

News Elements



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The concepts that make news *news*.

There are facts that are newsworthy, and there are facts that are not newsworthy. There are facts which might be newsworthy in one town or at one school, but not in another town or another school. There are facts which might be newsworthy today, but not tomorrow.

What makes a fact newsworthy is how it affects the people in your locality, the people who would read your publication. If the fact is not interesting to them or does not affect them in any way, it is not newsworthy.

Among the most common news elements are:

- **Proximity:** This has to do with location. If the event is happening close by, it will impact your readers more than if it is happening across town, or across the world, all other considerations being equal. A dance at your school, for instance, is more newsworthy than a dance at another school.
- **Prominence:** This has to do with how well known the people involved in your story are. If the person or persons are well known to your readers, the story will impact your readers more than a similar story involving people they do not know.
- **Timeliness:** If something is happening NOW, it has more impact than something that happened yesterday or last week. Often, the most recent development is the feature of the story.
- **Oddity:** If something is unusual, the oddity alone can make it newsworthy, because people want to know why it has happened.
- **Consequence:** If the impact of an event on your readers is major, they want to know all about it. For instance, they might not care that a particular street is being shut down for repairs, until it is brought to their attention that this will reroute the major portion of the traffic into their residential areas. This will affect them in a significant way, and they will want to know about it.
- **Conflict:** Readers have an interest in disagreements, arguments, fights and rivalries. If an event has conflict attached to it, many readers will be interested on that basis alone. Stories that involve conflict are those about sports, trials, war, politics and even Congressional debates.
- **Human interest:** If a situation makes you angry, sad, happy or overjoyed, it contains the news element of human interest. Some stories are newsworthy on this basis alone.

Most news stories will have a combination of news elements.