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The exercises in this section are designed to supplement some of the things you may have learned in The News Manual chapters. They have been invented, to concentrate into a shorter space the aspects being tested. Unfortunately, this means that they are separated from real life, so you have to make judgments in an artificial situation which you
would not normally face in real life where such issues would be found in context. The exercises are also more clear-cut than you might experience in your normal work. Bear these factors in mind when you undertake the exercises. We also suggest some answers to the exercises first without looking at the answers, then read
the answers through carefully so you understand our reasoning. The answers we give are, in most cases, just suggestions. Journalism is not an exact science because people in society are unique and behave in different ways even when they think they are being consistent. Also, legal systems vary from country, so an answer applicable here
may not apply in your country. Do not get downhearted if your answers differ from those we give. Your answers may be just as valid. Again, the important thing is to understand the reasoning and see how it is based on the things you've learned. As with the material in the chapters themselves, the exercises are just starting points. From here you
should go back to the work you do as a journalist and see how you can make decisions in real life. Above all, enjoy doing the exercises. The only person watching and judging your ability is yourself. Be a good, fair and honest judge of your own work. ^back to the top BBC presenter Huw Edwards Here are a few script-writing tips and examples of
real BBC scripts which teachers might find use to models for writing TV and radio news. The sample scripts are from BBC Radio News. SCRIPT-WRITING TIPS Decide how long your entire programme, decide on the
length of each report. Most people speak at three words a second, so the script for a 30-second report contains about 90 words. This worksheet will help you. Worksheet 3.2: Script template Think about your audience and use appropriate language. Write as you speak. You don't have to use formal language. News presenter Fiona Bruce Keep reading
your scripts out loud to check how they sound. Avoid repeating the same word too often. Write any words which are tricky to pronounce phonetically. Look at the Five Live script below for an example of how to do this. Liven up your reports with lots of interviews and sound or video clips. Long sections of script, containing only the presenter's words,
can become boring. Remember to tell the audience who said what. In other words, credit your sources. If you did not manage to record the best quote out loud. It's better to paraphrase like Radio 4 have done in this example: Tony Blair has said remarkable progress is
being made in Afghanistan and that Britain is committed to supporting the country. Analyse as many programmes as you can. It might help students to answer these questions: How long was the programme? Were there headlines? Did it contain music? Remember, in order to use music in YOUR news you have to compose it yourself or obtain
permission for it's use. Breaking copyright law is a form of stealing. How many stories did the programme contain? How long were each of the reports? What was the language like? Which sound and video clips were used? Did you find it interesting? EXAMPLE RADIO SCRIPTS Below are three BBC radio scripts, all broadcast on the same day. It is
interesting to compare the different stories and the choice of language adopted by each programme, and to discuss how this relates to audience. It is also interesting to note that all the scripts are quite short. THREE Cs Asking students to read them out loud and time themselves encourages them to be CONCISE when writing their own scripts - one of
the three key writing skills involved in journalism. Key Each script is written for a presenter to read out. It might help students to think of a news script like the lines of a play with an invisible PRESENTER: at the beginning. The words at the
beginning (IN WORDS) and end of each clip (OUT WORDS) and the length in minutes and seconds (DURATION) of the clip are shown so the presenter knows when to start reading again. Radio 1's Newsbeat script Radio 4 Tony Blair has said remarkable progress is being made in Afghanistan - and Britain is committed to supporting the country. He
was talking after meeting the Afghan President, Hamid Karzai, in the capital, Kabul. Mr Blair said the people of Afghanistan deserved to live in a proper democratic state. Audio insert NAME: AFGHAN BLAIR IN WORDS: ...challenges with you. DURATION: 0'11" The Iraqi government has rejected claims from an
international human rights group that the trial of Saddam Hussein was unfair. Human Rights Watch said, among other things, key evidence hadn't been disclosed to the defence in advance. Dozens of Palestinians have converged on a house which they believe is under threat from Israeli warplanes. This is the second time in recent days civilians have
been urged to act as human shields at the homes of militants in Gaza. On Saturday, Israel called off a planned air strike. The American technical stock exchange, Nasdaq, has launched a takeover bid for the London Stock Exchange. Health unions have
criticised proposals for NHS hospitals to be able to advertise for patients. The Department of Health has warned trusts not to spend too much on marketing their services. Doctor Laurence Buckman, from the British Medical Association, rejected the idea. Audio insert NAME: NHS BUCKMAN IN WORDS: Patients want... OUT WORDS: ...care for
patients. DURATION: 0'09" Environmental protesters are blockading a big Shell petrol station in Birmingham. They say they're angry that the impact of the oil giant's work on the environment - and also the way they're angry that the impact of the oil giant's work on the environmental protesters are blockading a big Shell petrol station in Birmingham. They say they're angry that the impact of the oil giant's work on the environmental protesters are blockading a big Shell petrol station in Birmingham.
