

Introduction to News Writing and Reporting

Lecture 7

Writing Style – Accuracy, Brevity, Simplicity

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Lecture Learning outcomes

By the end of this lecture, students should be able to:

1. **Define writing style** in journalism and explain its significance in effective news communication.
2. **Explain the importance of accuracy** and its role in maintaining credibility and trustworthiness.
3. **Demonstrate techniques for ensuring accuracy**, including fact-checking, source verification, and careful review of details.
4. **Define brevity** and explain why concise writing is essential in news reporting.
5. **Apply techniques for achieving brevity**, such as using short sentences, active voice, and eliminating redundant words.
6. **Explain the concept of simplicity** in language and its importance for reader comprehension.
7. **Balance brevity and completeness** to ensure concise yet informative reporting.
8. **Demonstrate clarity in expression** through logical sentence and paragraph structure.
9. **Maintain consistency of style and tone** throughout a news article.
10. **Select precise and appropriate words** to convey meaning accurately and avoid ambiguity or bias.
11. **Structure sentences and paragraphs effectively** for readability and logical progression.
12. **Eliminate redundancy** to ensure each sentence contributes value to the story.
13. **Understand the use of active versus passive voice** and apply them appropriately for clarity and engagement.
14. **Adapt writing style for different mediums**, including print, online, broadcast, and social media.

15. **Summarize principles of effective writing style**, combining accuracy, brevity, simplicity, clarity, and consistency to enhance reader engagement.

1. Introduction to Writing Style in Journalism

Writing style in journalism refers to the distinctive way a journalist communicates information, combining language, tone, structure, and clarity to present news effectively. It is more than just grammar and vocabulary; it encompasses how a story is organized, how facts are prioritized, and how the audience is guided through the information. A professional writing style ensures that news is **understandable, credible, and engaging**, regardless of the medium or audience.

1.1 Definition of Writing Style

- Writing style is the method and manner in which a journalist presents facts, context, and opinions in a coherent and professional manner.
- It involves **choice of words**, sentence and paragraph construction, tone, readability, and the overall voice of the article.
- Example: Using active voice and precise verbs (“The mayor approved the new plan”) versus weak phrasing (“The new plan was approved by the mayor”) conveys clarity and authority.

1.2 Significance of Writing Style

- **Clarity**: Ensures that readers quickly understand the essential information without ambiguity.
- **Credibility**: Accurate and precise language enhances the trustworthiness of the journalist and the news outlet.
- **Engagement**: A coherent and readable style keeps readers interested and encourages them to read the full story.
- **Efficiency**: Structured and concise writing allows readers to grasp key information rapidly, which is essential in today’s fast-paced news environment.
- **Adaptability**: A strong writing style can be adjusted to suit different platforms—print, online, broadcast, or social media—while retaining professionalism.

1.3 Key Elements of Effective Writing Style

- **Accuracy**: Reporting facts correctly, avoiding errors or misinterpretation.
- **Brevity**: Presenting information concisely without omitting essential details.
- **Simplicity**: Using language that is clear and accessible to the target audience, avoiding jargon unless necessary.
- **Consistency**: Maintaining uniform tone, style, and voice throughout the article.
- **Logical Flow**: Organizing information to ensure that each paragraph and sentence contributes to the reader’s understanding.

1.4 Relationship to Other Journalistic Principles

- Writing style works in tandem with **news values**, **lead writing**, **story structure**, and **source integration**.
- It strengthens reporting by ensuring that the content is not only accurate but also easily digestible and compelling.
- A professional style can help highlight the most important information, guide reader attention, and create a sense of trust and authority.

Summary

Writing style in journalism is the deliberate and professional use of clarity, accuracy, brevity, simplicity, consistency, and logical flow. It ensures that news stories are **informative, credible, and engaging**, helping readers quickly understand key facts while maintaining their trust. Mastery of writing style is essential for journalists to communicate effectively across different media and to diverse audiences.

2. The Importance of Accuracy

Accuracy is the cornerstone of journalism. It refers to the correctness of the facts, figures, names, dates, quotations, and context presented in a news story. Accurate reporting is essential for maintaining credibility, trust, and the integrity of both the journalist and the news organization.

