

News & Views

*A Course in Reading
British & American News*



NEWS & VIEWS

A Course in Reading
British and American News
Mehdi Vaez Dalili



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Introduction

NEWS AND VIEWS - A COURSE IN READING BRITISH AND AMERICAN NEWS offers an authentic multi-skills syllabus in reading journalistic texts that is specifically geared towards the needs of the students of EFL, as well as of media and cultural studies. Its accessible style and exercises based on a wide range of texts and exemplary sentences make it an invaluable book for general readers too. This innovative reader covers not only the 'what' of news media but also the 'how' and 'why' of journalistic discourse.

Objectives

This book is overridingly intended to be suitable both for people with only minimal knowledge of English, and for those who have already done quite a bit of English reading (e.g. students of EFL), but want to get familiar with 'what', 'how' and of 'why' of the language of the news media. The book presupposes an intermediate proficiency level for reading English texts and is mainly written in an approachable style avoiding unnecessary and unexplained complexities of the journalistic jargon. To this effect, two objectives are followed. The first is to provide an opportunity for reading journalistic texts. To this end, 30 reading passages (with their accompanied audio files in the CD) and their relevant exercises on vocabulary of the journalistic genre have been provided. Besides, more audio and video activities are included. The second objective is to help interested readers develop their basic knowledge of the nature and procedure of the formation of the language of news media. To this end, some vignettes called "Spotlight" are introduced in the lessons in order to familiarise the readers with 'how' and 'why' of the journalistic language.

Key Features

Taking the objectives into account, the book has been developed so that a set of specific features are included. Here are some of the key features of the book:

- Suitable for self-study and classroom use
- Focus on both British and American English
- Clear, logical, and easy-to-use layout with stimulating exercises
- Real texts and examples from authentic sources
- Compelling high-frequency journalistic themes including *elections, summits, international disputes, natural disasters, war and peace*
- Clear and accurate definitions of more than 900 frequently-used new words along with their phonetic transcriptions and relevant examples
- High-interest hands-on multimedia-based exercises supported by the accompanied CD
- Coverage of key journalistic abbreviations and terms
- Self-study vignettes on the language of news media

The Organisation of the Book

The book has been divided into two parts: 15 lessons in American English and 15 lessons in British English. The idea behind such categorisation has been to cover the interests of a wide range of readers. The criteria for the selection of the lessons has been the inclusion of the commonest themes reported in the news media, including *elections, summits, international disputes, natural disasters, war and peace*. In both sections, the lessons are mainly graded according to the number of the new words singled out in each lesson.

In the final section of the book, the 'Index of Newspaper Terms' and the 'Index of New Words' introduced in each lesson are included. There is also a 'bibliography' of some of the most well-known works in the area of journalistic reading and also the common sources (e.g. dictionaries) used in the development of the material. However, the list is by no means fully reflective of all the materials used in this book, as use has also been made of other resources such as the Internet and miscellaneous papers on the subject.

The Organisation of the Lessons

To fulfil the objectives of the book, lessons have been designed so that their general structure is as the following:

