

The Associated Press



BROADCAST NEWS STYLE BOOK

And Broadcast News Wire Operations Timetable

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The Associated Press



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THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
50 Rockefeller Plaza
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Dedicated to
Associated Press Member
Radio and Television stations
whose contributions
to The AP news report
add immeasurably
to its success.

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FOREWORD

You have before you the third edition of The Associated Press Broadcast News Style Book. Like its predecessors, it is intended primarily for the Broadcast staff.

But its principal points may be of value as well to all who deal with broadcast news.

Its main objective is to try to help writers and editors come up with strings of pearls—simple, declarative sentences that will have an impact on the ear. They should be strung together with a skill that will leave no doubt in the mind of the listener about anything that was said.

It incorporates the many helpful suggestions of the 1972 Performance Committee of The Associated Press Broadcasters Association, whose Chairman was News Director Charles Whitehurst of WFMY-TV in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Staff members who helped mightily in suggesting revisions include Broadcast Supervisors Stephen Dermady, Charles Monzella, John Mine and Bruce Hodgman in New York, James Carrier in Hartford, Dennis Sorensen in Chicago and Grant Lamos in Kansas City.

This new edition of the Broadcast News Style Book was prepared under the supervision of General Broadcast News Editor Gerald B. Trapp and written by William M. Fitzgerald, Deputy Broadcast Editor.

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New York, 1972.

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History of The Associated Press



“I suppose that when I go to the Hereafter and stand at the Golden Gate, the first person I shall meet will be a correspondent of The Associated Press.”

Those words of Mohandas Gandhi to AP correspondent Jim Mills in Poona, India in 1932 were spoken in mock seriousness by the Mahatma.

But they say something about The AP, the dedication of its staff and their combined tenacity in digging out the news—wherever it may develop.

For Gandhi had been released from prison in secret and whisked to a railroad station miles distant from the prison where the British had confined him; yet Mills already was at the station when Gandhi arrived.

Gandhi, the frail leader of the non-violent campaign to win independence for India, also had something else to say to Mills that says something further about The Associated Press. Just before he was jailed in January of 1932, Gandhi said to Mills:

“I hope that after I am gone The Associated Press will continue to inform the American people of the exact situation in India, telling them what we as Indian Nationalists are trying to do to emancipate India. But at the same time I would ask you to do the fullest justice to the British side of the controversy. For I do not wish to hurt as much as a hair on any English head.”

And, for almost a century and a quarter now, The AP has tried to present fairly all sides of controversies.

Growth of The Associated Press

The not-for-profit news cooperative known as The Associated Press was begun in 1848. Today it is the largest news-gathering and dissemination organization in the entire world.

The AP has moved forward steadily in its mission of covering the news of the people of the world for all of its members.

The AP led in the establishment of its own wire transmission facilities, first leasing a New York City-Washington circuit in 1875. That AP wire carried up to 20,000 words a day—and the flow from Washington never has been less since that time.

In the period just preceding that time, AP correspondents had covered the Civil War with a freedom of action war correspondents have not enjoyed since.

But its men then established the tradition that was to carry The AP through wars that never really ended: the two great World Wars, the war between Nationalists and Communists in China that put that nation of more than 800 million people in isolation for almost a quarter century, the Korean conflict, the lightning war in the Middle East and the war in Indochina.

AP men, carrying typewriters and cameras, covered those eras not only with professional competence, but with distinction; the long list of Pulitzer and other prize winners attests to that.

All this time, the cooperative continued to grow; its circuits now girdle the globe, carrying news and pictures to the farthest corners of the earth.

With the growth of its national and international news wires, there also was a corresponding growth on the state and local level.

In 1935, The AP launched a revolution in the dissemination of pictures—the Wirephoto network was born in that year and hasn't stopped growing.

Five years later The AP moved into the field of servicing a specialized news report to the broadcast industry.

In the years that have followed, this service has grown until now Broadcast News serves more Members than any other single news circuit in The Associated Press.

The national news report is produced in New York and prepared by a staff devoted exclusively to that assignment; similar regional and state reports are produced by staffers in AP bureaus across the country.

The Broadcast News wire is the only AP domestic circuit which operates 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

This wire is the longest single circuit in the world, stretching across the entire contiguous 48 states for 180,000 miles; Alaska and Hawaii are served over separate facilities.

Member Organizations Grow With Cooperative

AP has grown because this is what its Members wanted; they are the ultimate voice in determining what directions the news cooperative is to take.

And Members always have worked closely with the management of AP and its staff.

The highly respected Associated Press Managing Editors Association (APME) was founded in 1933 to work closely with AP in all phases of its activities.

As Broadcast News became an increasingly important area of AP activity, a counterpart of the APME—The Associated Press Broadcasters Association—was formed in 1955.

Its 16-man board of directors is drawn from the Broadcast membership of some 3,300 radio and television stations; it represents a cross-section of management and news personnel of the member stations.

In the less than 20 years of its existence, APBA has grown to the point where it now sponsors a national meeting open to personnel of all member stations.

The first such session was held in June of 1971 and representatives from 45 states attended.

The New Electronic AP

Accuracy still has top priority on the AP Broadcast wire. But speed plays an increasingly important role in modern broadcast journalism. For this reason, The AP entered the electronic age faster and better than any other news service. And the new, computerized AP delivers its traditional accuracy with unprecedented speed.

AP Broadcast writers no longer use typewriters. They use the Cathode Ray Tube (CRT), which is a keyboard with a television screen rather than paper.

The story is written and edited on the screen—then moved directly from the screen to the Member station. The news is handled only by newsmen—eliminating the time delays and human errors that can accompany a teletype system.

News Now Delivered Faster

With the elimination of the teletype system, comes the elimination of such tape problems as rubouts, which used to result in wasted wire time. The broadcast wire now moves at a TRUE speed of 66 words per minute—making room for several additional stories per hour.

