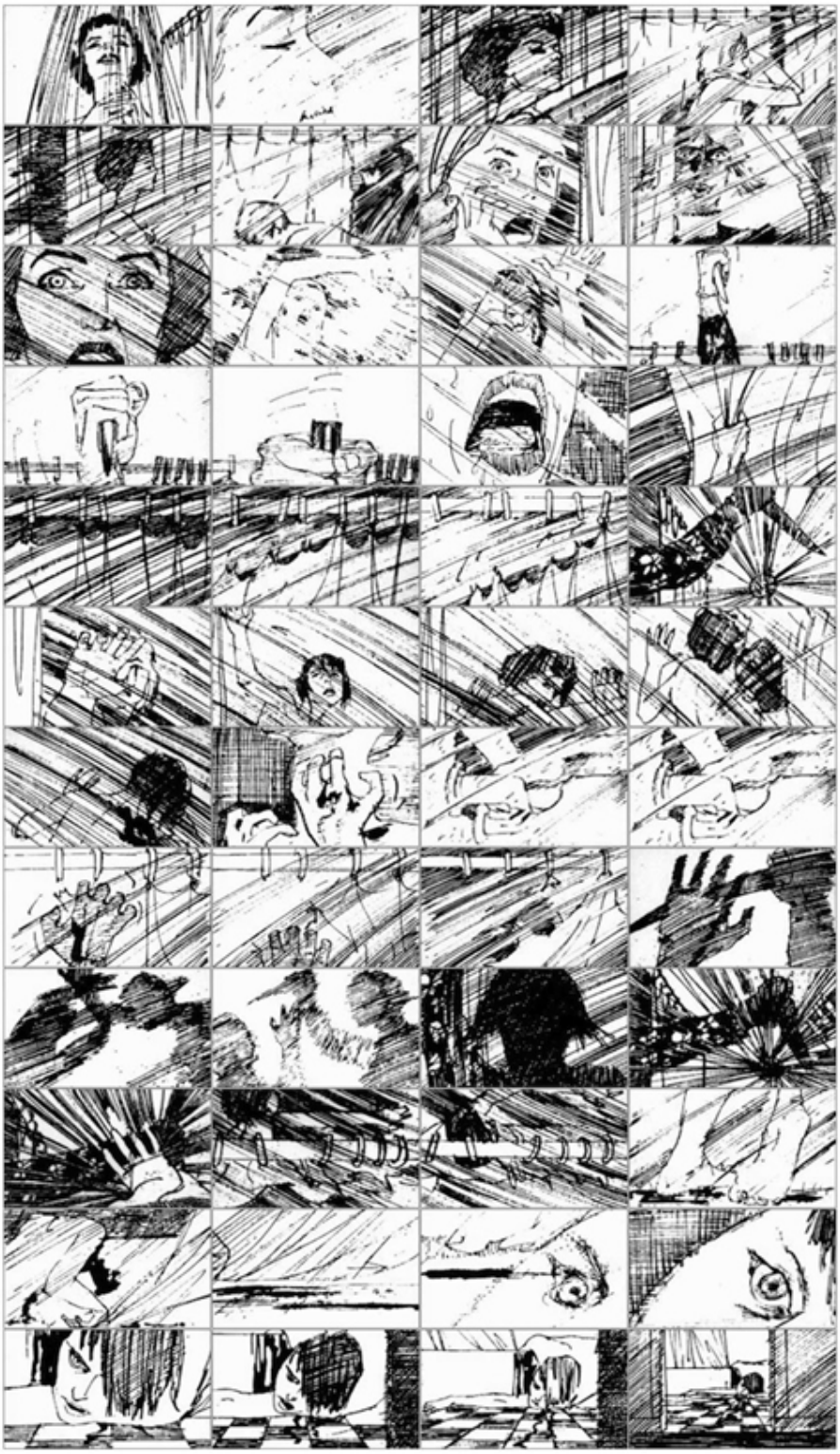
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12.4 SHOOTING SCRIPT AND STORY BOARDING

Scripting is a part of pre-production tasks. For the production of a motion picture, a revised and detailed format of the script gets drafted. This draft is called a **shooting script.** When a screenplay gets approved for production, the scenes are assigned with serial numbers, included in the script along with different scene headers. These numbers provide a convenient reference for each individual scene and can be well understood by the various production departments. Shooting script follows a defined set of procedures specifying how script revisions should be implemented and circulated.

Story Boarding is not essentially a part of script writing. It takes place after the writing of script and it's not the task of writer; but it helps the cinematographer and the director to visualize the scenes of the script. Storyboard also known as shooting board, is a series of frames, with sketches or drawings of the sequences of the film script, like a comic book. It's the pre-visualization of the film from the script with illustrations. Storyboard helps in estimating production cost and saves time. Many of the large budget silent films were storyboarded; but most of these materials have been lost during 1970s-1980. George Melies was one of those first filmmakers to use storyboard. However, the process today we know as storyboarding was developed at Walt Disney Productions during the early 1930s. Let us look at the storyboard of one of the thriller films of all times , Alfred Hitchcock's Psycho (1960) where the spine chilling shower scene still stands out as one of the iconic scenes of all times.

In order to better understand the concept of storyboard, the shower scene has been shown in the same format with each scene carefully narrated through illustration. Saul Bass, an American graphic designer and an Academy Award winning filmmaker prepared the storyboard for this famous scene.



Source : http://cpbucket.fiu.edu/1178-fiu01-vic-3400-secrvc-81031%2Fpsycho-shower-scene-storyboard.pdf

If you looks at the illustrations, you will see that the scene begins with zoom-in from the translucent shower curtain where we get to know that killer is coming from behind. The camera zooms and pans and the audience is allowed to know that killer is here but the victim is still unaware of it. Till this point there is no use of music and all that can be heard is splash of water giving an impression that everything is fine (at least from the victim's perspective).

In the next shot , the killer pulls the curtain revealing the horrifying look of an old lady holding a large knife in the right hand.

The lighting is such that the face of killer is never revealed throughout the scene which adds to the suspense. The frantic high-pitched music suddenly kicks in, which raises the heat and creates an overall horrified atmosphere. The music in this scene is dark and sinister and accompanies the knife entering and exiting the character's body.

Then follow a series of stabbings with several shots showing body language and also facial expression, numerous close-ups and extreme close-ups emphasizing characters' reactions and point-of-view shots putting the audience in the positions of both the victim and the killer. This successive change of reference makes the scene more horrific to watch.

After the lady has been killed, the music reaches its apex and changes from a high-pitched screeching to a low-pitched and disturbing sound. The music successfully captures the pain of Marion being stabbed continuously.

Finally Hitchcock leads us to the iconic shot of the slow zoom into the plug hole as the blood flows into it, and then zooms out from the woman's eye.



LET US KNOW

Spec script : A "spec script" literally means that you are writing a screenplay on speculation. That is, no one is paying you to write the script. You are penning it in hopes of selling the script to a buyer. Spec scripts should stick stringently to established screenwriting rules.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.5 : What is a shooting script?

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Q.6 : What is story boarding?

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Q.7 : Fill in the blanks –

i. Storyboard also known as _____, is a series of frames, with sketches or drawings of the _____ of the film script.

ii. Storyboard is the _____ of the film from the script with illustrations

iii. The process today we know as storyboarding was developed at _____ Productions during the early 1930s

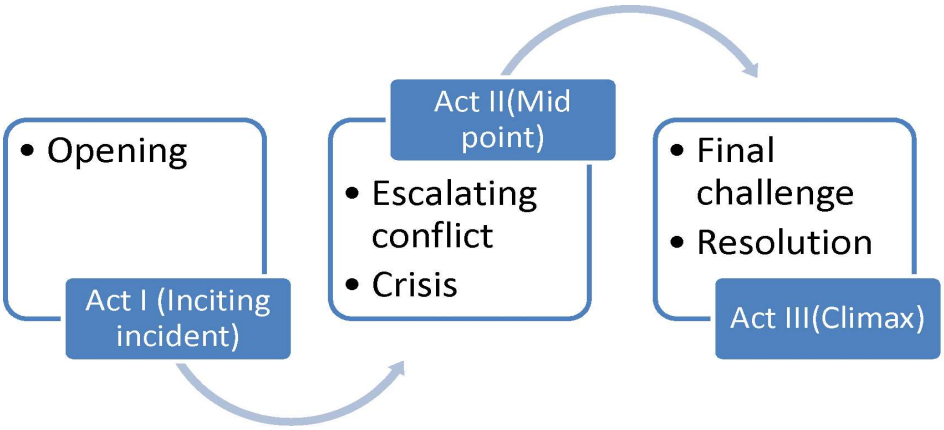
12.5 STEPS TO FOLLOW WHILE WRITING A SCRIPT

So far, you have been learning about script and screenplay, format, styles and components of screenplay and story boarding. Now, after learning about theoretical aspects of scriptwriting, you want to write a script yourself, how would you start it?

