

VI TOP 10 RULES OF JOURNALISM

The following ten essential rules of journalism or **10 practical tips** for good reporting are adapted from the list by Jeremy Porter from the blog *Journalistics*, previously mentioned as an excellent source of material on this topic.

- RULE 10 Name Your Sources**
When you name sources, you make your story persuasive and you show that you are responsible as a reporter. It is acceptable to use anonymous source as well, but you should not overdo it. This should be done only when discovering the identity of your source would put them at risk.
- RULE 9 Be Objective**
General rule is that journalism should not be about what you think or you believe is true. Of course, it is hard, if not impossible, to be absolutely impartial or objective. However, if you make efforts to be as objective as possible, your readers will appreciate it.
- RULE 8 Offer Balance**
There is always more than one side to a story. You should make efforts to get information from all sides. If one side does not want to talk, you should make that clear. This way, you show that you tried to get different opinions and viewpoints, and that it is not your fault.
- RULE 7 Get It Right**
It is extremely important to be precise and accurate. If you are not a professional journalist, you should not generally be pressured to publish fast. So, make sure to check your facts, and take as much time as you need to get the story right. This is a matter of ethics, and your integrity is at stake.
- RULE 6 Don't Plagiarize**
Do not steal other people's work. This is not only morally wrong and unprofessional, but it is also pretty much useless as well. If you use copy/paste method, a simple Google search will show where you took your content from. If you really like what someone else said or wrote, then quote them on it and continue your story in your own words. This is a matter of ethics, and your integrity is at stake.

- RULE 5** **Don't Believe Everything**
As mentioned, you should check your facts. Don't believe everything someone else tells you, or just take for granted some statistics that you find on the net. Double check or triple check the information, especially if the information seems a bit hard to believe. If it's too good to be true, it often isn't true.
- RULE 4** **Keep Good Records**
This rule applies more to investigative or professional journalists, but it also applies when you are conducting interviews or surveys. Take good notes, and keep them in order. Sometimes they are the only proof that you really reported what you were told. Also, in countries with good legal system and freedom of the press, these notes are considered to be evidence at court.
- RULE 3** **Don't Write in a Stream of Consciousness**
If you're writing news, use the Inverted Pyramid. Give the reader the basics in the first few sentences, then give additional information after that. Make an outline your story first, otherwise you can find yourself jumping from one part of the story to another.
- RULE 2** **Find Your Voice**
Not everything is about the facts, it is also extremely important to tell the story in a particular way. Thus, in time, as you write more and more, try to find your own voice, different from others. Try to be original, interesting and relevant.
- RULE 1** **Never Stop Learning and *HAVE FUN***
There is no perfect writing and perfect journalist. So, you should always try to improve as a journalist. There are a number of ways or places where you can acquire new skills. And, finally, look at this as an adventure, have fun and enjoy your research and writing. This way you will always aspire to something more and challenge yourself to be better and better.