In fact, the computer linked to the CRT even eliminates the three most common types of typographical errors—long-lines, over-lines and upper case garble. This makes for a cleaner, more mistake-free news package even in the physical sense.

What this all means to The AP Broadcast Member is that he receives information within moments after The AP does—and the information is guaranteed correct, readable and airable.

This new technology enables The AP to jealously guard its reputation for accuracy, while at the same time delivering news in unprecedented amounts with unparalleled speed.

CHAPTER ONE



THE WRITER



The simple declarative sentence is not always easy to write.

But it is the basic ingredient for one who would write, whether for broadcast, or any other media.

If you can't master the art, then writing for broadcast is not for you. The matter was put succinctly this way by stylist E. B. White in an interview:

“You can help people improve their writing, but you can't teach them to write an English sentence—it's impossible. There are some people who can live to 150 and they couldn't write a declarative sentence because it isn't in them.”

These basics, then, are intended to be helpful.

First of all, before you put anything at all on that Cathode Ray Tube, put yourself in the place of the broadcaster who is going to read it.

There's nothing that infuriates a broadcaster more than to stumble over poorly written copy.

Aim For "People Talk"

Make sure he can't blame you for it—use the simple phrase, the precise word but the word the listener has no trouble understanding—in other words, "people talk."

You do this by first understanding yourself what you are writing about.

And you do this by living and breathing news day in, day out.

You have to tell this news—within 750 words for a five-minute summary—so well that you have answered all the questions.

This means you have to go through every single line of the source copy on which you base your items.

Never operate on the theory that you have read it all before; perhaps the new lead you have in hand contains some fresh information not available previously.

Make certain you understand what you've read; don't hesitate to ask questions, and more questions, until everything is clear in your mind.

Read over your copy aloud, and then read it again, as if YOU were the newscaster. This is the way you can spot the awkward phrase, the unanswered question, the sentence that's too long.

Try for sentences in the 20-to-25-word range or less, but make that a guide, not an inflexible rule.

You never can catch up with errors on the air.

Corrections are necessary from time to time, but the chances are someone already has broadcast the erroneous information before you can get a correction on the wire.

At stake is the 125-year-old tradition of accuracy and objectivity that is The Associated Press.

CHAPTER TWO



CONVERSATION

The broadcasters—both women and men—who handle on-the-air news best use a conversational style.

That's the best approach to writing the copy for them to use, or to edit for their own personalized use—the easy, conversational style.

But never the vernacular or dialect style; that has to be the personal choice of the announcer handling the newscast.

You have to tell what the story is all about but you don't have to cram all that information into the first sentence. But do set up your story in such a way that you don't lose the listener.

Let Who, What, When, Where and Why come naturally into your story. Let one thought flow into the next. Despite the deadline pressure and the need to be accurate, relax and think about what you're writing. Words are only your means of expression. You be the master. Make each word carry its own weight.

That practice of jamming the "W's" into the first sentence slid from common use years ago.

When you check out those sentences for the 20-to-25-word range and you find them running long, look for the connecting links and break up the sentences.

A caution here: strings of too-short sentences can be just as deadly as the over-long sentences—they produce a staccato effect.

Another read-over of what you've written may show you where you can add a few words to a sentence here and there to give your sentences variety. And read it aloud—but quietly.

Clauses Create Problems

Clauses can create problems and for that reason should be avoided.

This is not to say, however, that they never should be used. Nor is it necessary to avoid the use of clauses at the beginning of a sentence; sometimes they can be used to good advantage to get over a point.

Here's one that is easily read and easily understood: "In spite of doctor's orders, former President Jones spent the day roping cattle."

But this type is a clause you should always avoid: "Congressional candidate John Jones, son of President Jones, died today."

President Jones didn't die today, but some listeners may think so. The predicate was split from the subject.

Monotonous repetition is to be avoided at all costs. But you can become monotonous in using the same tool in the area of tenses.

Verbs are your action words. Be precise and select the right one. Don't say "announced" if something was "reported" and don't use "declared" if something was simply "said."

The present perfect tense—"Something has happened"—is effective for air use; but it can become as monotonous as the constant use of the word today.

Although the present perfect tense gives a sense of immediacy, it is not always the best tool to use in summaries. These summaries may not be broadcast until a considerable time after they appear on the wire.

In this area, the present tense may be best—or even the past tense, for example: "The president said earlier today."

Sentences can be started with "but" and "and" because this style reflects quite accurately the way people talk.

And you can further outrage the strict constructionist grammarians by writing incomplete sentences—just as an attention-getter, or scene-setter.

An example: "This just in from Washington, London, etc."

Just follow one rule when you employ such legitimate writing devices: Don't overdo it.



ATTRIBUTION

Getting attribution into your copy early on in the story is a cardinal rule that almost never should be violated.

In writing for the eye, attribution can be placed almost anywhere in the sentence. Not so in the case of writing for the ear.

What we must avoid is leaving the listener with the impression that what he has just heard is the opinion of the newscaster, or The Associated Press.

If it is at all controversial, never start a news item with a direct quotation and follow through with a second sentence giving the source of the quote.

This form of attribution is likely to be lost on the listener if the first sentence has had real impact.

But something like this could be used—sparingly: “This is a day that never should have happened.” That’s what John Jones said in telling about the misfortunes he encountered today.

Provided those misfortunes weren’t of a tragic nature, such an introduction could be a welcome change-of-pace approach.

Don’t overdo attribution. If the White House, for instance, says the President is going to do something, it’s perfectly all right for us to go ahead and say: The President will sign, will hold a news conference, will leave, etc.”

Your best rule of thumb: if you think someone at sometime in the future could dispute what you’ve written, put in the attribution.

When you identify a person by his title, put the title first; that prepares the listener for who the person is.