Writing a film script is fascinating; but not an easy task. It takes reasonable amount of time and dedication to get hold of the craft of screenwriting. There are a few steps to follow when developing and writing a screenplay. However, these steps are not hard and fast rule, so they can happen at any order of precedence depending on the demand of your story.

First and foremost before moving on with the steps , one needs to have the story structure in place.

Most of the films that are made have a distinct outline which consists of beginning, middle and end. This basically sets in motion the story to unfold in three different Acts .Movie scripts are further broken into “beats,” or places in the script that are pivotal turning points in the story, such as the presentation of the central challenge or the final battle. Given below is a story map of the important beats in a story which highlights the standard 3-Act story.



As is evident from the above diagram, the opening sequence establishes the tone and genre and hooks the viewer. A problem, event or an opportunity that the protagonist will have to overcome is covered under Act I. Escalationg conflict signifies the end of Act I where the protagonist makes a proactive decision to face the challenge at hand. At this stage the protagonist is more committed to the goal than ever before. At the end of Act II, the protagonist gets an insight to conquer the problem posed by the central conflict. Act III is usually the point of highest drama where the protagonist is able to resolve the central conflict. The resolution ties up the loose ends of the story, giving an idea of where the characters are headed.

Let us now try to understand the different steps that must be kept in mind while writing a script.

Step 1: Craft a logline

A logline is a brief summary of the story. It is usually a single sentence that describes the protagonists as well as antagonist and their conflict of interest. The goal of logline is to convey both the premise of the story and the emotional undertone. It is the spine of the screenplay.

Step 2: Write a Treatment

A treatment includes the title of the screenplay, the logline, a list of main characters and a short synopsis of the story. It is usually a 2-5 page long summary of the story. The synopsis should highlight the main beats and turning points of the story. Anyone who reads it should get a clear idea of the story, its characters and the style. Writing a treatment is basically necessary to sell the script in the market; but gives a holistic view of the story on page and helps the writer to understand it for further detailing. To sell it in the market, a treatment should include the writer's name and contact information as well.

Step 3: Develop your characters

In the next step, the writer has to think about the characters in the light of the story he or she wants to tell. The most important thing while developing the characters of a script is that the writer has to make them empathetic and bad. Even the antagonist has a reason for being bad.

Step 4: Plot and Outline

In this step, the writer has to break down the story into narrative-arc components and has to outline every scene. Detailed outline will save time in the writing of the script. While outlining the plot, one should remember, tension drives a story. Building and releasing tension keeps the audience engaged.

Step 5: Write a First Draft

Based on the outline, next one should write down the script with dialogues and screen direction. Every word of descriptive action in a screenplay should be written in present tense. The first ten pages of a script is very critical to write and if one has to submit it for production houses, one has to be very careful about the ten pages as these ten pages can pull them in or to reject

it. However while writing the first draft one should be too self-critical. Re-building can be done later.

Step 6: Take a Break

Once the first draft, has been finished the writer should take his or her mind off from the script to rebuild it later with a fresh set of eye.

Step 7: Rewrite

Rewriting involves refining the action, tightening the dialogues and going for an overall rebuilding of the script by editing and fine tuning it. While creating a final version, using some white space will make it easier for a potential reader to get through quicker.

Writing a screenplay is difficult; but one can learn the craft of screenwriting with perseverance and patience.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.8 : Fill in the blanks -

(i) A logline is a _____ of the story. It is usually a _____sentence that describes the protagonists as well as antagonist and their _____.

(ii) Every word of descriptive action in a screenplay should be written in _____

(iii) While outlining the plot, one should remember,_____

_____drives a story.

(iv) A treatment includes _____, _____, a list of _____ and _____ of the story.

(v) The goal of logline is to convey both the premise of the story and the



12.6 LET US SUM UP

Let us sum up our unit on the writing for film with the following points:

- In media writing, script basically refers to the written text for any story telling medium, to detail the building of a story or plot to be performed later. It is the skeleton of any kind of production. It involves detail character establishment, dialogues, ambience narration and other elements in order to make a plot ready for performance.
- A screenplay is the written work to support the story for a film or a television program. It involves the dialogue, slug or time and space element of the narrative and screen direction etc. It can be an original piece or adaptation.
- Film screenplay for mainstream studios all over the world are expected to abide by the 'studio format' that defines how elements of screenplay, as for transitions, dialogues, character names, shots etc. are to be presented on page with proper font and line spacing. According to the general practice of script format, one page roughly equates one minute of screen time. The standard font is 12 point Courier Typeface.
- The major components of a film script are action or 'screen direction', 'dialogue' and 'slug line'.
- There are two standard styles of writing script: 'single column script' and 'double column script'. Single-column script is written in one part. And before every scene and sequence, slug line and other directions are given. Double column scripts are more elaborative in nature. Shot direction/ components of action or visual direction, and audio elements are divided into two parts.
- For the production of a motion picture, a revised and detailed format of the script gets drafted. This draft is called a **shooting script.** When a screenplay gets approved for production, the scenes are assigned with serial numbers along with different scene headers.

Shooting script follows a defined set of procedures stating how script revisions should be implemented and circulated.

- Storyboard also known as shooting board, is a series of frames, with sketches or drawings of the sequences of the film script, like a comic book. It takes place after the writing of script and it's not the task of writer; but it helps the cinematographer and the director to visualize the scenes of the script.
- While it may seem fascinating to write a film script, it is not an easy craft. There are some important things or steps to remember and follow while writing a script. The writing of a film script involves the writing of log-line, writing the treatment, planning the outline, writing the first draft, and rewriting or rebuilding the script afresh after a break.



12.7 FURTHER READING

1. Dancyger, Ken (2013). Global Scriptwriting. Massachusetts : Focal Press.
2. Hueth, Alan, C. (2019). Scriptwriting for film, television and new Media. Oxford : Routledge.



12.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1 : Script is the skeleton of any kind of production. It usually refers to the written text that forms and supports a narrative for a play, film or broadcast. It involves detail character establishment, dialogues, ambience narration and other elements in order to make a plot ready for performance. Script is the backbone of any storytelling medium, including film.

Ans to Q No 2 : The script for a film is known as screenplay. It is the written work to support the story for a film or a television program. It involves

the dialogue, slug and screen direction etc.For any good film, the most significant and pivotal element is the writing of screenplay.

Ans to Q No 3 : The major components of a film script are action or 'screen direction', 'dialogue' and 'slug line'. Screen direction refers to the description of settings, character movement or sound elements. The dialogues are the words that the character speaks. A 'slug line' or a 'master scene heading' contains three pieces of information: whether the scene is set inside or outside: interior/INT or exterior/ EXT, the location and the time of the day.

Ans to Q No 4 : The standard font for film script format is 12 point Courier typeface.

Ans to Q No 5 : For the production of a motion picture, a revised and detailed format of the script gets drafted. This draft is called a **shooting script.** After a screenplay gets approved for production, the scenes are assigned with serial numbers, according to scene headers. These numbers provide a convenient reference for various production departments. Shooting script follows a defined set of procedures specifying how script revisions should be implemented and circulated.

Ans to Q No 6 : Story Boarding takes place after the writing of script. It helps the cinematographer and the director to visualize the scenes of the script. Storyboard also known as shooting board, is the pre-visualization of the film, with series of frames, with illustrations of the sequences of the film script, like a comic book.

Asn to Q No 7 : (i) Storyboard also known as shooting board, is a series of frames, with sketches or drawings of the sequences of the film script

(ii) It's the pre-visualization of the film from the script with illustrations

(iii) The process today we know as storyboarding was developed at Walt Disney Productions during the early 1930s.

Ans to Q No 8 : (i) A logline is a brief summary of the story. It is usually a single sentence that describes the protagonists as well as antagonist and their conflict of interest.

(ii) Every word of descriptive action in a screenplay should be written in present tense.

(iii) While outlining the plot, one should remember, tension drives a story.

(iv) A treatment includes the title of the screenplay, the logline, a list of main characters and a short synopsis of the story.

(v) The goal of logline is to convey both the premise of the story and the emotional undertone.



12.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions

Q.1 : What is studio format of script writing?

Q.2 : What are the styles of screenplay?

B. Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1 What is a shooting script?

zQ.2 :What is story boarding? What is its importance in the context of filmmaking?

C. Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1 :What are the steps to be followed while writing a film script?

Q.2 : What are the major components of a film script?

