

News Values

Learning Objective:

To understand what 'news values' are, and how news outlets use them to determine their reporting.

Do Now (in silence):

We've talked about news values briefly throughout the study of your CSPs.

Look back at your work from the start of the course, on **values** and **beliefs**. Read through the material; what can you remember?

Challenge:

How do you think newspapers show their values?



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The concept of 'news values' is defined as:

"criteria that influence the selection and presentation of events as published news. These values help explain what makes something "newsworthy."

- Boyd, A. (1994) Broadcast Journalism, Techniques of Radio and TV News. Oxford: Focal.

Task (five minutes; writing to be completed in your purple exercise book):

1. First, discuss the above quotation with a partner. Do you understand it?
2. What do you think makes something 'newsworthy'? Could you come up with a list of no more than seven?
3. Write these down in your book. We will compare the actual answers with them.

Challenge: Can you say **why** each value you have selected is important?

Ensure you complete this work!

I will be selecting pupils at random to answer, so make sure you have something to say.

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Now, watch [this video](#) and [this video](#)...
do you want to make any changes to your work?

Although these two videos have different perspectives and have used slightly different terminology, the principles are the same. There are certain elements a reporting outlet must consider when deciding how 'newsworthy' something is, because it has to have the values that fit with the target audience.



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Just Googling 'news values' throws up hundred of results...!

Do you notice anything about the language use in these images?

7 NEWS VALUES

- > **PROMINENCE** -
HOW OFTEN HAS THIS HAPPENED?
- > **PROXIMITY** -
HOW CLOSE IS THIS STORY TO OUR READER?
- > **IMMEDIACY** -
HOW RECENT HAS THIS HAPPENED?
- > **IMPACT** -
HOW DO THIS AFFECT OUR READER?
- > **NOVELTY** -
HOW UNIQUE IS THIS?
- > **CONFLICT** -
HOW ARE TWO PARTIES DISPLEASED?
- > **EMOTION** -
HOW DOES THIS MOVE OUR READER?



8 NEWS VALUES

1. **Impact**
The significance, importance, or consequence of an event or trend.
2. **Timeliness**
The more recent, the more newsworthy.
3. **Prominence**
Occurrences featuring well-known individuals or institutions.
4. **Proximity**
Closeness to the story. Geographically or in mentality.
5. **The Bizarre**
The unusual, unorthodox, or unexpected attracts attention.
6. **Conflict**
Controversy and clashes are newsworthy.
7. **Currency**
Take into account what's on people's minds.
8. **Human Interest**
More of an entertainment value.

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The language used is very similar!

It features words that are either the same across graphics, or **synonyms** of these words. Sometimes it has several words for one value.

Can you remember what a **synonym** is?

Synonym:

Words that are different but have the same or similar meanings.
e.g. Synonyms for 'shout' could be 'yell' or 'scream'.

This means that...

Although people have interpreted the concept of news values using different words, the principles are the same. You have to remember them your own way; the following slides are how I would remember them...!

News Values!

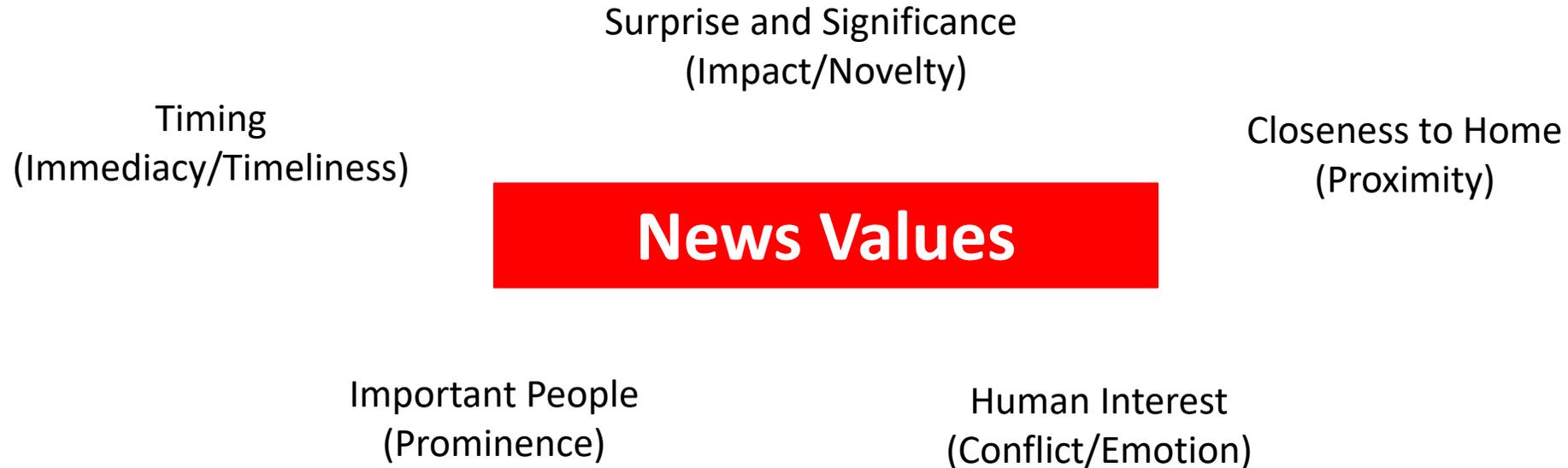


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Task (fifteen minutes; purple exercise book):

1. Copy the spider diagram below, this time using the terminology. We're going to focus on **five news values**.
2. Add what each word means. How are these values relevant?
3. In your **blue vocab book**, add in the term below!