Do it this way: City Council President Mary Jones, Secretary of Commerce John Jones, etc.

If the person holding the title is that well known, it’s permissible to omit the first name.

However, we should—with the obvious exceptions—use the first names of national and state legislators.

To avoid too much of an earful, you don't have to put into the same sentence the party affiliation and the area of the lawmaker.

That can come in the next sentence thus: The Orange County Independent said, etc.

Use of Foreign Names

Don't use obscure foreign names, whether of persons or places; they really aren't essential to the story, could confuse the listener and the correct pronunciation often is hard to come by at once.

It's sufficient to say: The Prime Minister of Country X was assassinated today in a small village 60 miles from the capital, City Y.

If you never heard a person's middle initial before, don't use it in writing your copy; if it's one you always hear, by all means use it.

Nicknames should be avoided unless they are accompanied by a further identification, such as the name of the city represented by the sports team involved, etc.

Particularly in the area of sports, there has been such a proliferation of teams you can't always be certain the listener knows the world champion team by its nickname.

Commonly used abbreviations are acceptable: Mr., Mrs., Ms. (for which we will use the pronouncer "Miz"), Dr. etc.

Most initial abbreviations should be hyphenated like F-C-C, U-N, but we use AFL-CIO just like that, along with EST, EDT and the appropriate ones for the other time zones.

Commonly pronounced acronyms like NATO should be spelled out just that way; and never use an acronym that's not familiar to you—the listener will be confused, too.

We don't use hyphens between the initials in a person's name; periods are called for: J. J. Jones.

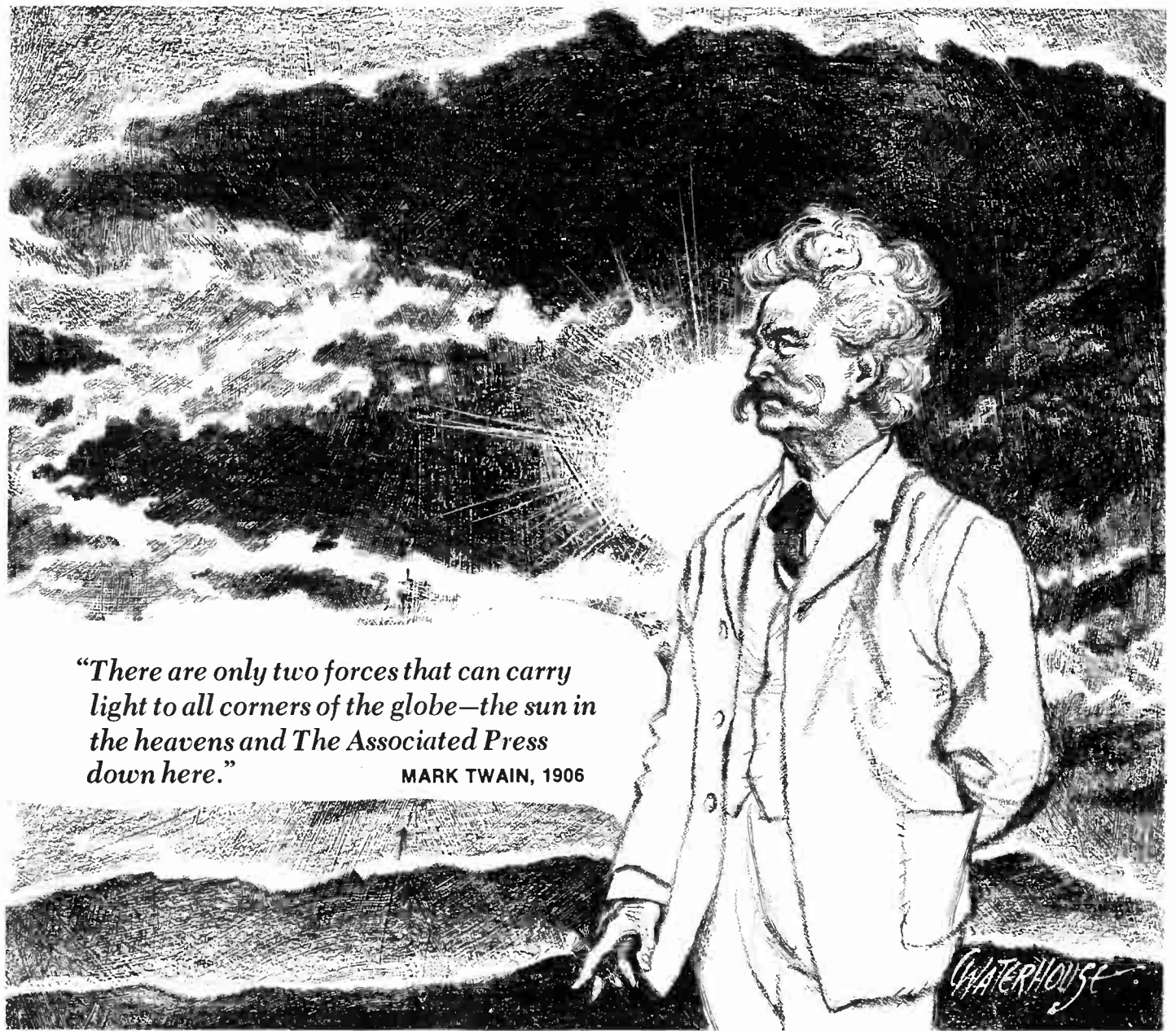
If it makes the word easier to read, do use a hyphen regardless of what the dictionary or the news style may be.

But don't hyphenate us out of the English language like in master-piece, etc.

It is in areas like semi-annual, anti-whatever, etc. that we should use the hyphen.

Everyone probably recognizes the abbreviations for the days of the week, the months, the states, the military ranks, etc.