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UNIT- 13 : ART OF WRITING PLAYS

UNIT STRUCTURE

13.1 Learning Objectives
13.2 Introduction
13.3 Types of Play
13.4 Formats of Performance
13.5 Structure of a Play
13.6 Steps to write a Play
13.7 Let Us Sum Up
13.8 Further Reading
13.9 Answers to Check Your Progress
13.10 Model Questions

13.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- describe the different types of plays
- discuss on the formats of performance for plays
- evaluate the craft of writing a play

13.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit you have been familiarised with the preparation of a script for a film and the concepts of screenplay, scriptwriting, storyboard etc. In this unit, we will discuss about plays, different types of plays and various other aspects related to play writing.

Let us now focus on the craft of writing plays. A play is a form of literature that usually consists of dialogue between characters, planned not only for mere reading, rather for theatrical performances. One, who writes a play, is called a playwright. However the term play is often used as synonymous to theatrical performances or drama; but here we will follow the defined distinction between the two as a form of media writing and its performance.

Plays are the backbone for any theatrical performance like a screenplay for a film. However the major philosophical difference between the two forms of media writing exists on the fact that plays can exist without theatrical performances and there can be multiple number of performances of one play; but a screenplay exist only by virtue of the film concerned and once the film gets released, the same screenplay never gets used again. So a film is the death of a screenplay with its all potential used or not used for once, and a theatre is a rebirth of a play leaving dynamics to explore in future performances.

The term play as a general term, at times refer to only non-musical plays or called as 'straight plays'. For plays of shorter duration, the word 'playlet' is used at times. There are different types of plays with their defined craft of writing. Again, the same play can be performed in different platforms using different formats. However irrespective of the performing space and type of play, they follow a basic structure for building the narrative. In the following segments we will discuss about the types of plays, their performing formats and the structure of a play.

13.3 TYPES OF PLAY

After having an idea on play, let us have an understanding on the different types of play with their unique features. On the basis of emotion and the content they are dealing, plays can be identified in different categories. Again on the basis of performance structure they are intended to follow, plays can further be sorted in different categories. Here, we will discuss some of the most prominent categories of plays:

- **Comedy :** Comedies are designed to be humorous. They are often identified with wit, unconventional and unusual characters and strange circumstances. In ancient Greece, where the example of classic theatre can be traced along with India, comedies were one of the two major forms of theatrical performance and play types, tragedies being the other. In Indian theatre tradition as well, comedy played an important role and sense of wit and humour with touch on satire can be found in Sanskrit theatres.

In practice, comedies are also of different types, based on their content and approach for reaching audience. The more prominent are:

- **Satire:** A satire attempts to make a political or social statement with the sense of humour on current events by looking on it comically. American playwright Edward Albee's 'The American Dream' is a classic example of satire that takes a look on American family life. Voltaire's 1759 French play 'Socrates' is another classic example of satire with their witty approaches towards government authority and organized religion.
- **Farce:** A farce is generally a nonsensical genre of play that aims at entertaining the audience by means of the intended performance with exaggerated situations with high extravaganza. They seem too improbable in reality and often characterised with physical humour, deliberate absurdity and stylised performance. William Shakespear's 'The Comedy of Errors' is a classic example of farce. Philip King and Falkland L. Carey's 'Big Bad Mouse' is another example of comedy farce being performed widely.
- **Parody**: A parody, also called a spoof, send-up, take off or lampoon, is created to comment on an original work-on its subject, author, style or some other aspect- by making comic imitations. One classic example of parody is Francis Beaumont's 'The Knight of the Burning Pestle', which was a parody of Thomas Heywood's 'The Four Prentices of London'.

- **Tragedy :** Tragedy evokes the emotion of sadness and is based on human sufferings. It intends to invoke an accompanying catharsis in audience while performing. Tragic plays deals with many emotions; but primarily suggest a sense of unhappiness, sadness, grief or depression. It was one of the classic types of play in ancient Greece and India. William Shakespear's 'Othello', 'King Lear', 'Macbeth' and 'Hamlet' are some classic examples of tragedy.

Historical: A Historical is based on actual historical events. They can evoke any emotion. History emerged as a distinct genre from tragedy

during Renaissance in England. A play in this genre, based on a historical narrative, is often set in the medieval or early modern past. History as a separate genre was popularized by William Shakespeare and his plays are still counted as the best examples of the genre. Thomas Heywood's 'Edward IV' and William Shakespeare's 'King John' are some of the classic examples of history. Mihir Bhuta's 'Chanakya', widely performed under the direction of Manoj Joshi, is an example of historical play from India.

Musical: Musicals are characterised by their unique performance structure. They refer to a kind of play identified by the unique use of songs and music as a means of building the narrative. Musical combines songs, spoken dialogue, acting and dance. Songs are sung by the characters and often weave with or as part of dialogues. Songs are performed by the characters to move the story forward. It can be distinguished from Operas on giving equal importance to dialogue, movement and other elements. As performances some of the most noted events of musicals are the big-budget Broadway in New York and West End in London. Though musicals are considered to have a western origin; but many of the folk theatre forms from India like the 'Yakshagana' or Noh of Japan have the characters of musicals. Joseph Stein's 'Fiddler on the Roof' is an example of musical.

Absurd: Absurd plays deny rationality and embrace the certainty of the void in human condition. Absurd plays demonstrate such void leaving the audience to discuss and question the content of the play for themselves. On the structural base absurd play can be seen as a physical contradiction to the language used. Samuel Barclay Beckett, Jean-Paul Sartre, Eugène Ionesco, Arthur Adamov, Jean Genet etc are some of the most prominent playwrights from this genre. Beckett's 'Waiting for Godot' is often considered as the most cherished work of absurd play.

One-act play: A one-act play can be defined by its unique structural design of having only one act. A difference of these plays can be seen from other plays that occur over several acts. One-act plays may consist of one or more scenes. These plays are less time consuming while performed, hence

have world wide popularity. Edward Elbee's American satire 'The American Dream' is an example of one-act play.

Ten minute play: Ten minute plays are basically a subgenre of one-act play developed in recent time. These are experiments popularised by writing competitions in recent years. Protagonist or the characters of a ten minute play struggle to maintain balance in his world; but end in complication. Jeff Goode's 'Murder by Midnight' and Alex Broun's '10000 cigarettes' are some examples of ten minute play.

Full length play: The simple definition of a full length play can be given as, a play that has a narrative not limited only to one act and covers several acts evoking different emotion. Content wise it can be comedy, tragedy, parody or historical. Shakespearian plays were full length plays. In practice, the term defines the structure of a play and is used against the term one-act.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1. What is a play?

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Q 2. What is the philosophical difference between screenplay and play?

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Q 3. What are the two major play types in ancient Greece?

Q 4. Fill in the blank :-

(i) A satire attempts to make a _____ or _____ statement with the sense of humour on current events by looking on it comically.

(ii) It (musical) can be distinguished from Operas on giving _____ to dialogue, movement and other elements.

(iii) Ten minute plays are basically a _____ of one-act play developed in recent time.

13.4 FORMATS OF PERFORMANCE

Plays performance formats can be of different types. Though in each of the formats, experiments can be done by exploring the dynamics of different play types; but not every play type suit every performance format. Major formats of performances for play are:

Folk: Folk theatre, also called as community theatre, is largely prenalent in Asian countries of India, China, Thailand, Japan, Indonesia etc. with different names; but common structures. Folk Theatre is a composite art form with a fusion of elements from music, dance, epic and ballad recitation, graphic and plastic arts, religious as well as other cultural rituals and festival peasantry. The play for folk theatres are either surviving as oral traditions or has been long written ages back. However performance text can be and has often been moulded according to the necessity of the performance within the defined traditional structure. Yakshagana, Ankiya Nat, Jatra, Ramleela of India, Noh of Japan, Chinese opera etc are some of the examples of folk or community theatre.

Open Air: Open air or amphitheatre basically refers to a performance space from the design of ancient Roman and Greek theatre traditions. The term amphitheatre can be traced back to Greek origin. Unlike a modern open air stadium in amphitheatres, it was more of a semi-circle arrangement of performance, entertainment and sports. In India, folk theatre forms are always traditionally performed in an open air arrangement. However, in the

modern day use of theatre, it may consist of theatre-style stages with spectator seating on only one side or in three sides in semi-circle or following the structure of theatres in the round/arena theatre. Natural formations of similar shape are sometimes known as natural amphitheatres. In recent times, open air theatrical format or space is used for experiments with existing modern plays and also by creating new contents. Play types can be improvised or pre-decided or can be a mix of both.

Proscenium: In simple sense, proscenium is the conventional modern day stage for theatrical and other performances. It is usually surrounded on the top and sides by a physical proscenium arch and on the bottom by the stage floor itself. That space acts as the frame for the audience to observe the events taking place. There is a divide between the audience and the performers in such format. In proscenium, audience are allowed only to observe the performers from one dimension, unlike open air or arena theatre, where audience can watch the performance of a play from all the sides. Proscenium performances follow a structured text with elaborate lightings, settings and sound. Folk theatres are often not performed in proscenium unless for demonstration purpose.

