

# **4-H Know Your Government Conference Reporter Workshop Power of the Press**



## **4-H Citizenship Through Community Pride**

### **Reporter Materials**

Name \_\_\_\_\_



## 4-H KNOW YOUR GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE REPORTER

Coordinator: KYG Extension Educator and/or Adult Volunteer responsible for the Reporter Workshop, and the Teen News Editor.

- Purpose:** To explore the relationship between the press and politics or the making of public policy.
- Benefits:** Increased knowledge and development of journalism skills.
- Major Responsibilities:**
1. Carry out pre-conference assignments as listed in the *Power of the Press* project materials.
  2. Interview KYG delegates and speakers.
  3. Write news stories for and help produce the KYG newsletter.
  4. Assist with the production of the KYG news video.
  5. Participate in field trips and other scheduled activities of the reporter workshop.
  6. Carry out post-conference assignments.
  7. Complete the *Power of the Press* 4-H project.
- Qualifications:**
- \* Attendance at two KYG Conferences and participation in both Legislative and Judicial workshops.
  - \* Completion of the KYG project, *Exploring Citizenship, My Government*. (both years).
  - \* Interest in learning the "Power of the Press" in government issues.
  - \* Interest in government and active in 4-H program in your county. Must be enrolled in 4-H the year you attend the KYG Conference as a reporter.
- Term:** 1 year
- Time Involved:** June-Sept., 2-3 days (attend summer meeting)  
Dec-Feb, 2-3 days (carrying out pre-and post-conference assignments)  
Washington's Birthday Weekend (attend pre-conference training session and 4-H Know Your Government Conference)
- Training Provided:** Summer planning meeting, pre-conference training session, and orientation workshop during KYG.
- Support Provided:** Conference registration fee reduced.



## 4-H KNOW YOUR GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE NEWS EDITOR

- Coordinator:** KYG Extension Educator and/or Adult Volunteer responsible for the Reporter Workshop.
- Purpose:** Help plan, promote and conduct the Reporter Workshop as part of the 4-H Know Your Government Conference.
- Benefits:** Increased knowledge and development of leadership and journalism skills.
- Major Responsibilities:**
1. Meet/communicate with the Reporter Workshop Coordinator in November/December to discuss plans for the reporter workshop.
  2. Work with the Workshop Coordinator to conduct the reporter workshop during the conference.
  3. Help develop the news video and/or KYG newsletter (involving extra hours of work during Sunday evening free-time.)
  4. Write an editorial for the KYG newsletter.
  5. Serve as EMCEE for the Closing Session.
- Additional Qualifications:** Experience in writing for school or community publications is desired.

11/2013

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*This packet of materials was prepared by Darlene P. Moss, Caribou County Extension Educator; Jade Riley, Lincoln County Volunteer 4-H Leader; Mary Jean Craig, Extension Associate, 4-H/Youth, State 4-H Office; and Jerald Adams, Editor, Agriculture Communications. Adapted from "Politics and the Press," Washington State University, 1988.*

## **“Power of the Press” Overview**

The Reporter Workshop has been designed to explore the relationship between the media and politics or the making of public policy.

Participants will be assigned news stories, meet local media representatives, interview KYG delegates and speakers, learn some video production techniques, produce a newsletter, and take field trips to a local TV or radio station and newspaper.

### **Objectives of the Reporter Workshop**

Through pre-conference activities, KYG Conference experiences, and post-conference assignments, participants will learn:

- What is news and the differences between news and editorials.
- To read news objectively.
- How to use the Freedom of Information Act.
- How a newspaper and TV or radio station are organized.
- About policies of the media.
- How to cover activities “on the Hill” (in the Legislature and the Supreme Court).
- About news sources and how to gather the news.
- Interviewing techniques.
- How to write news articles and publish a newsletter.

### **Project Requirements**

1. Participate in the summer KYG planning meeting.
2. Develop a Plan of Action and attach to your record book.
3. Complete pre-conference assignments (Activity 5, p. 12; Activity 9, p. 25; Activity 10, p. 28). Submit to Reporter Workshop Coordinator by third Friday in January.
4. Attend the 4-H Know Your Government Conference and carry out reporter responsibilities (write news stories, help with the production of the newsletter, news video, PowerPoint presentation, and/or the web page).
5. Complete the reporter workshop activities in each section of *Power of the Press*.  
Section 1: What is News? (Activities 1 – 5, p. 8 and 12)  
Section 2: Getting to Know the Media (Activities 6 – 7, p. 15 and 20)  
Section 3: Gathering and Writing the News (Activities 8 – 11, p. 22, 25 and 28)  
Section 4: Record and Handouts - include information from workshops and tours.
6. Evaluate your experiences as a KYG reporter before, during, and after the Conference.
7. Give a demonstration/share your KYG experiences with others (e.g. give an oral report or talk about your experiences at the KYG Conference, and/or show the KYG news video if one was produced).
8. Evaluate your experiences as a KYG reporter before, during, and after the Conference.
9. Complete the 4-H Project Record Book (#91950), Step Up to Leadership Event Planning Optional Focus Area Skills Checklist (#64010), and the 4-H Involvement Report (#91910).