2.1 Definition of Accuracy

- Accuracy involves presenting information **exactly as it is**, without distortion, exaggeration, or misrepresentation.
- It includes **verifying facts**, ensuring proper attribution, and confirming details with reliable sources.

2.2 Significance of Accuracy in Journalism

- **Credibility and Trust:** Readers rely on journalists to provide truthful information. Errors can damage reputations and erode public trust.
- **Legal and Ethical Responsibility:** Inaccurate reporting can lead to defamation claims, loss of credibility, and ethical violations.
- **Informed Public:** Accurate news enables readers to make informed decisions about social, political, or economic issues.
- **Professional Reputation:** Journalists known for accuracy are respected and valued in the media industry.

2.3 Common Challenges to Accuracy

- **Rushed Reporting:** Deadlines can pressure journalists to publish before verification.

- **Misinformation:** Relying on unverified sources or social media can introduce errors.
- **Complex Data:** Misinterpreting statistics, financial reports, or technical information can lead to inaccuracies.
- **Bias and Assumptions:** Personal opinions or assumptions can inadvertently distort facts.

2.4 Techniques to Ensure Accuracy

- **Fact-Checking:** Double-check all names, dates, figures, and statements.
- **Cross-Verification:** Confirm information with multiple credible sources.
- **Source Validation:** Assess the reliability, expertise, and credibility of sources.
- **Quotation Verification:** Ensure quotes are exact, accurately attributed, and in context.
- **Continuous Review:** Re-read drafts carefully to identify potential errors before publication.

2.5 Consequences of Inaccuracy

- Loss of audience trust and credibility.
- Damage to the journalist's and news organization's reputation.
- Spread of misinformation with potential societal impact.
- Legal and ethical repercussions, including lawsuits or professional sanctions.

Summary

Accuracy is the foundation of journalistic integrity. By ensuring that facts, figures, quotes, and context are correct and well-verified, journalists maintain credibility, foster trust, and provide readers with reliable information. Developing habits of careful verification and fact-checking is essential for professional and responsible reporting.

3. Techniques for Ensuring Accuracy

Ensuring accuracy in journalism requires deliberate strategies and careful attention to detail. Accuracy is not automatic; it is achieved through rigorous verification, careful sourcing, and disciplined reporting practices.

3.1 Fact-Checking

- Review all facts, names, dates, statistics, and claims before publication.
- Verify numbers, percentages, and dates against official documents or reliable records.
- Example: Confirming the number of participants in a protest by consulting police reports, organizers, and eyewitness accounts.

3.2 Cross-Verification of Sources

- Confirm information with multiple credible sources to reduce errors.
- Avoid relying on a single source, particularly for controversial or complex information.
- Example: Verifying a government statement by checking press releases, official records, and expert commentary.

3.3 Source Validation

- Assess the credibility, expertise, and reliability of sources.
- Distinguish between primary sources (direct witnesses or participants) and secondary sources (commentaries, reports, or summaries).
- Example: Quoting a health expert rather than an unverified social media post for information on a medical issue.

3.4 Verification of Quotes

- Ensure quotes are **exactly as spoken**, accurately attributed, and in context.
- Avoid paraphrasing in a way that changes the intended meaning of the speaker.
- Example: If a politician says, “We will address this issue next year,” do not report it as “We will fix the issue immediately.”

3.5 Use of Reliable Documentation

- Consult official records, press releases, reports, and statistics to support claims.
- Avoid speculation and ensure all factual statements are traceable to a credible source.

3.6 Continuous Review and Editing

- Re-read drafts carefully to identify errors, inconsistencies, or ambiguities.
- Engage in peer review or editorial checks to catch mistakes that the writer may overlook.

3.7 Practical Habits for Accuracy

- Maintain organized notes and documentation from interviews and research.
- Develop checklists for verifying critical facts before submission.
- Stay updated on the topic to prevent outdated or incorrect information from being published.

Summary

Techniques for ensuring accuracy include meticulous fact-checking, cross-verifying sources, validating credibility, verifying quotes, consulting reliable documentation, and

conducting thorough review and editing. By adopting these practices, journalists minimize errors, uphold professional standards, and maintain public trust.