1. "Reading" passages which gradually increase in size as the reader proceeds through the lessons in each section of the book.
2. "New Words" which are extracted from the reading passages based on subjective assessment of their difficulty level. The examples provided are mainly simple and frequently used ones in the journalistic genre and take both general readers and EFL students into consideration. As you read the reading passages, you may encounter some difficult words the meanings of which are not presumably provided. In such cases you could easily refer to the "Index of New Words" to check whether the words have been marked as new ones in previous lessons.
3. "Exercise 1" is a fill-in-the-blank exercise following each reading passage, which requires the readers to use the new words in new contexts – mostly journalistic ones.
4. "Exercise 2", a synonym-matching exercise, requires the readers to review some of the new words used in the reading passage. In order to expand the vocabulary of the readers, several synonyms are provided for each word.
5. "Exercise 3" deals either with matching some headlines with their relevant news leads or with writing headlines for some news leads.
6. "Exercise 4" includes 5 fill-in-the-blank multiple-choice tests of news headlines, including vocabulary choices not only introduced in the "New Words" section of each lesson, but also other words recurring in news headlines.
7. In "exercise 5", there are 10 split sentences and the readers should match the two separate parts of the sentences based on both grammatical and semantic clues to their collocational properties. This exercise is intended to make the readers conscious of how the words are combined with each other in both general and journalistic contexts.
8. In "exercise 6", the Listening Post, the readers should listen to the audio clip in the accompanied CD and fill in the blank spaces. The words elicited are mainly those which are frequent in journalistic texts. Attempt has been made to establish some harmony between the content of the reading passage and the listening exercise as far as possible. This exercise is best practiced when the students do it in the classroom. However, when necessary facilities are not available, the exercise should be done at home and checked for its correctness and further practice in the class.
9. "Watching Post" in "exercise 7" again should ideally be done in the classroom if the necessary audiovisual facilities are ready. Otherwise, the readers/students should practice it at home and defer checking their comprehension for class activity. This exercise provides the opportunity for the improvement of the three skills of listening, writing, and dictionary use.
10. The section "Spotlight" familiarises the readers with the most frequently used abbreviations and terms in the news media. This part intends to increase the knowledge of the news readers regarding the 'what' of these abbreviations and terms. Surely, it will help them to comprehend the news more easily and not to get puzzled while reading or listening to a piece of news containing such expressions.
11. The section "Language of News Media" presents vignettes on the nature of the language of news and the basic principles underlying it. This part mainly expounds on newspaper sections, the vocabulary and grammar of newspapers, hard/soft news, the structure of a hard/soft news story, the headline and its features, the news lead and body and their features, feature stories, editorials, bias and euphemism in the news media, and advertising English. It can be very helpful to all readers, especially the students of EFL.



The Organisation of the Accompanied CD

The book has an accompanied CD which consists of 5 major parts included in its "Main Page": 'Preface', 'Lessons', 'Index of New Words', 'Bibliography' and last but not least the "Software Requirements". The page hyperlinked to the button "Lessons" is the core of the software, leading the CD user to any of the 30 lessons in the book. In each lesson, the reading passage of the lesson, its audio clip, its news words and the American English (AmE) and British English (BrE) pronunciation of the words, as well as facilities for printing the lesson and its new words are included. Also there are links to the audio and video clip exercises, respectively related to exercise 6 (Listening Post) and exercise 7 (Watching Post) in the book.

NB: If you encountered any problem regarding the visibility of phonetic transcriptions or the audio and video clips, be sure that you should go to the "Software Requirements" page to install the software(s) needed.



Contact Information

For teachers adopting the book, I have developed an answer key to the exercises. To receive the answer key or any further information don't hesitate to contact me via: news.views@yahoo.com. Also, any comments or ideas concerning the improvement of the present book or a prospective revision of the book are warmly welcome.

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Pronunciation Symbols

Consonants	Symbol	Key Word	Vowels	Symbol	Key Word
	b	Bee	Short	ɪ	pit
	d	do		e	wet
	f	fat		æ	cat
	g	go		ʌ	run
	h	hat		ɒ	hot
	j	yet		ʊ	put
	k	key		ə	ago
	l	led		i	cozy
	m	map		u	influence
	n	nose		i:	see
	p	pen		ɑ:	arm
	r	red		ɔ:	saw
	s	sun		u:	too
	t	ten		ɜ:	her (BrE)
	••	better (AmE)		ɜ:	bird (AmE)
	v	vat	Long	ə	father (AmE)
	w	wet		eɪ	day
	z	zip		aɪ	my
	•••	general		ɔɪ	boy
	••	hang		əʊ	low (BrE)
	••	that		oʊ	low (AmE)
	••	thin		aʊ	how
	••	ship		ɪə	near (BrE)
	••	measure		eə	hair (BrE)
	•••	chin		ʊə	poor (BrE)
				aɪə	fire
				aʊə	sour

Other Symbols Used in the Pronunciations

- This shows that the /r/ as in the word **teacher** /ˈti:tʃə(r)/ is pronounced in UK English when followed by a vowel sound, but not when followed by a consonant sound. In US English it is always pronounced.
- primary stress (the part of the word you emphasize most), as in **above** /əˈbʌv/
- secondary stress (the part of the word you emphasize as well as, but not quite as much as, the primary stress), as in **backyard** /ˈbækˈjɑ:d/
- This is used when a consonant (usually 'l') can be pronounced as a syllable on its own, as in the word **angle** /ˈæŋ.ɡl/.
- || This separates British and American pronunciations: British on the left and the American on the right.
- This is the syllable mark shown as a full stop, coming before each new syllable as in the word **standard** /ˈstæn.dəd/. The syllable mark shows that the word 'standard' has two syllables. If stress marks are shown in a word, they also show when a new syllable starts. So, in a word like **banana** /bəˈnɑ:ˌnə/ the stress mark and syllable mark show that there are three syllables in the word.

