

Topic 2.2. Want to be a good reporter? Follow these tips

Exercise 1. This is the Basic version of the reading.

Anastasya Lloyd-Damnjanovic is an editor for the Daily Princetonian, her college newspaper. She was a reporter at the paper before that. Working for the newspaper taught Lloyd-Damnjanovic just as much as she learned in class. Here are some things she's learned to do:

Make a pitch (Suggest ideas).

Think of an idea for an article. Put together a short list of people or groups who can give you information. Explain to your editor why the article will interest the newspaper's readers. The first articles Lloyd-Damnjanovic wrote were assigned to her by her editors. Later, she was able to come up with her own ideas for articles.

Disclose conflicts of interest (Speak up when you cannot be fair).

It is very important for newspaper articles to be fair. However, it is hard to be fair when you are writing about someone you know or something you care about. Lloyd-Damnjanovic told her editors when she felt she could not be fair. "At those times, editors found another reporter" to work on the article, she says.

Get both sides of the story

Reporters should talk to people or groups on both sides of the story. It is very important to talk to people on both sides if the article will say something bad about someone or something.

Follow rules about gathering information

Some people agree to talk to reporters "on the record." Someone who talks on the record gives the reporter permission to write about what they discussed and mention the person's name. "On background" means a reporter can use the information a source tells him or her, but should keep the source's name secret. "Off the record" means the source wants both their names and information to be kept secret. Reporters should try to talk to people on the record and make sure all of their information is true.

Fix any mistakes

Sometimes information in an article is wrong. A newspaper usually fixes the mistake and apologizes when that happens. Lloyd-Damnjanovic says that readers trust newspapers that admit when they are wrong and fix their mistakes.

A free press has an important job in making complex issues understandable to people. To learn more about the standards U.S. journalists strive to achieve, see the Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics.

ShareAmerica. (Ed. Newsela staff). "Want to be a good reporter? Follow these tips." 04 May 2015. Web: <https://share.america.gov/want-to-be-good-reporter-follow-these-tips>

Exercise 2. Check Your Understanding: "Want to be a good reporter? Follow these tips." Instructions: All questions in this quiz refer to the reading, "Want to be a good reporter? Follow these tips." You are allowed to refer to this reading as you answer these questions.

In the questions below, match each topic discussed in the article with its meaning.

Quiz

1. make a pitch

information from an unnamed source

information that cannot be used in the article

suggest an article topic

information from a named source

when a reporter is too familiar with a source or topic and cannot be fair

2. conflict of interest

information from an unnamed source

information that cannot be used in the article

suggest an article topic

information from a named source

when a reporter is too familiar with a source or topic and cannot be fair

3. on the record

information from an unnamed source

information that cannot be used in the article

suggest an article topic

information from a named source

when a reporter is too familiar with a source or topic and cannot be fair

4. on background

information from an unnamed source

information that cannot be used in the article

suggest an article topic

information from a named source

when a reporter is too familiar with a source or topic and cannot be fair

5. off the record

information from an unnamed source

information that cannot be used in the article

suggest an article topic

information from a named source

when a reporter is too familiar with a source or topic and cannot be fair