4. Brevity in News Writing

Brevity in journalism refers to presenting information concisely while retaining essential meaning and context. It is a key element of writing style that ensures readers can grasp the core facts quickly without wading through unnecessary words or details.

4.1 Definition of Brevity

- Brevity is the art of expressing ideas clearly and concisely, using the fewest words necessary.
- It does not mean omitting critical information, but rather **eliminating redundancy and filler**.

4.2 Importance of Brevity

- **Reader Engagement:** Concise writing holds the reader's attention and encourages completion of the article.
- **Efficiency:** Helps readers quickly extract essential facts, particularly in fast-paced news environments.
- **Clarity:** Reduces the risk of confusion caused by long, complicated sentences.
- **Adaptability:** Short, clear sentences are suitable for digital platforms where readers scan rather than read fully.

4.3 Techniques for Achieving Brevity

- **Use Short Sentences:** Keep sentences simple and direct, focusing on one main idea per sentence.
- **Active Voice:** Prefer active voice ("The mayor announced the plan") over passive voice ("The plan was announced by the mayor").
- **Eliminate Redundancies:** Remove unnecessary repetition, filler words, or phrases.
- **Condense Information:** Combine related ideas into a single, coherent sentence without losing meaning.
- **Avoid Over-Explanation:** Provide enough context for comprehension but avoid excessive detail that slows the story.

4.4 Common Pitfalls

- Over-condensation leading to loss of essential context.
- Overuse of abbreviations or shorthand that may confuse readers.
- Omitting critical quotes or background in the pursuit of conciseness.

4.5 Examples

- Wordy: “The city mayor, who has been in office for ten years, made an announcement today regarding the new public transportation plan.”
- Concise: “The city mayor announced a new public transportation plan today.”
- The concise version retains all essential facts while eliminating unnecessary words.

Summary

Brevity in news writing ensures clarity, engagement, and efficiency. By using short sentences, active voice, eliminating redundancies, and condensing information, journalists present essential facts clearly and quickly, enhancing readability and keeping readers focused on the main story.

5. Techniques for Achieving Brevity

Achieving brevity in news writing requires deliberate strategies that allow journalists to communicate essential information clearly and efficiently without sacrificing accuracy or context.

5.1 Use Short and Direct Sentences

- Limit each sentence to one main idea.
- Avoid long, complex sentences with multiple clauses that can confuse the reader.
- Example: “The council approved the new plan” instead of “The council, after much deliberation and discussion over several hours, decided to approve the plan.”

5.2 Prefer Active Voice

- Active constructions are more concise and direct than passive ones.
- Example: “The mayor signed the bill” (active) vs. “The bill was signed by the mayor” (passive).
- Active voice improves clarity and engages the reader immediately.

5.3 Eliminate Redundant Words

- Remove phrases that repeat the same meaning or add no value.
- Examples of redundancy: “past history,” “advance planning,” “end result.”
- Streamlined writing avoids clutter and maintains focus.

5.4 Use Strong, Precise Verbs

- Replace weak verb constructions with strong, specific verbs.
- Example: “The committee rejected the proposal” instead of “The proposal was turned down by the committee.”

- Precise verbs convey meaning efficiently, reducing the need for extra words.

5.5 Condense Supporting Information

- Integrate related facts or quotes into single sentences without losing context.
- Avoid splitting information across multiple sentences unnecessarily.

5.6 Avoid Over-Explanations

- Include enough detail for comprehension but avoid lengthy digressions.
- Focus on what the reader needs to know immediately.
- Example: Instead of explaining every historical detail of a law, summarize its relevance to the current event.

5.7 Edit Ruthlessly

- Review drafts to remove filler words, repetition, or tangential information.
- Use checklists or peer review to ensure conciseness without losing essential meaning.

Summary

Techniques for achieving brevity include using short, direct sentences, preferring active voice, eliminating redundancy, employing precise verbs, condensing supporting information, avoiding over-explanations, and rigorous editing. These practices ensure that news stories are concise, readable, and focused, allowing readers to absorb information efficiently.

6. Simplicity in Language

Simplicity in journalism refers to the use of clear, straightforward, and accessible language that allows readers of diverse backgrounds to understand the story easily. Simple language enhances comprehension, avoids confusion, and ensures that the core message is effectively communicated.

