

BASIC CONTENT DEVELOPMENT FOR PRINT MEDIA-1

Notes by

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●What is reporting?

Reporting is the process of taking raw numbers and facts and turning them into clear, structured documents. It helps organizations track daily work, make smart decisions, and satisfy legal rules.

A report is the final document you create. It organizes information for a specific group of people, such as managers, financial planners, auditors, or clients.

Depending on what a team needs, reports can take different forms:

- *Dashboards*: Screens that update automatically so teams can monitor activities in real time.
- *Visual summaries*: Short overviews using charts and graphs so readers can spot key trends at a glance.
- *Paginated reports*: Formal documents designed with set page layouts for printing or saving as PDF, Excel, and Word files.

In simple terms, reporting turns messy data into trustworthy facts that everyone can agree on.

●What is objective reporting?

Objective reporting is news coverage that focuses purely on verifiable facts. The reporter does not include personal feelings, preferences, or biases.

Reporters do not take sides, even if they disagree with the outcome. They look for facts first and let those facts lead to the final story, rather than trying to prove a personal opinion.

●Key characteristics of objective reporting include:

- *Factual Accuracy*: Information is checked and verified before it is shared to ensure it is true.
- *Impartiality*: The reporter stays neutral and does not express personal approval or disapproval.
- *Balance*: Different valid viewpoints are presented fairly so that no single opinion takes over the story.

- *Transparency*: The journalist openly shares sources and discloses any potential conflicts of interest.
- *Clear Distinction Between News and Opinion*: News stories are kept clearly separated from commentary and opinion columns.
- *Avoidance of Sensationalism*: The story uses calm, direct language instead of exaggerated or emotional words to grab attention.
- *Respect for Diversity of Voices*: People from different backgrounds are given a voice to provide a full picture of the event.

Even though everyone has personal opinions, objective journalists work hard to set their bias aside so readers can make up their own minds.

●What is interpretative reporting?

- "It is about telling the reader everything he needs to know about a given development, and all the essential facts in a way that brings the story to the reader's environment." — Robert Bolorf, Executive Editor, *The Wall Street Journal*
- "It is giving the reading public accurate information as fully as the importance of any story dictates." — Catledge, Editor, *The New York Times*

Interpretative reporting does not stop at simple facts. It adds background information, expert analysis, and explains what the news means for everyday life.

●Major Phases Involved in Interpretative Reporting

- *Fact-Gathering Phase*: The reporter finds, verifies, and checks all core facts to build a strong foundation.
- *Prophecy Phase*: The reporter creates a working hypothesis and uses expert input to predict where the situation might lead.
- *Interpretation Phase*: The reporter brings everything together to explain the real meaning and future impact of the story.

●What is investigative reporting?

Investigative reporting is a deep form of journalism that uncovers things that are hidden from the public.

Reporters spend weeks or months digging through records, checking leads, and following clues. Their goal is to expose corruption, wrongdoing, and unfair practices that powerful groups want to keep secret.

●Why is investigative reporting an important form of journalism?

Investigative journalism protects the public interest in several vital ways:

- *Uncovering Truth:* It brings hidden facts into the light so the public knows what is really happening.
- *Holding Power to Account:* It keeps powerful leaders, corporations, and institutions honest by exposing misuse of power.
- *Driving Social Change:* It draws public attention to serious issues, which often leads to new laws and practical solutions.
- *Protecting the Vulnerable:* It gives a voice to people who are treated unfairly and helps them seek justice.

●Common methods of investigative reporting:

Investigative journalists use specific tools and techniques to discover the truth:

- *Data Analysis:* They examine large spreadsheets and databases to find hidden trends, errors, or financial tricks.
- *Whistleblower Cooperation:* They work carefully with insiders who share secret evidence, while keeping their identities safe.
- *Source Verification:* They cross-check every claim against multiple public records and independent sources to prevent mistakes.
- *In-Depth Interviews:* They conduct detailed conversations with witnesses, experts, and officials to get direct statements on the record.

