



WOLF-TV

A Lesson in News Production

What is the News?

News is what is happening right now. The audience wants to know what is going on, where it's happening, when did it happen, why is it happening, who is involved, and how did it come about? Your job is to answer those questions with each story we feature.

Where do we find the news?

It is all around you. Look at what is happening in your classroom, what is going on with sports,



where is the prom being held, is there anything to do this weekend? We want to be more than just "video announcements", we strive to report what is happening with the student body and connecting our viewers. You may be a member of a club and you have something exciting going on that you think would be of interest to the rest of the school. We can put together a package that explains what is happening and why the audience should care.

Shooting a package

Packages are the lifeblood of the news. Each time a reporter finds out about something interesting happening, they have to put it together into a digestible presentation known as a package. There are two key components to any package: **interviews (A-roll) and B-roll**.

Interviews occur any time you talk to a person on camera or on mic. This person will usually be someone who witnessed the event you are covering, an expert in the field you are reporting on, or an official with a company or government agency that has knowledge of the event you are investigating. When shooting an interview, always pay attention to your framing and background. You should provide your subject with the proper head room and lead space. Make sure you have an interesting background without it being distracting. It is always a good idea to position your subject in front of or near the event/subject they are talking about. This ties the interviewee to the event/subject. This is also known as your **A-roll**.



B-roll is the footage you shoot of the event itself. Footage of the parade, video of the fire being put out, people working on a project. **B-roll** is one of the most critical parts of a story and you can never have too much. Look for interesting angles and framing when shooting **B-roll**. You are acting as the eyes of the viewer so get plenty of angles to keep your audience interested. If your interview subject mentions specific things in the interview, be sure to get video of those things when you shoot your **B-roll** so you can edit them into the package as they talk about them. A good rule of thumb is to always shoot every piece of **B-roll** for at least ten seconds, thirty if you



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have the time. This will give you plenty of footage to work with in the edit and let you put



transitions if you need to. Shoot the same subject multiple ways. If you are shooting a story about a dog getting a new dog house, you might shoot the dog house from the front, from the side or off angle, from the ground, from inside looking out. You will also want to get static and moving shots (pans and tilts) of each of these shots as well. *Again, you can never have too much B-roll!*

Audio

Good audio is just as critical to a package as good video. If you don't have good audio, the package will not make it on air. When shooting in the field, you should always have headphones, or "cans", with you to monitor the volume and quality of the audio. If you are using a microphone (**handheld, lavalier, or shotgun**), make sure it has a fresh battery (if necessary), that it is positioned correctly, and that the sound quality is good. Watch the **VU (Volume Unit)** meter on the LCD screen of the camera to make sure it is not too loud (pegging the meter red). Mic your subject and always get a good level check before you roll. You can do this by simply talking to your subject and setting the level when they answer. Always keep an eye on the audio and make adjustments while recording if necessary.



Monitor your VU Meter to make sure you have good audio levels

When you are shooting B-roll, you need good audio as well. You have a few options here. If you are using a shotgun mic, you can put it on the camera and use a short XLR cable to plug into the camera. This will give you excellent audio from what the camera is "looking at" and is the preferred method. If you are using a boom pole, you can have the boom operator simply follow the camera and point it at the subject. Make sure the boom and mic do not get in the shot! Finally, you can turn the audio input off and record sound off the built-in camera mic. Whichever you choose, you still have to monitor your audio volume and quality.

Video

Quality video is the key to a good package. First and foremost, check the **White Balance** of the camera. The **White Balance (WB)** is what sets the "temperature" of the video you record. Adjust the **WB** to match the color of light your subject is in. The color temperature is measured in degrees *Kelvin*, or *K*. Indoor lights, often Tungsten lights, are usually cooler in color temperature (3200K) and outdoor light, sunlight, is warmer, (6800-7200K). The color of the light is the opposite, with cool light being more yellow and warm light being more blue. Check your camera to see how to adjust the **WB** for that particular camera.