and Britain is committed to supporting the country. He was talking after meeting the Afghan President, Hamid Karzai, in the capital, Kabul. At a news conference, Mr Blair said the people of Afghanistan deserved to live in a proper democratic state. He gave this pledge: Audio insert NAME: AFGHAN BLAIR IN WORDS: I want to OUT WORDS: with
you DURATION: 0'23" A former Russian security agent remains in a serious condition in hospital in London, where he's being treated, under police guard, for the effects of poisoning. Alexander Litvinenko, an outspoken critic of President Putin, was taken ill after meeting a contact at a sushi bar. The Sunday Times reporter, David Leppard, told Five
Live Mr Litvinenko was keen to tell his story even though he was seriously ill. Audio insert NAME: RUSSIA LEPPARD ACT IN WORDS: .....my interview with him. DURATION: 0'20" A police officer who was seriously injured when his patrol car overturned in Leeds on Saturday morning has died. The 36 year old officer was
responding to a call when the accident happened. Dozens of Palestinians have converged on a house which they believe is under threat from Israeli warplanes. This is the second time in recent days civilians have been urged to act as human shields at the homes of militants in Gaza. From the town of Beit Lahiya, here's Alan Johnston. Audio insert
NAME: GAZA JOHNSTON IN WORDS: The owner... OUT WORDS: ...Saturday night. DURATION: 0'35" Rescue teams searching for two ice climbers missing in the Cairngorms overnight say they may have been caught in an avalanche. The pair, both from the Aberdeen area, had been climbing in the Coire an t Sneachda (PRON: CORRY AN SNECHDA)
area yesterday. The alarm was raised when they failed to turn up at a meeting point. Environmental protesters are blockading one of the main Shell petrol stations in Birmingham. They say they're angry that the impact of the oil giant's work on the environment - and also the way it treats people in third world countries. In the city, the one hundred
share index is down 33 at 61-58. Radio 1 Newsbeat A former Russian secret agent's critically ill after claims his government's tried to kill him in a London restaurant. It's thought Alexander Litvinenko's was poisoned with a chemical called thalium. He'd met a contact to
try and expose who murdered a reporter who'd heavily criticised the Russian President Vladamir Putin. Alexander Goldfarb's his friend. GOTO AUDIO NAME: r1 mon Russian Spy Goldfarb OUT WORDS: can hardly talk DURATION:0'11" Tony Blair's thanked British troops in Afghanistan for the courage they've shown fighting the Taliban. He spent an
hour and a half talking to soldiers at the main British camp in Helmand province. The government's putting more money into a pupil mentoring scheme in schools to try to stop bullying... GOTO AUDIO NAME: 0800 bullying OUT WORDS: their
responsibility to DURATION:0'09" Mountain rescue teams are searching for two ice climbers who've gone missing in the Cairngorns. It's thought may have been caught in an avalanche. Michael Mulford's from RAF Kinloss... GOTO AUDIO NAME: 1030 climbers OUT WORDS: sudden unanticipated avalanches DURATION:0'07" Blackburn and Spurs
both ended up with ten men in a 1 all draw at Ewood Park. Red cards for Tugay (too-guy) and Hossam Ghaly and Martin Jol got in to an argument with the ref. And more problems for Hearts in the SPL - after a 1-0 defeat at home to Rangers there was a fans protest calling for captain Steven Press-ly to be recalled and owner Vladimir Romanov to go
Radio One Newsbeat...more at...11.30... E-mail this to a friend Printable version Page 2 In this chapter we will begin by looking at features are, and the kinds of features which are commonly used before examining
                                                                                                        What are features and documentaries? A feature or documentary is an opportunity to take more than a superficial look at something newsworthy. It is an opportunity to explore the background to an issue, or the character of the person behind a news
how to construct and present them.
event. It is a chance to offer the reader or listener a better understanding of the news which you are reporting elsewhere in the newspaper or programming. They are usually called features in print media and documentaries in broadcasting, though you may see the term feature used in radio and television. Features in newspapers and magazines A
newspaper which had no features at all would seem shallow, because there is not enough space within most news stories to dig very deeply into issues. A newspaper which had only features and no news stories to dig very deeply into issues. A newspaper which had only features and no news stories to dig very deeply into issues.
specialist subject in this way. A good newspaper balances its news and features, so that there is always space to give in-depth coverage of one or two news events each day, while covering adequately all the news which the readers want. In some ways, it is easier to say what a feature isn't than to say what it is. It is not an opportunity for a journalist
who secretly wants to be a great novelist to indulge himself or herself. If you want to write artistic prose, do it in your own time; your first duty while writing for a newspaper or magazine is to inform the readers, and after that to entertain or amuse them. Of course, you should write well if you can, and there is more scope in a feature than in a hard
news story for your writing style to show through. The most important thing, however, is the content of the feature; if you allow the literary style to get in the way of the content, you will have failed. It is not a way of disposing of subjects which are long and boring, but which you feel obliged to publish. Every feature should be assessed on its merits in
exactly the same way as every news story - is it newsworthy? In fact, since it will take up many times more space than a news story. As we shall see later, the structure of a feature is quite different from a news story. You might set out to write a 400-word
news story, find that you have much more material, and write 1,000 words. You have more material, and you have more material, and you have more material, and you have more material words. You have more more material words. You have more more more more more more mo
inverted pyramid. This means that the most important information is presented first, followed by the rest of the information in diminishing order of importance. A news story written in this way at all. A feature has a beginning, a middle and an end. If a
feature is cut from the back, it will leave the story hanging in the air, and leave the reader wondering where the rest of it has gone. A feature is structured more like the advanced techniques. Like that complex news story, the subject matter of the feature is
divided up into separate pieces, each of which is told completely before moving on to the next. There is a difference between a feature and an extended, pyramid; and there is no reason why the most newsworthy piece
should be told first, and the least newsworthy last. Sometimes in a feature you will wish to deal with one piece of the story. This is perfectly acceptable. The bead necklace A feature is rather like a necklace, and each piece of
the story is like a cluster of beads. Just as a necklace would not look attractive if the biggest bead was put on first, followed by the next biggest, down to the smallest, so the parts of a feature do not seem right when they are written as mini-inverted pyramids. Use each paragraph like a bead. Thread on a paragraph or two of descriptive writing,
followed by a paragraph of argument. Then thread on a few paragraph introducing the second speaker. This cluster of beads will have told one part of the story. You could give exactly the same pile of beads to ten different people.