6.1 Definition of Simplicity

- Simplicity involves choosing words and sentence structures that are easy to understand.
- Avoids unnecessary jargon, technical terms, and complex phrasing that may alienate readers.
- Example: “The city launched a new bus route” instead of “The municipal authority inaugurated an additional vehicular transit corridor.”

6.2 Importance of Simplicity

- **Comprehension:** Readers quickly understand the story without deciphering complicated language.

- **Engagement:** Simple, direct writing maintains reader interest and prevents fatigue.
- **Accessibility:** Ensures that news is understandable to a wider audience, including those with varying levels of literacy or language proficiency.
- **Efficiency:** Helps convey essential facts without unnecessary explanation.

6.3 Techniques for Maintaining Simplicity

- **Use Common Words:** Replace obscure or technical terms with familiar vocabulary.
- **Keep Sentences Short:** One main idea per sentence prevents confusion.
- **Avoid Overly Complex Phrases:** Use direct expressions rather than convoluted structures.
- **Clarify When Necessary:** Provide brief explanations only when a technical term is unavoidable.
- **Focus on the Core Message:** Each sentence should convey information directly related to the story's main point.

6.4 Balancing Simplicity and Precision

- Simplicity should not compromise accuracy or essential details.
- Avoid oversimplifying complex issues; instead, present them in a digestible form.
- Example: Explaining a legal ruling in plain terms while retaining its legal significance.

6.5 Benefits of Simple Language

- Enhances reader comprehension and retention.
- Reduces misinterpretation or confusion.
- Strengthens the journalist's credibility by presenting information clearly.

Summary

Simplicity in language ensures clarity, accessibility, and engagement in news writing. By using common words, short sentences, direct expressions, and focusing on the core message, journalists communicate information effectively to a diverse audience while maintaining accuracy and professionalism.

7. Balancing Brevity and Completeness

Balancing brevity and completeness is a critical skill in journalism. While brevity ensures conciseness, completeness guarantees that all essential information is conveyed. Effective news writing finds the optimal balance, providing enough detail for understanding without overwhelming the reader with unnecessary words.

7.1 Definition of Balance

- **Brevity:** Presenting information concisely, focusing on essential facts.
- **Completeness:** Including all necessary context, background, and details to fully inform the reader.
- Balance ensures clarity, comprehension, and engagement simultaneously.

7.2 Importance of Balancing Brevity and Completeness

- **Reader Understanding:** Ensures readers grasp the full story without confusion.
- **Efficiency:** Delivers key facts quickly while still providing context for comprehension.
- **Professionalism:** Demonstrates careful judgment in determining what information is essential.
- **Credibility:** Avoids under-reporting (too brief) or over-reporting (too wordy) that could mislead or fatigue readers.

7.3 Techniques for Achieving Balance

- **Prioritize Information:** Lead with the most important facts, followed by supporting details.
- **Use Concise Sentences:** Express essential ideas clearly without unnecessary elaboration.
- **Integrate Background Strategically:** Include only context necessary for understanding, avoiding excessive historical or technical detail.
- **Summarize When Possible:** Condense complex explanations while retaining accuracy.
- **Segment Information:** Use subheadings, bullet points, or short paragraphs to organize details efficiently.

7.4 Common Pitfalls

- **Over-condensing:** Important context or nuances may be lost.
- **Over-elaboration:** Stories become long, complex, and difficult to read.
- **Neglecting reader perspective:** Failing to consider what information the audience needs to understand the story fully.

7.5 Examples

- **Balanced:** “The city council approved a new public transportation plan today. The plan adds three new bus routes and extends operating hours, aiming to reduce congestion during peak hours.”
- **Too Brief:** “The council approved a new plan today.” (lacks critical details)

- **Too Wordy:** “After several hours of debate, consultation with experts, and considering various traffic studies and public opinion surveys, the city council finally approved the new public transportation plan, which will include a number of measures aimed at reducing congestion, improving commuter convenience, and modernizing the bus network.” (overloaded with detail)

Summary

Balancing brevity and completeness ensures that news stories are concise, readable, and fully informative. By prioritizing essential information, condensing background context, and organizing content efficiently, journalists provide readers with clear and comprehensive reporting without overwhelming them.