Editing a package

When you begin editing, it is important to start with the audio. Find the best soundbites from your interviews and put them into an order that tells your story. Once you have the soundbites in, you should try to find places to bring the sound full from your B-roll footage. This helps build a complete experience for the viewer. Finally, decide if you need to incorporate voiceover, or **VO**, to help further explain the story, connect one soundbite to another, fill in blank spaces, or issue a call to action.

ANCHOR INTRO	A PAYMENT TRACKING SETUP HAS LEFT 40 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS WITHOUT LUNCH.
TAKE VO	THE SALT LAKE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT HAS DECIDED TO INVESTIGATE THE CAFETERIA MANAGER AT GINTAR ELEMENTARY RESPONSIBLE. HE HAS BEEN PUT ON ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE SINCE THE INCIDENT WAS MADE KNOWN. Republican Todd Weiler was repulsed by the incident saying.
TAKE SOT Todd Weiler R-Woods Cross	'TRY [0:05] "To me this rises to the level of bullying...Children were humiliated."
ANCHOR TAG	THEY WILL BE KEPT UNDER CLOSE SCRUTINY UNTIL THE INVESTIGATION IS COMPLETE.

Typically, a package will open with a **Reporter Intro**, then there will be a **VO**, and then an **SOT**, or *sound on tape*, to add to what the **VO** discussed. This pattern will often continue, until we have a final **VO** or answer, to call the audience to action. A call to action might be to visit a website, direct the audience to a person or group to ask for more information, or a way to volunteer, donate or help out.

Often times, we are editing a package at the last minute because we are trying to get it on air as quickly as possible. This is when mistakes can occur. A few things to watch out for are:

- **Audio issues** – Make sure your audio is clear and that the background and B-roll audio don't overpower what is being said in an interview. Check your levels and always edit with headphones so you can hear any small issues that you could miss using the computer speakers.
- **Video issues** – This can be anything from bad framing in an interview, shaky B-roll, or "video hits" (where the video has a bad spot pop up). If you find an issue, look for a different shot or a way to work around the issue.
- **Editing issues** – These can include "flash frames" (where a single frame of black or another shot is visible), jump cuts (going from one shot or angle to another that is almost identical), misspelled names and fonts, and unnecessary video transitions (dissolves etc.)
- **Music** – Does your package need music? That depends on the package. Most news packages will not have music, however, if it is a human-interest piece you may want to include music to enhance the mood of the package for the audience. If you do include music, make sure it fits the piece and doesn't overpower the other audio in the package. You can always export two versions, one with music and one without, to be on the safe side.

Finally, always watch your final package from start to finish and get a second set of eyes on it before you turn it in.



WRITER

THE WRITER

The entire show begins with the Writer. They research stories, track down information, and write the script for the newscast. At its core, the Writers are the most important position on the news team. Not only do the Writers have to write the script that the Talent will read, they have to make sure all the facts are correct, the Who, What, Where, When, Why and How, but they have to write the script in a natural speaking style that makes it easy for the Talent to read and the audience to understand. This is called "Writing for the Ear" and it is different than writing for the eye. When you write for the ear you have to pay attention to how the words and sentences sound. Do they sound forced, choppy, and unnatural? Or do they sound conversational and natural? Here is an example of the difference between "Writing for the Ear" and "Writing for the Eye." Read both aloud and pay attention to how they sound.

"Two-bedroom, two bath with renovated kitchen in desirable neighborhood. Eat in kitchen with good workspace and storage. Large, fenced yard with a one car garage."

"Located in a desirable neighborhood, this two-bedroom, two bath home features a renovated kitchen that has plenty of counter space to prepare meals, and ample cabinets for all of your dishes and appliances. Host a BBQ in the spacious backyard for your friends and family and keep your car safe in the one car garage."

They both contain the same information, however, the first one is written for the eye, to be read, and the second is written for the ear, to be spoken. When in doubt, *read it out loud and listen to how it sounds*. Mistakes, like poor grammar and awkward writing, should stand out and prompt you to rewrite it.

