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Science Journalism

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Which of these story is worth telling?

- ◆ And why?
- ◆ [Current topics on Eurekalert](#)



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Telling to who? Why?

- ◆ Audience
- ◆ Your role:
 - Science journalist
 - Science communicator



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How about this one?

- ◆ <http://science.sciencemag.org/content/363/6430/979>



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Your turn

- ◆ Use the handout to identify the news and select the first five graphs of your story.

- ◆ Here's how the press release read:
https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2019-02/ru-ccs022219.php

- ◆ And here are some of the stories that ran:
 - <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/28/climate/fish-climate-change.html>
 - <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2019/02/28/climate-change-shrinking-fish-population-worldwide/3018540002/>
 - <https://www.motherjones.com/environment/2019/02/stop-freaking-out-about-the-future-of-climate-change-and-start-worrying-about-the-present/>
 - <https://news.google.com/stories/CAAqOQgKljNDQklTSURvSmMzUnZjbmt0TXpZd1NoTUtFUWw4akpYVmpZQU1FZmF0OEO2SHhvclZLQUFQAQ?hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US%3Aen>



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What is science journalism?

- ◆ <https://www.nytimes.com/section/science>
 - ◆ <https://www.yahoo.com/news/science/>
 - ◆ “Science” on [Google News](#)
- Are press-releases “journalism”?
- ◆ www.sciencedaily.com
 - ◆ www.eurekalert.org



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What is science journalism?

- ◆ News about new discoveries, findings, events
- ◆ Background on the news
- ◆ Features about ongoing issues
- ◆ “How-to,” practical stories
- ◆ Human interest stories



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Basic news (practice → theory)

- | | | |
|----------|-------|------------------------------------|
| ◆ Who? | ————— | ◆ Prominence |
| ◆ What? | ————— | ◆ Conflict, human interest |
| ◆ Where? | ————— | ◆ Proximity |
| ◆ When? | ————— | ◆ Timeliness |
| ◆ Why? | ————— | ◆ Significance, impact, importance |
| ◆ How? | | |



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Basic news definition (theory)

- ◆ Timeliness
- ◆ Importance/impact/significance
- ◆ Proximity
 - Physical
 - Psychological
- ◆ Prominence (celebrity)
- ◆ Conflict



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Now, can you do it with your work?

- ◆ Take the text you prepared in advance
- ◆ Write the lede for
 - *Cornell Sun*
 - *New York Times*
 - Yahoo! News



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Journalism 101 (and +, ++): Quick guide for science writers

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The writing process

- ◆ Identify the audience
- ◆ Identify the news
- ◆ Gather information
- ◆ Organize information
- ◆ Write the story
- ◆ Revise



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Basic ledes

- ◆ Basic 5W&H/pyramid/summary
- ◆ Multiple Element
- ◆ Story-telling
 - Narrative
 - Scene-setting
 - Anecdote



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Unusual ledes

- ◆ Contrast
- ◆ Direct Address
- ◆ Quote
- ◆ Punch
- ◆ None of the above
 - Implications
 - Cutesy
 - Other



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Bad ledes

- ◆ Buried lede



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Let's write some ledes

- ◆ Go to EurekAlert!
- ◆ Let's pick some ledes to write and share



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Basic types of stories

- ◆ News
- ◆ News feature
- ◆ Color
- ◆ Profile
- ◆ Human interest
- ◆ Seasonal
- ◆ How-to-do-it
- ◆ Information/education
- ◆ Backgrounders



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Journalism 101+: Features

- ◆ Have a **theme**
- ◆ Think about **structure**
- ◆ Deep **information**
- ◆ Writing **style**



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Theme

- ◆ More than “topic”
- ◆ Point of view
- ◆ Argument
- ◆ Goal



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Structure

- ◆ Engaging lede
- ◆ Clear theme (“nut” graph)
- ◆ Story chunks
- ◆ Conclusion



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Depth of information

- ◆ Plan search (hunt for theme)
- ◆ Documents
- ◆ Interviews
- ◆ Observations



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Interviewing

- ◆ Open-ended vs. close-ended questions
- ◆ Funnel vs. inverted funnel interviews
- ◆ Build rapport vs. hit-'em-hard



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Writing

- ◆ Word choice
- ◆ Rhythm
- ◆ Transitions
- ◆ Detail/show-don't-tell



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Journalism 101+ +: Quotations

- ◆ Why use quotations?
 - Authority/credibility
 - Perspective
 - Color



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When using quotes. . .

- ◆ Accuracy!
 - Get the words right
 - Get the person right
- ◆ Have something to say
- ◆ Mechanics
 - Place attribution at *end* of sentence or quote
 - Use “said”
 - Punctuate properly



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