



# **WYOMUN VII**

**Press Corps:  
Coming to You Live From WYOMUN VII**



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Hello delegates!

My name is Ellie Boettcher and I will be your editor in chief of this committee. I started doing Model UN in 8th grade, and this year, I am serving as the Secretary of Finance in our Model UN Club's secretariat. This is also my second year of doing logistics for this conference. Even though this year we will be online, I will work my best to make this a great experience for you.

Besides Model UN, I have many other interests. I love to travel and go on adventures; I have been to Paris, Montreal, Quebec, Niagara Falls, the Grand Canyon, and more incredible places. One of my favorite things to do of late is to go cliff jumping. I also plan on going skydiving on my birthday this year.

When I am in town, I enjoy hanging out with friends and running cross country. In the winter I try to help out with our school's musicals, from publicity and acting to tech. In the spring, I do track and field and do hurdles and long jump.

I am also the president of Women in STEM, Icarus (our school's literary magazine), editor of Yearbook, and student council representative. I also love to do volunteer work, especially with young kids or the elderly. Last year I had the privilege to work with first graders, teaching them how to do block coding to make robots operate.

Please feel free to contact me at [elle.boettcher1@gmail.com](mailto:elle.boettcher1@gmail.com) if you have any questions or concerns!

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## **Introduction**

Writing a newspaper article, once one knows the basics of it, is not particularly difficult. It is similar to constructing an essay in an English class; the goal is not to be overly flashy, technical, or stylistic, but simply to deliver information. It is a newspaper, not poetry. The objective is to get the point across and to make sure readers finish the article exactly as informed as the writer wants them to be. At the same time, it should not become too dry. It's easy to just churn out an article without thinking much about it and call it a day, yet a perfect news article will simultaneously get a point across in as few words as possible, while still proving to be an entertaining read. There's an aspect of manipulating the information presented as well - being in the Press Corps means that delegates will decide what information goes into the article and what gets left out. Later in this background guide, notable news outlets, how they conduct themselves, their styles and their audiences, and how all of these components influence each other will be analyzed. This background guide will outline a step by step process for writing newspaper articles.

## **Newspaper Articles: How To**

### **Headlines**

It goes without saying that the headline is the most important part of the article. These are a maximum of fifteen words. The headline should function as a thesis; it defines exactly what the article is going to be about. The main topic goes here, as succinctly as possible. If the article is about a humanitarian named John Jones who has been assassinated, all the headline needs to be is JONES ASSASSINATED. The length of headlines will differ depending on what the article in question is about, but succinctness is absolute. Remember: fifteen words, no more.

### **Sub-Headlines**

Under the headline come several sub-headlines in a smaller font size. These are where the article goes into slightly more detail and elaborates on what's been stated in the headline. This may involve explaining events sparked in response to the headline or simply providing greater detail. The best sub-headlines enhance the headline by adding context and preparing readers for what's going to come next; they answer the questions people are going to have after seeing the headline. Three sub-headlines is the maximum here, which can be separated through semicolons, dashes or on different lines with gradually decreasing font sizes. They can also get a little wordier than the headline--no need to be so clipped.

So, back to John Jones's tragic assassination: an ideal sub-headline for the JONES ASSASSINATED article would be, say, NATION OUTRAGED BY DEATH OF HUMANITARIAN, MOURNERS TAKE TO REDDIT, which answers question number one: how are people reacting to Jones's death? (Note: it did not say humanitarian *and* mourners take to Reddit because that would've taken up more space. While sub-headings do not need to be as concise, if there is a chance to remove an "and" or a full name, go for it. E.B. White once said "omit needless words", and nowhere does this apply better than in newspaper writing.) Then, under that, ASSASSIN CURRENTLY BEING HELD IN DETROIT PRISON, because after

