



GCE  
Teacher and  
Student  
Guidance  
Journalism in the  
Media and  
Communications  
Industry  
AS: 2 Print  
Portfolio

(For first teaching from September 2013)



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## 1 Planning and Research

Planning and time management are important considerations when undertaking your AS: 2 Print Portfolio. When organising the schedule of work with your teacher, time for planning and evaluation should be factored in as well as time for the writing of the articles. These are important aspects of your overall submission and will form part of the assessment.

### **What is primary and secondary research?**

Primary research is the work done by you first hand. It is what you find out for yourself or the information and details you assemble from your own activities. It involves first hand observation and/or questioning/interviewing. You might interview someone or visit a particular site to find out what you want to know or to add details and interest to your story.

Secondary research uses the ‘facts’ or information gathered by someone else. It is a retelling or writing of another person’s information. It is a sort of editing of other people’s primary research.

The process of undertaking primary and secondary research and the use of planning is crucial to the production of the portfolio and must be on going throughout your work on the portfolio. You should keep a log detailing the planning and research undertaken. You must submit a Statement of Intentions (maximum 400 words) and a sample of material from your log (maximum 10 pages) as evidence of your planning and research. Your teacher must consider this log as evidence of AO2 (Planning and Research) when marking your portfolio.

### **The Statement of Intentions**

This is your opportunity to think about each written piece and to identify how you will explore the key print journalism concepts and contexts through the pieces you create and your Evaluation. Writing the Statement of Intentions enables you to focus on what you will need to include and what you intend to achieve. It should clarify the original intentions for both.

It must show your choices and decisions regarding:

- the original intentions for all your pieces in relation to news value, audience and purpose;
- primary and secondary research including your selection of sources;
- the presentational and technical formats you intend to use; and
- the legal and ethical considerations that you will have to take into account.

## 2 The Print Portfolio

Unit AS: 2 provides candidates with the opportunity to research, write and format a portfolio of different types of stories for a local or regional newspaper or magazine. The portfolio brief involves different styles of writing, formatting and presentation. The local or regional focus of the portfolio provides opportunities for candidates to conduct hands-on primary research. All stories that the candidates produce must contain evidence of this. The portfolio enables candidates to demonstrate and apply their knowledge and understanding of print journalism in their own research and practical work. Candidates must subedit their own work and format each piece for publication using appropriate desktop publishing software. They must appropriately position and format each piece to appear in the relevant page(s) of the publication.

Candidates must include additional features (such as advertisements or other text as appropriate) around each piece to provide a visual context and demonstrate their knowledge of presentational format.

Candidates do not need to produce or submit any pages in the publication other than those where the required work is presented.

### 2(a) Topical News Story (with photo)

Candidates must produce a 350 word topical news story, suitable for publication in a local or regional newspaper or magazine, including a photo that reflects the piece. It should be presented as it would appear on the page of the publication.

#### What is news?

News can be about anything – any person, any subject or any place. However, news tends to focus on the new (or newly discovered), the unusual, the interesting or the significant. It also helps to have a human angle. It should be objective and balanced. News – or hard news as it is sometimes called to distinguish it from human interest or features pieces – makes up the bulk of most newspaper's editorial content and starts on the front page with the most important story (the lead or splash).

Some tips for writing your topical news story:

- Understand what you are writing about. If you don't understand the story, neither will the reader.
- Use the inverted pyramid structure – start with the most important, surprising or newest aspect of the story.
- Continue with less important (but relevant) facts and quotations to provide context.
- Use quotations from different sources to reflect different opinions and create balance.

They will also add colour and life to your piece.

- Write clearly and concisely – don't use three words if one will do.
- Do not give your own opinion on the story.

When planning, researching and writing the story, candidates should keep the five Ws in mind:

- Who?
- What?
- When?
- Where?
- Why?

## **2(b) Editorial (photo optional)**

Candidates must produce a 150 word editorial, suitable for publication in a local or regional newspaper or magazine. An optional photo that reflects the piece may be included if wished. It should be presented as it would appear on the page of the publication.