List of Abbreviations and Terms i SPOTLIGHT

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Lesson 5	Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)	36
Lesson 6	Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO)	43
Lesson 7	International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)	50
Lesson 8	North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)	57
Lesson 9	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT or NNPT) United Nations Human Rights Council	64
Lesson 10	Group of Eight (G8) Group of Seven (G7)	72
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Lesson 21	World Health Organization (WHO) World Trade Organization (WTO)	166
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Lesson 27	Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Mossad	206
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Lesson 29	European Parliament (Europarl or EP) European Central Bank (ECB)	220
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THE LANGUAGE OF NEWS MEDL

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Lesson 1

Iraq's New President Pledged to Uphold Democratic Principle



Reading and Listening

Mr. Talabani, an **ethnic** Kurd, is modern Iraq's first non-Arab head of **state**. Mr. Talabani's **swearing-in** came one day after he was **elected** by Iraq's **interim** 275-member National **Assembly** – ending weeks of political **deadlock** following the January 30 **elections** – the country's first free and fair elections in 50 years.



Analysts say his **designation** to the largely **ceremonial** post is a **gesture** of **reconciliation** and unity by Iraq's Shi'ite **majority**, which **dominated** the

elections. They also say it is a major **victory** for Iraq's **minority** Kurds, who suffered **decades** of **oppression** under **ousted** Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

During his **inauguration** speech, the 72-year old Kurdish political leader **pledged** to **reach out** to all Iraqis, regardless of **ethnicity** or religion.

"I **swear** by God that I'll sincerely perform my tasks and legal responsibilities and work towards **maintaining** the general and private freedoms and the independence of the **judiciary**," said Mr. Talabani.

He also called for reconciliation with Iraq's Sunni Arab population, which ruled the country under Saddam Hussein, and which is believed to make up the **backbone** of the country's **insurgency**.

Mr. Talabani's newly-formed **presidential** council quickly named Shi'ite Ibrahim al-Jaafari as interim **prime-minister**, the country's most powerful position.

Mr. al-Jaafari has two weeks to name his **cabinet**. The **transitional government** will then be **charged** with **drafting** a permanent **constitution** to **pave the way** for fresh elections in December.



New Words

assembly /ə'sem.bli/ *noun* : a group of people who are elected to make decisions or laws for a particular country, area, or organization (e.g. state/legislative/federal/local assemblies)

- *Power has been handed over to provincial and regional assemblies.*

backbone /'bæk.bəʊn/ *noun* : **the backbone of sth** : the most important part of sth, providing support for everything else

- *Farming and cattle-raising are the backbone of the country's economy.*

cabinet /'kæb.ɪ.nət/ *noun* : the politicians with important positions in a government who meet to make decisions or advise the leader of the government

- *The Prime Minister has announced a cabinet reshuffle (= changes in the Cabinet).*

ceremonial /,ser.ɪ'məʊ.ni.əl/ *adj.* : used in a ceremony or done as part of a ceremony

- *The full costume is only worn on important ceremonial occasions.*

charge /tʃɑ:dʒ || tʃɑ:rdʒ/ *verb* : **charge sb with sth** : to give sb a responsibility or task

- *The commission is charged with investigating war crimes.*

constitution /,kɒn.stɪ'tju:ʃən || ,kɑ:n.stɪ'tu:-/ *noun* : a set of basic laws and principles that a country or organization is governed by

- *The right to speak freely is written into the Constitution of the United States.*

deadlock /'ded.lɒk || -lɑ:k/ *noun* : a situation in which agreement in an argument cannot be reached; neither side will change its demands or accept any of the demands of the other side