and they would make ten different necklaces. So it is with features. There is no absolute right way or wrong way of writing any feature, just as one person's necklaces as they practise, so some features are
better than others, and you will get better with practice. Develop a sense of balance, between the different kinds of paragraph - description, argument, quote, comment. And try to read your own features as if you were a reader who had never seen them before. Develop an understanding of what makes your features easier to read, and what makes
them harder to read. Write to length It is obviously even more important with features than with news stories to write to length. If the editor asks you for a 300-word news story and you write 350 words, you will be a nuisance, but your last 50 words can simply be deleted (and if you have written the story properly, the story will still be intact). If,
however, the editor asks for an 800-word feature and you write 950 words, you will create real headaches for the sub-editor; you should do it before
you hand it in. This has two advantages. First, it saves production time; and second, it increases the chances of the cuts being done by the writer, who understands the merits of each part of the feature. ^^back to the top Subjects for features One British newspaper had for many years the slogan "All human life is
Very few people can think of anything which could happen to them suddenly that they would welcome, other than winning money in a lottery. Most things which people will welcome happen only slowly and gradually, and are therefore not news in the strictest sense. For example, the terracing of a village's hillside farmland, to prevent soil erosion, will
take many years, and there is never a precise moment at which the work can be said to be done. Yet this is surely good news. Features offer an opportunity for a newspaper to redress this balance. They are a chance to step back and view life in perspective, to relate current events to a wider social and historical perspective. They are an opportunity to
tell the good news as well as the bad. "All human life" means just that, the whole of your readers' lives, their family lives, their spiritual. You must choose subjects which will interest your readers. No feature can hope to interest everybody, but
you must aim to appeal to as wide an audience as possible in general features. There is scope to write for minority interests as well, but we shall come to that later when we consider columns. Remember that it is not just news and leisure which are suitable for features. The business pages and the sports pages, too, can carry both news and features
Dated features will date and become unusable, just like news stories. Undated features are many categories of dated features the following: News features are many categories of dated features.
news feature, which offers extra understanding of the news of the day. It can take many forms: 1. Backgrounders These explain the historical or social setting in which events are taking place. They help the reader to understanding news in
societies and cultures with which readers are unfamiliar. 2. Situation reports These act like a picture of the present state of affairs in a place which has been in the security situation in Sri Lanka, or the economic situation in Ho Chi Minh City?
Personality profiles News is about people, because people make the news. If something important is happening, it helps readers to understand it if they are told more about the person behind the news. 4. Revelations A newspaper, radio or television station's own investigations may reveal something which the public ought to know. There are often
injustices in any society - social, economic or political - which journalists can bring to light. Features about inadequate housing conditions for poor people in towns, child abuse or favouritism in political appointments can open a society's eyes to its own problems. One of the greatest scandal of US politics was revealed in a series of newspaper features
- the Watergate scandal, which eventually led to the resignation of President Richard Nixon. Although the amount of space which will be needed to publish such revelations makes them features for an inside page, they will normally also be exclusive news. For this reason, you should also write a news story for publication on page one, cross-referred to
the feature inside. 5. Analysis and predictions An informed and skilled person may be able to write features predictions make newspapers look very stupid. It is often a good idea to invite an academic or experienced person
to write a feature of this kind, rather than to write it yourself. 6. Debate of issues A controversial issue may be given the arguments for both sides and be able to make up their own minds. This is often best done by two people with opposing views each writing an
argument to support their case. These may be published either on consecutive days or together on the same day. Good news, though, and it is important to report it in order to
give a balanced view of society, with all its achievements and failures. Anniversary features in that they must be published at a particular time, but they are like undated features in that they must be published at a particular time, but they are like undated features in that they can be written ahead of time and stored. They are features which recall an event from the past, and look again at the event or its
implications, or a little-known aspect of it. The feature will be published on or near an anniversary of the event itself. Not every anniversary of an event is suitable for publishing such a feature will be published on or near an anniversary of the event itself. Not every anniversary of the event itself. Not every anniversary of an event is suitable for publishing such a feature. Good anniversary of the event itself.