TOP OF THE SHOW

WOLF-TV has a structure to help it flow naturally and to make it easy to prepare each week. The TOP OF THE SHOW is where all current news and information goes. Anything that is happening that day and on the following two days. For example, if the show airs on a Thursday, The TOP OF THE SHOW will begin with anything happening on that day, Thursday, and any events on Friday and Saturday. Events should be in chronological order, with school events coming first and community events coming second.

THE TURN

THE TURN is the point in the show where we transition from current news to future news. **TGIFryday** was used as THE TURN in the show as a way to transition to future events in an entertaining way.

BOTTOM OF THE SHOW

The BOTTOM OF THE SHOW is where we discuss future events, concerts, games and school functions that will occur from 3 to 7 days after the show airs. It is important to cluster like events together and make sure they are chronological in order. Putting upcoming sporting events together and upcoming performing arts events together will make it more digestible for the audience. It is also the part of the show where we switch to single shots, instead of a two-shot of both anchors.



TALENT

TALENT

Talent is a term used to describe anyone who is in front of the camera. This could be an anchor, reporter, or special correspondent. The job of the Talent is to present the news in a professional and clear manner. It can be a difficult job for most people because you are putting yourself in front of the entire audience. By maintaining a professional attitude and practicing your scripts, you will do well.

When preparing for a show, it is critical that you understand your script. Always pre-read the script to make sure you understand the content, context, and pronunciation. It is best if you don't have to "cold read" the stories you will present. During rehearsal time, you will practice how you will perform. This means you will read the news as if we are recording it as this will help you to work out any problem areas.

If you come upon a story that gives you difficulty, either with the way it is worded or with pronouncing certain words, you will work with the Prompter Operator to make corrections and changes so it fits your style of delivery. This is always time well spent as it can help avoid embarrassing mistakes on air and ensure we have enough to record the show in a single day and avoid reshoots.

PERSONALITY

As the Talent, it is important for you to present yourself to your audience in a professional manner. However, it is equally important for you to connect with your audience and be engaging on air. This is where your natural personality and style come into play. Watch local newscasters and you will see that they smile, joke and have fun on air. They are professional, but not stuffy. This newer style of engaging with one another in a jovial manner on set, and with the audience directly, allows the anchors behave naturally on air. No one wants to get their news from a robot!

THE TOSS

In the news world, anchors will sometimes "toss" to a package or reporter. This is a chance to directly engage with the package or "live reporter". Sometimes, we will pre-tape the reporter as if they were live and you will toss to them as if they are standing by waiting for you. This is all part of the illusion of television and you will know ahead of time if this is the case. You may also take a toss back from the reporter and you will acknowledge it with a simple, "Thanks for that report, (reporter's name)" or something similar.

SIGN OFF

Each anchor has their own unique signoff at the end of the show. This should not be forced and should let the audience know you have their best interest at heart. You can pitch your own personal sign off to use on air. If it is approved, you will have your own, personal "signature" at the end of the show.



STUDIO CREW

STUDIO CREW

The studio crew is responsible for setting up the studio for the day of shoot, running all of the equipment during the shoot, and striking the set at the end of the shoot.

FLOOR DIRECTOR

The Floor Director is in charge of the studio. They make sure the other crew members do their jobs and that the show is recorded on time. Once the studio is set up and ready for the show (lights on, news desk ready, mics on and audio is good, camera is ready, talent on set), they run the show. When set, crew, and talent are ready, the Floor Director will call for “Quiet on the set.” Then, once the studio is quiet and ready, the Floor Director will tell the Camera Operator to “Roll camera,” and they will reply “Rolling.” Finally, the Floor Director will call “Standby” and count down from 5 to cue the talent. When you count down, you never say 1 because you don’t want your voice accidentally making in on air. They will also listen to the talent to make sure everything they say is pronounced correctly and that every news story in the script has been recorded.