### **What is an editorial?**

Newspaper editorials are the ‘voice’ of the newspaper and set out its position on the biggest issues of the day or week. They often seek to draw out some wider point from a particular news story.

They are usually found in the opinion section, to distinguish them from news stories. They are normally written by a senior editor or the publisher. An editorial in a tabloid newspaper usually has a less formal, ‘chattier’ tone than one in a broadsheet/quality newspaper. Magazine editorials are similar in that they also reflect the views of the publication and are normally written by the editor. However, depending on the publication, magazine editorials may be lighter and more informal in tone than those in newspapers.

Unlike a news story, editorials are not intended to be objective but they must still adhere to media law including the laws on defamation and contempt of court.

## **2(c) Review (with photo)**

Candidates must produce a 250 word review, suitable for publication in a local or regional newspaper or magazine, including a photo that reflects the piece. It should be presented as it would appear on the page of the publication.

### **Writing reviews**

Review writing is a specialised journalistic skill and requires deep knowledge of the subject, often books, music, arts, theatre, cinema or computer games. You may not have developed such deep knowledge yet but choosing a subject that you are passionate about will make for a better review.

Normally things must be ‘new’ to be eligible for review, so choose something like an upcoming concert, play or arts event to review.

Unlike news reporters, it is the job of review writers to give (well informed) opinions. You can introduce background information if it is relevant and use more imaginative and descriptive writing than you would in a news story. However, as with any story, check your facts (e.g. names, places, dates etc.) carefully.

Photos should be relevant and chosen to add vibrancy to the page.

## **2(d) Feature (with photo)**

Candidates must produce an 800 word feature, suitable for publication in a local or regional newspaper or magazine, including a photo that reflects the piece. It should be presented as it would appear on the page of the publication.

### **Different types of features**

Often longer than news stories, features are designed to entertain, although they may also inform. It can be a chance to show off your creativity and writing style, since they contain more of the writer's observations and description.

There are many different types of features and they can be written in different styles. Many features draw out a topical issue or pick up on a trend, e.g. following Angelina Jolie's announcement that she had a double mastectomy to reduce her cancer risk, a feature writer might write a piece on local women who have had similar experiences. Or following the death of a homeless man who was crushed while sleeping in a rubbish bin, a feature writer might visit homeless hostels and talk to residents about their experiences on the streets.

They may be 'fly on the wall' or 'behind the scenes' observation pieces.

They may be based on an interview with someone important or famous or an ordinary person who has had an unusual experience.

Features (particularly in magazines) may simply be written from a human interest perspective and have no particular news 'hook'.

### **What is in a feature?**

Features typically include quotations from the interviewee or interviewees and description and observation from the writer, as well as contextual and background information.

Some features are written in the first person, as if by the interviewee – 'in their own words'. However, these pieces are normally actually written by a features writer who has interviewed the subject and presented an edited, cleaned up (but still accurate) version of what was said.

The structure need not stick so closely to the inverted pyramid structure (who, what, when, where, why). For instance, a feature need not open with the most important fact of the story but could instead 'set the scene' to draw the reader in. However, you will generally find that a well written feature answers all these questions at some point.

## **2(e) Photo montage**

Candidates must produce a montage of four original photos (taken by the candidate) with captions, suitable for publication in a local or regional newspaper or magazine. The montage should be presented as it would appear on the page of the publication.

The well-known phrase ‘a picture is worth 1,000 words’ refers to the ability of an image to convey a complex idea. A photo montage is a way of telling a story using images and like a writer, a photojournalist is a reporter. This means you should choose images that reflect the truth of the story. You should not choose photos or write captions that distort the truth.

You must also consider the factors any other journalist does when writing a story – law, ethics and taste and decency being some of the most important.