- *The peace talks have reached a complete deadlock.*

decade /'dek.eɪd/ *noun* : a period of 10 years, especially a period such as 1860 to 1869, or 1990 to 1999

- *The 1980s were considered to be a decade of great change in our culture.*

designation /'dez.ɪg'neɪ.ʃən/ *noun* : **designation as sth**: the act of choosing sb/sth for a particular purpose, or of giving them a particular description

- *The area qualifies for designation as a site of special scientific interest.*

dominate /'dɒm.ɪ.neɪt || 'dɑ:.mə-/ *verb* : to be the most important or noticeable feature of sth

- *In that report, organizers listed the five big issues that dominated discussions.*

draft /dra:ft || dræft/ *verb* : to write a plan, letter, report etc. that will need to be changed before it is in its finished form

- *Officials are drafting a strategy which aims to raise teaching standards through training and staff support.*

elect /ɪ'lekt/ *verb* : to decide on or choose, especially to choose a person for a particular job, by voting

- *The candidate promised to lower taxes if he got elected, but no one trusted him.*

election /ɪ'lek.ʃən/ *noun* : a time when people vote in order to choose sb for a political or official job

- *In America, presidential elections are held every four years.*

ethnic /'eθ.nɪk/ *adj.* : relating to a particular race, nation, or tribe and their customs and traditions

- *The President hoped the different ethnic groups in the country could live together in peaceful co-existence.*

ethnicity /eθ'nɪs.ɪ.ti || -ə.ti/ *noun* : the fact of belonging to a particular race

- *His ethnicity is unclear; he has both Asian and African features.*

gesture /'dʒes.tʃə(r) || -tʃə/ *noun* : sth that you do or say to show a particular feeling or intention

- *The government has made a gesture towards public opinion (= has tried to do something that the public will like).*

inauguration /ɪ.nə:ɡju'reɪ.ʃən || -nə:-/ *noun* : holding an official ceremony when sb starts doing an important job in government

- *In the United States, Inauguration Day is the day when a person officially becomes President in a special ceremony and takes responsibility from the previous President.*

insurgency /ɪn'sɜ:.dʒənt.sɪ || -'sɜ:-/ *noun* : an attempt by a group of people to take control of their government using force and violence

- *About 50,000 people are estimated to have been killed in a decade of insurgency.*

interim /ɪn.tər.ɪm/ *adj.* : intended to be used or accepted for a short time only, until sth or sb finally can be made or found

- *An interim government was set up for the period before the country's first free election.*

judiciary /dʒu:'dɪʃ.ər.ɪ || -rə-/ *noun* : the part of a country's government which is responsible for its legal system and which consists of all the judges in the country's courts of law

- *The judiciary, not the executive or legislative branches, is the most powerful institution in this country.*

maintain /meɪn'teɪn/ *verb* : to support sb/sth over a long period of time by giving money, paying for food, etc.

- *The army has been brought in to maintain order in the region.*

majority /mə'dʒɔr.ə.ti || -'dʒɑ:.rə.ti/ *noun* : the larger number or part of sth

- *Although they are the biggest single party, they don't have an absolute majority.*

minority /maɪ'nɔr.ɪ.ti || -'nɑ:r.ə.ti/ *noun* : a small group of people or things within a much larger group

- *The challenge of any government is to see that the majority respects the rights of the minority in their culture.*

oppression /ə'pref.ən/ *noun* : when people are governed in an unfair and cruel way and prevented from having opportunities and freedom

- *War, famine and oppression have forced people in the region to flee from their homes.*

oust /aʊst/ *verb* : **oust sb from sth**: to force sb out of a job or position of power, especially in order to take their place

- *The rebels finally managed to oust the government from power.*

pave the way /peɪv ðə 'weɪ/ *verb* : to make a later event or development possible by producing the right conditions

- *An African proverb suggests that a man who pays respect to the great paves the way for his own greatness.*

pledge /pledʒ/ *verb* : to make a serious or formal promise to give or do sth

- *In many American schools, the students pledge allegiance to the flag (= state that they are loyal to their country) at the beginning of the school day.*

presidential /prez.ɪ'den.tʃəl/ *adj.* : relating to a president

- *Another candidate has now entered the presidential race.*

LESSON 1 Iraq's New President Pledged to Uphold Democratic Principles

Prime Minister /praɪm 'mɪn.ɪ.stə(r) || praɪm 'mɪn.ɪ.stə/ *noun* (abbreviation **PM**) : the most important minister and leader of the government in some countries which have a parliament