## Exhibit

- Completed 4-H Project Record Book (#91950) with Plan of Action Attached.
- Step Up to Leadership Event Planning Optional Focus Area Skills Checklist (#64010).
- Notebook with *Power of the Press* (#11006) and reporter workshop materials and a copy of the KYG Newsletter, which you helped produce.
- Optional: If one was produced, arrange to show the KYG News Video as part of your exhibit.

### **Standards of Excellence for Evaluating *Power of the Press*** (to be completed by the judge)

|  | Possible<br>Score | Your<br>Score |
|--|-------------------|---------------|
| Notebook is neat and attachments, handouts, pictures, etc., are included.                            | 5                 | _____         |
| Notebook has been signed by member, parent and leader/advisor.                                       | 5                 | _____         |
| Demonstration/report given.  | 5                 | _____         |
| Personal Goals: Evaluation shows accomplishment of goals, or explanation why they were not achieved. | 10                | _____         |
| Answers to questions in notebook show thought and understanding.                                     | 10                | _____         |
| Activities are complete and comments/analyses show thought and understanding.                        | 25                | _____         |
| Writing assignments show understanding and use of appropriate style and technique.                   | 25                | _____         |
| Story records feelings, learning, accomplishments, etc., at the conference.                          | <u>15</u>         | =====         |
| Total  | 100               | _____         |

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### **PLAN OF ACTION**

Develop a Plan of Action for carrying out your reporter responsibilities. Use this form, or develop your own. Attach Plan of Action to your record book.

Assignments for the Conference (i.e. work on the web page, help develop a PowerPoint presentation, write articles for the news letter, help with the videotape).

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How will you prepare for these assignments?

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What resources will you need (people who will help you, sources of information, computer access, etc.)?

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How do you plan to promote the 4-H Know Your Government Conference to your 4-H club and groups or organizations outside of your own club?

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What KYG activity(ies) in your county/district do you plan to help with prior to the conference? What will your responsibilities be?

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How will you share your experiences with others after the Conference?

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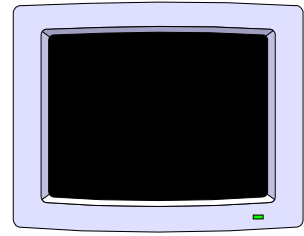
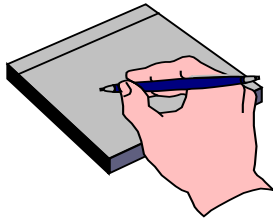
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## Section 1

# What is News?





## News Stories

News is information we need--whether we like it or not--in order to be an informed citizen and to live more happily and successfully. News is objective; a collection of facts, reports of events, and comments that are accurately attributed to quoted individuals. We need to know about taxes and about voting for a candidate. News is also something we need to know in order that society can function such as new businesses, road repairs, police and fire activities, and world events. We need to know the new laws and regulations and to be kept informed about customs, attitudes, and mores, all of which change. News, too, is information a reader wants--for personal pleasure and to satisfy the need for entertainment. We want to know about vacation possibilities, and what our favorite team is doing.

Who decides what we need to know? Government does, when it issues pamphlets or gives information to the media. Advertisers do, when they buy space to sell goods. Political groups do, when they hand out pamphlets to citizens. County boards do, when they pay newspapers to publish legal notices and minutes of their meetings.

Mostly, who decides what a reader needs to know?

You!

## What Is An Editorial?

Reporters, editors, readers and critics all have an opinion of what an editorial should be. Editorials are personal comment on issues. Frequently, an editorial takes a position on a subject, and provides justification for that position. Found on the editorial page, an editorial should deal with ideas and issues that affect the lives of all citizens. Often the subject for editorial comment grows out of the day's news. But editorial writing is different from news writing. When making editorial comment, writers have the freedom (unlike the news reporter) to give criticism, opinion, and advice to the reader.

### **Activity 1: News Stories and Editorials**

Clip an example of a news story and an editorial from your local paper. Mount them on paper, label them, and comment on why you think they fit the definition of news and editorials.

**Mark them as exhibit 1 and place after this page.**

# **Freedom of the Press**

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES THE BILL OF RIGHTS**

### **AMENDMENT I.**

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for redress of grievances.

*The first 10 Amendments to the Constitution, known as the Bill of Rights, were ratified in 1791 four years after the Constitution in 1787. Civil liberties were not guaranteed by the original Constitution, but the founding fathers promised that a Bill of Rights would soon follow.*

“Congress shall make no law...abridging the freedom of...the press.” No other business in the United States enjoys that specific constitutional protection. As a reporter you are able to gather information for your stories because of this protection. Most information generated in public agencies can be obtained upon request. Reporters make frequent use of this source of information.

## **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT**

In 1967, Congress attempted to ensure maximum openness in government proceedings by passing the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act, requiring all federal agencies to establish procedures whereby citizens could obtain information. The act also directed the agencies to establish reasonable fees for photocopying requested materials (fees can be waived if the information will primarily benefit the general public, as through news reports), and to make available all information except that specifically exempted in certain categories.

