Basics of journalism

By Pallavi Ghosh
What is journalism?

Answer: The profession of gathering and publishing news is called journalism.
Broadly, there are two kinds of journalists:

1. Reporters gather information and/or images for news story

2. Subeditors edit and publish news reports from the office space
Pick up any news story, you will find a combination of these elements:

- Headline
- Strap/Intro
- Image/Illustration/infographic/cartoon
- Image caption
- Body of the story

A story is not complete if it does not have one of these elements.
Typically, the newsworthiness of a story is based on the following factors:

- Timeliness
- Proximity
- Impact
- Prominence
- Human interest
- Peculiarity
Rule 1: A news story should answer 5Ws and 1H, that is who, what, where, when, why and how.

Rule 2: Keep sentences simple. The longer and more convoluted the sentence, the less reader-friendly it is.

Rule 3: Avoid the use of passive voice as much as possible.
In a research published in *Scientific Reports*, a peer-reviewed open access scientific journal published by *Nature Research*, researchers have demonstrated for the first time that cells from an insect-eating brown bat can be persistently infected with MERS coronavirus for months, due to important adaptations from both the bat and the virus working together.
There is no hard and fast rule about the length of a sentence. Typically, a sentence should be **no longer than 20 words** and should contain **no more than three ideas**.
Why we avoid passive voice

Sentence 1: Pallavi broke the table (Word count: 4)  
Sentence 2: The table was broken by Pallavi (Word count: 6)

The other reason for avoiding passive voice while writing is that we usually speak in the active voice in our daily lives. The language is important in news writing. Using active voice makes the writing relatable, thus, reader-friendly.

BUT there are instances when one HAS TO use passive voice.
Sometimes, we need to retain the sentence, even if it is in the passive voice. Here is an example.

**Actual sentence:** Three children have been admitted to the hospital with suspected food poisoning. (Passive voice)

**When we change this sentence in active voice, we get:**

Sentence 1: **Someone** admitted three children to the hospital with suspected food poisoning. (Active voice)

Sentence 2: **Food poisoning put three children in the hospital.** (Active voice)
Journalists who report stories that inform readers about relevant developments related to the environment (local as well as global) and how these impact:

1. Our planet and its resources like the land, water and air

AND

2. Its inhabitants-humans, yes but also other animals and plants.

Source: Greenmedia
Let us begin our live tour of the GT website and re-cap what we’ve learnt about newswriting so far…

Now, the practicals
Thank you!

End of session on journalism
What do we write about?

- Temperature changes and its impact
- Pollution (air, water, land and noise)
- CO2 emissions
- Impact of technology
- Extreme weather events (floods, cyclones, heatwave, etc.)
- Biodiversity & wildlife
- Waste management
- Food
Science of climate change, GT style

For the children,

Of the children,

By the children.

Source: Wikimedia Commons
For the children: Use simple language and instead of 3 big ideas, we identify 1 big idea and explain it to our readers. Keeping the article brief (500-600 words)

Of the children: The focus here is how climate change impacts children. For example, a story about school closures due to severe heatwave or coldwave, or extreme rainfall is more likely to connect with children.

By the children: Voices of children presenting their personal experience of their immediate environment.

Source: Down To Earth