- *The Prime Minister announced major changes to his cabinet today.*

reach out /ri:tʃ 'aʊt/ *verb* : **reach out to sb**: to offer help and support to someone

- *The society needs to find new ways of reaching out to young people.*

reconciliation /ˌrek.ənˌsɪl.i'eɪ.ʃən/ *noun* : **reconciliation between/with** : when two people or groups of people become friendly again after they have argued

- *It took hours of negotiations to bring about a reconciliation between the two sides.*

state /steɪt/ *noun* : the government or political organization of a country

- *The use of force occurs more frequently in societies where loyalty to the state is fragile.*

swear /sweə(r) || swer/ *verb* : to state or promise that you are telling the truth or that you will do sth or behave in a particular way

- *I swore an oath to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.*

swearing-in /ˌsweə.rɪŋ'ɪn || ˌswer.ɪŋ-/ *noun* : a ceremony in which sb with a new public job or position officially promises to do their duty well

- *She had a good seat at the President's swearing-in ceremony.*

transitional government /træn'zɪʃ.ən.əl 'gʌv.ən.mənt/ : a temporary government, usually one that governs until official elections can take place in a country

- *The transitional government continued to face challenges to its authority.*

uphold /ʌp'həʊld/ *verb* : to defend or maintain a principle or law, or to state that a decision which has already been made, especially a legal one, is correct

- *The government has promised to uphold the principles of democracy.*

victory /'vɪk.tər.i/ *noun* : the success you achieve when you win a battle, game, election etc.

- *The polls were predicting that the party would win a landslide victory (=the winning of an election with an extremely large number of votes).*



Exercises



Exercise 1

Fill in the blanks with the words you learned in this unit. Make the necessary changes. There are some extra words in the box below.

- A. elect
- B. draft
- C. cabinet
- D. gesture
- E. assembly
- F. designation
- G. dominate
- H. insurgency
- I. maintain
- J. swear
- K. interim
- L. oppression
- M. election
- N. uphold
- O. oust
- P. state
- Q. reconcile

- The industry is by five multinational companies.
- How many candidates are standing for ?
- The prisoners sat down together to a letter to the governor.
- He was appointed president until an government was established.
- We do not accept responsibility but we will refund the money as a of goodwill.
- Her income was barely enough to one child, let alone three.
- What has been happening since the President was from power in 1990?
- The group one of its members to be their spokesperson.
- The new and other ministerial appointments are announced within a matter of days, sometimes within a matter of hours.
- The government is reported to be concerned about the growing in the South.
- The new law provided for the election by all people of representatives to local and provincial
- What matters are the structures of power, the institutions and the social practices that produce racial and discriminatory outcomes.
- The committee aims to educational standards across the country.
- Some people opposed the of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday as a national holiday.
- I think his birthday is on the 5th, but I wouldn't to it.

Exercise 2

Match the words with their synonyms. Write the letter in the box.

1		inauguration	A. order (v.)
2		dominate	B. vow, swear
3		oppression	C. vote for
4		charge (v.)	D. gathering
5		oust	E. temporary
6		insurgency	F. triumph
7		draft (v.)	G. make an outline
8		deadlock	H. expel
9		pledge (v.)	I. stalemate
10		maintain	J. rebellion
11		elect (v.)	K. opening ceremony
12		reconciliation	L. control (v.)
13		victory	M. settlement
14		assembly	N. uphold
15		interim	O. tyranny

Exercise 3

Match the headlines with the news leads and write them in the spaces provided above each news lead.

- U.S. Praises Iraqi Judges
- Iraq Leader Signals Cabinet Shake-Up
- Democrats Plan To Fight Expansion Of Troops In Iraq
- Suicide Bombing Raises 3-Day Toll In Iraq Above 150
- To Exit Iraq, How Is As Important As When

1. **Headline:** _____

News lead: The announcement came hours after a pair of suicide bombers blew themselves up at police recruitment center in Baghdad, killing at least 35.