But we will spell them out anyway: Sunday, January, Alabama, Specialist Four, etc.



“There are only two forces that can carry light to all corners of the globe—the sun in the heavens and The Associated Press down here.”

MARK TWAIN, 1906

... and some six decades later, the world's largest newsgathering organization maintains its force in serving more than 3,000 radio and television Members.

If your regional Associated Press Broadcasters Association prefers a different way, amend the rules locally.

Whenever we can, we should convert like this: 5,000 feet can be made “almost one mile,” 1,450 can be made 15-hundred or “almost 15-hundred.”

Again, the question arises, if there are more than three digits involved should the figure be written out like 15-hundred, rather than 1,500?

Preferably, write it out; a misplaced cipher or comma and you come up with an entirely different sum.

Fractions and decimals always should be spelled out: one and seven-eighths (not $1\frac{7}{8}$) and five-tenths (not 0.5).

When you record a vote, do it this way: 51-to-49—put that word “to” in there always just to avoid trouble with the dash.

In writing dates, follow style and write them all out from first through eleventh; after that it becomes 12th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd.

We do use four-digit figures for years—1972.

And also digits for the time of day: 2 a.m. EST; 2:30 p.m. EDT and for all street addresses.

Numerals are used in all market stories and these include fractions. The reason for this is obvious: speed.

That same reason—speed—prevails in handling figures in sports copy; but we should spell out those fractionalized times in various events for the non-sports people who have to read them.

Thus, instead of 2:9.3 let’s write it out: two minutes, nine and three-tenths seconds.

In the 1972 Olympics, a winner was decided—by computer—on the basis of having crossed the finish line 19-hundredths of a second ahead; try reading that in numerals.

CHAPTER FOUR



NUMBERS

Numbers present problems in broadcast writing. In these days of multi (B) billion and (M) million-dollar budgets, there’s a proliferation of stories dealing with figures like that.

And everyone is interested since it’s his tax monies involved. But they are interested in specific, exact figures only in the case of how much they have to pay, or are going to get back, from the tax collector.

So, the rule of thumb on those six-plus-digit figures is: round them off.

We spell out all numbers from one through eleven and use figures for all numbers from that point up to 999.

The exception to this rule is when two numbers occur in sequence like: his score was 130, thirteen under par.

To get down to cases on money:

The figure \$1.5 billion we get in our source copy is not sent that way on the Broadcast trunk; we translate it thus, one (b) billion 500 (m) million dollars.

Now, if we have occasion to use that same figure again, the question arises can we just send it that way: \$1.5 billion?

One school of thought says yes; the other says be careful, spell it out.

On the national level, we will opt for the careful way: spell it out for the busy, small news operation which doesn’t always have time to check out these things before they’re on the air.



CHAPTER FIVE

QUOTES/SLANG

Too many direct quotes in summaries and in separate stories can lead to trouble.

The important thing to remember here is no one ever has devised a means of reading quotation marks on the air.

The oldtime use of quote-unquote has long gone by the boards and more and more, phrases like “what he termed,” “in his words,” etc. appear to be going the same way.

There is a school of thought that newscasters, by the inflection in their voices, can get across a direct quote; that is a debatable point.

There are very few quotes which don't sound better carefully and accurately paraphrased; more often than not, using direct quotes is lazy writing.

Listeners are entitled to your professional expertise in spelling out accurately in simple terms what the person said.

If the quotation defies comprehension, no one is being served by using it in a summary or a separate story and letting it go at that.

But we don't want to take away from the report quotations which many broadcast newsrooms find valuable in doing their own rewrite.

So when we give “in depth” treatment to a major story—a presidential address, an important declaration before a world body, etc.—we should use as much direct quote as we can.

But all copy should be prepared ready to use at once on the air.

One successful device used on the national wire is the roundup of textual excerpts we carry frequently on the president.

If it's a major speech on the local level, there's no reason not to use the same device.

We should use quotation marks in some instances solely as a tool to help announcers, placing them around unusual names such as those of ships, horses, place names that have well-known nicknames.

Slang, dialect and colloquialisms should not be used.



PRONOUNCERS

One commodity we never seem to be able to produce often enough on the broadcast wire is the pronouncer.

Members tell us it's one thing that they need more than anything else when we give them an unfamiliar place or person name-in-the-news.

The guideline here is: if you know immediately how to pronounce the name, you probably don't need a pronouncer.

But if you have to hesitate and still aren't certain that it is the correct pronunciation, then we need to try our best to provide one.

We all know the procedure for bracketing the pronouncer immediately after the first time we use the name.

We use a simple phonetic spelling system to try to convey how the name sounds; the diacritical marks used in dictionaries and gazetteers are not available on teletype printers.

We go along with the commonly accepted principles of English usage as to how vowels and consonants are sounded.

Where an accent is indicated, the teletype apostrophe mark is placed over the letter or letter-group which should be accented.

Here is how we would go about a pronouncer for the name Juan Martinez (Wahn Mahr-tee'-ness).

With many foreign names, only approximations can be arrived at for various reasons—the nasal sounds common to the French tongue, the unlauded sounds in the Germanic languages, etc.

Never guess at the pronunciation of a proper name.

In the case of persons, the individual himself is the best possible source; failing that, try members of the family, business associates or others who would know for certain.

Foreign names generally can be provided by the appropriate embassy or consulate, or domestic or overseas AP Bureau.

Sources for Pronouncers

The sources we accept for the national wire include those men-

tioned, plus the Columbia Lipincott Gazetteer of the World and Webster's Biographical Dictionary.

On the state or regional level, historical societies often are only too glad to help with place names; state highway departments are another good source for these pronouncers.

Clerks of state legislatures can provide pronouncers on those members with unusual names.

It often is not possible to come up with a pronouncer immediately and we should advise members we are trying for one.