8. Clarity in Expression

Clarity in journalism refers to presenting information in a straightforward, understandable manner. Clear writing ensures that readers immediately grasp the main points of a story without confusion or misinterpretation.

8.1 Definition of Clarity

- Clarity is the quality of being **easy to understand**, free from ambiguity, and logically structured.
- It involves precise word choice, coherent sentence construction, and logical paragraph organization.

8.2 Importance of Clarity

- **Reader Comprehension:** Ensures readers understand facts, events, and context accurately.
- **Engagement:** Clear writing maintains attention and prevents frustration.
- **Credibility:** Ambiguous or confusing writing can undermine trust in the journalist or news outlet.
- **Professionalism:** Demonstrates skill and discipline in organizing and presenting information.

8.3 Techniques to Achieve Clarity

- **Organize Ideas Logically:** Present facts in a structured order—chronological, importance-based, or thematic.
- **Use Precise Language:** Avoid vague terms or ambiguous expressions.
- **Keep Sentences Focused:** Each sentence should convey one clear idea.
- **Use Paragraphs Effectively:** Group related ideas together and signal shifts with topic sentences.
- **Simplify Complex Information:** Break down technical or dense material into digestible parts for the audience.

- **Avoid Jargon:** Unless essential, replace technical terms with common language.
- **Active Voice:** Enhances readability and makes statements more direct and understandable.

8.4 Examples

- **Unclear:** “The new legislation, passed after extensive discussions and consultations, will affect various aspects of city transport.”
- **Clear:** “The new legislation will expand bus routes and extend operating hours in the city.”
- Clear writing removes unnecessary complexity and focuses on the core message.

8.5 Common Pitfalls

- Overloading sentences with multiple ideas.
- Using ambiguous terms or vague descriptions.
- Ignoring the reader’s perspective or prior knowledge.

Summary

Clarity in expression is essential for effective journalism. By organizing ideas logically, using precise and simple language, keeping sentences focused, and avoiding jargon, journalists ensure that their stories are understandable, engaging, and professionally presented. Clear writing strengthens credibility and allows readers to absorb information efficiently.

9. Consistency of Style and Tone

Consistency in style and tone ensures that a news story presents information in a coherent, professional, and predictable manner. It helps maintain the journalist’s credibility and provides a seamless reading experience.

9.1 Definition of Consistency

- **Style** refers to the journalist’s approach to language, sentence structure, and presentation of information.
- **Tone** refers to the attitude or mood conveyed through the writing—formal, neutral, serious, or conversational depending on the story.
- Consistency means maintaining the same style and tone throughout an article, or across a series of reports on the same topic.

9.2 Importance of Consistency

- **Professionalism:** A consistent tone reflects the journalist’s control over the story and reinforces credibility.

- **Reader Comfort:** Predictable style and tone make it easier for readers to follow the story.
- **Clarity:** Avoids confusion caused by shifts in language, formality, or perspective.
- **Branding:** Consistent style aligns with the editorial standards of a news organization.

9.3 Techniques for Maintaining Consistency

- **Set a Clear Tone Early:** Establish the appropriate tone in the lead paragraph and maintain it throughout.
- **Follow Editorial Guidelines:** Adhere to house style manuals for grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and terminology.
- **Monitor Language Choices:** Ensure vocabulary, phrasing, and level of formality remain consistent.
- **Check Voice and Perspective:** Avoid unintentional shifts in point of view or narrative style.
- **Review and Edit:** Multiple readings and peer review can catch inconsistencies in style or tone.

9.4 Examples

- **Inconsistent Tone:** “The city council approved the plan. Isn’t that great?” (shifts from neutral to informal)
- **Consistent Tone:** “The city council approved the plan today, aiming to improve public transportation efficiency.” (neutral and professional throughout)

9.5 Common Pitfalls

- Switching between formal and informal language mid-story.
- Mixing journalistic voice with personal opinion unless clearly marked.
- Inconsistencies in technical terminology, abbreviations, or style preferences.

Summary

Consistency of style and tone is essential for professional, credible, and readable journalism. By establishing a clear tone, adhering to editorial guidelines, maintaining vocabulary and voice, and reviewing drafts carefully, journalists produce stories that are coherent, reliable, and aligned with the standards of their news organization.

