



2 Selecting and Reporting the News

Exercise 1: News Judgment

Use the nine news pegs, discuss in class why these items are newsworthy.

1. Your province's Ministry of Education released a report today saying high school students in your city have reached an all-time high in scoring on their literacy exams.
2. The province approved a plan to build a six-lane bypass around your city that will cost \$284 million and destroy thousands of acres of prime agricultural and developable land.
3. A city man was charged in an arson that destroyed an apartment building and killed eight people, including five children.
4. CSIS investigators visited the public libraries in your city to check on the reading records of several local residents who CSIS believes may be linked to terrorism.
5. Three Israelis and 10 Palestinians were killed in a suicide bombing at a bus stop in a suburb of Tel Aviv.
6. The parents of quintuplets in your city saw their five children off to school for the first time, as the three boys and two girls were picked up by a bus that took them to kindergarten.
7. More than 100 people were killed and another 800 injured when a runaway passenger train collided with a freight train in Tanzania.
8. City officials agreed at their Tuesday night council meeting to spend \$128 million to build a new trash incinerator that would burn trash from the city as well as from six surrounding counties.

Exercise 2: Accuracy in Facts

Patricia Richards, a 52-year-old businesswoman in your city, today announced that she is running for mayor. You know and can prove all the following facts but have never reported them because she was a private citizen. Mark the facts you would report today and discuss in class.

- A. _____ Richards has been divorced three times.
- B. _____ At the age of 17, Richards and two friends were charged with stealing a car. The charges were dropped because the car was recovered undamaged and the car's owner, a neighbour, declined to prosecute.
- C. _____ Richards has diabetes.
- D. _____ Richards has had two abortions.
- E. _____ Richards is a recovered alcoholic; she has not had a drink in 20 years.
- F. _____ Before going into business for herself, she was fired from two other jobs because of her drinking.
- G. _____ Her campaign literature says she attended McGill University, yet she never graduated.
- H. _____ She established, owns, and manages the city's largest chain of furniture stores.
- I. _____ Various tax and other public records reveal that her chain of furniture stores is valued at \$20 million and last year earned a profit of \$2.3 million.
- J. _____ Each year Richards donates more than \$1 million to local charities that help troubled young women but always avoids publicity, insisting that the charities never mention her donations.

Exercise 3: Accuracy in Facts

Your provincial MLA Constance Wei was involved in a traffic accident that resulted in the death of another driver and his passenger. Which of the following details would you use and which would you discard? Discuss in class.

- A. _____ Wei is married and has two children.
- B. _____ As an attorney, Wei successfully defended two people who had been accused of vehicular manslaughter.
- C. _____ Wei was speeding and ran a red light.
- D. _____ A woman, who didn't want to be identified, called your newsroom and said the minivan she and her children were riding in was almost struck at an intersection one time by a car driven by Wei.
- E. _____ Friends of Wei said she often joked about having a "lead foot."
- F. _____ Police said Wei refused to co-operate with them when they arrived at the scene of the accident.
- G. _____ Wei has had five tickets in the past four years for speeding and reckless driving.
- H. _____ Wei was first elected to office nine years ago.
- I. _____ Wei was driving on an expired driver's licence.
- J. _____ Wei once sponsored a bill to eliminate the point system used to penalize drivers stopped for motor vehicle violations. Drivers would lose their licences after accumulating a certain number of points.