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English lectures

Speciality/ level: print and electronic journalism/master 1

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Introduction about the journalism writing and language

❖ Journalistic writing

Journalistic writing is, as you might expect, the style of writing used by journalists

❖ What is journalistic language?

Journalistic language embodies the following features:

1. Simple

the main task as a journalist is to help people understand what is happening around them. Not

every reader will have your knowledge of language, so you must simplify it for them.

This means writing in short, sharp, concise sentences.

2. Formal

In order to inform as many readers, this ‘proper’ English is taught in schools and is easily understood by everyone in the country. It means. avoiding the use of slang, and words and phrases that some readers might not recognise.

3. Concise

if you’re a journalist working for a newspaper or website you need to be able to stick to a word count. This is the number of words required for a particular article. Word counts are needed in order for the newspaper or website to manage space and accurately create its layout.

❖ *Characteristics of Language Journalism*

- Short, clear sentences

you should always aim for words and sentences which provide the maximum amount of understanding with the minimum risk of confusion.

- Sentence length

There is no single rule about the length of sentences in news writing, they suggest that you never use more than 20 words in any sentence.

- Lively language

The words you use will help to make your story easy to understand. Some words should be avoided, because they are difficult to understand.

- Objectivity- Your language must not only be easily understood, it must be fair. You should not use words which give a biased view of a person, an event or a situation

❖ The Journalistic Writing Process

- Gather all necessary information:

The first step is to gather all the information that you need to write the story.

- Verify all your sources

It is crucial to establish the value of your information—that is, whether it is true or not

- Establish your angle

You then need to establish your story ‘angle’ or focus: the aspect that makes it newsworthy

- Write a strong opening paragraph

Your opening paragraph tells readers why they should bother to read on

- Consider the headline

Being able to summarise the piece in a few words is a very good way to ensure that you are clear about your story and angle.

- Use the 'inverted pyramid' structure

Journalists use a very clear structure for their stories. They start with the most important information (the opening paragraph, above), then expand on that with more detail

- Edit your work carefully

The final step in the journalistic writing process is to edit your work yourself before submitting it.