columns, and they have one thing in common - they are written by one named person and all the views expressed in that column are his or her views. It is not necessary for a column to be impartial and objective; part of its function may well be to provoke people by offering a strong or even biased point of view. It must certainly have something
definite to say. People often enjoy reading a point of view with which they strongly disagree as much as one with which they agree. They will certainly enjoy either of these more than a column which offers no point of view at all. Columns offer a newspaper an excellent opportunity to introduce two things which readers enjoy, but which are not
generally appropriate elsewhere - calculated bigotry, and humour. 1. News opinion column This is especially true of the first type of column - the news and offers an opinion of the merits of what is being done and the way it is being done. No junior reporter should expect to be allowed to write
a column such as this. Not only is there the danger of being sued for defamation, but also it will be very difficult for a young person of limited experience to write a column of sufficient depth. 2. Minority interest column In this second type of column, regular space can be devoted each day, or each week, to a particular subject such as cookery, or golf
or pets, or bush-walking, or any activity about which there is something to say and interested people to buy the paper and read it. Reviews and previews Your readers will want to decide whether to pay their hard-earned money to go and see a new play or film, or to hear a concert, to go to an art exhibition or to eat at a new restaurant. You can help
them to decide by publishing previews or reviews. Both of these are your description and opinion of the film or play or concert or exhibition; a preview is published as soon as possible after the first public performance. We shall deal in detail with reviews
and previews in Chapter 52. Diary column The diary column of a newspaper should not be allowed to become a dustbin for all the material which could not get into the mews columns. Each item should be a genuinely interesting, amusing or illuminating piece of news or gossip about the world in which we live. Be warned, though: people who live in
glass houses should not throw stones. Newspapers are full of typographical and spelling errors, so it is unwise ever to make fun of somebody else's typographical or spelling errors, however amusing the result. Also, if you use your diary column to criticise people who throw rubbish out of car windows, you had better make sure that nobody ever sees
you doing the same thing. Practise what you preach. Obituaries Like anniversary features, these can be written in advance but must be used at a particular time - when the subject of the obituary dies. Of course, you cannot tell in advance when you are going to need an obituary (usually referred to as an obit). An obit is an account of the life and
 achievements of an eminent person who has just died. A disorganised newspaper is always taken by surprise by the death of such a person, and scrambles an obituary together after hearing of the event. It publishes the obit a couple of days later. Nobody should be taken by surprise by death - it is the only thing in life which is certain. The organised
newspaper has obituaries ready written on all the eminent people who matter to its readers. From time to time, when a person is in the news, his or her obit can be brought up-to-date and it can be published immediately. We shall deal more
fully with obituaries in Chapter 51. ^^back to the top Undated features These may be about any subject under the sun (or, indeed, about the sun itself), but it will always help you to decide what will interest your readers if you ask yourself what your readers if you ask yourself what your readers do with their time. One good indication of this is what they spend their money on: if they are
keen enough to spend money on it, they will probably also want to read about it. This will have a commercial spin-off, if yours is a commercial spin-off, if yours is a commercial newspaper, in that you will be able to sell advertising space connected to those activities. Don't forget, though, that some activities may be popular but not need any money spending on them, such as bush
walking. And don't neglect generally popular features such as nostalgia or light humour. Educational features The world is changing quickly, and the news media can help people to keep pace with the changes around them, and to adapt. You could run
features on health and hygiene, giving up-to-date practical advice on how to improve the prevention of disease in the village farmers higher standards of living, and thereby to build up the country. Newspapers can run special features for
people who have just learned to read, written by a language expert in a way which these people can understand. In this way the new media can play a role in building up their nation. Food and drink Everybody must eat and drink. As soon as people can understand. In this way the new media can play a role in building up their nation. Food and drink Everybody must eat and drink Everybody must ea
features are recipes, which can be very useful for introducing readers to ways of cooking from other cultures. You may also wish to publish reviews of restaurants, and even a wine column. Travel As soon as people can afford it, they like to dream about holidays. A lot of money is spent every year
on travel, both holiday and business travel. You will offer your readers a service if you write intelligently and informatively about how to spend their money wisely and enjoy travel to the full. Fashion Fashions change in all sorts of things, but especially in clothes, and many people consider it important that they are up-to-date in the clothes they wear
An informed regular report on fashion, with good photographs to show readers what is in fashion, will always be popular - especially with women readers often have a great appetite for knowing all about these people's lives. Leisure There are a
host of leisure activities which can be written about, either as regular columns or as single features. It is often a good idea if you, the writer, go and try parachuting, or horse riding, or mountaineering, and then write about it. It makes it more real for the reader and it makes life more interesting for you. A local club will often allow you to
use its facilities for free in return for the publicity which it will get, in the hope that your features on radio and television can range from quite short segments within programs to lengthy documentaries or multi-program documentary series
Broadcasting news features should follow the same general principles as print features and radio or television bulletins. (See Chapter 49) The Three Ts The main ingredients in making a great radio or TV feature are: TOPIC TALENT TREATMENT One could also include Time, but journalists and producers can never find enough of that; they always
want more time! Topic The subject matter a journalist chooses to write about. Within any topic there might be a number of issue you can explore. An issue is a topic presented as a problem or a matter in dispute. In news terms, we also call the topic issue the news angle; what the feature is about. It must interest your target audience(s) to tune in,
keep them listening and inspire them to remember it and maybe talk about it to other people, spreading the word. The topic can be almost anything, but if it is a news feature, then it needs to fulfil the criteria for What is news. These are explained more fully in Chapter 1 of The News Manual. Talent The medias term for people who appear in
programs, movies, features etc. Radio, television and online audio must have people speaking. This can be a speech or public pronouncement but people answering interview questions means you can get answers that will interest your listeners or viewers. Good talent are people who not only know the subject matter they are speaking on but can
communicate it well. And in a longer piece like a news feature, a variety of talent is best, to change the sound and pace of the program. Treatment in the media, a treatment is a plan of what you want to produce. A treatment is the way you plan your feature, guiding you in gathering the different parts of it such as research, facts, interviews, sound
effects, music etc - and then in editing it all together. In movie making, the treatment is only the plan, but radio and television news features can change as they are being made, so the treatment becomes part of the actual production process. It develops as you find the pieces of your documentary such as new facts, the talent, audio or vision you
might discover etc. As your feature evolves, so must your treatment. Often, the Topic is obvious such as anything to do with a current newsworthy event or it can be assigned to you. Finding the right Talent is a mixture of good research and your ability to assess people, but it can also depend on good luck. Your ability to produce a good Treatment and
to implement it depends on your own skills as a storyteller, skills which develop with experience and practice. All of these Topic, Talent and Treatment will be wasted. A great topic without people to express it will fail. Just as in movie making, you can
have the best idea in the world and invest large amounts of money but if you dont have a good cast of actors, it will not be a great movie. ^^back to the top Practical steps in producing radio and TV news features. Your audience should always come first when you begin planning your news feature. And they should continue at the front of your mind all
the way through the planning, production and scheduling process. Although the listener or viewer comes in at the very end of the broadcasting process, they are the target you are constantly aiming at in everything you do. The best program in the world is wasted if nobody watches or listens to it. So its only smart to think about who your audiences
are, what they want, what will they understand and how you can grab both their attention and their hearts. You may have been making programs for, say, young people for years but every program is a new event, so planning for it first involves thinking of those young listeners again. What have they already heard? What might they want to hear now?