10. Appropriate Word Choice

Word choice in journalism involves selecting terms that are precise, clear, and suitable for the story’s context. Effective word choice enhances clarity, engages readers, and maintains professional credibility.

10.1 Definition of Appropriate Word Choice

- Using words that **accurately convey meaning**, avoid ambiguity, and fit the tone and style of the story.
- Words should reflect the nature of the event, the audience, and the medium without introducing bias or confusion.

10.2 Importance of Appropriate Word Choice

- **Clarity**: Precise words prevent misunderstandings.
- **Credibility**: Correct terminology demonstrates professionalism and reliability.
- **Engagement**: Active, vivid, and relevant words capture reader attention.
- **Neutrality**: Proper word selection prevents unintentional bias or judgment.

10.3 Techniques for Choosing Words Effectively

- **Use Specific and Concrete Words**: Replace vague or abstract terms with precise language.
 - Example: “Protesters marched through the city streets” instead of “People moved around.”
- **Avoid Jargon and Technical Terms**: Unless the audience is specialized, simplify complex words.
 - Example: “Inflation increased by 2%” instead of “The consumer price index experienced a 2% escalation.”
- **Be Conscious of Connotation**: Words carry emotional weight; avoid terms that imply bias or exaggeration.
 - Example: “Clashed” vs. “fought” depending on the event’s nature.
- **Use Active Verbs**: Convey action and clarity rather than passive or weak expressions.
- **Maintain Consistency**: Use the same terminology for recurring concepts to prevent confusion.

10.4 Examples

- **Imprecise**: “The politician did some stuff about the budget.”
- **Precise and Appropriate**: “The politician introduced amendments to the national budget to increase education funding.”

10.5 Common Pitfalls

- Overly complicated or obscure vocabulary that alienates readers.
- Emotional or biased word choice that distorts facts.
- Inconsistent terminology throughout the story.

Summary

Appropriate word choice is crucial for clarity, credibility, and engagement in journalism. By selecting specific, precise, and neutral words, avoiding jargon, using active verbs, and maintaining consistency, journalists ensure that their reporting communicates information effectively and professionally.

11. Sentence and Paragraph Structuring

Effective sentence and paragraph structuring is essential in journalism to present information clearly, logically, and engagingly. Well-structured sentences and paragraphs guide the reader through the story and enhance readability.

11.1 Definition

- **Sentence Structuring:** Organizing words within a sentence to convey one clear idea effectively.
- **Paragraph Structuring:** Organizing related sentences together to develop a coherent idea or section within the story.

11.2 Importance

- **Clarity:** Well-structured sentences and paragraphs reduce ambiguity.
- **Flow and Coherence:** Logical organization helps readers follow the narrative or argument.
- **Engagement:** Properly structured paragraphs prevent reader fatigue and maintain interest.
- **Professionalism:** Demonstrates mastery of journalistic writing and editorial standards.

11.3 Techniques for Sentence Structuring

- Keep sentences concise and focused on a single idea.
- Use active voice to make sentences direct and engaging.
- Vary sentence length to create rhythm while avoiding overly long, complex constructions.
- Begin sentences with the subject or main idea for clarity.

11.4 Techniques for Paragraph Structuring

- Start paragraphs with a topic sentence that introduces the main idea.
- Follow with supporting sentences that provide facts, quotes, or examples.
- Conclude with a sentence that transitions to the next paragraph or reinforces the key point.

- Limit paragraphs to a manageable length to prevent visual and cognitive overload.

11.5 Logical Flow and Coherence

- Ensure sentences and paragraphs follow a **logical sequence**: chronological, importance-based, or thematic.
- Use **transitional words and phrases** (however, therefore, meanwhile) to connect ideas.
- Group related ideas together to maintain cohesion and prevent abrupt shifts.

11.6 Examples

- **Poor Structuring**: “The mayor announced the plan. Traffic is a problem in the city. Buses will run longer hours.” (Disconnected sentences without flow)
- **Effective Structuring**: “The mayor announced a new transportation plan to address the city’s traffic problems. The plan includes extending bus operating hours to reduce congestion during peak periods.”