Theatre of the Oppressed: Brazilian theatre practitioner Augusto Boal first elaborated this set of theatre practice that focuses on oppression and social issues. Boal's techniques use theatre as means of promoting social and political change. Audience becomes active in these theatre forms with a changing role from spectators to 'spect-actors'. They are made to explore, show, analyse and transform the reality in which they are living. It includes theatre forms like 'invisible' that takes in a place where people would not normally expect to see a theatrical performance. Performers hide the fact that it is a performance from those who observe and may choose to participate in it, thus leading spectators to view it as a real, un-staged event. Formats of theatre of the oppressed hardly follow any structured play text; but exercise an impromptu control over the narrative.

Street Play: Street play performances take place in public spaces like shopping centres, street corners, campuses of academic institutions etc.

without a specific paying audience. They focus on health, public, political and social awareness issues. Though they follow a narrative and play text, the performances are not structured and make place for slogans and awareness speeches. They act as advocates for socio-political change.

A playwright has to act cautiously while writing with a clear idea of its format. However, experiments can be done by the director with formats and play type. For example play text of folk theatre has been used for proscenium and plays written basically for proscenium are being explored within the format of open air.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5. What is folk theatre?

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Q 6. Fill in the blank :-

(i) Open air is also known as _____

(ii) In Theatre of Oppressed spectator transforms into _____

3.5 STRUCTURE OF A PLAY

Lay-out design for play texts may from vary country to country depending on cultural dynamics and also based on a play's format of performance. However each play contains certain basic structural elements. They are:

Title page: Title page or the cover page has the name of the play and the playwright along with the contact detail of the playwright at the corner of the page.

Character list: This page should contain all the names of the characters involved in the narrative of the play.

Art-Scene heading: Art-Scene heading is the line before every scene of a play that contains the information of the time and space. It is equivalent to the slug line of a screen play.

Action description: Immediately below the art-scene heading, the description of that particular scene is given. It's the directorial description of the narrative.

Dialogue: Dialogues are written at the centre in each scene against each character.

Transition: Finally at the end of each scene, transition for the next scene gets incorporated.

These are the basic structural elements of a play. Except one-act plays, most of the plays are being constructed with a three act structure. The first act sets up the plot, second act calls for rising action or the confrontation between two forces and the third act calls for resolution. However, in recent times playwrights not always follow this three act structure and experiments with the narrative structure.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 7. What are the basic components of a play-structure?

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Q 8. What are the three acts in a play?

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Q 9. What do you mean by art-scene heading?

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13.6 STEPS TO FOLLOW WHILE WRITING A PLAY

Watching a play performance can provoke many emotions: happiness, sadness, even anger. Watching a theatrical performance is a more engaging experiment for an audience than watching a film. As a medium close to audience, it has its own challenges and limitations with regards to setting and staging certain tricks like magic tricks. However, lot of limitations have been challenged with modern technology and a good imagination. So a playwright has to keep an open mind while writing; but has to remember to be practical. The steps for writing a play may very from person to person; but here we are describing a standard guideline for beginners:

a. Create an interesting plot

The plot leads a story. It leads the playwright, the director, the performers, and audience from the beginning to the end. A plot has to have an exposure, rise and a decline in it. It may not be linear in structure; but has to be easy to follow for audience.

b. Decide on your structure

Stage plays are most of the time divided into three acts, and each act is divided into scenes. Beside, a playwright has to keep it in mind while structuring a play that unlike a novel, a theatrical performance is limited to a physical space. Much of the staging will be up to the director, but if there

are certain things that are required for narrative building it should be included in the descriptions.

c. Create interesting characters

Like any other piece of writing, each of your characters should be unique and easy to identify. And while writing character gestures for performance, the writer has to make it sure that the gestures are grand enough. Body language should be given more importance than facial expressions as facial expressions cannot be seen from distance.

d. Know your audience

Audience is an important element for a play because at the end of the day one has to perform it.The playwright has to think about the age, gender, demographic, class background, education, and other details of the audience while scripting.

e. Lay it out correctly

For a production, one has to lay out the play in proper format. A playwright has to make it sure to lay out his play correctly according to standard format followed, before submitting it for production.

Although staging a play is director's job; but while writing a stage play, one should be able to visualise how your play will appear on stage to audience.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 10. Fill in the blanks

(i) Watching a theatrical performance is a more _____ experiment for an audience than watching a film.

(ii) _____ should be given more importance than _____ as facial expressions cannot be seen from distance.

(iii) A playwright has to keep it in mind while structuring a play that unlike a novel, a theatrical performance is limited to a _____



13.7 LET US SUM UP

Let us sum up our unit with the following points:

- A play is a form of literature usually consists of dialogue between characters planned for theatrical performances. However, the term play is often used as synonymously to theatrical performances or drama. Plays are the backbone for any theatrical performance like a screenplay for a film. However the major philosophical difference between the two forms of media writing exists on the fact that plays can exist without theatrical performances and there can be multiple number of performances of one play; but a screenplay exist by virtue of the film and can be shot only once for a film. There are different types of play based on their content and performance structure. Some of the most prominent genres are: comedy: farce, satire and parody, tragedy, historical, musical, absurd, one-act and full-length. Each of these categories can be identified with their content, emotional thread and performance structure.
- Plays performance formats can be of different types. And every play type does not suit every format of performance. Major formats of performance for play are: folk theatre, open air, proscenium, theatre of the oppressed, street plays etc.
- Basic components for a play structure consist of title page, character list, art-scene heading, action description, dialogue and transition. A play, if not an one act play, usually have three act with set up, confrontation and resolution.
- Writing a play is a challenging task. Here are some steps to follow while writing a play: create an interesting plot, decide on your

structure, creating characters, know the audience and laying out the proper format.



13.8 FURTHER READING

1 Hatcher, Jeffrey. The Art and Craft of Playwriting, US : FTW Media Story Press.

2 McKee, Robert (1999) Story : Substance, Structure and the Principles of Screenwriting. Metheun.



13.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No. 1: A play is a form of literature that usually consists of dialogue between characters planned for theatrical performances. However, the term play is often used as synonymously to theatrical performances or drama.

Ans to Q No. 2: Plays are the backbone for any theatrical performance like a screenplay for a film. However the major philosophical difference between the two forms of media writing exists on the fact that plays can exist without theatrical performances and there can be multiple number of performances of one play; but a screenplay exist by virtue of the film and can be shot only once for a film.

Ans to Q No. 3: Tragedies and comedies are the two major play types in ancient Greece.

Ans to Q No. 4:

(i) A satire attempts to make a political or social statement with the sense of humour on current events by looking on it comically.

(ii) It (musical) can be distinguished from Operas on giving equal importance to dialogue, movement and other elements.

(iii) Ten minute plays are basically a subgenre of one-act play developed in recent time.

Ans to Q no. 5: Folk theatre, also at times called as community theatre, is largely prevalent in Asian countries of India, China, Thailand, Japan, Indonesia etc. Folk Theatre is a composite art form with elements from music, dance, epic and ballad recitation, graphic and plastic arts, religious as well as other cultural rituals. The play for folk theatres are either surviving as oral traditions or has been long written ages back. However, they are being moulded as per the necessity of the performance within traditional structure. Ankiya Nat of Assam is an example of folk theatre.

Ans to Q no. 6:

(i) Open air is also known as amphitheatre.

(ii) In Theatre of Oppressed spectator transforms into spect-actors.

Ans to Q no. 7: Lay-out design for plays may vary depending on cultural dynamics and a play's format of performance. However each play contains certain basic structural components. They are:

Title page: Title page or the cover page has the name of the play and the playwright along with the contact detail of the playwright at the corner of the page.

Character list: It contains the names of all the characters from the play.

Art-Scene heading: Art-Scene heading is the line before every scene of a play that contains the information of the time and space.

Action description: It is the description of that particular scene that is given immunediately after the art sceme Leading. It's the directorial description of the narrative.

Dialogue: Dialogues are written at the centre in each scene.

Transition: At the end of each scene transition for the next scene gets incorporated.

Ans to Q no. 8: Most of the plays are being constructed with a three act structure. The first act sets up the plot, second act calls for rising action or the confrontation and the third act calls for resolution.

Ans to Q No. 9 : Art-Scene heading is the line before every scene of a play that contains the information of the time and space. It is equivalent to the slug line of a screen play.

Ans to Q no. 10:



(i) engaging.

(ii) Body language; facial

(iii) a physical space.

13.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions:

Q. 1: What are 'straight plays'?

Q. 2: Give one example of satire.

Q. 3: Who is a playwright?

B. Short Questions (write within 150 words)

Q 1: What are the different formats of a play performance?

Q 2: What is a three act structure?

Q 3: What are the components of a play?