How can I make this story relevant to them? A lot depends on the media outlet you are making your news feature for. If it is a large broadcaster with a general audience, you may need to appeal to a wide cross-section of people in terms of gender, age, education, income, cultural interests and personal ideologies. This can be restricting but does not
mean you cannot be inventive and daring in your production just try to not leave any listeners or viewers behind. On the other hand, if your audience is niche with special interests and from more narrow backgrounds, you can tailor your production more specifically. And if the program hosting your feature is nightly, hard news current affairs, you may
need to be more conventional in your approach and production than, say, for an arts and culture program. Whatever the situation, think first about your audience. Then and only then can you go back to start the planning process. While there are some important differences between making content for radio and television, whether for broadcast on-air
or posting online - the following advice applies generally to both audio and visual news features. Decisions you will need to make include the following: Choosing the topic Sometimes the topic is already chosen for you, either by events or by someone higher in your organisation, such as your editor. It may be dictated by a seemingly straightforward,
important event such as an air crash or a mass protest. The topic choses itself and your task begins with how best to tell the story of it. However, sometimes the spread of a deadly virus, such as the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. As mentioned above, exactly how you decide to
treat the story the Treatment will depend on several things such as your choice of news angle as we discuss elsewhere in Chapter 4, the news angle is not a description of the event or even the people you can interview. Selecting the best news angle as we discuss elsewhere in Chapter 4, the news angle is not a description of the event or even the people you can interview.
journalist in how you will report the event, the perspective (angle) from which you will look at the event. It is sometimes described as the door through which you enter the event, the more complex the real-life event is the more news angles yournalist in how you will report the event, the perspective (angle) from which you enter the event. Sometimes only a few and occasionally only one. Often, the more complex the real-life event is the more news angles yournalist in how you will report the event, the perspective (angle) from which you enter the event is the more complex the real-life event is the more news angles yournalist in how you will report the event.
can choose from. During the coronavirus pandemic (the overall event), many thousands of journalists around the world were daily choosing different news angles to enter their news angles the enter their news and the enter their news and the enter their news and the enter t
stories of sufferers or families the list was seemingly endless. But even apparently straightforward topics can have a variety of news angle for you to choose from. The seemingly simple plane crash might suggest an obvious news angles for you to choose from the seemingly simple plane crash might suggest an obvious news angles for you to choose from the seemingly simple plane crash might suggest an obvious news angles for you to choose from the seemingly simple plane crash might suggest an obvious news angles for you to choose from the seemingly simple plane crash might suggest an obvious news angles for you to choose from the seemingly simple plane crash might suggest an obvious news angles for you to choose from the seemingly simple plane crash might suggest an obvious news angles for you to choose from the seemingly simple plane crash might suggest an obvious news angles for you to choose from the seemingly simple plane crash might suggest an obvious news angles for you to choose from the seemingly simple plane crash might suggest an obvious news angles for you to choose from the seemingly simple plane crash might suggest an obvious news angles for you to choose from the seemingly simple plane crash might suggest an obvious news angles for you to choose from the seemingly simple plane crash might suggest an obvious news and the seemingly simple plane crash might suggest an obvious news and the seemingly simple plane crash might suggest an obvious news and the seemingly simple plane crash might suggest an obvious news and the seemingly simple plane crash might suggest an obvious news and the seemingly simple plane crash might suggest an obvious news and the seemingly simple plane crash might suggest an obvious news and the seemingly simple plane crash might suggest an obvious news and the seemingly simple plane crash might suggest an obvious news and the seemingly simple plane crash might suggest an obvious news and the seemingly simple plane crash might suggest an obvious news and the seemingly simple plane c
unusual the term miracle might be used. And if everyone except a baby passenger died, then the angle of the news feature might be on the baby who it survived, what happened to its parents or carer. Remember, the news angle is little more than the way you start your news item or feature, how you grab your listeners or viewers attention
and begin telling the story of the event. Once you are in the story, the number of angles and issues you cover will probably grow and change. The story of the baby who survived may start your feature, but you may continue to discuss issues like passenger safety, the airlines safety record, the rescuers etc. In a news feature, the news feature, but you may continue to discuss issues like passenger safety, the airlines safety record, the rescuers etc. In a news feature, but you may continue to discuss issues like passenger safety, the airlines safety record, the rescuers etc. In a news feature, but you may continue to discuss issues like passenger safety, the airlines safety record, the rescuers etc. In a news feature, but you may continue to discuss issues like passenger safety.
angle sometimes reappears at the end, to wrap the whole segment or program together, to bring it full circle. For example, you may end by talking about the baby survivor again, what the future holds for the child. Length and format Part of the Treatment, sometimes the length and format are dictated to you, perhaps by scheduling considerations
sometimes by the overall tone and format of the program in which your feature will appear. For example, in a news and current affairs program, your feature might be more relaxed with fewer but more lengthy elements, perhaps even only
one or two interviews, less formal in style. When you are asked to produce a news feature, always check how long it should be. If you dont work regularly on the specific program where it will be broadcast, ask about the format and listen to some previous broadcasts to get a sense of the tone and pace of the program. Sometimes, current affairs
programs start with serious issues then end with a lighter segment. Check which the producers want from your feature, produce a description of the topic, angle, length and format that you can give to potential program producers or commissioning editors. Voices and
interviews News is about people the people involved in the issue or event or people affected by them. Your listeners and viewers will often tune in to imagine how they too might have been affected or might yet be affected by them. Your listeners and viewers will often tune in to imagine how they too might have been affected or might yet be affected. The media are all about sharing knowledge and experiences, with you, the journalist, as the vital link in this sharing process.