Key term!

News Values: ideas that are considered when deciding to report a story as 'news'. They include: timing, important people, surprise and significance, closeness to home, and human interest.

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Add anything you have missed!

Timing (Immediacy/Timeliness)

Recent stories trumps old, hence 'news'. News providers often have running stories so they can offer updates. Diary items are on this agenda too; visits, sports events can be predicted in advance so will naturally create a 'buzz'.

Important People (Prominence)

Celebs, politicians, royalty all get more coverage than 'ordinary' people. The latter are only newsworthy if they meet other criteria, but the bar is much lower for celebs. Just wearing a new outfit for a party, for example, could be an opportunity for a photo story. The same principle applies to powerful institutions like big companies or the government. Their size and importance makes them newsworthy.

Surprise and Significance (Impact/Novelty)

Items are more newsworthy if they are out of the ordinary and have an element of surprise. This is linked to the size of the event and number of people involved. Bad news usually carries more weight than good news.

News Values

Closeness to Home (Proximity)

Items directly affecting consumers are more newsworthy; national news is given prominence over international. Other stories are not linked by geographical closeness, but the country's cultural importance to the UK.

Human Interest (Conflict/Emotion)

These are stories with emotional impact and/or entertainment value. They could be unfolding dramas, animals, sex and relationships, or quirky, good news items. Unusual or interesting photos, humour, or witty headlines often help to promote human interest stories above others that may have more obvious newsworthiness in other criteria.

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Some more definitions for your **blue book!**

Key terms!

Running Story: A story that appears in two or more consecutive news updates. If a breaking story has potential for this, the journalist will often say 'this story will run' (a metaphor!)

Photo Story: In newspaper journalism, this is a story that is interesting because of the significance of a photograph.

If you're finished...

How would you score the following stories for newsworthiness out of 10? Why?

- A train crashes in Switzerland – ten people died.
- A train crashes in Kent – ten people died.
- Owners announce that their car factory in North-East England will close, with the loss of 7000 jobs.
- A rival newspaper's campaign to strengthen laws on cyber-bullying is successful.
- The baby of two well-known celebrities survives a life-saving operation.
- Police charge the boss of the UK's biggest advertising company with murder, but his company is a major source of income for your paper.
- The PM falls flat on her face in the mud on a private visit to a farm. You have exclusive pictures.

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Progress Check!

In exam situations, you may be asked to determine **what a news outlet's values are**, or work backwards, explaining **how news values are important**. Today's work helps you do this.

Finally, you can watch [Mrs Fisher's video](#) to really increase your understanding!

Even more, we can look at [this!](#)

NEWS VALUES



Journalists use news values to determine which events become "stories" and which do not. News values aren't all weighted the same, and not every story has all of them.

By Dr. Jennifer Cox

- 1 IMPACT**
- How much does this story matter to our readers?
- Explain how the event impacts audiences' lives
- How many people might be affected by it?
- Numbers are a great way to convey impact - Put them up high!



IMPACT SHOULD BE INCLUDED AND IDENTIFIED IN EVERY NEWS STORY

- 2 TIMELINESS**
- Did the event happen recently? (Breaking news)
- Make sure the story is still relevant to readers now
- Is there a particular day/month when the story would be best?
- Use time pegs to come up with timely story ideas



- 3 PROXIMITY**
- Did the news event occur within your coverage area?
- Audiences don't care about things that don't affect them
- Can a larger issue be "localized" for your readers?
- Take issues happening broadly & report on their local impact



- 4 PROMINENCE**
- Does the story involve a well-known person/organization?
- Including well-known sources creates a shared experience
- Does the story involve decision-makers/authority figures?
- People in power often affect change that impacts audiences



TIMELINESS, PROXIMITY & PROMINENCE ARE INCLUDED IN MOST STORIES

- 5 ODDITY/NOVELTY**
- Is this an unusual occurrence?
- Strange or unusual topics often compel audiences to click
- Is this something that hasn't happened before or is rare?
- Record history by documenting how things are changing



- 6 CONFLICT**
- Does the story involve two or more parties disagreeing?
- Balance is crucial to avoid appearing biased in these stories
- Will audiences have strong opinions on one side of the topic?
- Stories that incite emotion generate social media shares



- 7 HUMAN INTEREST**
- Does the story involve average people doing extraordinary things?
- No celebrities - normal people with a story to tell
- Does the story have elements of tragedy, inspiration or triumph?
- Audiences are moved by stories and characters they relate to



- 8 HELPFULNESS**
- Will this story help audiences make decisions about things?
- It's not our job to lead, but to share news helping people decide
- Will audiences learn new information that might help them?
- Use sources to inform, not your own observations or opinions



ODDITY, CONFLICT, HUMAN INTEREST & HELPFULNESS ARE AUDIENCE FAVORITES