The exempt categories include items that are to be kept secret because of national security; internal personnel rules and practices; trade secrets or commercial and financial information submitted to government agencies with the understanding that it will remain secret; personnel and medical files; agency memorandums that would not normally be available; law enforcement investigation records that might interfere with enforcement or with privacy if released; certain reports from financial institutions to government regulatory agencies; and certain geological and geophysical data....Many states have passed parallel legislation requiring the opening of their government files.

## OBTAINING ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION

Often reporters will be able to see public records without having to cite the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act (quoted earlier), but sometimes a gentle prod may be necessary before a civil servant responds. If gentle prods do not succeed, it may be necessary to insist that the public employee tell you which section of the FOI Act justifies withholding the information.

Most requests for information can be handled orally, but sometimes agencies require the request in writing. Here is a sample letter:

Name and Title

Name of Agency (if applicable)

Address

City, State, Zip

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

I am requesting access to [identify the records as clearly as you can; you need not have the exact name or number, though] under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. Section 552.

Should there be any fees for searching or copying the records, please waive them since the information will be used to benefit the general public. [Or: Please inform me of what the charges for photocopying will be.]

If any part or all of this request is denied, please cite the specific exemptions justifying the denial.

I look forward to your handling this request as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,

[your name and title, if applicable]

## Freedom of the Press Questions

1. Why should there be such a specific Constitutional protection for the media?

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2. Should there be any limitations on the media? What? Why or why not?

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3. What are your views on the Freedom of Information Act?

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**Activity 2: Public Records**

Select one or more local politicians and determine, solely through the use of public records two of the five pieces of information listed below:

1. What real estate does he or she own in your county?
2. What is the assessed value of the real estate? What taxes are paid on it? (You might want to take this a step further and see what the neighbors' properties are assessed at and how much they are paying in taxes. If you notice any large discrepancies in property that seems roughly similar, you may be on to a story.)
3. Has he or she ever sued anyone or been sued? (You may need to limit this to the last five-year period.)
4. Is he or she in a business partnership with anyone?
5. How much did he or she collect in contributions during the last campaign, and how much was spent? (This information will come from campaign financial reports, filed with the city, county, or state.) From whom did the contributions come?

**Bring your findings to KYG. Mark them exhibit 2 and place after this page.**

**Activity 3: Editorials** (Complete one of these activities.)

1. Collect one week's editions of any newspapers available to you, then clip three editorials or editorial columns from them. Check the previous editions of the newspaper to find the news stories on which the editorials and columns were based. Mount the "pairs" on paper and analyze the difference between them.
2. Read editorials in any newspaper available to you. Clip one that interprets an issue, another that recommends a solution to a problem or a course of action, and a third one that may be a humorous comment or cartoon on an event. Check the comic section also for any editorial comments. Mount them on paper and comment on their content and style.

**Bring your findings to KYG. Mark them exhibit 3 and place after exhibit 2 in this book.**

**Activity 4: Reading News Objectively**

1. Find two or more news articles on one issue written for different publications (newspaper, magazine, etc.). Analyze them considering the following questions:
2. Do the reporters take different approaches to the same subject?
3. How do the headlines differ?
4. Do both articles contain the same facts? Does each story reveal a different bias?
5. Do both reporters quote similar sources of information?

**Mount them with your comments. Mark as exhibit 4 and place after exhibit 3.**

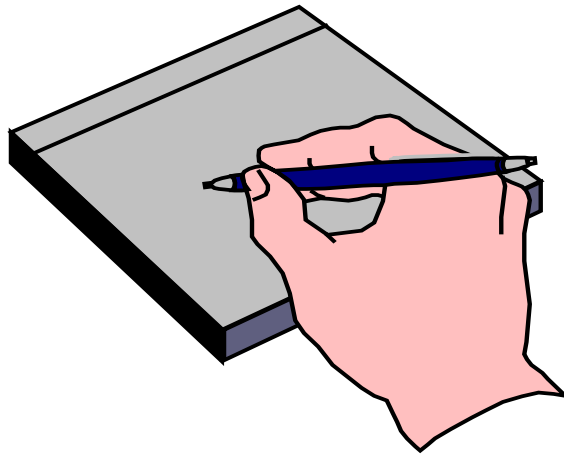
**Activity 5: Pre-Conference Writing Assignment, Editorial**

Using any newspaper available to you, select three news stories that you believe are about events worthy of editorial comments. Mount the clippings on paper and write an editorial for a local newspaper or school newspaper about one of the events. Send a copy of the editorial to the Reporter Workshop Coordinator by the third Friday in January.