Even remote, non-human events such as the explosion of a distant star can be presented as news if you can show how it might impact on your audience it wont happen here for millions of years. So, because news is about people, lets hear
their voices on radio and additionally see them on television. The voices might be people involved in the event or issue, victims, rescuers, witnesses, law makers, experts, or just ordinary people commenting on what is happening. With the exploding star, obvious voices are those of cosmologists or psychologists speaking about human fear, for example
For more on interviewing, read Chapter 16. Exactly how you include voices in your news feature depends on several factors including: availability of an interview, either face or over the phone or Internet how important to the feature is what they say how interesting and fluent are they as speakers
technical quality of the audio available In detail, we mean the following: Availability We will discuss later how your own voice fits into news feature production, but a basic rule is if you have recordings of people speaking and the audio quality is acceptable, let them speak rather than you try to report what they said. If the audio is not available, you
may have to consider other options, such as voicing what they said. This can be especially useful in features involving, for example, evidence from a court where recording is not allowed. Interviews Will you need to interviews Will you need to interviews Will you need to interview people.
is just not possible, so interviews over the phone or the Internet can be a good alternative and may be quicker. Whether you use your questions in the final feature or edit them out to leave just the responses will be discussed later in this chapter. If the issue is one with a high public profile, consider doing a vox pop, short street interviews of several
ordinary people. For more on vox pops see Chapter 22 and Chapter 23 on vox pops for radio and television. How vital One factor affecting your decision about who to interview or how much effort to put into getting audio will be how important is it to your final feature. Making a news feature can be very time consuming and resource intensive, so
sometimes you have to decide not to pursue some angles or people. But if a particular person is really important, you might want to make an extra effort to get their voice. For example, you could cover the airline crash without interviewing survivors but if the captain pulled off a miraculous landing, then you really should try to get their voice.
describing how they did it. How good are the speakers Not everyone involved in a significant issue or event will be an interesting speaker, fluent or comfortable talking into a microphone. If they are really bad, you might be able to find someone just as knowledgeable but a better speaker. But sometimes you have to use the person who knows the most
or is available. In these cases, use the skills youve learned in Chapters 16 and 17 to put them at ease, draw out the information you need or get them to speak about their true feelings. If the outcome is still not good but you must use their voice, keep the grabs short. It is better to have three separate short extracts than one long, poor quality grab.
Technical quality As mentioned already, you should try to get sound and interviews with good technical quality, where all the words are easy to understand and there are no noticeable echoes or extraneous noises. This is preferable for your listeners sake. (In television, you can sometimes correct audio defects by using closed captions or subtitles.)
Problems usually arise when trying to record voices over telephones or by VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol), using apps such as Skype, Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp Video and FaceTime are usually not good quality by broadcast
briefly mentioning what the interviewee is going to say and then briefly summarise what they said afterwards in a back announcement. See Chapter 48 for more. For example, if the audio quality is poor, you might have: Narrator: Pilot Dan Ho said he went strangely calm just before the crash. Dan Ho: Everything in the cockpit went silent. No engine
No voices. It was strange. I felt so calm I knew I could do anything. Narrator: With no sound and feeling strangely calm, Dan Ho did something special. He saved the lives of all 235 passengers and crew by Again, if the audio quality is good, there is no usually no need for such repetition, which can waste valuable airtime. Sound effects Sound effects
(often shortened to FX) can be used to add reality and drama to a radio or television news feature. In television, additional vision library, either in your news organisation or obtained online. Sound effects are usually free of copyright restrictions,
though some more complicated ones or rare ones from major events might require you to seek permission before using. A quick check on the Internet should reveal which ones require copyright clearance. When using a sound effect, play enough of it for the listener to hear and understand what it is. A one-second noise will be just that. With a violent
 EX such as a bomb exploding, there is usually also sound afterwards, maybe a few seconds later as people realise what has happened and start to react, shout, scream etc. Their reactions can be as powerful as the sound of the explosion itself. If you use an emotionally powerful EX, allow a slightly longer pause before continuing your feature, to allow a slightly longer pause before continuing your feature.