C. Long Questions (write within 300 – 500 words)

Q 1: What is a play? What are the different types of play?

Q 2: Can plays play a role in bringing social changes in the society? Give your views.

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Unit - 14 : WRITING CAPTIONS FOR PHOTOJOURNALISM

UNIT STRUCTURE

14.1 Learning Objectives

14.2 Introduction

14.3 Concept of photojournalism

14.4. Basics of photojournalism

14.5 Qualities of a photojournalist

14.6 Basic parts of a caption

14.7 Writing and editing captions

14.8 Let Us Sum Up

14.9 Further Reading

14.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

14.11 Model Questions

14.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- understand the meaning of photojournalism
- analyse the qualities of a photojournalist
- discuss the basic parts of a caption
- evaluate the points that must be kept in mind for preparing a photo caption

14.2 INTRODUCTION

Before beginning our discussion on the meaning of photojournalism and the basics of writing a good caption, let us look at the following quote given by a famous American novelist, photographer and an essayist, Wright Morris (1978)-

"The camera eye and the mind's eye share a vision that has imposed itself on this century. Photographs now confirm all that is visible, and photographs will affirm what is one day remembered. Human affairs have not quite been the same since the first images formed on plates of copper, but after a century and a half we are still uncertain if it is for the better, for worse, or neither".

Till a few years back, people thought that what they saw in photographs were true. However, as we embark on a new century, the virtual age , we know that many visual representation that seem to be true are actually fake. In fact, an increasingly common response to an unusual photograph is , 'It has been digitally manipulated in the computer'. Advances in digital imaging technology has made it possible to edit a picture using various tools and techniques. The line between fact and fiction, science and art, news and entertainment, information and advertising has become increasingly blurred. Yet somehow, we must continue to disseminate the visual and verbal information necessary to inform the public about matters within and beyond their local universes. Successful and reasonably truthful communication through visual images is possible – but we must frame the production and use of reality images as "mediated communication" rather than as "objective truth". The future of visual truth depends on the integrity of the photojournalist and everyone else – subjects, editors, viewers – those who are involved in the process of making and consuming visual reportage.

A good photograph has the ability to tell a story through its composition, lighting and most importantly its subject matter. A lot of effort goes into the making of a perfect photograph and photojournalism as a branch of study is primarily concerned with the process of story telling using the medium of photography as the main story telling device.

In this unit, we shall discuss at length the concept of photojournalism, qualities of a photojournalist and the important points that must be kept in mind for writing a photo caption.

14.3 CONCEPT OF PHOTOJOURNALISM

Photojournalism had its origin in war photography . Even though early illustrations had appeared in newspapers, such as an illustration of the funeral of Lord Horatio Nelson in *The Times* (1806), the first weekly illustrated newspaper was the *Illustrated London News*, first printed in 1842.The illustrations were printed with the use of engravings.The first photograph to be used in illustration of a newspaper story was a depiction of barricades in Paris during the June Days uprising taken on 25 June 1848.Aptly titled as 'Barricades on rue Saint-Maur' the photo was published as an engraving in L'Illustration of 1-8 July 1848 as shown below-



Barricades on rue Saint-Maur' (1848)

Author :Thibault, (1830-1927)

Source : L'Histoire par l'image

Photojournalism as we know today is news photography. It is a descriptive term for reporting visual information via various media. Photographs that support the story of a news event fall in this category and photographers

who specialize in this are called photojournalists. Following are the different categories of photojournalism.

Sports photojournalism: As sports events are a big part of news, there are photojournalists who specialize in photographing sports.

War photojournalism: This is the earliest form of photojournalism, where photojournalists have covered wars and sent photos from the centre of action.

Glamour photojournalism: Celebrities and other famous personalities have become a major part of news coverage as most people want to peep into the lives of the rich and famous. There are photojournalists who specialize in this kind of photography only are also called paparazzi, which is an Italian word.

Spot news photojournalism: This means covering events that make day to day news, like political events, crime, accidents etc. This is in fact the most common type of photojournalism and is most demanding for a photojournalist.

Travel photojournalism: This type of photojournalism involves the documentation of an area's landscape, people, cultures, customs and history.

Wildlife photojournalism: This is regarded as one of the more challenging forms of photojournalism. Advanced photographic equipment as well as a good knowledge of the animal's behaviour as well as the terrain is needed to take wildlife photographs.

14.4 BASICS OF PHOTOJOURNALISM

So far, we have discussed the concept of photojournalism. It typically applies to a genre of images with a range of subgenres published or broadcast with accompanying words and usually as part of a package that may include

other visual elements like headlines, charts or multiple images. The following section will cover basics of photojournalism like Street, Candid, Documentary, Secret and Subminiature Photography.

Street photography is photography conducted for art or enquiry that features unmediated chance encounters and random incidents within public places. Though people usually feature directly, street photography might be absent of people and can be of an object or environment where the image projects a decidedly human character in facsimile or aesthetic. The street photographer can be seen as an observer of the streets with the aim of capturing newsworthy events.

Documentary photographers typically have a defined, premeditated message and an intention to record particular events in history. In social investigation, often documentary images are intended to provoke, or to highlight the need for, societal change. It also refers to a popular form of photography used to chronicle events or environments both significant and relevant to history and historical events and everyday life. Documentary photos are typically designed to draw public attention to real-life situations e.g. discriminatory, or harmful working or living conditions associated with a particular group of children or adults; health issues or scandals; environmental problems, violation of human rights etc.

A candid photograph is a photograph captured without creating a posed appearance. This is achieved in many ways e.g. when the subject is in motion, by avoiding prior preparation of the subject, by surprising the subject, by not distracting the subject during the process of taking photos. Thus, the candid character of a photo is unrelated to the subject's knowledge about or consent to the fact that photos are being taken, and unrelated to the subject's permission for subsequent usage such as distribution. The crucial factor is the actual absence of posing. If the subject is absolutely unaware of being photographed and does not even expect it, then such photography is secret photography, which is a special case of candid photography.

When the camera is disguised or concealed for some obvious element of concealment or at a great distance it is known as secret photography. It could be part of investigative journalism, photography by voyeurs, industrial

espionage, intelligence gathering by police or private investigators; by vigilantes, political protesters or activists.; by academicians such as ethnographic researchers or participant observer sociologists. Some consumer compact digital cameras are now so small that in previous decades they would have qualified as "spy cameras", and digital cameras of 41 megapixels are now being embedded in some mobile camera phones. Subminiature photography is photography with unusually small cameras using unusually small film formats. The term "miniature" was originally used to describe the 35 mm format, so cameras that used a format smaller than 35 mm were referred to as "sub-miniature". The smallest of these are often referred to as "ultra-miniature". In the interest of specificity, cameras that produce an image on the film smaller than the standard 135 film format (24×36 mm) are usually included in the genre. Lipstick cameras and other small digital cameras are not included, because they don't use film. The smaller subminiature or ultraminiature cameras, particularly Minox, are associated with spying.



LET US KNOW

Photofeature : Also known as a photo essay, a photofeature is a story or an essay on a subject told using photographs. It consists of a series or collection of photos which are interwoven to convey a story without any need for captions to convey through words. Photo features appear in newspapers, magazines and web contents.

Photo editor : A photo editor is someone who is in charge of the photo section in a newspaper or magazine. He choses the photographer and discusses the topic. He may also chose a reporter who will write the story around the photo essay. It is also the responsibility of the photo editor to decide and select on the best pictures that convey the whole story.

14.5 QUALITIES OF A PHOTOJOURNALIST

A professional photojournalist requires some guiding principles, rules to check and balance his attitudes as well as attributes towards a good professionalism. He must bear in mind that he has to be careful of his coverage by ensuring that he does not degrade or defame characters, he/ she should scout to be the best while maintaining balance, credibility and fairness. Events wait for no one, especially for photojournalists. A photographer should be patient and win the confidence of the people he wants to photograph. The photographer should work in such a way that people who are being photographed do not feel self-conscious and behave normally when the camera is pointed at them. A photojournalist must be prepared to act fast and have his camera always at hand.

The interesting pictures are most often a result of the alertness of the photojournalist who is at the right place at the right time and it involves notions of speed, quick decision-making, hastiness and working under pressure. The notion of immediacy, referring to the need to publish photographs and videos immediately after something newsworthy happens, has revolutionized the concept of time within photojournalism. Realtime reporting is considered highly important, even though it often requires balancing the values of immediacy and objectivity, which may lead to stretching traditional practices. In addition to taking news photos, a photojournalist may be responsible for –

a. Brainstorming news ideas with journalists
b. Consulting with photo editors
c. Developing film
d. Editing photos
e. Scheduling photo sessions
f. Writing the photo caption

The National Press Photographers Association, founded in 1946 in the U.S is a professional society that promotes the highest standards in photojournalism, acknowledges concern for every person's need both to

be fully informed about public events and to be recognized as part of the world in which we live. It has laid down a code of ethics known as NPPA Code of Ethics whereby it states that photojournalists and those who manage visual news productions are accountable for upholding the following standards in their daily work. It further says that photojournalists should,

i. Strive to ensure that the public's business is conducted in public
ii. Think proactively to develop a unique vision and presentation
iii. Strive for total and unrestricted access to subjects, recommend alternatives to shallow or rushed opportunities and work to show unpopular or unnoticed points of view.
iv. Avoid political, civic and business involvements or other employment that compromise or give the appearance of compromising one's own journalistic independence.
v. Strive to be unobtrusive and humble in dealing with subjects
vi. Respect the integrity of the photographic moment.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1 :Which was the first photograph to be used in illustration of a newspaper story?

