

Chapter 11 Journalism Today

Quotations and Attribution

Quotations

- Quotation - Using another person's exact words and placing them in quotation marks
- Reporters can incorporate quotations in their stories in one of three ways:
 - Direct - Present a source's exact words and are placed entirely in quotation marks.
 - Indirect - Lack quotation marks because reporters use their own words to summarize or paraphrase.
 - Partial - Directly quote key phrases and paraphrase the rest

When to use direct quotations

- When sources say something important or controversial or state their ideas in a colorful manner
- Let the sources talk directly to the reader
- When you cannot improve on the speaker's exact words or cannot match the speaker's wit, rhythm, color or emotion
- To tie a controversial opinion to the source
- Evidence for a statement
- To reveal the speaker's character

Using Direct Quotations Effectively

- The best stories combine quotations and paraphrases for a pleasing effect
- Reporters often summarize a major point before offering a direct quotation
- Quotations can also help describe a story's dramatic moments

When to Use Indirect Quotations

- When sources fail to state their ideas effectively
- Allow reporters to rephrase a source's remarks and state them more clearly and concisely
- Avoid quotations that state the obvious or let the source praise himself or herself

When to use Partial Quotations

- Avoid "orphan" quotes. Do not place quotation marks around an isolated word or two used in an ordinary way.
- To more clearly attribute to a source controversial, important, or interesting phrases

Blending Quotations and Narrative

- Reporters must blend the quotations and the narrative they write to create a coherent, well-focused news story.

- Explaining quotations
 - Adding explanatory information after the quotation or attribution is little better than using parentheses
 - Turn the sentence around, instead, and use an indirect quotation

To Change or Not to Change Quotations

- Subjective on whether to slightly alter quotes to make them more appropriate or in the proper tone

Correcting Grammatical Errors

- Reporters nowadays are less likely to correct grammatical errors in direct quotations
- AP Stylebook: "Never alter quotations even to correct minor grammatical errors or word usage.
- If a quotation is so ungrammatical that it becomes difficult to understand, the reporter should paraphrase the source
- Use an ellipsis to show where a word has been deleted

Deleting Profanities

- Reporters usually omit profanities from quotations

Editorialization

- Avoid unintentional editorials

Attribution

- Attribution lets the readers know who the reporter's sources are.
- Ideally, all direct quotations, opinions, evaluations and secondhand statements of fact should be attributed to specific individuals.
- Reporters can attribute information to people, documents or publications, but not to places or institutions.

Statements That Require Attribution

- Reporters do not have to attribute statements that report undisputed facts
- Reporters must attribute:
 - Facts that are not common knowledge
 - Statements about controversial issues
 - Statements of opinion
 - All direct and indirect quotations
- Reporters must attribute statements that praise or condemn or assign credit or blame to any person or organization.

Guidelines for the Placement and Frequency of Attribution

- Attribution may be placed at the beginning or end of a sentence or at a natural break within it.
- Should appear as conveniently possible
- Should not be delayed until the end of the second or third sentence
- Should come at the beginning of any quotation where there is a change of

speakers

Direct Quotations

- A direct quotation should be attributed only once, regardless of the number of sentences it contains.
- Avoid floating quotations: direct quotations that lack clear attribution to a speaker

Partial Quotations

- Place the attribution between the partial quotation and the full-sentence quotation
- Place the attribution when paraphrasing the partial quotation

Indirect Quotations

- Need more frequent attribution than direct quotations
- Every sentence of indirect quotation should have attribution, but writers should avoid inserting phrases that may attribute a quotation twice

Word Choice in Attributing Statements

- The verbs used to attribute statements must be accurate and impartial
- Past tense

Levels of Attribution

- Every source should ideally be fully identified
- Four levels of attribution in case source wants anonymity:
 - On the record - Everything the source says may be published and quoted directly and the source may be fully identified by name and title
 - On background - Reporter may quote the source directly but may not attribute the statements to the source by name
 - On deep background - Source may not be quoted directly and may not be identified in any way
 - Off the record - A source's information cannot be used

Anonymous Sources