**Mount a copy on paper and include as exhibit 5 in your binder.**

## Section 2

# Getting to Know the Media

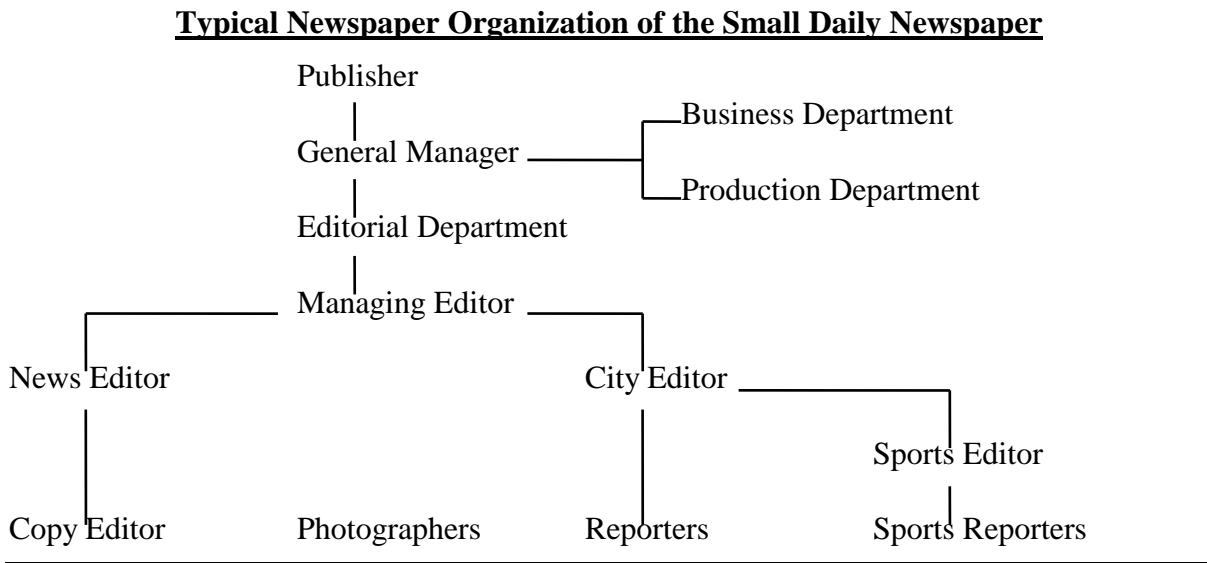


# Getting to Know Your Local Newspaper

## Visit Your Local Newspaper

The main purpose of this activity will be to learn how a newspaper is organized, how the news is reported and published, the role of advertising and the editorial policy of the newspaper.

Before your visit review the following organizational chart.



**Publisher:** Owner of newspaper who sets financial and business policy.

**General Manager:** Responsible for the business of running the newspaper, including advertising, circulation, and production concerns.

**Business Department:** Handles advertising, circulation, sales, and financial management.

**Production Department:** Responsible for composition, typesetting, layout, and printing.

**Managing Editor:** Responsible for news gathering, decides on placement of stories, editorial policy, hiring, and budget concerns in the newsroom.

**News Editor:** Responsible for the copy desk where all final copies of stories land, does final check of stories, writes headlines, and determines page layout.

**Copy Editor:** Polishes stories and checks accuracy of information and spelling of names. Sometimes works on cropping pictures and art work.

**City Editor (Local News):** Supervises reporters who gather local news, and runs city desk, which is the hub of the newsroom.

**Reporters:** Assigned a beat (area of responsibility) for reporting the news. This may be the courthouse, legislature, rural county area, or a subject such as science, art, or business.



## Topics to Cover with Local Newspaper

**Below are questions that can be asked during your newspaper visit. They should be reviewed in advance.**

### Organization and structure of media.

- How is your newspaper staff structured?
- What is the staff size? How many departments do you have?, etc.
- Draw an organizational chart for the newspaper you visit.

### Deciding what's news.

- How do you decide what news to report?
- Who decides what is printed?
- What/who are your news sources?
- How do other media influence what is news? (e.g., wire services, national media, other dailies.)
- How do I submit an article to your newspaper?

### Covering the news.

- Describe your typical day.
- How do you prepare for interviews?
- How do you cover local and state issues?
- How do you work with local public officials?
- What are your plans for covering the state legislature this session?

### Media and public policy.

- How is your editorial position determined?
- How do you feel your editorial position affects public opinion and policy?
- How do you feel media in general affects public policy?
- What do you feel are the most important issues facing your community? state?
- What circumstances would require an editor to seek the advice of an attorney before writing a story?

**As a review, in the space below, diagram the news flow of a story from gathering the news to printing. Show the flow by drawing arrows on your organizational chart.**

### **Activity 6. Newspaper Visit**

Write a summary of the answers to the questions you asked during your visit (see above list).

**Mark as exhibit 6 and place after this page.**

## **You Be the Editor**

*What would you do, faced with these decisions?*

### **THE MISSING GIRL**

A 10-year-old girl fails to return home after school and her parents notify police she is missing. Convinced the girl has not run away, authorities and volunteers begin a widespread search of the neighborhood.

You run a detailed story about the search and use the name of the missing girl. Television and radio reports also use the girl's name.

Two days later, the girl is found alive. Police say she has been beaten and raped. Your paper's policy is not to use the name of rape victims unless there are very unusual circumstances. A reporter prepares the story that the girl has been found.

