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Associated Press Guide To News Writing: The Resource For Professional Journalists



Synopsis

A former AP General News Editor offers novices and seasoned professionals practical advice and lively commentary on writing like a pro. He covers all the essentials of researching, generating, and writing: developing a hook, choosing the right words, constructing a good lead, and more.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I wish I had had this book when I started writing. Now that I copy edit, I've made our editor-in-chief buy it for all of the writers. In a completely readable way, it demonstrates how to write clean, effective copy. If you're vaguely dissatisfied with your writing, or if you have any desire to write for publication, then get this book. It will improve your writing at least 100 per cent.

"The Associated Press Guide to News Writing" makes more points in 136 pages than do most writing books four times the size. One would expect no less from a master news editor like Rene Chappon. The formula Cappon follows is to write a very brief explanation of a problem; an example of the problem; a sentence dissecting the example; a rewriting of the problem sentence; and a summary of the topic. The result is almost always memorable. Consider this typical section on The Elegant Variation (capitalized words below are italicized in the original):***Writers who believe that the repetition of plain words within shouting distance of each other is crude take off on synonym safaris.... It's all the more grotesque as there are few true synonyms and the author may introduce misfits:"The mayor's task force was asked to meet with the owners of the STRUCTURES, discuss

whether they wanted their BUILDINGS preserved, and recommend ways to adapt older EDIFICES to new use."STRUCTURES could be anything and EDIFICES is too grandiose; the story concerns commercial and apartment buildings. If the author didn't want to repeat BUILDINGS, a pronoun was the way out:"...to meet with the owners of the buildings, discuss whether they wanted THEM preserved, and recommend ways to adapt the older ones to new uses."The same craving for daintiness will convert elephants to PACHYDERMS, dogs to CANINES, cats to FELINES, tigers to STRIPED PREDATORS and cars to VEHICLES. Petroleum becomes BLACK GOLD, snow becomes WHITE POWDER (a justly forgotten poet once called it "God's dandruff"), a banana turns into THE ELONGATED YELLOW FRUIT.***The benefit of this style is that Cappon's admonitions pop up unasked whenever we commit one of the sins he identifies. I find that "elongated yellow fruit" frequently superimposes itself on my more tortured prose.

This book is a must reference for journalists. It is small enough to be read and re-read many times. Every journalist should be forced to read this book, and be quizzed on it, every six months. It would save the rest of us from having to read the awful writing in the mainstream press. Even a non-journalist would enjoy this book. It will give you some insight into how news stories are written. Also, if you catch a journalist breaking these simple "how to" rules, you can move on to another more well written story. Personally, I would rather read a well written story about a topic in which I have no interest, than a poorly written story about something for which I am passionate.

I am a 17 year old novice at journalism. I write local sports coverage for a professional paper. I don't know what I could have done without this book. The back few pages were especially helpful when I didn't know what the difference between infer or imply were, or alternately and alternatively. It's a great desk reference as well as a good how-to read.

As the owner of a 17 year old PR and marketing firm, I always look for ways to improve the knowledge of my associate staff writers. This book is an excellent guide to usage in writing "newsy" articles, short news bits, and even public relations releases (press releases). With the explosion of content on the Internet, this kind of guide has become invaluable to any content editor who needs to provide clear, concise editorial material for on-line readers of any industry or niche. Highly recommended! (Just ordered a second copy!).

I love the examples in this book. The author helped me trim down word usage and get to the point.

Before this book I would have written that the author really helped me learn how to get to the point by not using so many words.

This book is a good review for the experienced reporter and an excellent introduction to the craft and the caveats of news writing for the novice. The facts are up front and easy to reach, making this a worthwhile book to keep nearby as a reference.

I first read this book while in graduate school, now as an editor I keep one on hand for my staff to read.

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