seeing JONES ASSASSINATED in big, black letters, people are going to question where the assassin is. If a third was needed, it would be advisable to cover the motivation behind the assassin, something like ASSASSIN RUMORED TO HAVE TIES TO RADICAL LEFT. (A note: “radical left” would only be used if the organization delegates are writing for is the type to blame things on a radical left. If it is a left-leaning organization, delegates could say ASSASSIN OBTAINED FIREARM DESPITE HISTORY OF MENTAL ILLNESS. If it is neutral, there probably wouldn’t be a third sub-headline at all. This is when political bias begins to complicate things.) Sub-headlines exist for several reasons: they answer any questions the headline might raise, they provide information that the headline didn’t, and they further contextualize, tying the headline to other current issues. If there was a word limit for this part of the article, it would be that no more than fifty words should be devoted to sub-headlines, not fifty words PER sub-headline, but fifty words shared between all of them.

Here’s a brief example, a recitation of the Boston Globe’s front page from November twenty-third, 1963. Here is an iconic American headline: JFK’s assassination,



as covered by the Boston Globe. Note the division of information in the headlines. The headline is pure emotion, which is an option if the article is trying to be eye-catching or dramatic. Also, it works because everyone looking at that headline is going to see a picture of JFK with those words and know exactly what is coming. The sub-headlines go into more detail on the assassination itself. Each line is a sub-headline, covering various sides and impacts of the assassination. There’s an interesting middle headline that is focused on JFK and more memorialistic than anything else (JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY, BORN IN BROOKLINE, MA--SHOT AND KILLED IN DALLAS, TEXAS, AT AGE OF 46). This headline is, all at once, a eulogy, an introduction, and an outraged reaction. Plus, it meets the word limits.

**Body Paragraphs**

If all of the headlines are done correctly, then there is already an outline for body paragraphs before the article is even written. The lengths for these vary, depending on the subject matter and the amount of information that a writer can use. Generally, for newspaper articles, five hundred words is a solid middle ground between too short (three hundred) and too long (eight hundred). The body of the article is something like a more detailed version of what is written above it. Always open by describing the event described in the headline--never, ever focus on a sub-headline first (if so, then make that the headline; if it’s important enough to

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open the article, it's the focus of the whole thing). So, with John Jones, delegates could write: "Last night, during a speech at the Detroit Homeless Veterans' Shelter, well-known American humanitarian John Jones was shot to death by a young man who had been following Jones for several weeks."

The first sentence of the article is a headline in and of itself, establishing the article's focus. Afterwards, continue to add background on the main topic--in this case, that would mean discussing what Jones was doing at the Homeless Veterans' Shelter (he was considering running for the Senate, and wanted to kick off his campaign by appealing to older conservatives and volunteering at a veterans' shelter), what happened in the immediate aftermath of the shooting (panic, the gunman was tackled and maimed by an angry mob, Jones died five hours later in the hospital), and what other notable hopeful politicians think of the incident (all are very sorry, and wish the best for Jones' family). This would inherently mean elaborating on sub-headlines as well, if the sub-headlines function to expand on the headline as they should. Any sub-headlines that aren't a part of the headline are mentioned after the few sentences of explanation. This is the part in the body where delegates start to add larger context. So, for Jones, give information on the gunman and talk about the national reaction to his death. No good article is the key event, some brief context, and nothing else; there needs to be a focus on how the article will fall into the larger arc of events taking place. Mentioning events from past articles or notable events--like Jones's scandalous affair two years before--is a great way to do this.

Finally, don't drag. The last few sentences of the article aren't supposed to be a review of what has already been talked about. Articles differ from English essays in that they do not summarize at their end. Instead, focus on what's next. What's going to happen after the event that has been covered? Are there nationwide protests calling for tighter gun laws in response to John Jones's killing? Tell readers here. Delegates can outline the direction they think things are going to go.