#### **Questions:**

1. Do you report the girl was raped? \_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_no
2. If so, do you use the girl's name? \_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_no
3. Do you use her name but not mention she was raped? \_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_no

### **THE DRUG BUST**

The police chief is a hard-liner on crime and has spoken out for tougher drug laws. You learn that his 19-year-old son, who lives at home, has been arrested for possession of a small amount of marijuana, a misdemeanor if convicted. Your paper does not usually report misdemeanor cases.

#### **Questions:**

1. Would you run a story on the arrest? \_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_no
2. Would you run the story if the arrest were for selling one pound of marijuana? \_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_no
3. Would you run the story if the arrest were for cocaine? \_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_no

### **THE MURDER**

A local businessman living in one of the city's most affluent neighborhoods is found brutally murdered in his home. It's a sensational case that receives widespread media attention.

At first it's believed the man may have been killed by a burglar. The victim is described as a good family man, well liked and respected by neighbors, friends, and fellow workers.

The man's wife and their two teen-age children were visiting relatives at the time he was killed.

A week after the slaying, police announce a suspect has been arrested and charged with the murder. Police provide few details, other than to say the suspect knew his victim and the two men had been seen together earlier in the evening.

Police sources tell you the victim was a bisexual and was having an affair with his alleged killer. You confirm this independently of those sources. You are convinced the information is correct.

The victim's family is shocked when you tell them what you have learned. They don't believe it, and beg you not to mention the homosexuality in your story about the suspect's arrest.

**Questions:**

1. The victim's homosexual involvement will come out at the trial. Do you report now what you have learned? \_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_no
2. A reporter learns the victim had lived a secret life as a homosexual for years. Do you publish at this time a detailed background story about the victim? \_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_no

## **Getting to Know Broadcast News**

Broadcast news differs from print news in that it reaches the audience's intellect through emotion, in contrast to newspapers that reach the reader's emotion through intellect. Broadcast news also can be immediate by covering "breaking" events, typically does not contain a lot of detail, and is more inclined toward entertainment. Viewers and listeners of broadcast news are less likely to receive information a second time, unless something new has happened, whereas newspaper readers receive much greater detail over a longer period of time.

The demographics of broadcast news varies from the print medium too. Television audiences are vast, consisting of all ages, intelligence, and interests. Radio listeners are fewer in number, more narrow than television, and can be described in general terms of age, gender, education, and economic status. Newspaper readers are at least the age of teens, more desirous of news details, and have the opportunity to seek news balance through choice of print mediums.

Broadcast news--television and radio--each project energy, enthusiasm, knowledge, and confidence. Broadcasters want to be your friend, seek your attention, influence the news content by setting a mood appropriate for the story, and provide information while entertaining you. Subjects for broadcast news tend to be the extreme of society--ultra-conservatives or ultra-liberals, bad people, or people who have had misfortune (e.g., victims of accident, crime, natural disaster, etc.).

Despite the challenges to thoroughness that broadcast news has, many surveys have shown that audiences rely greatly on broadcast sources for their "news" compared to print, particularly when immediacy is an audience need (e.g., election results, details of natural disaster, results of athletic events, forecasts of weather, etc.).

### **TELEVISION NEWS**

Television is a visual medium that attempts to provide information quickly, accurately, and with entertainment. Pictures show the story and announcers tell the piece of the story that cannot be shown visually. All television broadcasts use "stock" footage to tell stories (e.g., story on education may include the visual of a classroom scene but the audio of an interview or report about an education issue).

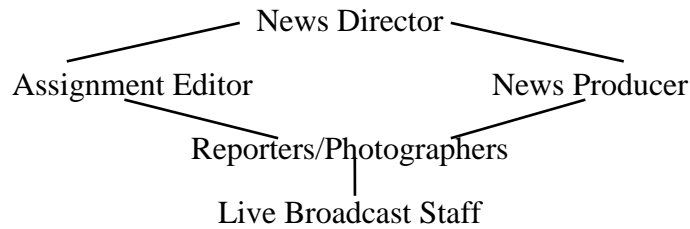
Common in television is to have a two-person reporter/photographer team that conducts and records interviews. Television news teams gather detail from news sources, not give detail themselves. Interviewee's give their reactions to the facts and their impressions of events. Effective reporter/photographer teams seek and provide balance in their coverage (e.g., interviewing representatives on both sides of an issue).

Television reporters should be dressed appropriately for the story subject (e.g., no clashing patterns in clothes, casual clothing when covering active stories, dressy appearance in official settings, etc. Reporters also should display the mood appropriate for the story in their speaking delivery, facial expression, and posture or gestures.

The television news staff typically consists of many people, when visual and audio technicians are counted as well as those staff that gather the news. A common television news structure follows:

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### Common Television News Structure



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**News Director:** Hires staff, sets broadcast policy, serves as the liaison between the general public and the news staff, and is a power broker on assignments.

**Assignment Editor:** Decides what's covered, makes decisions of news content, assigns reporters to cover news, offers suggestions to reporters on news angle, determines the pulse of the newsroom, and deals with all news releases.