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Q.2 :What do you mean by photojournalism?

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Q.3: What are the basic features of a candid photograph?

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Q.4 : Define the term Photo feature .

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ACTIVITY 14.1

Visit a newspaper house and watch the works related to photo editing there. Take few newspapers and study the photographs there alongwith their captions. Then try to write caption for some photographs of current happenings.

14.7 BASIC PARTS OF A CAPTION

A picture without a caption is like watching television with out the sound. A good caption always begins with a great photograph and thorough research , then ends with well-written , polished sentences in active voice and an informative and enlightening note. Photo captions require information, judgment and imagination. The purpose of captions is not only to explain the photo but to gain the interest of the viewer as well.

A good caption usually has four parts as given below-

(i) A headline : The headline should be a clever title that is verbally linked to the photograph.

(ii) An identification sentence : This particular sentence talks about what is exactly going on in the picture that is written in the present tense.

(iii) A secondary information sentence : The secondary information sentence adds information that is not obvious in the photo and is written in past tense. This particular sentence is generated from the interview and gives more meaning to the photo.

(iv) A quote : A quote at the end adds the feeling of being there/at the place of action. Feelings and opinion must be expressed through quotes.Quote can either be from a person in the photo or a person related to the action of the photo.

Writing a good caption takes a lot of effort and a creative bent of mind. The following steps will provide the much needed guidance in order to write an eye catching and interesting caption :

Step 1: Who is in the photo?

Step 2: What are they doing/ what is he/she doing and what happened as a result of what they did?

Step 3: When did all this happen?

Step 4: Where did this take place?

Step 5: Combine all the facts and create your basic caption.

Step 6: A second line can be added if there is additional information that does not fit into the basic caption.

Step 7: The two sentences that has been constructed must be edited. Redundant words should be removed .

14.7 WRITING AND EDITING CAPTIONS

It is true that a picture or a photograph can express thousands of words. But sometimes, a text is needed to make a photograph more meaningful. So, we need a caption to explain the meaning of a photograph. In a simple manner we can define the term ‘caption’ as a textual representation that

refer to information identifying a picture or illustration. Let us discuss briefly how to write and edit a good caption for a photograph.

John D. Simmons, staff photographer of *Charlotte Observer*, offers some advice to write and edit good captions. According to him, "good captions are more than just the subject's name and what's going on in the photo. In fact, if all you do in your caption is explain the activity in the photo it has little or no value to the reader. Good captions incorporate the five W's: Who, What, Where, When and Why. You can occasionally throw in "How" if the photo is so technically complicated and interesting that the reader might wonder how it was made. Good captions are spelled correctly. Good captions are factually accurate. Good captions leave the copy editors with few questions. Good captions not only enhance your standing in the newsroom but also the photo department's standing. Good captions are essential to the credibility of the newspaper and its standing in the community."

Writing a good photo caption is definitely an essential part of the news photographer's job. A particularly good photograph must provide the reader the requisite information needed to understand it and its relevance to the news. In other words, a caption must be written in a consistent and concise manner having a high degree of clarity and accuracy. In most photo captions the first sentence identifies the people and place in the photograph and supply the date and location where it was taken. The second (and perhaps third) sentence should provide contextual information to help readers understand what they are looking at.

There is no such definite format to write captions for photographs as it varies from one publication house to another. However, a basic photo caption must -

- **Contain the five W's and one H :**It is expected that a good caption must contain 5 Ws and 1 H. The **f**ive W's are Who, What, Where, When, Why and one H- How. These are used for basic information about the story. It is a fundamental concept in journalism. Suffice to say that the same principle holds good for a photo caption.

- **Clearly identify the people and location that appear in the photo.** Professional titles should be included along with the formal name of the location. One must be extremely careful to spell the names correctly . Photographs that contain more than one person, identifications usually go from left to right. If the picture consists of a large group of people, then identification of only notable people may be required and sometimes no IDs are required at all.
- **Include the date and the day the photograph was taken.** This information is quite important for a news publication. If an archive photograph is provided or even if a photograph taken prior to an event is used, then the caption should make it clear that it is a 'file photo'.
- **Provide some context or background information** so that the reader can understand as to what the photograph wants to convey. Usually one or two sentences is sufficient to describe a particular photograph.
- **Be written in complete sentences and must be in the present tense.** The basic rationale behind using present tense is that it gives the image a sense of immediacy. Of course , it is not always logical to write the entire caption in the present tense.
- **Be brief and concise**. It is advisable to not to write long sentences (not more than three sentences) while describing a particular photograph.
- **Always include credits and citations.** Every photo should include the name of the photographer and/or the organization that owns the photograph. In actual photographic magazines and publications, photos also include the technical details of how the photo was taken (e.g. aperture, film speed, f-stop, lens, etc.)

Writing a photo caption is definitely not a cakewalk. A lot of thought goes into conceptualising the perfect caption. However, one must be careful enough to watch out for the following-

- If a photo is manipulated digitally beyond simple sizing and colour control, it should be labelled as a "photo illustration" in the caption or in the photo credit. If the photojournalist makes use of unusual photo techniques such as time-lapse photography, it should be noted in the caption. It is also imperative to explain the use of special effects, such as the use of an inset or a picture sequence.

- A caption should not begin with the words 'a,' 'an,' or 'the.' These words are too basic and take up valuable captioning room when they aren't necessary. For example, instead of saying: "A Royal Bengal tiger in the Sundarbans" one should simply say: "Royal Bengal tiger running through the Sundarbans."

- Another important point that must kept in mind is that one should not start a caption with the name of someone. Rather one should start the caption with a description first and then include the name. For example, one should not say- "Ruchika Jain near the Nehru Park". Rather it must be said as "Jogger Ruchika Jain near the Nehru Park."

- Verbs or verb phrases such as "looks on" or "poses" "or "is pictured above" in writing captions must be avoided. They are obvious and boring.

- If the photo is simply of a person (e.g. headshot) or a photo of a very specific item (e.g. umbrella), its fine to caption the photo with the name of the person or item without any punctuation. An example of a photo without punctuation is –' Toyota VSX transmission engine'.

- One must not make assumptions about what someone is thinking in a picture . For instance, one must try to avoid phrases like "an unhappy voter…" or "A fortunate survivor…" . Facts should be provided and then it should be left for the reader to judge for himself or herself what the feelings or emotions are.

- One should not try to characterize the content of a picture as beautiful, dramatic, horrifying or in any other such descriptive terms that should

be evident in the photograph. This is because, if it does not show in the photograph, then trying to convince the reader about it would seem like a foolhardy exercise.

So far we have discussed about the do's and dont's of caption writing. This brings us to the question of another important thing- that is how to go about collecting information for captions.

Usually photographers often do some amount of research on their own and collect the requisite information from the field itself or from the internet. Sometimes at well-organised events press releases are provided that contains all the detailed information necessary for writing captions. Very often the information necessary for a caption is not readily available before a picture is taken and so is collecting it during an event. During such an eventuality, the photographers carry small notebooks with them where they write the required information. These days professional cameras also have built-in audio recorders that allows one to record any significant information. At certain events, where several photos are taken, photographers often use the same general description in all of their captions, merely changing the significant names in the individual photos.

Cutline : Cutlines (in newspapers and some magazines) are the words (under the caption, if there is one) describing the photograph or illustration.

Let us take a look at one example of a photo caption-





Cutline : Cutlines (in newspapers and some magazines) are the words (under the caption, if there is one) describing the photograph or illustration.

Caption : United for Children

Cutline : Glimpse of a section of media professionals attending a workshop on the occasion of International Day of Broadcasting for children organised by UNICEF in Guwahati on Sunday, 2nd December, 2019 (UB Photos, Guwahati)

Usually the best place to place a caption is below the picture, preferably the full width of the picture. Caption can also be placed next to a picture, but ideally a caption in this position should have a column of space all to itself, so that the caption can be easily seen.

Thus, a great caption has added value when it is well written. To write a good caption one has to know the journalistic concepts and develop the skills of a journalist. Second, he/she should also be skilled as a writer. One has to use the language with a flourish. A good caption has accurate, useful information and is a good read.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.5 : What are the basic parts of a caption?