So, what about political bias? It has been mentioned before but never explicitly described. How does one write convincing political bias into an article? How does a writer push their outlet's agenda without getting preachy? This is a tricky question, and to be able to pull it off requires delegates to be very familiar with the outlet for whom they are writing. There is no particular part in the article to insert political views; rather, they should seep into nearly every aspect of what is being written. Emphasize some things that the outlet's agenda wants people to know, and downplay what they don't. Sub-headlines will cover different topics if a delegate is writing for Breitbart in contrast to if they are writing for CNN. The language used will depend on this as well as the language loaded with emotional, connotation-heavy words, or is it as dry and neutral as possible? Again, there's no secret formula to do this; the best way to think about it is through the lens of someone whose political agendas tend to match up with the outlet being written for. What would they want to read? What would they want to discover about John Jones's assassination? Is it another sign that the left has gone too far, or another point against the second amendment? Delegates have to determine that for themselves, and then give that particular audience that particular information. Every event has multiple sides, multiple interpretations, and delegates must understand each and every side, then select the one that makes the most sense to them, their audience, and their outlet.

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## Summary

So, in summary, a good newspaper article would be structured something like this:

1. **HEADLINE:** Provides the main topic of the article. Less than fifteen words.
2. **SUB-HEADLINE (0-3):** Elaborates on headline, answers questions, contextualizes. Less than fifty words for all of these.
3. **BODY:** Elaborates on all information presented in all headlines, sub or otherwise. A few sentences per headline. Adds context for the events described in headlines. Closes out by looking towards the future. Between three and eight hundred words. Five-hundred is a healthy middle.

General rules of thumb:

1. **KEEP IT SIMPLE.** No run-ons. No fragments. No big, pretty words. Just information.
2. **BUT NOT TOO SIMPLE.** Don't add slang or anything that would seem unprofessional.
3. **MAKE IT FUN.** It sounds silly, but a good news article shouldn't just be a generic skeleton article; it should be enjoyable to read as well. No one is going to like cookie-cutter articles that don't have anything new or insightful to say. Generally, if delegates follow every other rule that's been listed, they'll be fine. But don't just write on autopilot, checking boxes. Make it fun to read, give it an impact; a little bit of dramatic writing is fine in the opening sentences, as well as the closers.
4. **DON'T REPEAT YOURSELF.** If something is stated once, great. Don't say it again.
5. **THINK ABOUT BIAS.** Bias is a large part of the news today. Above all else, try to eliminate bias. Inevitably, news outlets wind up being viewed as "biased" one way or another because of the people running them and writing the articles. Delegates should try to cover every end of a story, reel in every perspective. Bias is deceptive and often can skew an article one way or the other. The delegate's job is to be the neutral party. Watch the writing for any particularly emotional or sensational language; these are often how a bias manifests itself.
6. **DON'T DRAG.** It can be tempting to just keep writing and writing. Unfortunately, being overlong is a death sentence for a newspaper article. Watch the length and abide by word counts. Writing with a word limit will naturally make the writing concise.

## Newspaper Writing: In Action

This is no traditional Model UN committee. There are no Crisis Directors, no Chairs; rather than participating in committees, members of the Press Corps will be writing *about* them. Here, delegates will be operating in three phases; OBSERVING, REPORTING, and WRITING. Each delegate will choose a committee to observe. From there, they can expect to follow the events of that committee closely. This is observation. Reporting entails going deeper--interviewing key delegates and chairs to get a better account of what's going on (and to get quotes to use in headlines...). After a delegate feels that they've completed a sufficient amount of Observation and Reporting, they'll proceed to write an article on their committee. WYOMUN is split into two halves, a morning and an afternoon session. Delegates should expect to complete one article per session, though there's nothing wrong with going over.

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## Outlets/Positions

Here are some of the largest news providers today; there will be some analysis here, but delegates should take it upon themselves to familiarize with these and other outlets, in order to get a good grasp on how news is written. Their bias will be either: Left, Left-Leaning, Central, Right-Leaning, or Right.

1. **USA TODAY** - One of the most popular physical newspapers in America, USA Today, like many other modern news outlets, maintains a heavy online presence. Being widely circulated, USA Today's articles tend to be relatively easy to read and simply structured. Articles covering entertainment or celebrity life tend to be more whimsical in tone. It's worth noting that USA Today has been rated as politically neutral by the media bias ranking site AllSides, though many of the outlet's editorials have been billed with a Left-Leaning Bias.