●What is legal reporting?

Court/Legal reporting means reporting on the different kinds of cases being heard in various courts, particularly cases that are of public importance or attract public interest, along with the statements of the plaintiff and the defendant.

The Supreme Court is the highest court in India. Unlike the United States, the Supreme Court in India is not as powerful. The Indian Supreme Court can strike down laws that are contrary to the Constitution. It can examine the principles and reasonableness of laws according to the established legal procedure. During a state of emergency, however, the Supreme Court cannot play an effective role in protecting the fundamental rights of the general public. Nevertheless, when highly important cases are heard in the Supreme Court, they attract the interest of everyone, including newspaper readers.

The High Court is the highest court of a state. News of very important cases in different states can be obtained from the premises of these courts. Besides these, there are various courts at

the district and sub-divisional levels. Civil and criminal cases, similar to those dealt with by the High Court and Supreme Court, are also heard in these courts. Newspapers and journalists are particularly interested in cases that have a connection with society and involve public interest. Therefore, every newspaper generally has specific journalists and reporters assigned to collect court-related news.

●Responsibilities and Ethics of a Court Reporter:

A court reporter must be familiar with the law. While preparing legal reports, a reporter should never make comments about a case. Nothing should be written that might influence the judge or affect the judicial process. Apart from information presented during the court proceedings, a reporter should not publish other information about a case under consideration. Otherwise, the concerned journalist and newspaper may be charged with contempt of court.

A legal reporter generally has to work within the premises of the court. Therefore, the reporter spends much of the time there and meets lawyers and judges regularly. Through this, the reporter develops close professional relationships with them. A good court reporter must therefore be efficient and, at the same time, knowledgeable about legal matters.

●Write about development journalism.

Development-oriented journalism is synonymous with positive journalism. We see the light of a lamp, but the vast darkness on its opposite side often goes unnoticed. Similarly, development journalism chooses not to focus on the negative aspects of life, but rather highlights the bright, illuminated side before everyone. By emphasizing honest human efforts, it guides people away from degradation and shows the path toward upliftment. The continuous development of individuals and society is the core objective of this type of journalism. The news of the neglected and marginalized people at the bottom tier of every country does not easily reach everywhere. In our society, the influence of the powerful is ubiquitous. Unless a large-scale accident or disaster occurs, the miseries of ordinary people are rarely published in any newspaper. However, development journalists are determined to bring the stories of ordinary people to the general public. They highlight the voices of the neglected and oppressed, making both the common citizens and the administration aware. Development journalism spotlights reports concerning the economic and overall development of ordinary people. It is practised with several key objectives. For instance, when such news is published, it inspires the public mind to be industrious and development-oriented. It highlights that development is the result of collective effort, and that better days return through relentless work and perseverance—development journalism actively propagates this truth. To bring the public closer to government developmental initiatives, journalists take steps to ensure that the fruits of development reach the masses. Newspapers today, which are mostly accustomed to pointing fingers only at social decay, are now seeing a significant decline in genuine developmental reports. The newspapers of developing countries are indifferent to publishing their developmental reports through rigid exchanges. As a result, along with their own domestic

news, these stories fail to reach the people. A lack of public awareness is often observed in developing nations. For the sake of the development of the country and the nation, a positive role should be adopted across all levels of the media in this regard.

Development is a concept with two different paradigms. There is a dominant paradigm, according to which it is a process of economic upliftment, which is a result of an ongoing process of industrialisation, mining, urbanisation, building infrastructure, dams and roads, production and consumption of huge amounts of energy and an increase in the use of technology in every sphere of the social and economic realm. The dominant paradigm of development may have some repercussions like displacement of mass, employment and labour-related issues, environmental threats, people's resistance and militarisation. There is an alternate paradigm of development, according to which real development is the development of the quality of human life, which can only be attained through production, procurement and distribution of social benefits like food sufficiency, good health conditions, good education and a sense of social harmony, social justice and love for all mankind. Issues of science and technology are also subjects of developmental news, and the vision of their implementation places them in the category of dominant or alternate paradigms. The aforesaid issues of both paradigms of development and the associated issues can be reported as developmental issues. Considered positive journalism, it also centers on a country's developmental landscape, fostering awareness about diverse development programs and issues. Its purpose is to inform readers about developmental matters and initiatives, encouraging their active participation and involvement. A reporter must understand the philosophy of development before pursuing any issue under this head. He or she should try to get answers to some basic questions – What are the benefits of a development project? Who are the beneficiaries? Who pays the price in the long run? And what will be the associated cultural and social change

●What is Entertainment Reporting?

