

# **JOURNALISM**

## **UNIT – V**

**Language of Journalism – Writing a News story – Writing opinion pieces –  
Writing Leads – Headlines**

### **Language of Journalism:**

A journalist's purpose is writing for newspapers, magazines or news media. He should practise the language as specialists with all linguistic distinctions required by their profession. The journalistic style is distinguished mainly by accuracy, freshness of the language, honesty and appropriateness. A good journalism should be without grammatical errors. Language should be precise and it should give the essence of the fact. The language should be without spelling mistakes. The journalist must have a command in vocabulary. He must have knowledge to use apt words at exact places. Brevity, clarity and pragmatism of the communication is necessary. A newspaper publishes news, opinion and ideas to mass audience. Style books are necessary and the standards are set by responsible news papers and news agencies for their employees. The stylebook is a primary tool of the journalist. Repetition and clichés should be avoided. The report should not be filled with

statistics. Exaggeration and winded language should be avoided. Room should not be given for sentiments. Quotations should be avoided.

## **Writing the News Story**

A journalist who understands the purpose of news and masters the art of news writing will be prepared to work in both traditional and new media. Learning how to write a news story is a fundamental thing for a journalist. Writing the news story is another step in news dissemination process.

## **The Inverted Pyramid Form**

Writing a news summary lead is the first step in writing a fully developed, inverted pyramid news story. The inverted pyramid form presents facts in descending order, from most important to least important. The most important facts based on news values and selected by the reporter, are given in the opening, the first and sometimes the second paragraph. All of the succeeding paragraphs expand the lead by supporting it, explaining it or making it specific. To answer five W's and H asking by the readers in the second paragraph, the first paragraph should be as short as possible. Many hard news stories will have a two paragraph lead. Before and after writing the story's lead, the reporter should read the notes carefully. This helps the reporter to order the information from most to least important.

Paragraph and sentences should follow one another smoothly. Then only it will have coherence making the development easy to follow. Special words and phrases can be used to tie paragraph and develop story continuity. These are called ‘transitional words’. Some reporters modify the inverted pyramid significantly by telling the story in a chronological order. The time sequence or chronological news story form is sometimes called storytelling.

### **Writing opinion pieces:**

The editorial and the opinion column are both opinion and subjective analysis. Opinion columns are less formal than most editorials; columnists have more freedom and usually more space to present their ideas. Columns often are structured the same way as an editorial, beginning with an introduction, followed by the body and ending with a conclusion. Chronological method of development can also be used.

The editorial can support or criticize some policy or action, government, institutional or global. The editorial is the sign post of the attitude of the newspaper.

A column is also identified with a consistently used title. A writer of columns is called a columnist. Many columnists develop a unique opening or closing line or a word or a phrase that is always included. He reviews events and

developments of public events like sports, political happenings, economic developments etc., He attends public meetings and contributes periodically to a newspaper.

### **Writing Leads:**

Write the lead – that’s what the reporter wants to do. It’s the logical place to start. Like all good stories, this one needs to begin with the right words which attract some readers or listeners. The inverted pyramid wasn’t always the form of choice for the daily press; the narrative form ‘story telling’ was popular through 19<sup>th</sup> Century. A news lead often cites the source of news. This gives the story and the newspaper credibility. The time reference will help make the lead more complete. If opinion is included in the lead, then the opinion is attributed to a source, a person. This is done to increase story objectivity and credibility.

The news summary lead is frequently used because hurried readers who may not have time to read an entire story can still get the most important information by reading the story’s headline and the first few paragraphs. Sometimes the writer simply modifies the news summary lead by dividing the essential facts into two paragraphs, delaying complete disclosure of the main facts. Many writers use a brief anecdote as the first paragraph, or some suspended or delayed interest

statement. The follow up paragraph will then be a more conventional summary of the main fact of the story.

The vignette lead is used for reports on social, economic, political, environmental and other major issues to bring the stories to the human level. In addition to the news summary, modified summary and vignette leads, the news writer has some other choices to consider as the lead is written.

### **Writing Headlines:**

The headline, or the large type on the top of a story, is what catches the readers' attention. A well-written headline entices readers to read the lead, and you are one step closer to the goal of getting people to read a story.

The headline is important because

- It names or summarizes the important facts of the story
- It communicates the mood of the story
- It signals the relative importance of the story

Copy editors refer to headline content as either a "teaser" or "teller". The teller headline gains the reader's attention by arousing curiosity or by entertaining readers. The teaser headline attracts by arousing curiosity or by entertaining

readers. In many magazines, newspaper feature packagers and yearbooks, designers make use of teaser headline.

Headlines have to fit into a specific space on the page. This is one of the greatest challenges in headline writing. Teller/ Teaser labels for headline refer to contents; headlines are also identified by appearance. A one line headline is basically a single, unbroken sentence. A two line headline is one sentence broken into two lines. A three line headline is one sentence broken into three lines. A deck is a secondary headline that is positioned under the main headline and adds information and is helpful in explaining complicated stories. A tripod is a combination of a large word or phrase followed by a two line headline. The jump headline accompanies the part of a story that continues on different page.

The headline should follow these guidelines:

- Be accurate
- Be informative
- Be fair
- Don't put anything in the headline that is not in the story.
- Avoid padding
- Don't repeat words in the headlines
- Punctuate correctly; omit periods

- Avoid obscure unnecessary abbreviations
- Avoid brutal words