



Basics of journalism



By Pallavi Ghosh



What is journalism?



Answer: The profession of gathering and publishing news is called journalism.



Species: journalist

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



(Image: New York Times newsroom, 1942 via Wikimedia Commons)

(Image via Wikimedia Commons and Pxfuel.com)



What is a news package?

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.





Tips for deciding news value

Typically, the newsworthiness of a story is based on the following factors:

- Timeliness
- Proximity
- Impact
- Prominence
- Human interest
- Peculiarity





Tips for writing news



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.



What is wrong with this?

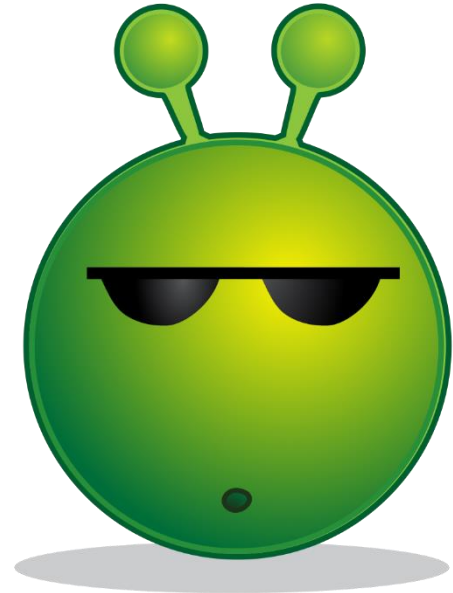
In a research published in *Scientific Reports*, a peer-reviewed open access scientific journal published by *Nature Research*, researchers have demonstrated for the first time that cells from an insect-eating brown bat can be persistently infected with MERS coronavirus for months, due to important adaptations from both the bat and the virus working together.





When and where to use the “full stop”?

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**.





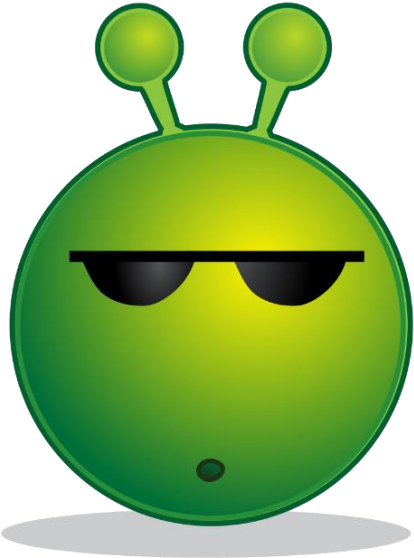
Why we avoid passive voice

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.





When 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)



Who are environmental journalists?

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



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Rise of the mosquitoes
Scientists have mapped how rising temperatures will impact the population and distribution of mosquitoes in the world

International Tea Day gets a thumbs up from UN

Days of COVID-19 confinement: How school-goers are dealing with lockdown

All hail the "Rain Queen" of South Africa

Let us begin our live tour of the GT website and re-cap what we've learnt about newswriting so far...



End of session on journalism



Thank you!



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



Writing for the young

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.