Areas of art, theatre, cinema, and cultural activities stimulate mass fantasy and become the domain of wide public interest. News from this segment caters to readers across all sections of society. In the age of social media, the concept of "news" encompasses more than the conventional emphasis on politics and international relations; it extends to anything new occurring across various aspects of life, including sports, entertainment, celebrity gossip, current affairs, culture, arts, and technology. Thus, as a journalist, you must follow the social media accounts of celebrities to uncover potential stories and stay updated on the latest happenings.

●What is Political Reporting?

Political reporting focuses on tracking political developments and issues across diverse platforms, including newspapers, radio, television, magazines, and digital news wires. Journalists working in this field cover the actions of ruling and opposition parties, electoral campaigns, public policies, and legislative and administrative systems. This coverage keeps

citizens informed about the enforcement of laws, evaluates executive decisions, uncovers institutional shortcomings, and poses critical questions. Furthermore, political reporting holds the ruling administration accountable to the public by examining the allocation of public funds. It also uncovers the objective truth behind partisan campaigns, delivering verifiable facts and balanced perspectives to the audience. To succeed, political reporters must stay in regular contact with party spokespersons, cultivate relationships with key leaders, and possess the analytical acumen to connect separate yet interrelated issues.

●What is Crime Reporting?

Crime stories hold a universal appeal and play a crucial role in keeping the public informed about community happenings. They not only capture our attention but also serve as a vital service by aiding in crime resolution through information sharing. For aspiring journalists interested in specializing in crime reporting, honing research and writing skills is essential. Developing sources within the law enforcement community is key to accessing valuable information. Being prepared for extended work hours and maintaining a working knowledge of penal codes and libel laws are crucial aspects. Viewpoints of all concerned persons or groups should be taken into account. The reporter should also collect the required documentary and substantial evidence, if available and cross-verify all the facts.

●What is Financial/Economic Reporting?

A reporter, reporting the Corporate World and Economic affairs, must have knowledge of basic principles of trade and business. He or she should be aware of trade practices and economic history of the region. It also involves the analysis and presentation of financial information about companies, markets, and economic trends. Journalists in this field aim to provide accurate, timely, and insightful coverage that helps readers understand the financial health and performance of businesses.

●What is sports reporting?

Sports journalists write and report news about worldwide sporting events. Working as a sports journalist allows you to build relationships with different people, such as coaches, athletes, sportspersons and psychologists. If you want to work as a sports journalist, understanding what the job entails can help you make the right career decision. In this article, we explain journalism, discuss what sports journalists do, outline their skills, requirements and work-life and explore the various career prospects. Here are some types of journalism stories sports journalists cover:

- **Straight lead game stories:** Straight lead game stories use a pre-defined structure and are one of the most fundamental types of journalism. They provide information about who won or lost the game, team and individual scores and key players.

- **Feature game stories:** Feature game stories are popular because readers know the game's outcome. They provide a different angle on what happened in the game and why.
- **Profiles:** While a feature game story highlights a game, a profile story features and focuses on a person. This person can be a rising entry-level athlete or an influential coach.
- **Season preview and wrap-up stories:** Sports journalists cover and publish these stories when teams and coaches prepare for the upcoming season or after the season ends. These stories typically share the expectations of coaches and players and how they plan to approach the new season.
- **Columns:** In a sports column, a journalist shares their opinion. Sometimes they include strong opinions when a team player or coach does not meet the desired performance expectation.