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14.8 LET US SUM UP

- Photojournalism typically applies to a genre of images with a range of subgenres published or broadcast with accompanying words and usually as part of a package that may include other visual elements like headlines, charts or multiple images.
- War photojournalism is the earliest form of photojournalism, where photojournalists have covered wars and sent photos from the centre of action.

- Travel photojournalism involves the documentation of an area's landscape, people, cultures, customs and history.
- Street photography is photography conducted for art or enquiry that features unmediated chance encounters and random incidents within public places.
- Documentary photographers typically have a defined, premeditated message and an intention to record particular events in history.
- A candid photograph is a photograph captured without creating a posed appearance.
- When the camera is disguised or concealed for some obvious element of concealment or at a great distance it is known as secret photography.
- Subminiature photography is photography with unusually small cameras using unusually small film formats.
- A professional photojournalist requires some guiding principles, rules to check and balance his attitudes as well as attributes towards a good professionalism.
- A good caption always begins with a great photograph and thorough research , then ends with well-written , polished sentences in active voice and an informative and enlightening note.



14.9 FURTHER READING

1. Kobre, Kenneth (2004). Photojournalism. UK : Focal Press.
2. Menon, Krishna (2008). Media Communication and Photo Journalism. Delhi : Manglam Publications
3. Pandey, B.K Desh (2007) . Photo Journalism. New Delhi : Sonali Publications
4. Singh, Bhanu Pratap (2011). Photo Journalism. New Delhi : Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd.

14.10ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1 : Barricades on rue Saint-Maur'

Ans to Q No 2 : Photojournalism as we know today is news photography. It is a descriptive term for reporting visual information via various media.

Ans to Q No 3: A candid photograph is a photograph captured without creating a posed appearance. This is achieved in many ways e.g. when the subject is in motion, by avoiding prior preparation of the subject, by surprising the subject, by not distracting the subject during the process of taking photos. Thus, the candid character of a photo is unrelated to the subject's knowledge about or consent to the fact that photos are being taken, and unrelated to the subject's permission for subsequent usage such as distribution.

Ans to Q No 4 : Also known as a photo essay, a photofeature is a story or an essay on a subject told using photographs.

Ans to Q No 5 :A headline , an identification sentence, a secondary information sentence and a quote.

14.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions

Q.1 :What are the basic features of a documentary photograph?

Q.2 : What do you mean by spot news photojournalism?

B . Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1 : What are the different categories of photojournalism?

Q.2 :What are the different parts of a caption?

Q.3 : What are the important points that must be kept in mind for preparing a good photo caption?

C. Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1: Write a short essay on basics of photojournalism.

Q.2: Discuss the qualities necessary to be a responsible photojournalist.

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UNIT-15 : COPY EDITING AND PROOF EDITING

UNIT STRUCTURE

15.1 Learning Objectives
15.2 Introduction
15.3 Principles of copy editing
15.4 The Language of copy writing.
15.5 Print media requirements
15.6 Radio and television copyediting.
15.7 Let Us Sum Up
15.8 Further Reading
15.9 Model Questions

15.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- develop the skills and knowledge necessary for copy editing.
- understand the common elements of a copy.
- understand the proper layout and design of a copy for the purpose of editing it.
- develop the knowledge and skills necessary for editing a proof copy.

15.2. INTRODUCTION

Let us begin with a basic question: What is a copy? 'Copy' is a term used in the literature of visual commercials to refer to the 'text' of an advertisement (ad henceforth) or the spoken words used in radio and TV commercials. In other words, a copy is the text of an adreatsement which can be either visual or audio or both.

A personal who constructs the text of an ad is referred to as a copywriter. Sometimes more than one person are associated in the work of developing an ad and they would collectively by known as copywriters. A

copywriter has to be a competent user of the language of meanings, derivations as well as the effect that a word can create in the reader's mind . Now who is a copy editor? A copy editor is a person who is responsible for editing a copy. For effective copy editing, it is important for a person to have a number of competencies.

Most importantly, he must have.

- a vast range of knowledge on the basic style of writing appropriate for an ad,
- an ability to describe the various copy elements of a print ad, and,
- an ability to explain the message, characterization. and tools of radio and TV commercials among others.

On the other hand, the term 'proof editing' refers to the knowledge and skills necessary for editing a proof copy before it is finally approved for printing. Thus proof reading requires a person to have

- a knowledge of the conventional signs and symbols of proof reading, and,
- a knowledge and skill on the layout and design of a pice of text of ads.

Thus, you will notice that the unit is made up of two parts. The first part is concerned with the principles and skills of copy editing while the second part is concerned with the knowledge and skills of proof editing and designing. For effective copy editing, it is necessary to acquire a knowledge on proof editing as well.

15.3. PRINICIPLES OF COPY EDITING

Copyediting is an art and a technique. It involves a number of activities notably correcting and adapting the text of a copy so as to make it effective for the purpose for which the copy has been made. It would also involve activates like revering, amending, checking, polishing, rephrasing and rewriting the text. Copy editing would also require designing and lay out of

the copy and other important features. To illustrate this point with an example, let us look at the following ad so as to examine its basic elements. We can think of five basic elements namely: (a) the headline, (b) sub – head, (c) tag line d) body copy , e) caption or call outs . Each of these five elements has a distinctive purpose. The role of the copy editor is to evaluate the ad.

1. The Headline

The copy editor will look at the following points in the headline of an ad.

(a) Has the headline (along with any photo or illustration) been able to draw the attention of the reader to the ad?

(b) Is it too long or wordy?

While evaluating the given ad he will note the head line critically :

M A S T E R P I E C E S

He will find that

(i) The headline in the ad is immensely eye-catching

(ii) It is not too long. A single word has been able to achieve the desired objective of wearing the readers to the ad.

(iii) The copy editor will definitely like the headline. It raises in the readers mind the question; What master pieces are being referred to? Obviously, the question will lead the reader to care to explain the message further on.

2. Sub head :

Not all ad contain a sub head. It is not an indispensable part of an ad. The copy editor will look at the following points in a sub-head :

(a) What purpose is the sub head performing in the ed?

(b) Is it really necessary? Does it give a sense of redundancy?

(c) Does the sub-head contribute to the desired impact of the ad?

He will note the sub head critically:

One created in marble & other created in Pashmina. He note will that the above sub-head elaborates on, or extends the message of the headline.

Obviously, he will find that in the present ad, the sub- head effectively plays the role of an extension of an ad.

3. The body copy

The copy editor will look at the following points in a body copy of an ad:

(a) Does it fulfill the promise of the headline?

(b) Does it convey more details?

(c) Does it elaborate the "offer" that is made in the headline and sub-head.

He will examine the body copy of the ad and will note that the body copy fulfills the promise of the headline and elaborates the sub head in a very artistic way. The first part of the body copy is an extension of "One created in marble" with certain technical details. The second part of the body copy is an extension of the second part of the sub-head "Other crafted in pashmina".

A person who is actually interested in the item and is likely to buy it, would closely read the body copy. The copy-editor notes how cohesively the text of the body copy is put together in a pattern of contrast:

(i) "Pure makarane marble" contrast with "Softest and lightest wool".

(ii) " subte variation of tints and tones" contrast with "sensuous colours".

(iii) "Intricate Pietre Duke work " contrast with "Fine silk embroidery".

(iv) "Lakhs of admirers over 300 years" contrast with "Treasured by generations over 600 years".

Hoardings often do not have such a text as a body copy. But in such cases, the picture of the item performs the function of the body copy.

4. Captions and call outs

Copy editing of an captain of an ad will include the following aspects

(a) What kind of photo or illustration is being used in the ad?

(b) Does the information in the captain go beyond

What appears in the photo or illustration?

The word “call out “ is used in the literature of ads to refer to caption-like blocks of copy, usually connected to a photograph or illustration by a line or arrow which describe portions of an item or scene. You may have seen ads of fridges or cooking ranges like microwares in which arrows are used to indicate or describe a part of the item. At the end of the arrow are caption – like block of copy to refer to or describe an object or science.

The copy editor will closely examine whether the technical details (if any) are accurate. He is aware of the fact that people usually read caption and call outs before reading the body copy.

5. The tag line

Tag lines are slogans that sum up the position of an ad. In print it usually appears just beneath or beside the company logo or name. It can be useful to reinforce the company’s identity especially in radio commercials where there is no scope to use a logo or other identifying deign features the copy – editor will note that people usually read captions or call – outs before they read the body copy. Hence he/she must be particular about the use of these two elements in an ad . Note also that not all ads may contain a call – out.

15.4. THE LANGUAGE OF COPY WRITING

Some creative concepts are primarily visual. A jewellery ad illustrates a young woman richly bejewelled gazes dreamily. The visual attempts to make an impact on the prospective customer. However the ad will be more effective when words are also used. This is so because.