Once we get it, we should use it whenever the name crops up in the report (one time to each story use, of course).

A frequent Member complaint is we drop pronouncers too quickly after we have used them once or twice.

Remember, it's not always the same person reading each newscast.

Failing to get a pronouncer direct from a source, this guide has proved—over the years—to cover just about every contingency.

AH—like the “a” in arm.

A—like the “a” in apple.

EH—like the “ai” in air.

AY—like the “a” in ace.

E—like the “e” in bed.

EE—like the “ee” in feel.

I—like the “i” in tin.

Y—like the “i” in time.

OH—like the “o” in go.

OO—like the “oo” in pool.

UH—like the “u” in puff.

KH—a guttural sound.

ZH—like the “g” in rouge.

J—like the “g” in George.

Vowels are pronounced alike in all languages except English and German.

But not all foreign names are pronounced as they look.

One final point: Many bureaus periodically prepare state or regional pronunciation guides and send them along to their Members in a log mailing, or a special mailing. It's a practice highly commended by the Members who find such guides extremely useful.



REGIONALIZATION/ OPERATIONS

Regionalization of The Associated Press domestic wire system has changed many of the previous practices with reference to use of copy slugs.

No longer is the trunk folio number transmitted from New York meaningful across the country.

It quite possibly could be a completely different number in every single area served by every one of the Hub bureaus.

Therefore it's imperative that copy is identified clearly in all slugs used, both nationally and regionally.

This makes it easy for the Members to find the copy when their attention is called to it for an add, a correction, etc.

Nationally, we will use these slugs:

First five minute summary take 2 will carry a slug like this—first 5 take 2, first 5 take 3, etc.

We will use this system also for the expanded summaries.

On separate stories we will continue much the same procedure as heretofore: Wall Street (Subs) means that this separate story is a self-contained wrapup of the developments in the stock market story to that hour. Wall Street (Tops) means that this separate story contains just what it says—new information; it is self-contained but not a complete wrapup of the story.

When we have occasion to add to a story, we no longer will use the familiar “More” slug. Instead we’ll identify the add as, Wall Street take 2 (or 3, 4, etc.), just like that.

We will continue to slug sidebar stories as “With” whatever the subject may be. These items should be written so they can be aired without any reference to what has been carried previously.

Use the Proper Slugline

It’s imperative, therefore, that we use easily understood, preferably one-word sluglines on our separate stories, whenever we have need for such a slugline.

We no longer will use folio numbers in reference to anything moved previously on the wire.

We will continue to use, when appropriate, such familiar slugs as Sports, Farm, Business, Science, Religion, Women, Radio-TV.

A caution on that latter slug: if it is an item of general interest, an FCC decision affecting the listening and viewing public, as well as the broadcasters themselves, add the word General to the slug, thus—Radio-TV-General.

And, if it is that type of industry piece, be certain it is used as a news item in summaries.

We should use advisories whenever the situation warrants—when we are planning a series, when we are informed that a development can be expected in a running story at a certain time, when we plan changes in our routine or format for one reason or another, etc.

These should be slugged thus: News-Program-Sports Directors (Bureaus). When appropriate, the words General Managers, Station Managers, should be used ahead of the other titles in an advisory.

How We Handle Advances

The Broadcast wire follows the same principles as all other AP wires in the handling of advances; but we do translate Standard Time to Daylight Time from the end of April to the end of October.

We will use bracketed advance slugs before and after all advances, whether moved as separates or in summaries.

These slugs should read thus: (Advance for use after 7 a.m. EST) and (Above Advance for use after 7 a.m. EST).

We will not bracket (Advance) preceding the dateline in a separate or the first sentence of a summary item.

When there is no set release time our slugs should read (Advance to be held for Release).

As soon as the material in such an advance is released, a prompt advisory must be filed on the wire. The advisory should identify the story by describing the subject matter thus:

News Directors (Bureaus):

Release presidential State of the Union message advance.

Regional bureaus handling advance material use local time zone designations in their sluglines.

And this final note on advances: The Associated Press insists there be no discrimination among the media so far as embargoes are concerned. We will use the same time or type of embargo on all wires. And if the embargo itself is unusual, we will say it has been set by the source.

Bulletin Handling of a Story

Bulletin is a slug given a story which must take precedence over anything else moving on the wire at that moment. Obviously, therefore, we must use discretion in its use. Common sense, as well as competitive considerations, should go into our thinking whenever we use the Bulletin slug.

When we do decide the story merits bulletin treatment, here is how we handle it:

If we are sending a summary, or a regional split, we send the word Bulletin (AP) on one line, drop down a line and send

“This bulletin just in from Washington.”

If a bulletin breaks outside summary or regional sending time, we handle it as a separate item, with the Bulletin slug and (AP) logotype on one line, drop down one line and go right into the dateline of the story.

All bulletins are preceded by bell signals; and followed with the bracketed logotype thus, (AP)', and all bulletin material is double-spaced.

Whenever a story of an urgent nature develops that is not quite bulletin caliber, we double-space the story; no bell signals or slug are required.

The Broadcast wire uses a Flash only when such treatment is given a story on the general news wires. This refers only to a story of transcendental importance. It should not be confused with the the “F” or Flash priority coding for getting copy into and out of the computer system.

The Associated Press does not set itself up as censor of the news or the contents of any particular news story.

Often story details may strike some people as being in poor taste. If they are essential to the story, we spell out the details in as good taste as possible.

At the start of such an item an advisory should be sent to News Directors saying: **The following story contains material which some stations may find objectionable. Its use is left to your discretion.**

If we make a mistake we should fix it just as soon as we discover it; even then, because broadcasting is now, we probably will be too late to prevent everyone from airing it.

