

# WHAT MAKES A STORY NEWSWORTHY?

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Everybody's different. What's fascinating to him may be boring to her. Still, these values figure most prominently in stories that qualify as "news." Plan your programming around them:

## **IMPACT**

Does the story matter to readers? Will it have an effect on their lives or their pocketbooks? The bigger the consequences, the bigger the story has to be. How many people are affected by an event or idea?

## **TIMELINESS**

News is supposed to be new. If news is to be relevant and useful, it must be timely. Has this story just happened? Is it about to happen? Timeliness is crucial, especially when there's competition against other media.

## **PROXIMITY**

Generally, people are more concerned about and interested in what happens close to home. Obviously, events close to home will matter more to readers than events in other cities, states or countries (usually).

## **PROMINENCE**

Does this story involve a well-known public figure or celebrity? If so, readers are bound to be more interested or curious. Names make the news. The bigger the name, the bigger the news. Ordinary people have always been intrigued by the doings of the rich and famous.

## **NOVELTY**

Is something new, odd or surprising going on? (Did a man bite a dog?) Readers enjoy news that is intriguing and unexpected.

## **CONFLICT**

This is a recurring theme in all storytelling, whether the stories told are journalism, literature or drama. Struggles between people, among nations or with natural forces make fascinating reading. Is there a clash of power? A political battle? A sports rivalry?

## **EMOTIONS**

Does this story make us sad? Happy? Angry? Readers respond emotionally to human interest stories that are poignant, comical or inspiring.