**News Producer:** Writes the broadcast show "intros" and extros" for news stories, packages the news show content, writes the copy that a broadcast anchor reads, controls the story length, and influences story content.

**Reporters:** Gather the information and distill the content so that the story is understandable to a general audience, conduct interviews, and write stories.

**Photographers:** Often teamed with a reporter, record interviews including natural sounds and visual angles that support the story.

**Live Broadcast Staff:** Tape editor technicians that distill the reporter stories, anchor announcers who deliver the news, and a technical staff of director, camera operators, audio technicians, and others.

### **RADIO NEWS**

Radio broadcast news has immediacy without visual delivery. Radio news stories are written visually, usually in an active voice from the first person, with the announcer/reporter being the eyes of the listener. Radio reports can be longer than television, containing slightly more detail, although they are comparable to television because broadcast news is mostly headlines compared to print.

Radio news reporters should deliver stories with enthusiasm, choosing active words with visual content, and they should project authority and confidence. The mood of their delivery should be appropriate for the story being reported.

News segments in radio are called "actualities," which are obtained through interviews over a telephone, at a press conference, or in person. Radio news staffs are small, typically consisting of a news director and reporters.

**News Director:** Selects stories from Associated Press and other "wire" news services, assigns reporters to conduct telephone interviews, reviews press releases written by others, and delivers usually "live" on-air broadcasts on a predetermined schedule.

**Reporters:** Gather the news from sources, and write/record stories, and may deliver "live" or "taped" stories to listeners.

## SUMMARY

Television and radio news is immediate and offers an overview of events. The news package has an entertainment element as well as informational. Broadcast is a powerful medium that consumers rely upon for a high percentage of their information.

Viewers and listeners are advised to be critical of broadcast news, taking into consideration both what they are and what they are not seeing and hearing. The broadcast audience should decide for itself whether a story is delivered without bias and that balance is provided.

### **Activity 7: TV or Radio News** (Complete one of these activities.)

1. Watch television or listen to radio newscasts that cover legislative issues at least three different times. Critique the broadcasts, answering some of the following questions: How was the legislative news presented) e.g., report, visual/audio delivery, use of unrelated visual file footage or sound bites that supplemented the story)? When was the report presented in the broadcast (e.g., beginning, middle, end)? How much time was given to legislative news compared to other news? Did you feel better informed after the newscast, or did you still have important questions? Were the reporters unbiased? If you could tell the story a different way, give example(s).
2. Visit a television or radio station newsroom. Using the questions on page 12 (Newspaper Visit) as a guide, find out about their structure, their policies and how they gather and report the news. Write a report of your visit.

**Include critique/report in binder and mark exhibit 7.**

## Section 3

# Gathering and Writing the News



## Gathering the News

### Issue Investigation

One of the first tasks of a reporter is to learn about the issues in which readers will be interested. This is commonly achieved through background research, observation of events, and interviewing concerned parties.

Issues and/or bills currently being addressed by the Legislature will be sent to you later. Legislative delegates to KYG will debate these issues/bills in the committee meetings.

#### **Activity 8: KYG Issues**

Investigate the issues that will be considered at KYG. Try to find out some information about each issue using some of the sources listed on the next page. Make notes on the issues pages or attach a sheet with your findings. Be sure to identify your sources of information.

**Insert issues pages as received from the Legislative Workshop Coordinator with your notes after this page. Mark them as exhibit 8.**



## News at Its Source

Potential news sources are all around. Complete the following chart on news sources with names of local contacts. Save as a reference for future activities.

### Interesting People

Politicians, speakers, artists,  
adventurers, inventors, clergy,  
and doctors.

### Sources Locally

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### Other News Media Sources

Wire service, TV, magazines,  
newsletters, periodicals,  
journals, and newspapers.

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### News Releases

Issued by: Government agencies,  
business and trade associations,  
Chamber of Commerce, labor unions,  
special interest groups. (e.g.,  
Sierra Club, MADD, Right  
to Life, Idaho Farm Bureau Federation)

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### Hearings and Public Meetings

Legislative committees, local  
government, city council,  
school board, commissioner  
hearings, utilities commission,  
planning commission.

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### Public Records

County assessor's office,  
county auditor's office,  
school administrator's office,  
courts, police station.)

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## **Interviewing Techniques**

Completion of this exercise will prepare you for interviewing a news source.

1. Select a topic(s) from issues facing the Legislature.
2. Define the purpose of the interview: “What do you want to learn?”
3. Background information: Use the information you gathered on the issue to begin formulating questions for the interview.
4. Review “News at the Source” and list potential interviewees in order of preference:
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
5. Formulate a list of questions to ask during the interview. Avoid asking questions that may be answered “yes” or “no.” Also, do not ask “leading” questions, or those where you anticipate the answer. It will be easier for you to conduct the interview if you leave space after each question to write the interviewees response. The questions should be central to the purpose you stated in step 2.

Suggested ways to phrase your opening questions:

What do you know about...?  
Are you involved in...?  
What do you think about...?  
What is your opinion of...?  
What have you been doing about...?  
What are planning to do about...?  
How do your constituents feel about...?