11.7 Common Pitfalls

- Long, run-on sentences that confuse readers.
- Paragraphs that mix unrelated ideas, causing disorientation.
- Abrupt transitions or missing connections between sentences or paragraphs.

Summary

Effective sentence and paragraph structuring ensures clarity, coherence, and readability. By keeping sentences focused, using active voice, organizing paragraphs logically, and employing transitions, journalists create well-structured stories that engage readers and communicate information efficiently.

12. Eliminating Redundancy

Eliminating redundancy in journalism involves removing repetitive, unnecessary, or superfluous words and phrases. This ensures the story is concise, focused, and easily readable without losing essential information.

12.1 Definition

- Redundancy occurs when the same idea, fact, or meaning is repeated unnecessarily.
- Eliminating redundancy improves clarity, brevity, and reader engagement.

12.2 Importance of Eliminating Redundancy

- **Enhances Clarity**: Repetitive information can confuse or bore readers.
- **Maintains Brevity**: Concise writing respects the reader’s time and attention.

- **Improves Professionalism:** Clear, streamlined writing demonstrates mastery of journalistic style.
- **Increases Impact:** Each word contributes value, making the story more persuasive and compelling.

12.3 Techniques for Eliminating Redundancy

- **Review for Repetition:** Check for repeated facts, phrases, or ideas within sentences or paragraphs.
- **Condense Similar Ideas:** Combine multiple sentences conveying the same meaning into one coherent sentence.
- **Remove Filler Words:** Words like “very,” “actually,” “basically,” or phrases like “in order to” often add little value.
- **Streamline Phrases:** Replace wordy expressions with concise alternatives.
 - Example: “At this point in time” → “Now”
 - Example: “Due to the fact that” → “Because”
- **Use Precise Language:** Choosing the exact word reduces the need for additional explanation.

12.4 Examples

- **Redundant:** “The mayor personally made an announcement about the new plan himself.”
- **Concise:** “The mayor announced the new plan.”
- **Redundant:** “The report was completely finished and finalized.”
- **Concise:** “The report was finalized.”

12.5 Common Pitfalls

- Over-condensing, which can remove necessary context.
- Failing to identify subtle repetition across paragraphs.
- Ignoring wordy expressions that are culturally accepted but unnecessary.

Summary

Eliminating redundancy is essential for clarity, brevity, and professional storytelling. By removing repeated ideas, filler words, and wordy expressions, journalists create focused, readable, and impactful stories that convey information efficiently and maintain reader engagement.

13. Active vs. Passive Voice

Understanding the use of active and passive voice is critical in journalism because it affects clarity, readability, and the emphasis of information in a story.

13.1 Definition

- **Active Voice:** The subject performs the action of the verb.
 - Example: “The mayor approved the budget.”
- **Passive Voice:** The subject receives the action of the verb.
 - Example: “The budget was approved by the mayor.”

13.2 Importance in Journalism

- **Clarity and Directness:** Active voice clearly identifies who is performing the action.
- **Conciseness:** Active sentences are usually shorter and more direct than passive ones.
- **Reader Engagement:** Active constructions make the narrative more dynamic and engaging.
- **Emphasis Control:** Passive voice can be used intentionally to emphasize the object or action rather than the actor.

13.3 Techniques for Using Active Voice

- Place the actor (subject) at the beginning of the sentence.
- Use strong verbs to convey action vividly.
- Reserve passive voice for situations where the actor is unknown, unimportant, or deliberately de-emphasized.

13.4 Examples

- **Active Voice:** “The committee rejected the proposal.” (Clear, concise, and direct)
- **Passive Voice:** “The proposal was rejected by the committee.” (Acceptable if focus is on the proposal, not the committee)
- **Active Voice** enhances readability for hard news, breaking stories, and features requiring clarity and immediacy.

13.5 Common Pitfalls

- Overusing passive voice, which can obscure the actor and confuse readers.
- Misapplying passive constructions in stories that require immediacy and directness.
- Failing to use passive voice strategically when appropriate, such as in sensitive or diplomatic reporting.

Summary

Active voice is generally preferred in journalism for clarity, conciseness, and engagement, while passive voice can be used selectively to emphasize actions or objects. Understanding the distinction and applying both strategically helps journalists produce clear, professional, and reader-focused reporting.