2. **NEWSWEEK** - In 2013, this outlet stopped physical circulation; all of Newsweek's content is now distributed online. Many of its political articles are written through an anti-Trump (and inherently left-leaning) lens. In general, the outlet's writers are cynical about the state of modern American politics; criticisms of

both parties are common. AllSides ranks Newsweek as Left-Leaning; its politically-minded articles tend to use more emotionally-charged language (especially in its coverage of President Trump), billing the President and his party as rude, bullish, and indecisive.



3. **BUZZFEED** - Buzzfeed is one of the newest news outlets on this list, founded in just 2006. Entirely digital, Buzzfeed's articles, lists, and online quizzes are more focused on capturing viral internet moments rather than political rhetoric. These articles are often irreverently written to the point of

obnoxiousness and littered with GIFs and memes. Still, the site does cover events that would grab attention from other, more serious outlets. BuzzFeed's articles--of all kinds--feature tweets and other social-media posts from those involved with the article, rather than direct quotations, reflecting the site's modern outlook. AllSides ranks BuzzFeed as Left-Leaning; much of its coverage favors the left perspective.

4. **NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO (NPR)** - A non-profit media organization funded by private organizations and public donations, NPR distributes its information through radio programming and online news articles. NPR's online articles and radio coverage do not favor one end of the political spectrum over the other; they steer clear from emotional language, covering events from a wide-reaching perspective. Recently (post-2016 election), NPR's coverage has started to lean slightly leftwards; however, AllSides still ranks NPR with a Central bias--as in, no bias at all.



5. **FOX NEWS** - The slogan goes "fair and balanced", but in reality, Fox News is biased toward the Right. Founded in 1996 by Rupert Murdoch, the outlet was designed with conservative viewpoints in mind. Recently, the outlet has been accused of misrepresenting facts and stories to favor the Republican party. Fox News will often paint events in a Republican light, leaving out events that detract from that perspective. Online editorials, as well, promote conservative, Republican ideals. Emotionally charged language is commonplace, particularly in news broadcasts. AllSides ranks Fox News as

Right-Leaning, while its editorials are ranked as Right (the furthest ranking possible from Left).

6. **THE NEW YORK TIMES** - Founded in 1851, the New York Times is a widely-distributed newspaper and online sight acclaimed for its writing (its various articles over the years have won 125 Pulitzer Prizes). Its articles are, like USA



Today's, written in a concise, digestible manner. Also, much of a NYT article is actually devoted to contextualizing the event the article's about. The headline is covered within two paragraphs of a ten-paragraph article. AllSides ranks the New York Times as Left-Leaning; the paper has not endorsed a Republican candidate for President since Eisenhower, and some articles intentionally omit right-favoring information.

- 7. **CABLE NEWS NETWORK (CNN)** - In recent times, CNN has become the Left's answer to Fox News, a mostly liberal outlet condemned as "fake news" by conservatives. CNN is not "fake news", at least by the left-leaning standard (more liberal outlets tend to believe "fake news" is defined solely by false information, which conservatives have



been claiming that "fake news" is misrepresentation or omission of facts, which CNN has been guilty of before. CNN's articles use emotionally-charged language to a detectable frequency. Some of its headlines fall under a "clickbait" umbrella rather than the efficient summary of the article's main topic headlines are supposed to be (as in,

titles engineered for snagging attention and online hits). AllSides ranks CNN's online news as Left-Leaning, while its editorials and cable broadcasts are Left.

- 8. **British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)**- BBC is a news outlet founded in 1992, making it the oldest national broadcaster.

It is all the largest broadcaster in the world by number of employees. They are impartial and independent outlets creating content to inform, educate, and entertain in the U.K. and the world. They stick to the facts and stay away from words that could raise pathos. Allsides rates them as having a center bias rating.