CAMERA OPERATOR

The Camera Operator sets up the camera and TelePrompter, formats the SD Card, and records the show for editing. They make sure the framing of the two-shot of the talent is correct and make adjustments to the shot for single shots. The Camera Operator will connect the lavalier microphones (lavs or mics) from the Talent to the Camera with the XLR cables. They will then check the audio levels of the Talent using headphones and the VU Meter in the camera viewfinder. When the Floor Director calls “Roll Camera,” they will press the red record button on the camera, make sure the camera is rolling and reply “Rolling.” Once the entire show has been recorded, the Camera Operator will take the SD Card to the Editors to be digitized for editing. They will then make sure the camera is shut down and ready for the next show.

TELEPROMPTER OPERATOR

The TelePrompter Operator (or prompter) is responsible for loading the correct news script from the Google Drive to the Teleprompter App on the prompter iPad. Once the correct script is loaded, they will then clean up the script as shown. During the show, the Prompter Operator will run the prompter for the Talent. It is important that the Prompter Operator pays careful attention to the Talent to make sure everything that is said is correct in pronunciation and content. If a mistake is made, it is important for the Prompter Operator to let the Floor Director know so they can retake that section. When running the prompter, the PO should follow the Talent and the speed they are reading. The Talent should never have to chase the prompter because it is going too fast, or drag the Talent by going too slow. At the end of the show, the PO will turn off the Prompter and plug the iPad in to charge.

LIGHTS/AUDIO

Lights and Audio are combined because they have a smaller, but no less important, job to do. They will turn on the lights for the set in the Control Room and make sure the Talent has their mics on correctly. Once the show is finished, they will turn off the lights, return the lavs to their cases, and put them away properly. During the taping of the show, they will assist the Floor Director as needed and remain quietly in the Studio.



EDITOR

THE EDITOR

The Editor is in charge of the final stage of production, post-production. They take the raw footage of the Talent on set, any packages for the show, and all of the elements like music, lower thirds, and backgrounds, and put them together to form the finished show. The Editor begins the process by pre-building the show; creating a new timeline, putting in the news background, WOLF-TV logo, and news stinger at the start and end of the show.

LOWER THIRDS (FONTS)

As soon the script has begun being written, the Editor can begin typing the lower thirds for the newscast. A lower third is the onscreen title that accompanies a news story. A story could have a single lower third, or font, or it may have multiple fonts. It depends on the length of the story and the amount of critical information that it contains. When building the lower thirds, it is critical to get the information, spelling and formatting right. Looking at the script, the Editor will first decide what the main idea of the story is. For example, look at this story.

If you want to help save up to three lives, donate blood today. The Bonfils Blood Drive is happening right now in the wrestling room until 2:30. Any student who is over the age of 18 and at least 110 lbs can donate now. See Mr. Troy in B303 with questions.

The first line talks about saving lives, but that is not the main idea of the story. It's an important detail, but the main idea is the Bonfils Blood Drive. That should go in the top line of the two line lower third that we use for our news stories. The first lower third should look like this:

**Bonfils Blood Drive
Help Save Three Lives by Donating Blood Today**

This gives the audience everything they need to know about the first line of the story. The second font would read:

**Bonfils Blood Drive
In the Wrestling Room Until 2:30pm**

You will build as many lower thirds as are necessary to convey all of the information to the audience, you are not simply copying the script. You may have to rewrite, reorder, clarify, or compress the information to make it fit in the space available. Finally, you will *double-check for spelling and grammar errors*. When in doubt, check the script or Google the word!

THE SHOW

Once you have all of the lower thirds built, you will receive the show on an SD Card. You will digitize it into the correct news event for your class period. You will now begin building the show by placing the video clips of the Talent and packages in the correct order. You will then position and size the lower thirds where they belong over the clips. You will need to move and resize the background as well to make sure it fits under the video clips. *Make sure thy clips and background are the exact same length or there will be a flash frame.*