When we determine a correction is necessary, we write it so we make perfectly clear what is being corrected, using this form:

— CORRECTION —

FIRST 5 TAKE 4 2ND GRAPH STARTING THE SENATOR XXX ETC., READ IT: SENATOR JONES SAID HE WOULD NOT VOTE FOR XXX ETC., (INSERTING NOT).

Whenever the correction makes an important change in a story—as it would in the above example—a separate note should be sent to News Directors, pointing out that an important change has been made.

The Way to Handle a Kill

The Broadcast Wire follows the rules laid down for the whole Associated Press with respect to killing stories: No story ever is killed without prior consultation with the General Desk.

Whenever it is determined a kill is required, it is sent immediately.

When a kill is moved on another AP circuit and the Broadcast wire has used the material being killed, it is mandatory that the kill be relayed at once on the Broadcast Wire.

Here is the correct procedure in the case of a story which contains erroneous or dangerous matter and which has to be killed as a result.

First of all, the supervisor should be told at once when a kill is moved on any of the incoming wires; if we should get a telephone call, or a message, these also should be routed immediately to the supervisor.

Once it is established that a kill is necessary, we check the report thoroughly to see just when and how we carried the story; this involves going back into previous cycles.

When it is determined that the Broadcast wire is involved, we send a bulletin kill in essentially the same way it is done on the news wires.

However, since it is virtually impossible to catch up with erroneous or dangerous matter for broadcasters, we phrase our kill like this:

Format for Kill Message

NEWS DIRECTORS: MAKE NO FURTHER USE OF AP000 (IDENTIFY STORY). THE STORY CONTAINS ERRONEOUS OR POSSIBLE UNPRIVILEGED MATERIAL. A KILL IS MANDATORY; NO FURTHER USE MAY BE MADE OF THE STORY. A SUB STORY WILL BE UPCOMING. (OR THERE WILL BE NO SUB STORY—AS THE CASE MAY BE.)

A note to News Directors should be sent subsequent to the kill, attentioning them to the fact that a story has been killed.

It should follow this form:

NEWS DIRECTORS: AP000 HAS BEEN KILLED. A KILL IS MANDATORY. NO FURTHER USE MAY BE MADE OF THIS STORY.

A complete file on a kill must be left over.

IF THE ERRONEOUS OR UNPRIVILEGED MATERIAL INVOLVES A STORY WHICH HAS MOVED *ONLY* ON THE BROADCAST WIRE, THERE SHOULD BE IMMEDIATE CONSULTATION WITH THE GENERAL DESK *BEFORE* ANY ACTION IS TAKEN WITH REGARD TO A KILL.

It will be the *responsibility* of the General Desk to determine whether a kill is required.

Again, a complete file must be left over.

TIPS



Timeless, timely tips:

Flags are flown at half staff on land, half mast at sea.

A person is unidentified, not unnamed; most people have names.

It should be young, not small; a child could be large for his age.

Only is a word with editorial connotations and almost never is necessary; delete it.

For the same reason, avoid the use of so-called. If we have legitimate reason to doubt something we are reporting, let's hang it right on the source, thus "what so-and-so called."

Plan usually is a better word than scheme.

The phrase should be not yet instead of not immediately; the story with the word immediately could be hours old.

Use similar rather than same.

It's a joint session of Congress only when the President appears; otherwise it's a joint meeting. And remember, the Senate and House are co-equal branches of Congress; there is no upper or lower house.

You can't love an inanimate object; use like.

You compare something with not to.

The couple is going to do something, not are.

Businesses is too tough for announcers, make it business firms.

For the same reason use integrate not desegregate.

Make it Cardinal John Jones simply because that's the way we talk.

It is the Chief Justice of the United States; he is the presiding justice of the Supreme Court.

Words We Will and Won't Use

Society now recognizes openly that there are such things as contraceptives, such acts as rape, etc.—words that formerly were almost totally taboo on the air. They are being used now, along with similar words and, where they are pertinent to the story, we will use them in Broadcast copy. We will not use the well-known "four-letter" words, nor their multi-letter variations under any circumstances.

Let's not underuse any word simply to keep a sentence short. For instance, try using "that" in sentences every now and then. Quite often we write "The President said today this would happen." It just might read better if we wrote "The President said today that this would happen."

Your copy is being read aloud so don't add to the announcer's chore by using a string of sibilants which could cause him to sound like a tea kettle just coming to boil.

Alliterative phrases and sentences can cause a similar problem.

Beware, too, of the sound-alike words, homonyms like "great" and "grate" and "bare" and "bear." The difficulty with words like these is obvious.

You don't have to say in every sentence "the President said." It is permitted to use "he said" when there can be no mistake that "he" is the President.

But always remember the careless listener is more careless than the careless reader—and the listener can't "go back" to hear what he didn't hear the first time.

For that reason we avoid words like "former" and "latter."

And since the listener you are writing for may be in Alabama or Alaska "here" and "there" referring to locale are meaningless on the Broadcast wire. Get the place into the body of the story—even though datelines are used; not all broadcasters use the date-line format.

Remember, too, your copy is being used in four time zones so be careful how you handle the time element in the story; this afternoon in New York could still be this morning in Honolulu.

When you can shorten a title do so. We always refer to it as the Teamsters Union; the real handle is International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers.

Let's never use "cop" or "lawman" to describe policemen, detectives, sheriffs, investigators, etc.

Nor should we call a just-set record "new record"; it is just "record."

If you have red hair, you are "red-haired," not "red-headed."

When something happens in Washington, make it clear it is The District of Columbia or the state you are writing about. Take similar care with other same-name locales.

Be just as certain when handling persons with identical names who may have identical or similar positions.

CHAPTER NINE

IN YOUR JOB AS BROADCAST EDITOR



For AP Staffers handling Broadcast Desks wherever:

Know the contents of this book, especially the Timetable section.

Countless messages to New York could be eliminated by quick reference to the Timetable when members ask when they can expect this or that feature.