The subject of a montage can be serious or light-hearted. Montages are normally used as a way of covering stories with a strong visual element, e.g. the devastation caused by an earthquake; or a colourful St Patrick’s Day parade. The more dramatic, unusual or striking the images, the better. The captions should give further details about what is happening in the photos, provide context and include any essential information, for example, names of people and places and dates.

The level of digital manipulation that is acceptable is an area of controversy in photojournalism. Images are sometimes altered in relatively innocuous ways (to enhance the colours, for example). Consider carefully whether any alterations you make risk distorting the truth, e.g. cropping someone out of a photo could mislead the reader.

### 3 Ethical considerations

You should consider the legal and ethical implications of your use of sources and apply your knowledge and understanding of the current codes of practice and industry guidelines in the print media when producing your Print Portfolio.

The National Union of Journalists Code of Conduct states that a journalist:

1. At all times upholds and defends the principle of media freedom, the right of freedom of expression and the right of the public to be informed.
2. Strives to ensure that information disseminated is honestly conveyed, accurate and fair.
3. Does her/his utmost to correct harmful inaccuracies.
4. Differentiates between fact and opinion.
5. Obtains material by honest, straightforward and open means, with the exception of investigations that are both overwhelmingly in the public interest and which involve evidence that cannot be obtained by straightforward means.
6. Does nothing to intrude into anybody's private life, grief or distress unless justified by overriding consideration of the public interest.
7. Protects the identity of sources who supply information in confidence and material gathered in the course of her/his work.
8. Resists threats or any other inducements to influence, distort or suppress information and takes no unfair personal advantage of information gained in the course of her/his duties before the information is public knowledge.
9. Produces no material likely to lead to hatred or discrimination on the grounds of a person's age, gender, race, colour, creed, legal status, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation.
10. Does not by way of statement, voice or appearance endorse by advertisement any commercial product or service save for the promotion of her/his own work or of the medium by which she/he is employed.
11. A journalist shall normally seek the consent of an appropriate adult when interviewing or photographing a child for a story about her/his welfare.
12. Avoids plagiarism. You should also be aware of the Editors' Code of Practice and relevant media law when planning, researching and writing your pieces.

## 4 The Evaluation

When your Print Portfolio is completed, you must submit an evaluation. It should be a maximum of 500 words. In it you must reflect on the effectiveness (use strengths and weaknesses) of your research, writing, interviews and technical production (formatting and presentational) skills. It's important that you reflect on the process you undertook to produce your finished pieces.

You should comment on:

- research methods undertaken;
- story structure and selection and prioritisation of facts;
- use of language as appropriate to story type and audience;
- use of appropriate technical and presentational features; and
- legal and ethical considerations.

You should also refer back to your Statement of Intentions in the Evaluation and reflect on how this is reflected in your finished pieces.

## Appendix 1: Useful Resources and Websites

### Fact Files

- Audio and Video Recording Tips
- Speaking for Radio Tips
- Broadcast Journalism Conventions
- Radio Bulletins
- Radio Interviewing Tips
- Writing for Radio
- Journalism and Representation
- Journalism and Ethics
- Journalism and Law
- Legal Errors in Reporting
- Ofcom Guidelines
- Radio Packages
- Introduction to Sources
- Glossary of Broadcast Journalism Terms
- Roles in Cross-Platform Broadcast Journalism

### Useful resources – Some useful websites

<http://about.poynter.org/> – US-based journalism education site with industry articles and how-to guides

<http://www.journalism.co.uk> – UK-based journalism site with how-to guides

<http://www.nuj.org.uk/> – National Union of Journalists

<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/sep/25/writing.journalism.news> – news writing tips

## **Appendix 2: Further Reading (for teachers)**

Harcup, T. (2009) *Journalism: Principles and Practice* Sage Publications

Hicks, W. et al *Writing for Journalists* (2008) Routledge

Hanna, M, and Dodd, M. (2012) *MacNae's Essential Law for Journalists* OUP Oxford

Ibbotson, T. and Rudin, R. (2003) *An Introduction to Journalism* Abingdon: Focal Press