

Paper Code& Name – **203 Editorial Writing**

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EDITORIAL WRITING: SOURCING THE EDITORIAL MATERIAL

Editorial materials can be sourced primarily from topical events that are reported from the mass media. The reported events must be explosive and of public interest. In writing an editorial, the writer can do justice to the topic by discussing with experts especially if the issue under consideration is a technical one. In this jet age, internet is a good facility for editorial writers to source for materials. Editorials can browse through the internet and download useful materials to “cook” an editorial menu of high public taste. Editorial is a serious-minded issue, it should not be written based on hearsay or scoops from mere throwaway dialogues from members of the society. A good editorial is no doubt the product of good research. Journals, books, government gazettes, biographies/assembly proceedings, constitutions and authoritative sources can be useful in editorial writing.

Editorials as you know have an excellent combination of **news and features elements**. In sourcing for editorial materials, such synergy must be taken into account.

In editorial writing, a thorough and comprehensive research is needed to **interpret or analyze a news phenomenon** from the perspective of an editorial.

Editorials are **research oriented** and effort must be put in place by the editorial writer in eliciting information or data for the sake of the editorial project. A good editorial writer must be **a legman and socially literate** among other factors for him to cultivate **credible sources** for editorial writing.

Research in editorial writing

- **Research** is the focal point of editorial writing. No journalist can successfully editorialize on any issue of the day unless he/she has concrete facts or data at his/her disposal. Those facts can only be gotten through research. Because editorial deals with deep back grounding of an issue, the leader writer has to device different ways of reaching for relevant data before writing. For instance, it

is not possible to write a good editorial on the death of a prominent personality in the society without peeping through the man's profile or resume. Again, it is not possible for one to conveniently editorialize upon an issue without understanding the intrigues that led to its emergence in the news report. Such intrigues can only be understood through research.

- The editorial writer can make use of **survey research** in the course of his investigation. That is to say that he can gather data from a target population through the use of research instruments like **questionnaire, face-to-face interview** and would subject such data for statistical analysis for the purpose of reaching conclusion on the issue and providing solution to identified problems.
- **Field research** which calls for direct observation of social phenomenon in their natural habitat or environment can also assist the editorial writer in the course of his/her data gathering business.
- What about **descriptive research** which helps the researcher to explain or describe a given phenomenon? The editorial writer can benefit from such research as it helps him/her in understanding what is happening at present; giving him/her an idea about possible cause and effects, trends among other advantages.
- An editorial writer who embarks on **historical research** would get a vivid picture or perspective of what happened in the past to guides him/her in analyzing the present and predicting the future. An editorial is data- based and therefore editorial writer must be good in research for concrete and sound editorial to be constructed.

Sourcing the Editorial Materials

Editorial materials can be sourced primarily from topical events that are reported in the mass media. The reported events must be explosive and of public interest. Other sources are as follows:

- **Internet:** Editorial writers in a computer-minded society can browse through the net and download relevant materials to write or enrich an editorial.

- **Public and Printed Records:** It is important to note that catalogue of records exist documenting society's doings and misdoings. The editorial or leader writer can reach out to such records e.g. taxes, marriages, books, journals, government gazettes, biographies, assembly proceedings, constitutions, etc.
- **Social functions:** A good editorial writer is not supposed to be a social illiterate. He/she must be reach in human relations and mix freely with people of different classes in order to get insight into the goings in the society. Attending parties, conferences, seminars, etc with the top shots in the society would help the editorial writer to understand their likes and dislikes and that would assist the editorialist in make profound analysis concerning the people in question.
- **Law Enforcement Officers:** An editorial writer can get additional information on his subject matter from the law enforcement officers like policemen, state security service men, etc if the issue under probe demands their attention.
- **Experts:** professional and highly technical issues would compel the editorial writer to contact the appropriate experts. For instance, it will be necessary for an editorial writer to clear a controversial legal issue from a lawyer before writing. That would prevent the editorial writer from committing a costly mistake.
- **Medical doctors, engineers, educationalists,** etc can also be contacted for scoops in their own disciplines by the editorial writer.
- **Files:** Here, you have things like press clips which are usually classified according to subject matter for bibliographical exactitude. The editorial writer can also keep files of important events and related materials carefully dated and arranged for easy referencing.
- **Libraries:** Books of all kind; thesauruses, dictionaries, encyclopedias almanacs, maps and charts etc can be obtained from the library for use in the course of writing an editorial.
- **Specialized Sources:** E.g. Embassies, Statistics, Population Bureau, etc..

Testing the Materials

After obtaining the materials from relevant sources, editorial writer has to test the materials to ascertain whether they are rich or not.

The stages of testing procedures are:

- Give your materials a stiff test by reading them thoroughly again slowly and comprehend the aspect to be used.
- Write down, first, your main points, the facts of the topic before considering what comment to add. Now, begin to form an opinion using the contributions of your colleagues who have either participated in a group editorial discussion of the topic, or who share another view on the matter.
- You have to rely on your paper's editorial policy for proper guidance.
- Check your points, facts and opinions again for slips in logic.
- Now write the editorial.
- Always be on the side of professional ethics and submit yourself to ethical consideration in your editorial judgments, prescriptions, suggestions and remedies.

While writing your comment, be brief in your background information which must precede the body of the editorial. Treat all references in brief... Avoid repeating yourself. Go straight to the issue at hand. Do not be too wordy... Say what you want to say intelligently and withdraw. Be polite in your choice of words: be positive in your application of word; be forceful and make valid statements. Do not leave your readers in doubt where your newspaper stands on the issue. Be categorical

Creative to do section

- ✓ *Discuss the relevance of research in editorial writing.*
- ✓ *As an editorial writer, enumerate the sources you can use in obtaining your data*
- ✓ *Dissect the procedures or stages under which the editorial materials can be tested, from the gathering of information up to the writing point.*