the impact to sink into the listeners mind. If you use a FX from a sound library to illustrate a point, make sure it matches the feature. For example, the FX of a crowd at a football match is quite different from the applause of an audience at a concert. Try not to confuse your listeners. And remember, sound effects taken from a library and special effects taken from the applause of an audience at a concert. Try not to confuse your listeners mind. If you use a FX from a sound effects taken from the applause of an audience at a concert. Try not to confuse your listeners mind. If you use a FX from a sound effects taken from the applause of an audience at a concert. Try not to confuse your listeners mind. If you use a FX from a sound effects taken from the applause of an audience at a concert. Try not to confuse your listeners mind. If you use a FX from a sound effects taken from the applause of an audience at a concert. Try not to confuse your listeners mind. If you use a FX from a sound effects taken from the applause of an audience at a concert. Try not to confuse your listeners mind. If you use a FX from a sound effects taken from the applause of an audience at a concert. Try not to confuse your listeners mind. If you use a FX from a concert is a concert with the application of the a
(SFX and VFX) created in a television studio or editing suit are not actually part of the event on which you are reporting. They are not exactly fake, but still use them sparingly in news features. On television, it is usual to display a small notice on screen saying it is File footage, to make it clear it is not shot at the actual event. Music Music can be very
powerful, especially in creating or reinforcing moods, whether the listener is aware of it or not. However, music is not essential when making a news feature. In fact, in some kinds of news feature it is not appropriate, for example short hard news reports in news programs. But music can be a useful element in a longer news feature. It can: Create an
atmosphere or tone for the feature. If the feature is very serious, then serious music can lift the mood. Change pace. Some features may have different moods or atmospheres at different parts of the story. Perhaps it is a feature that starts very sad and dark
but eventually comes to a happy ending. Changing music can reinforce this change. Define the start and end of the feature to a specific length (for
example if the program producer wants some flexibility in timing of segments), a piece of music at the end can give the program director more chance to fade music out at any time they like. Signal that something is newsworthy. For news features, there is a whole genre of music available, either free or available for a fee. Large news organisations
often have a large section in their audio-visual library devoted to such music or they may create their own for special programs or features. An Internet search for news music will reveal hundreds of sites where it is available for download, often for free, though you need to check the audio quality on downloading. Occasionally, a well-known song can
link or illustrate content within a news feature. Such music is effective because it is associated in most listeners minds with the topic you are illustrating or because the lyrics say something about it. For example, two of the best-known songs used in finance features are Abbas Money, money, money, money, money, money and Pink Floyds Money, complete with the ker-ching
sound of an old cash register. Unfortunately, these have been used so often they have become a clich for many listeners and can only be used in an ironic way, the producer laughing at themselves. Whenever you use music, it should be a conscious decision, not an automatic action or a habit. Narration is probably the most efficient way of
communicating the information you want to include in your news feature. After all, you can write exactly what you want to say and often even read it yourself, as the narration is often not the BEST way of presenting information. As we have discussed above, radio and television are about people to whom things happen, people
who are passionate about issues, people who witness events first-hand and vour audience who want to share in those most human of circumstances. With traditional print media vou have little choice. You can use either reported speech or guotes. But with radio and television vou get to present real peoples voices what they say it. Nothing are passionated about issues, people who witness events first-hand and vour audience who want to share in those most human of circumstances. With traditional print media vou have little choice. You can use either reported speech or guotes.
could be better than that. So while the narrator has a place in news features, it should be limited to those circumstances where it is the best method of presenting information. This can be: To tell some essential information in as short a time as possible Sometimes non-broadcasters ramble when they speak, which can be annoying to your listeners and
viewers if it happens too often or goes on too long. So sometimes you are better narrating that information and get your talent to talk of the more interesting or emotional elements. In television, every second is precious so the narrator can give concise information in as short a time as possible. And he or she can speak over the vision, either giving
facts around it (e.g. Three days of continuous bombardment had left the streets of Aleppo littered with rubble and bodies.) or moving the story on while viewers watch footage (e.g. The war in Syria is entering its fifth year, with no end in sight.) Because you cannot get the audio. Sometimes you will not be able to get some relevant audio or a persons
voice, perhaps because theyre dead or otherwise unavailable. In such circumstances you can either get someone like an actor the voice their words or read them yourself. If you do get words voiced, you must tell your listeners this before voice
recording was invented, you may have no choice. To identify speakers or sounds. In television you can do this with captions, but on radio you have to do this yourself, usually the first time someone new speaks or to distinguish one speaker from another. There is a radio format which does not use a narrator at all only the voices of the talent. In this
case the talent introduces themselves in a form agreed at the start of your recording. Record them stating their name, profession and maybe why they are speaking, then you can put this grab in front of the first time they speak. A warning though: This is an unusual way to structure a feature so you should not do it too often, only when the format
really benefits from having back-to-back talent, maybe several people describing one event or issue from different, personal perspectives. The narrator is an element in the event or issue better than anyone else. For example, you might find a historian
who is both knowledgeable about the historic event your feature is memorialising and is also an exceptional speaker. In such a case, you might want them to script and narrate the feature, with you as producer. Or they could be a poet in a feature on poetry who can both narrate and read extracts in a distinctive and pleasing voice. Voiceover The
voiceover is a special kind of narration, literally a voice that is recorded over either another voice or the vision documentaries. Unlike ordinary narration, the voiceover provides information that the other voice or the vision documentaries.
translation, often read by a voice talent reading from the translated script. In television, a voice-over on vision is often used for any
voice laid over vision, including the reporters voice or the narrators. Practical tips on voice-overs for multilingual audio: Voice-overs have a special use when the talent in a radio or television report is speaking or recording one sound or voice
over another which is played more quietly but can still be heard. For example, if you are broadcasting in English over the talents voice. You can either speak the English version yourself or, better still, get someone else maybe a colleague of the same gender as
the talent to speak them for you, to indicate that the voice-over is a translation, not part of the narration. Using another voice also has the benefit of enriching to the texture of the talent in Creole. Make a note of how long that section is.