- 9. **NATIONAL REVIEW** - The tag on the website says "Conservative News, Opinions,

Policy, Etc.", so at least this outlet up-front about its bias. National Review circulates both online and in print. It describes itself as libertarian, and was founded in 1955 to unite conservatives in the face of a growing counterculture movement. As expected, the articles here are by conservatives, for conservatives; when the audience doesn't want to hear a left perspective, why bother giving them one? Surprisingly, the writing in



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National Review isn't particularly disparaging of the Left; like Vox, it's as if there's no opposing party at all. AllSides ranks National Review as Right.

10. **THE HILL** - The Hill is an American newspaper publishing in Washington, D.C. It deals in political coverage and business--not much more. The Hill's website claims its goal is to "[offer] objective and in-depth coverage of Congress, the Administration, business and lobbying, campaigns and more." For the most part, the Hill delivers on this statement, delivering articles devoid of emotional language and covering events from all sides. AllSides ranks The Hill as neutral.



11. **BREITBART NEWS NETWORK** - Breitbart News Network is a largely conservative American news outlet launched in 2007. Andrew Breitbart, Breitbart's founder, hoped to create "the Huffington Post of the right", and for the most part succeeded. Initially consisting of articles from other, larger sites, in recent times Breitbart has begun to include more original content. Breitbart's are short, sometimes extremely so. Often, the headline is elaborated on with just one or two additional sentences. Sub-headlines are nonexistent. Ninety percent of Breitbart's webpages are for comments. Unlike the National Review, another Right-leaning network, Breitbart's articles acknowledge the existence of a Left. They actively try to demean Leftist viewpoints with emotional, dramatic language. AllSides ranks the Breitbart News Network as Right.



12. **Reason** -Reason is an American libertarian monthly magazine created in 1968. It has been named one of the top 50 magazines in 2004 by the Chicago Tribune. Reason offers the tagline "free minds and free markets", covering politics, culture, and ideas with a mix of news, analysis, commentary, and reviews. They often publish factual information that utilizes loaded words (wording that attempts to influence an audience by using appeal to emotion or stereotypes) to favor conservative causes. This media sources are slightly to moderately conservative in bias according to Allsides.



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13. **DAILY MAIL** - The Daily Mail is a British daily newspaper, founded in 1896 and published in London as a tabloid. Similar to a site like BuzzFeed, the Daily Mail largely deals with entertainment and celebrity culture. Headlines are appropriately



eye-catching and sensationalist. Sub-headlines are given in bullet points beneath the headline--something to think about. Language in Daily Mail articles are charged to say the least; stories will be distilled to their most basic, vitriolic, clickbaiting forms, with little care given to context. AllSides ranks the Daily Mail as Right.

14. **WALL STREET JOURNAL** - The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) is the largest American Newspaper (by paid circulation), with nearly two-and-a-half million papers circulated daily. The newspaper covers politics and more personal, local stories. It has won the Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting and National Reporting twice. WSJ articles are more focused on informing a reader rather than getting across a particular political viewpoint. They are context-heavy, but not particularly wordy. The site is ranked by Allsides as Center.



15. **THE ONION** - Unlike every other outlet on this list, The Onion is a purely satirical news source, founded in 1988 by University of Wisconsin students. It covers a variety of stories, some purely fictional, some based in actual



current events, all ridiculously written. The Onion has garnered a fair amount of popularity among millennial readers, a rarity when compared with other outlets here, for its absurd, highly colloquial headlines and equally bizarre content. The writing in Onion articles tends to avoid being openly strange--much of the absurdity in question comes from the dry, clipped, decidedly normal writing styles of the news outlets it pokes fun at,

applied to odd fictional situations or extremely exaggerated real ones. Only the headlines in Onion articles are allowed to break the illusion of professionally-written

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news; everything else is intentionally kept as similar to an actual news outlet as possible.

### **Further Research**

The absolute best thing delegates can hope to do in the way of research for the Press Corps is to *read the news*. Read articles by each of the outlets given--preferably, multiple coverages of the same event, to understand how different outlets cover the same series of events. AllSides has fantastic options for this, presenting several different articles from different political perspectives. Pay close attention to the word choice and sentence structure. Always consider the outlet's potential for bias. Reading and intaking information is inhaling; writing your own articles is exhaling. Go out and read.

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