

The Ten Main News Qualities

Timeliness: News must be “new.” Something that happened last night is more interesting than something that happened a month or year ago.

Proximity: We are generally more concerned about events near us than far away (e.g. the weather). Often the size of the community is also a factor here.

Consequence: The more people affected by an event, the greater its news value. This may not always be apparent at face value, the reporter may have to explain the consequence to the reader.

Conflict: It is human nature that we pay more attention to clash than to routine. We take note of such things because they are human drama and suggest the unsettled nature of certain situations.

Change: It is human nature either to resist change or to welcome it. Either way you know that people are interested.

Prominence: More news value is placed on better-known persons or institutions.

Rarity: The less frequently something exists or happens, the greater the news value. When a dog bites a man vs. when a man bites a dog.

Action: The concept of people doing things is more dramatic and thus more newsworthy than people merely thinking or talking about them.

Emotion: Events that appeal to the senses and human emotions are more interesting to people than events which are detached and “dry.”

Relationships: Stories which can show relationships between people or events add understanding to situations and are thus more likely to interest people.