Follow by asking who, what, when, where, why, and how questions about the issue.

6. Plan to break the ice at the interview by introducing yourself and explaining again your purpose for the interview and about the Know Your Government Project.
7. The Interview Practice  
Practice interviewing your family or friends. Ask questions, listen, record answers, and be persistent with follow-up questions until you have learned what you want to know. You should conclude with a courteous “good bye...thank you... you’ve helped me a lot...etc.”

You should now be prepared to conduct the interview.

**Some rules to remember are:**

1. Be prepared. Study your background information and know your questions.
2. Be prompt. Don’t keep your interviewee waiting.

3. Be sure to ask for the correct spelling of the interviewee's name, title and agency.
4. Listen. Don't misquote your source.
5. Make sure you understand the answers to your questions. Don't hesitate to say "I don't fully understand...could you explain...could you rephrase the answer...I'm not sure I follow or what do you mean by..."
6. Remember, a reporter should ask questions, not give a speech about the issues. Limit your interview to less than 50 minutes.

**Activity 9: Pre-Conference Writing Assignment, The Interview**

Complete the following activity before KYG:

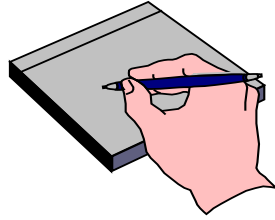
Request interview appointment. Sell the interviewee on the basis of educating the public. Be sure to tell the prospective interviewee the purpose of the interview. Conduct the interview and write a news story based upon it. Use the information in the following section to help you write the story. Send a copy of it to the Reporter Workshop Coordinator by the third Friday in January.

**Note:** If you have access to a tape recorder, ask the interviewee if it is all right to tape the interview. If you have a video camera and a friend to run it, ask the interviewee if you can video the interview.

**Include your news article in your binder. Mark it exhibit 9.**

**The KYG Interview Experiences**

A few interviews will be assigned during the KYG experience. Be ready for your assignments by reviewing and practicing. If you have access to a video camera, practice reporting on camera.



## Writing the News Story

News writing must be brief and to the point. Articles must catch the reader's attention immediately. Consider the types of news writing styles in the following stories:

### **Chronological:**

When she finished restocking dairy case shelves at 10 p.m. yesterday, Mati Brown, manager of Quick Stop in the Teton Shopping Mall, decided to start inventory in the stockroom.

She walked to the stockroom in the rear of the store, leaving her clerk, Steve Strong, in front to wait on customers.

As she was counting tomato soup cans, she heard a commotion in the front of the store and left the stockroom to investigate.

She saw a lone man with a ski mask pulled over his face holding a nickel-plated revolver in front of Strong, who was standing by the cash register.

As Strong fumbled in the cash drawer for the day's receipts, Brown crept behind the masked gunman. When he heard her and turned, she sprayed his eyes with whipping cream fired from an aerosol can -- one she had just restocked on the dairy case shelves.

The surprised robber dropped the gun and ran from the store, trying to clear the whipping cream from his eyes.

Strong called the police, who are investigating.

### **News Style:**

A jet of whipping cream fired from an aerosol can foiled a burglary last night at Quick Stop in the Teton Shopping Mall, according to police.

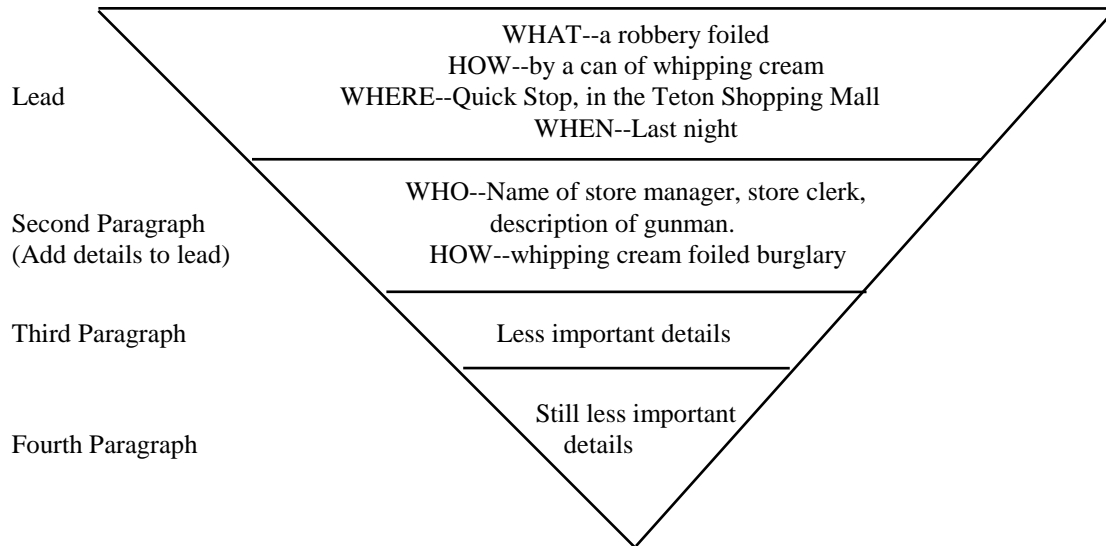
Mati Brown, store manager, told police she blinded a masked gunman with the whipping cream as he held a pistol on Steve Strong, the clerk. Strong, at the cash register, was preparing to give the robber the day's receipts.