Additionally, keep a clipboard of Broadcast Wire advisories—and keep it current.

This will enable you to know—and to tell members—what we are planning in the way of coverage on any given event.

One area in which we often are deluged with unnecessary queries is Sports.

Advisories always are sent on planned coverage of specific sports events, or seasonal activities like baseball, football, etc. and the coverage planned for the championship play in those sports.

More and more lotteries are attracting attention as revenue-raisers. Each state, or area, that conducts one has its own rules and regulations. State broadcast groups in areas affected have taken differing approaches as to how they are going to handle the stories concerning lotteries.

The AP guideline is this: The F-C-C has stringent regulations covering on-the-air promotion of lotteries and broadcasters are aware of these. We cover lotteries on their news merits not as promotion.

Finally, keep your cool when you come under fire from someone who thinks The AP did not handle a story properly—in his view.

If you have been factual, fair and reasonable in the way you have handled the news, you have done the job that continues to make The AP The Byline of Dependability.

We are not the breed calling themselves “advocacy journalists”; we are newsmen and proud of the title. As AP President and General Manager Wes Gallagher put it:

“There are enough strident, partisan, intolerant voices without adding that of the journalist.”

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SPECIAL SERVICES OF AP BROADCAST NEWS

NewsBreak is The AP's tape service which provides twenty new programs a week, to give Member stations hundreds of new voices.

The package is sent via first class mail once each week.

It provides five programs each of commentary, entertainment, sports and women's news, produced by The AP exclusively for AP members.

The women's programs are designed for 90 seconds, with a commercial cue; the other programs are three and one-half minutes, leaving a minute and a half for sponsorship.

The Special Projects Division also produces a yearend record, wrapping up all the top news events of the year.

It is available in either long-playing record form or on tape and it is cued to provide for a maximum of sponsorship.

The World in Sound brings you the voices of the newsmakers as they made the news and the voices of the men and women who report the news.



PhotoColor is the name of the special newsphoto service for Television.

It offers timely subjects, graphics and maps designed and produced exclusively for TV news programs.

The 35-millimeter slides may be offset right or left without additional cost.

The twice-a-week slide package is mailed to Members with catalogue cards and black and white facsimiles of the slides.

The twice-weekly packages are made up of ten slides each.

PhotoColor subscribers may order back issues.

REMINDERS

RECOMMENDED READING

The Elements of Style, Second Edition, William Strunk Junior and E. B. White, Macmillan.

Writing News for Broadcast, Edward Bliss Junior and John M. Patterson, Columbia.

The American Language (with supplements One and Two), H. L. Mencken, Knopf.

AP The Story of News, Oliver Gramling, University Microfilms.

The Associated Press Stylebook (current edition).



WORLD NEWS SUMMARIES

(Note — items marked with asterisk are transmitted in the early morning hours.)

WEEKDAYS		SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS	
AM	PM	AM	PM
12:25	12:25	12:25	12:25
1:25	1:25	1:25	1:25
2:25	*2:25	2:25	2:25
5:25	3:25	3:25	3:25
*6:25	4:25	6:25	4:25
7:25	5:25	7:25	5:25
8:25	6:25	8:25	6:25
9:25	7:25	9:25	7:25
10:25	8:25	10:25	8:25
11:25	9:25	11:25	9:25
	*10:25		10:25
	11:25		11:25

The summaries at left are for five minutes airtime—or two-and-one-half minutes, if you prefer. The five-minute summaries may be adapted for two-and-one-half minutes by airing the first paragraph of each datelined item. Those summaries during weekdays marked by asterisks include additional bracketed details on the day's major stories. Use of this material will expand airtime to 10 minutes. This provides maximum flexibility with a minimum of editing. On Saturdays and Sundays, all the summaries follow the five-minute/two-and-one-half minute format.

Spot news separates are presented between summaries as they occur.



WEATHER

FORECAST SUMMARY Quick rundown on the nation's weather prospects for the next 24 hours. Two to three minutes daily, Monday through Saturday. Clears by 4 a.m.

WEATHER SUMMARY The lowdown on early morning weather conditions around the nation. Two to three minutes daily, Monday through Saturday. Clears by 6:30 a.m. (4:30 Sundays)

WHY THE WEATHER A mid-morning look at the national weather picture and the factors involved. Two to three minutes daily. Clears at 11 a.m.

LET'S LOOK AT THE WEATHER Mid-afternoon analysis of weather conditions and the outlook for tomorrow, with temperatures in key cities. Three minutes daily. Clears at 5 p.m.

NATION'S WEATHER The day's maximum and minimum temperatures and the weather conditions in key cities. Two minutes daily. Clears by 11 p.m.

(Note—Regional and local weather forecasts are filed at regular intervals on a regional basis.)



SPOT SUMMARIES

SPOT SUMMARIES Spot summaries are transmitted hourly just before the half hour, except after the expanded five-minute summaries. These are preceded by headlines which may be used as spots if desired.

The Associated Press



**BROADCAST NEWS
STYLE
BOOK**

And Broadcast News Wire Operations Timetable



REGIONAL NEWS

WEEKDAYS		SUNDAYS	
AM	PM	AM	PM
12:25-45	12:25-45	12:25-45	12:25-45
1:35-45	1:25-45	1:25-45	1:25-45
4:35-45	2:25-45	6:25-45	2:25-45
5:25-55	3:25-45	7:25-45	3:25-45
6:25-45	4:25-45	8:25-45	4:25-45
7:25-45	5:25-45	9:25-45	5:25-45
8:25-45	6:25-45	10:25-45	6:25-45
9:25-45	7:25-45	11:25-45	7:25-45
10:25-45	8:25-45		8:25-45
11:25-45	9:25-45		9:25-45
	10:25-45		10:25-45
	11:25-45		11:25-45

The above periods are set aside specifically for transmission of regional news. Individual bureaus do, however, extend these periods at will to meet particular needs. They also make special splits at other times to expedite fast-breaking regional stories.