2. **Headline:** _____

News lead: The latest deaths underscored the government's inability to tamp down spiraling cycles of sectarian violence that, more and more, are characterized by execution-style reprisal killings.

3. **Headline:** _____

News lead: The White House said Sunday that Saddam Hussein's conviction by an Iraqi court of crimes against humanity showed that Iraq's judiciary was independent.

4. **Headline:** _____

News lead: Any troop withdrawal could take up to 18 months and would need careful planning, military experts say.

5. **Headline:** _____

News lead: The new leaders of Congress on Wednesday accused President George W. Bush of ignoring strong American sentiment against the war in Iraq.

Exercise 4

Which of the choices fits best in the headlines?

1. Policeman Over City Murder

A. Elected

B. Maintained

C. Charged

D. Dominated

2. President Closer EU-Africa Ties

A. Drafts

B. Charges

C. Swears

D. Pledges

LESSON 1 Iraq's New President Pledged to Uphold Democratic Principles

3. New Offensive Appears To Target Strongholds
A. Insurgent B. Demonstrator C. Reformist D. Activist
4. Minister In Brazil Over Air Safety
A. Ousted B. Pledged C. Swore D. Inaugurated
5. Violence Driving Iraqis From Home And Country
A. Presidential B. Sectarian C. Minority D. Majority

Exercise 5: Collocations

Match the first part of the sentences with the second part.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. In 1982 eight ministers lost their jobs | A. with the development of sport in the region. |
| 2. Their change of policy brought about | B. a reconciliation with Britain. |
| 3. The committee has been charged | C. against minorities and women. |
| 4. The second section of the third article of | D. the deadlock between the two warring factions. |
| 5. The law prevents job discrimination | E. in a mid-year cabinet reshuffle. |
| 6. Conflicts between the different ethnic | F. her speech for next week's conference. |
| 7. Britain is one of the member | G. states of the European Union. |
| 8. They called for a compromise to break | H. groups in the country exploded into civil war. |
| 9. Hugo Chavez won a decisive victory | I. the constitution defines the extent of the judicial power of the United States. |
| 10. She's busy drafting | J. over Francisco Arias in his bid for a six-year term as Venezuela's President. |

Exercise 6: Listening Post

Listen to audio clip 1 and fill in the blank spaces in the following piece of news.

Kofi Annan Launches Global Humanitarian Forum

The Global Humanitarian officially gets under way Monday. Mr. Annan, who left his U.N. post at the end of 2006, says the and strategies of the Forum are still being developed. But certain things are clear.

He says the Forum does not to compete with other organizations. It aims to the work that is being done and to new ways of humanitarian disasters so the can receive help in a more efficient and manner.

For example, he says the United Nations and other members of the community would not have been able to deal with natural such as the Indian Ocean and the earthquake in Kashmir without the help of the military.

"If the military had not come in and provided heavy support. Many more people would have died as we would not have been able to get to them," said the former U.N. chief. "And, so the military have become important players in humanitarian And, yet, when we get together to discuss humanitarian issues, they are not around, they are not at the table."

"I think we would want to bring them to the table to discuss with humanitarian actors how we could And, from my own previous experience, I know it is not an easy relationship," he added.

Mr. Annan says he private aid groups are not comfortable working with the military. He says he hopes the can improve this relationship. The , according to Mr. Annan, will deal with such issues as the humanitarian of climate change. He says more people are likely to their homes as natural resources, such as water and food become

Yet, these so-called environmental have no legal protections under international law. No one knows how to deal with them. This, he says, is an area of research for the Forum.

He says his group will also work to persuade developing countries they have an to take carbon and warming seriously. Although industrialized countries are chiefly responsible for these emissions, he says China, India, Brazil, South Africa and other developing countries cannot to just sit back and do nothing.

"Not only should they begin now, they should take and avoid the mistakes of earlier and frog some of the mistakes the others make and really begin to look for green technology, even if it is a bit more expensive," he said. "But there are reasonable technologies that can help

On the , Mr. Annan says, to protect the environment may to be the greatest on growth and development around the world.