Brown had been restocking the whipping cream in the dairy case only minutes before the attempted holdup, she said.

The gunman, who wore a ski mask, dropped the nickel-plated revolver and ran from the store, trying to clear the whipping cream from his eyes, police said.

## **The Inverted Pyramid**

The inverted pyramid is the basic design used for most straight news stories; the most important facts are outlined in the first paragraph, and the reporter works down to and through the trivial facts. The design lets the reader sample a story and then turn to another. No one expects a reader to read all of a newspaper.



## **Who, What, Where, When, How, and Why**

The first five questions are answered early in the “News Style” robbery story but took five paragraphs to answer in the chronological report. The reader will lose interest in a story if pertinent facts are buried in later paragraphs..

## **Writing Your Story**

After the interview, use the inverted pyramid scheme to develop your news story or editorial. Don’t forget to write an accurate eye-catching headline.

## **Writing Headlines**

Headlines should catch the reader’s attention. They should not mimic the lead. They should be specific and not misleading.

Don’t follow the examples below:

**Rock star hit with sick child**

**Editorial Page  
Almost a Garbage Dump**

**Services for man who refused to hate Thursday in Atlanta**

**Cause of AIDS  
found -- scientists**

**Slain  
minister  
recalled**

**Activity 10: Pre-Conference Writing Assignment, The News Story**

Select one of the issues you researched earlier and develop a news story for your local newspaper or school paper. Send a copy to the Reporter Workshop Coordinator by the third Friday in January.

**Place a copy in your KYG binder and mark it exhibit 10.**

**Complete the following activities during the Know Your Government Conference**

1. Develop questions to ask the persons whom you are assigned to interview. (See information for Activity 9.)

2. Conduct interviews as assigned.

Whom did you interview? \_\_\_\_\_

What is their job or role in the conference? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Participate in closing session news report.

Summarize what you reported at the closing session. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Complete the following activity after the KYG experience:****Activity 11: Newsletter stories**

Complete any assigned stories for the newsletter and send to the Reporter Workshop Coordinator by the first Friday in March. Include any comments on the workshop and suggestions for next year.

**Include a copy of the KYG newsletter in the binder after this page.**

## Section 4

# KYG Record and Handouts



## **TIPS FOR COMPLETING YOUR RECORD BOOK**

### **Project Goals:**

Record the goals that you made at the Summer Planning Meeting and develop a “to do” list to reach each goal. Your goals could include something about the role you will be playing in the conference as well as more general goals related to developing skills or abilities.

### **My Demonstration:**

List a demonstration or one of the times you shared your KYG experiences (i.e., gave an oral report or talk about your experiences at the KYG Conference, and/or showed the KYG news video).

### **Project Information and Activity Log:**

- Include the summer planning meeting and any district meetings/conference calls in which you participated.
- Include any promotional activities you completed (other talks, displays, newspaper or newsletter articles published, showing the promotional videotape, or the reporter video, etc.). Also talking to people about donating to the conference and youth you talked to about attending the conference.
- Include working on your pre-conference assignments and any research you did for your role as reporter (i.e., visiting a newspaper or TV. station), and any county/district leadership roles you took on (i.e., helping with delegate selection or orientation).
- Include what you did at the conference (i.e., “Interviewed the Saturday dinner speaker and wrote an article about her.” “Visited the Channel 6 newsroom.” Interviewed a delegate legislator on camera.” “Worked on the KYG web page.”)

### **Expense Record**

Include expenses such as your registration, transportation, meals, supplies, etc. Include income such as reimbursement for meals, scholarships received, etc.

### **How Did You Do?**

Evaluate how you did at completing your goals. For example, if one of your goals related to your role at the conference, tell what you learned, how you feel you performed, if you felt you were adequately prepared, etc. If one of your goals was to develop/improve a skill such as public speaking, tell what you did to improve this skill and if you felt you succeeded. Based on the responsibilities of your role and the other tasks you performed, how would you evaluate your work this year? Did you accomplish all you set out to do? As you look back over the year, would you change any of the goals you set? If so, how?

### **Photographs**

Include the KYG photo cards and any other pictures taken at conference, including ones showing you working as a reporter.



**Story**

Tell about your experiences as a 4-H Know Your Government Reporter and your reaction to the Reporter Workshop. What did you learn from your pre-conference experiences? Did you have any problems accomplishing them? What did you learn about interviewing? How did you feel about being filmed for the video? Include statements about the field trips and anything else you observed. What did you enjoy and what are your suggestions for next year?

**Exhibit**

Prepare a notebook with your *Power of the Press* materials and a copy of the newsletter that you helped produce. If you worked on the KYG web page, print off a copy of it and include it in your notebook. Arrange to show the KYG News Video as part of your exhibit, if one was produced.

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