BUSINESS and MARKET NEWS

MARKET SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS Roundup of developments in Wall Street, and major commodity markets; 10 minutes, Monday through Friday.

(Clears in time for early evening business news programs.)

BUSINESS BRIEFS A package of financial, corporate and trade briefs at 1:25 and 2:25 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Periodic reports on financial and commodity markets move on regular schedule during trading hours. These include: Opening Wall Street at 10:20 a.m., Mid-Day Wall at 11:45 a.m. and Closing Wall 15 minutes after market closes. Dow Jones averages transmitted hourly.



YEAR END SPECIALS

At the end of each year The AP broadcast wire transmits a series of special holiday scripts which include a half-hour news review of the previous year, a 15-minute sports review, a 10-minute business review and others. These scripts are transmitted well in advance of release dates to simplify programming problems.

OPERATIONS TIMETABLE

WORLD NEWS
SUMMARIES

COMMENTARY
ANALYSIS

WEATHER

REGIONAL
NEWS

WOMEN

SPORTS

FARM



YEAR END
SPECIALS

BUSINESS
and
MARKET
NEWS

SPOT
SUMMARIES

MISCELLANEOUS

NOTE: Times specified are New York Time and indicate when matter is to be completed on the circuit. New York Time differs by one hour from Eastern Standard Time during the Spring and Summer months. Thus, under Daylight Saving, noon New York Time is 11 a.m. Eastern Standard.



SPORTS LOG* Overnight sports results and upcoming events at-a-glance. Includes major league batting leaders, home run hitters, team standings and other pertinent data in season. Varies in length depending upon developments. Daily, Monday through Saturday.

SPORT SPECIAL* Overnight sports review for use on breakfast shows. Five minutes daily, Monday through Saturday. Ten minutes on Sunday.

THE SPORTSMAN* The inside story on sports. Fifteen minutes of comment and background. Can be used throughout the day or early evening. Daily, Monday through Saturday.

FORENOON SPORTS Five-minute package of the latest sports news. 9 a.m., Monday through Saturday.

SPORT WHIRL Five-minute sports review. 3:30 p.m., Monday through Saturday (omitted on Saturdays in football season).

MINI SPORTS SUMMARY Six to eight two-sentence sports briefs, highlighting the day's activities in the sports field 5:45 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

SPOT SPORTS SUMMARY Late sports news in headline form. About one minute, 9 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

Spot news of the sports world is carried in separate datelined stories around the clock.

BASEBALL Up to the minute scores at 20 minutes before the hour on all major league games. Final line scores at the end of each game. A summary of the day's play starts on completion of the first afternoon game, with adds or tops as each game is completed.

FOOTBALL Period scores on all major college games. Final scores on all college games. Separate stories on top contests. Special football summaries at 5, 6, 7 and 9 p.m. EST. Period scores on all National and American Football Conference games and separate stories on each game.

On Wednesday during football season, The Sportsman picks the probable winners in Saturday's games. On Sundays, a special 15-Minute script—The Sunday Quarterback—reviews Saturday's play and looks forward to the next weekend (2 p.m.).



FOR WOMEN

LISTEN LADIES* News for and about women . . . including helpful hints for homemakers, tips on fashions, interesting stories about feminine newsmakers and notes from Hollywood and the entertainment world. Ten minutes daily, Monday through Saturday. Moves on 24-hour advance basis.

Additional stories of special interest to women are transmitted as separate datelined items as the news develops. These bear identifying slugs to call them to the attention of women's editors.

FARM



MORNING FARM PRICES

A look at primary markets. Five minutes daily at 12 noon, Monday through Friday.

AROUND THE FARM, AROUND THE COUNTRY*

Ten minutes of news on farm activities here, there and everywhere. Sunday only.

FARM FAIR*

Overnight review of prices at principal farm markets, suitable for early morning farm casts. Six to seven minutes daily, Monday through Saturday.

FARM ROUNDUP*

Washington reports on news of interest to the farmer. Five minutes daily, Monday through Friday.

COMMENTARY and ANALYSIS



PERSPECTIVE

Background and detail which lend meaning to events at home and abroad. Five minutes daily, Monday through Friday. Moved in advance on Sundays.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE NEWS

Expanded treatment of an important facet of the day's news, with pertinent background material. Five minutes, clears nightly before 11 p.m. Other "reports in depth" are delivered around the clock as occasion requires.



MISCELLANEOUS

FEATURESCOPE*

A five-minute feature; sometimes amusing, sometimes instructive but always listenable. Monday through Friday. Moves on 24-hour advance basis.

ON THE ROAD*

News of the automobile industry. Five minutes, Saturday only.

TODAY IN HISTORY*

The day's highlight in history, plus famous anniversaries; also one, five and 10 years ago—and "A Thought for Today." Two to three minutes, daily. Moves on 48-hour advance basis.

JIGSAW NEWS*

The lighter side of the news; a collection of brief, brightly-told stories—for use singly or together. Five minutes daily, Monday through Friday.

RELIGION IN THE NEWS*

The week's happenings in the field of religion. Five minutes, Saturday only.

TURNTABLE TIPS*

Exclusive advance information from Billboard Magazine based upon the record charts and reviews which it will publish the following Monday. Prime material for every disc jockey and program director. Mid-week.

DISC JOCKEY SPECIAL*

Exclusive advance information from Cash Box Magazine on the record ratings which it will publish the following Monday. Moves Friday night.

YOUR MONEY *

Weekly economic review. Five minutes, Saturdays only.

AP VIGNETTES

Bright one-minute drop-ins which move around the clock as opportunity offers. A handy tool for the D.J.