1. The visual can be rather complicated; words make it more focused.
2. Words can be more specific them visual
3. Words can be read over and over again until then meaning is clear.

4. Words can tempt or influence a customer's decision on a particular commodity.

   What kind of words should we use? Remember your ad has to win its audience. For this reason, words should be as simple as possible . As a copy editor, you must ensure that

   - Every words counts because both space and time are effective.
   - Ineffective words waste precious space.
   - The tighter the copy, the easier it is to understand and the greater is its impact.

   What should the copy editor do while editing a copy? The primary concern of the copy editor will be to ensure that the copy is effective. This will entail that the copy should have the following features

   - Compactness. The copy should have short familiar words, short sentences and short paragraphs.
   - Focused. The focus should be on one main point
   - Specificity. The message should be specific, to the point without indulgence to the luxuries of generalities.
   - Intimacy. The copy should have a personal tone which can be achieved by direct address to the audience/reader as "you" rather than "we" or "they". It should read like two friends talking.
   - Variation in presentation. To add visual appeal in presentation, see that the copy is broken up into short paragraphs with sub – heads. In TV commercials TV monologues should be broken up with visual changes such as shots of the product, sound effect and dialogue. The writer puts these breaks in the script while the art director designs what they will look like

You may have noticed some 'Headings' and even copies tend to deviate from spelling and grammar eg for cool , ads prefer kool , for spreads (eg cheese spreads) ads prefer spreadz and so on. Likewise grammar is tampered with even in well – known ads.

If you've the inclination

We've the time.

Your grammar would not allow contraction of have when it is used as a main verb. Contraction is allowed only when it is used as an auxiliary as in; I've done the work. But I've a pen is not acceptable.

Copy editors should be conscious of the niceties of grammar, syntax and spelling. However it is not that copywriters who wrote kool or spredz or the limca copywriter doesn't know his grammar. He had used these deviations entirely to create an effect.

Now, what do you think of the style of the following ad T shirts?

Smart dressing is like success.
Not a destination, but a journey

This is not given to you as check your progress but as a point to ponder upon. Each one of you will have different points of view especially on the metaphor of 'journey'. One way to see it would be to think of the item being advertised as a contributory factor towards success.

15.5. PRINT MEDIA REQUIREMENTS

The word 'print media' includes a large variety of items. They include newspaper, magazine, directories, posters, outdoor advertising and product literature. they all use the some copy element such as headlines sub – heard etc; however the way these elements are used varies with the adjectives for using the medium.

1. Newspaper : The copy editor knows that the copy in a newspaper ad does not have to be as flashy as other kinds of ads to catch the attention of its audience. Readers skim through the pages of a newspaper with an equal seriousness both for news – items as for ads. As a result copy editors tend to see that the ads are straight forward and informative ; the writing is brief usually identifying the merchandize and going specific information about styles, sizes and prices.

2. Magazines : Compared to newspapers, magazines offer better quality ad production which is important for brand image and high – fashion ads. Copy editor take special care to see that such ads are well – phrased having attractive illustrations and are artistically erected. Such ads often take recourse to poetry also to make the texts more appealing to the readers.

3. Directories: Publications in the form of directories that provide contact information, such as phone numbers and addresses of forms and organizations often carry display advertising. In editing a directory, copy editors ensure that the headline used focuses on the character of the firm or organization. He should also see that complicated explanations are avoided.

4. Posters and out –door advertising: Poster and outdoor ads are primarily visual although the words generally try to catch consumers attention and lock in on idea registering a message. An effective poster or hoarding is built round a creative concept that links the concept with the visual. For example the heading on Louis Phillippe shirts uses only the simple noun phrase “THE UPPER CRUST” but that is enough to carry the message across. Some heading ads use literary references that make the ad very appealing. Rakesh Roshan, the eminent actor posing as the Pied Piper of Hamelin is just one example of the copy editor’s interest in literary ideas.

5. Product Literature: The term “Product literature” is used to refer to materials either in the form of brochures and pamphlets or long write ups with illustrations published in magazines. They provide details about a product, company or event. For example, the product literature of Tetley

Tea published in the build up the rich tradition of tea by tracing the historical perspective of the product in exquisite prose.

15.6. RADIO AND TELEVISION COPY EDITING

Radio copy editing : AIR calls the ads in the radio as commercial breaks. They are of 15 to 60 seconds in length. While print ads use a variety of tools – headlines, subheads and so on, the radio copy has to restrict to audio elements only. They are essentially voice, music and sound effects.

1. **Voice :** The most important element in a radio commercial voice which are heard as dialogues, announcements and commentaries. Most commercials have an announcer to focus on the product identification. The copy editor needs to have an ear for the distinctive patterns of speech for the target audiences. He should know that the structure of spoken language is different from that of written language. This difference becomes more pronounced in radio script which are characterized by features of spoken language than in other situations. Some of the features of spoken languages that the copy editor needs to be aware of are –
   - Simple and short sentences
   - Active sentence/passive forms hardly used.
   - Complex sentences are rarely used.

2. **Music :** Music is a common feature in both film/TV and radio commercial whose primary role is the creation of the dramatic effect. Music can be used behind the dialogues to create mood and establish the settings. Advertisers can have a piece of music composed for a commercial or can borrow it from a previously recorded song.

3. **Sound effect :** The sound of automobile horns, the cheers of fans at a stadium, the sound of things falling and breaking are examples of sound effect that are used to give a ad. The copy editor needs to note which sound effect is more appropriate over others in an ad.

4. Television copy editing: Television copy editors understand that it is the moving image, the action that make the television so much more engaging than print ads. The challenge for the writers is to fuse the image with the words to present not only a creative concept, but also a story. What then, are the tools of TV commercials that the copy editor needs to be aware of?

1. **Action:** Good TV ads use the effect of action and motion to attract attention and sustain interest. This is the greatest advantage of TV commercials.

2. **Demonstration:** If you have a strong sales message that bends itself to demonstration, such as "how-to" messages, then the television is the most affective medium. The copy editor will see that the sales message is not missed out as has been the case with soap ads where the message is obliterated by the languages soaping of the bathing beauty.

3. **Emotions :** TV ads have the ability to touch the feelings of the viewers with an emotional appeal. The ad may have a story to tell or to dramatize a situation in which a product is used and the type of people using it. A shampoo for girls can create a wide range of emotions of love and hate, rivalry and what not. The copy editor must see that the massage of the ad is not lost in a gush of emotion.



ACTIVITY 15.1

Watch TV commercials closely and try to find out for yourself how the ad

- Tries to get the massage acres
- Builds up a story to get the massage acres.

Also try to find out if the story has obliterated the massage in a welter of action, demonstration and emotion.

(This activity is for your practice only and each of your may have different responses. Hence a response is not give here.)



15.7 LET US SUM UP

A personal who constructs the text of an ad is referred to as a copywriter. Sometimes more than one person are associated in the work of developing an ad and they would collectively be known as copywriters. 'Proof editing' refers to the knowledge and skills necessary for editing a proof copy before it is finally approved for printing. Copy – editing is an art and a technique. It involves a number of activities notably correcting and adapting the text of a copy so as to make it effective for the purpose for which the copy has been made. Tag lines are slogans that sum up the position of an ad. In print it usually appears just beneath or beside the company logo or name. The primary concern of the copy editor will be to ensure that the copy is effective. The word 'print media' includes a large variety of items. They include newspaper, magazine, directories, posters outdoor advertising and product literature. AIR calls the ads in the radio as commercial breaks. They are of 15 to 60 seconds in length. While print ads use a variety of tools – headlines, sub – heads and so on, the radio copy has to restrict to audio elements only. They are essentially voice, music and sound effects.



15.8 FURTHER READING

1. Wells et al (2006) Advertising : Principles and Practice. New Delhi : Pearson Education.
2. Demsison Dell (1994). The Advertising Handbook – for Small Business. Self Counsel. Press



15.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

(A) Very Short Questions

Q. 1. What is a 'copy'?

Q. 2. What is copy editing?

Q. 3. What are the five basic elements of a copy?

(B) Short Questions (Answer in about 150 words)

Q. 1. Why does radio continue to be a viable advertising medium?

Q. 2. What is the primary advantage of TV advertising?

(C) Long Questions (Answer in about 300-500 words)

Q. 1. What are the key advantages and disadvantages of using newspapers as advertising medium?

Q. 2. What are the key advertising and disadvantage of using magazines as advertising medium?

Q. 3. What would you expect to see in a hoarding ad? Please elaborate.

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22. Singh, Bhanu Pratap (2011). Photo Journalism. New Delhi : Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd
23. Wells et al (2006). Advertising : Principles and Practice. New Delhi : Pearson Education