A screenshot of a web browser window. The title bar at the top says "SPOTLIGHT". The menu bar includes "File", "Edit", "View", "Favorites", "Tools", and "Help". The toolbar contains icons for "Back", "Forward", "Home", "Search", "Folders", "Favorites", and "Go". The address bar shows "Address" and "SPOTLIGHT". The main content area displays the Oxfam International website. It features a green header with the Oxfam logo (a stylized figure inside a circle) and the word "Oxfam" in white. Below the header, the text reads: "Oxfam International is a confederation of 13 organizations working with over 3000 partners in more than 100 countries to find lasting solutions to poverty and injustice." This is followed by a paragraph: "The Oxfam International Secretariat leads, facilitates and supports collaboration between the Oxfam affiliates to increase Oxfam International's impact on poverty and injustice through advocacy campaigns, development programs and emergency response." Below this text is a section titled "United Nations Special Commission" in blue, bold font. Under this title, it says: "United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) was a United Nations organization performing inspections in Iraq to ensure its compliance with the policies of the United Nations concerning Iraqi production and use of weapons of mass destruction after the Gulf War. Its director between 1991 and 1997 was Rolf Ekéus and from 1997 to 1999 Richard Butler. After the expulsion of Scott Ritter and his ensuing resignation, as well as the press attention that followed, the United Nations Special Commission was dissolved. The successor of United Nations Special Commission is the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission."



The Language of News Media (1)

Study the following vignette and discuss its major points.

What is News?



The word “news,” presumably, results from the combination of *N (North)*, *E (East)*, *W (West)* and *S (South)* in which each individual direction indicates the four corners of the world. **News** is defined as any new information or information on current events which is presented by print, broadcast, Internet, or word of mouth to a third party or mass audience. The reporting and investigation of news falls within the profession of **journalism**. News is often reported by a variety of sources, such as newspapers, television, and radio programs, wire services, and web sites. News reporting is a type of journalism, typically written or broadcast in news style. Most news is investigated and presented by journalists and can be distributed to various outlets via news agencies.

There are many categories of news. The *weather* is typically presented by a certified meteorologist or, on smaller stations, a less-trained “weatherman” and is considered news. Other news categories are: *sports*, *society*, *entertainment*, *business*, *cartoon strips*, *features*, *lives of celebrities*, *advertising*, and more.

In its infancy, news gathering was primitive by today’s standards. Printed news had to be phoned in to a newsroom or brought there by a reporter where it was typed and either transmitted over wire services or edited and manually set in type along with other news stories for a specific edition. Today, the term “**breaking news**” has become trite as broadcast and cable news services use live satellite technology to bring current events into consumers’ homes live as it happens. Events that used to take hours or days to become common knowledge in towns or in nations are fed instantaneously to consumers via radio, television, cell phones, and the Internet.

Commonly, news content should contain the **5W’s and H** (who, what, when, where, why, and also how) of an event. There should be no questions remaining. Newspapers normally write **hard news stories**, such as those pertaining to murders, fires, wars, etc. in **inverted pyramid (▼)** style so that *the most important information is at the beginning* and busy readers can read as little or as much as they desire. In the same way, local TV stations and networks with a set format must take news stories and break them down into the most important aspects due to time constraints. News channels are able to take advantage of a story, sacrificing other decidedly less important stories, and giving as much detail about breaking news as possible. In general, the basic elements that make up important news stories are:

1. **Timeliness:** People do not need yesterday’s news. So, news is perishable commodity, normally reporting on what has happened today or since the last minute.
2. **Proximity:** Events that are geographically or emotionally close to the reader, viewer or listener, are regarded as proximity element.
3. **Conflict:** Conflict frequently attracts more human interest than other news elements.
4. **Eminence or Prominence:** Events involving well-known people or institutions are viewed as prominent element.
5. **Consequence or Impact:** Readers pay attention to a news story that directly affects how they live or have any impact on them.
6. **Human Interest:** Stories of human interest have influence over the readers’ emotion, introducing them to other’s lives or to topics of broader concern.

In summary, news is always bound up with *time*, *place* and *audience’s interest*. In writing news stories, media writers normally combine two or three basic news elements to enhance the story’s interest and importance.

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