Translate it so your English script will be a few seconds shorter than the Creole grab. Record your English translation over the Creole grabs, fading them down to about 25% level after two-to-three seconds while you record the English translations over it and then bring the Creole
audio up to 100% level for the last couple of seconds. Or Multitrack the Creole segment and the English voice-over through your editing software, adjusting the levels of each element before saving the sound file. NOTE: You can either do the voice-over through your editing software, adjusting the levels of each element before saving the sound file.
the voice-overs as they occur. Your choice will largely depend on your recording and editing facilities. While we prefer to hear some of the original voice played at the end of the grab that is, the last few words of Creole faded up after the voice-over ends - some producers prefer not to fade the talent up again, but run the voice-over translation right up
to the end of the grab. They believe this makes it sound more naturalistic, i.e. that the voice-over seems to be live, when the translator will obviously not know in advance what the talent is about to say at the end of their final sentence. ^^back to the top Resources needed News features usually require more resources than everyday broadcast news,
if only because they are longer and usually more complicated to produce. Very few of us will ever get all the resources during the planning phase and then monitor them and adjust them if necessary as production progresses. For example, we may want to make
a news feature about space flight, but if we dont have the time and funds to travel to a space flight centre, we will have to review our aim and modify our production. The kind of resources that will probably effect a news feature production include: Time Budget Production crew Talent Studios and editing suites Seasons and weather Travel
Permissions and cooperation. Research facilities Looking at them in order: Time. This is normally set by the person asking your deadline forward a few
days or a week before the scheduled date, just so you can add those finishing touches that can turn a good feature into a great one. Completing your feature early will also give other people in your organisation time to hear it and contribute if appropriate. For example, your editor might want to suggest some improvements or your organisations
lawyer might need to listen to and advise on any legally risky matters. Budget: Have you been given a budget on? Does it include staff costs (including yours), travel, purchase of equipment, payment of royalties or copyright fees. With any major project, it is good to draw up a budget in a spreadsheet and list the
categories, items, costs and timeframe when money will be spent. Add them all together and add a contingency for unforeseen circumstances, something between 5% and 10%. If the organisation does not like contingency budgeting, call them Miscellaneous. If the news feature takes several weeks to make, monitor your budget and adjust your
spending and production to avoid overspending it. Production crew: Will you be working with other people? You will need to consider things like their salaries and other costs, their availability, what part of the production will they do or take responsibility for, what skills do they have and whether there are any skills you will need to find elsewhere. For
example, if your news feature involves several languages, factor in interpreters and translation costs. You should also determine what your responsibilities are. Are you the executive producer, producer, reporters, editor and how will you work with other people in your team and organisation? Talent: What talent will be available
and how will you work with them? As mentioned earlier, talent is very, very important in making news features. They can make it special or leave it ordinary. Make a list of the people you want to speak to (and record) for the feature. Be realistic. Don't plan for an interview with the president if you know he or she will never give one. On the other hand,
sometimes when you aim high your achieve the unexpected, so the rule should be: Be bold but realistic. Also, depending on how many different people affected by the issue. As discussed above, consider whether your
topic would be improved with a vox pop. Studios and editing suites: If you work within an established station or network, decide how much studio and editing suite time you might need and, if possible, book ahead so you are not disappointed. If you are working on your own or freelance, check that you have sufficient production facilities for recording
and editing. And if your news feature is being commissioned by a broadcaster, check with them that your equipment and software is compatible and the audio-visual quality you can produce is acceptable to their standards. Seasons and weather: These are often overlooked when planning a complex news feature. While you can roughly guess what a
season will be like (so you dont produce a feature on cross country skiing in midsummer), weather can be less predictable. If your feature involves segments outside and when to work in the office or studio. Travel has costs but it also has production
implications. If youre travelling overseas or within restricted regions, you may have to factor in visas and permits. If youre travelling in a foreign country that doesn't speak your language, you may have to factor in visas and permits. If youre travelling in a foreign country that doesn't speak your language, you may have to factor in visas and permits. If youre travelling in a foreign country that doesn't speak your language, you may have to factor in visas and permits.
prepared to be flexible and have contingency plans. As the COVID-19 global pandemic has shown, journalists need to be good at risk management and be extremely flexible. Permissions and cooperation: In addition to planning for travel, you may have to solve problems of accessing people and places that are normally out-of-bounds to journalists, for
the purposes of research and recording. For example, if your news feature involves your countrys military, you will probably need to seek official approval to enter bases, make recordings or speak to service personnel. Factor this into your time planning and allow extra time in case permissions are slow or something goes wrong. If you cannot get
permission, you may have to consider other options for the feature. See Chapters 39 to 41 on investigative reporting. Research facilities: In the days before digital media, journalists and producers had a limited range of places they could go to for research. Most major media organisations had their own libraries or archives (once called the morgue in
a newspaper), but these are expensive to maintain so many of those that were not digitised were allowed to decay. With the Internet, research is much easier, though journalists must take more care than ever to avoid using false or fake information. If you are producing a news feature requiring historical information, think ahead to whether the
research facilities and materials you need are available and where they might be accessed. ^^back to the top Story arcs When planning and producing your news feature, you must keep the story arc (sometimes called a narrative arc) is a term for the general way in which your final feature will progress how it will start,
develop, change and end like the arc of a bridge. While the term story arc is used most commonly in extended works such as movies, documentaries and television drama series, it can also be applied to longer news features. Like oral story telling, a story tellin
listeners and viewers need to be kept fascinated so they do not turn away or change channels. There is no formula to story arcs. Each one will be different. Most are not actually geometric arcs at all, in that they do not start low, build up in the middle and then decline towards the end. Some features will begin with the most dramatic element (to grab
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the audiences attention) and then gradually decline in dramatic power towards the end, as the details are being laid before the viewer or listener. Others might build up to a climax at the end. While this is most common in movies, it can occasionally be an effective technique in factual programs. In such cases, it is quite common for the narrator, at various stages, to say something like: But as we will see later, everything in the house was not normal. But mostly, story arcs can rise and fall in tone, pace and emotions several times throughout the feature. Even if you cannot predict these rises and falls when you are planning your treatment, you will probably them begin to emerge during recording

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