14. Adapting Style for Different Mediums

Journalistic writing must be tailored to suit the characteristics, audience, and technical constraints of different media platforms. Adapting style ensures that news is communicated effectively across print, online, broadcast, and social media.

14.1 Importance of Adaptation

- Each medium has unique **audience expectations, reading habits, and space/time limitations**.
- Adapting style enhances readability, engagement, and impact.
- Failure to adapt can result in unclear communication, reduced audience engagement, or misinterpretation.

14.2 Print Media

- Allows for more detailed explanations and structured narratives.
- Uses formal tone and standard paragraphing.
- Readers may engage in in-depth reading, so completeness is emphasized alongside clarity and brevity.

14.3 Online/Digital Media

- Readers often **scan headlines and leads**, so brevity and clarity are crucial.
- Use of subheadings, bullet points, and hyperlinks enhances navigation.
- Incorporate multimedia elements like images, videos, and infographics for engagement.
- Short paragraphs and concise sentences improve readability on screens.

14.4 Broadcast Media (Radio and TV)

- Requires **oral clarity** and simplicity since information is delivered audibly.
- Sentences must be concise and conversational for listener comprehension.
- Avoid complex terminology; focus on key facts that can be grasped quickly.
- Scripts may use active voice and strong verbs to maintain energy and engagement.

14.5 Social Media

- Content is highly condensed and attention-driven.

- Prioritize **catchy headlines, clarity, and immediacy**.
- Integrate hashtags, mentions, and visuals effectively to reach target audiences.
- Maintain professional tone while engaging directly with readers.

14.6 Techniques for Adapting Style

- Assess the medium's audience expectations and reading/listening habits.
- Adjust sentence length, vocabulary, and paragraph structure for the platform.
- Use formatting tools (headlines, subheads, lists) where appropriate.
- Integrate multimedia content to complement textual information.

14.7 Common Pitfalls

- Applying print-style writing directly to digital or broadcast media, reducing clarity or engagement.
- Overloading social media posts with long sentences or complex ideas.
- Ignoring platform-specific conventions or audience preferences.

Summary

Adapting writing style to different mediums ensures effective communication and engagement. By adjusting tone, sentence structure, vocabulary, and formatting to suit print, digital, broadcast, or social media, journalists can deliver news clearly, concisely, and professionally while meeting audience expectations.

15. Summary of Effective Writing Style

Effective writing style in journalism is the combination of accuracy, brevity, simplicity, clarity, consistency, and adaptability. Mastery of these elements ensures that news is communicated professionally, engagingly, and comprehensibly to a diverse audience.

15.1 Core Principles Recap

- **Accuracy:** Verifying facts, quotes, and figures to maintain credibility and trust.
- **Brevity:** Conveying information concisely without omitting essential details.
- **Simplicity:** Using clear, accessible language to enhance understanding.
- **Clarity:** Structuring sentences and paragraphs logically to prevent confusion.
- **Consistency:** Maintaining a uniform tone, style, and voice throughout the story.
- **Appropriate Word Choice:** Selecting precise, neutral, and impactful words.
- **Active vs. Passive Voice:** Using voice strategically for clarity, emphasis, and engagement.
- **Adaptation for Mediums:** Tailoring writing style to suit print, digital, broadcast, and social media.

15.2 Integrative Techniques

- Combine multiple techniques simultaneously, e.g., concise, simple sentences with active verbs to enhance clarity and engagement.
- Edit rigorously to eliminate redundancy, improve flow, and maintain tone consistency.
- Prioritize the reader's perspective: ensure the story is understandable, relevant, and engaging for the target audience.

15.3 Benefits of Mastering Writing Style

- Produces credible, professional, and trustworthy journalism.
- Ensures stories are readable and maintain audience attention.
- Supports clear communication of complex ideas without oversimplification.
- Enhances the journalist's reputation and the perceived reliability of the news organization.

Final Summary

Effective writing style in journalism is not merely about following rules; it is a deliberate practice of combining accuracy, brevity, simplicity, clarity, consistency, and adaptability. Mastery of these principles allows journalists to produce stories that are informative, engaging, professional, and tailored to the audience, ensuring that news is both credible and impactful.

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