Specialized Reporting
Covering Speeches

- Get background on speaker
- If Possible...interview speaker ahead of time
- Include why speech is being given
- Summarize what is said
- Use quotes to highlight interesting points
Covering News/Press Conferences

- Find out why conference is being held
- Come prepared with questions
  - Be prepared to be persistent
- Listen to what others are asking
- News conferences often cover a gamut of topics
  - Organize info in logical order
- Use Sidebars to cover interesting info that does not fit
Covering Meetings & Events

- Know what to do when you get there
- Tell what happened
- Pay attention when recording quotes
- Talk to as many sources as possible

**REMEMBER...**
- A regularly scheduled meeting is NOT news
- BUT...special meeting is
Crime & Accident stories

- Stories happen suddenly so research must be done quickly
  - Actively solicit info
  - Talk to people at scene

- Main info sources: *(Circumstances determine what is most important)*
  - police officials & crime reports
  - Victims
  - Witnesses

- You are entitled to view **arrest sheet** (a.k.a. arrest log or blotter)
  - NOT arrest report or interview police officers involved
Gather Basic info:
- What happened
- Location & time, victim info
- Extent of injuries
- Witness info (name, age & address)

On the scene...
- Question person in charge
- Find & Interview Witnesses
- Find relatives & friends of victim
- If possible, interview victims
- Talk to bystanders

Be sensitive to victims & their families
Court Stories

- Often follow-ups to earlier stories
  - Review what has already been written
  - Use tie-backs to past coverage

- Sources: lawyers, judges, other court functionaries

- Be careful of the words you choose...
  - only a prosecutor, not police officer, may file charges
  - a decision to publish a name should be done with extreme care
Think of the America judicial system like a game:
- Opposing players are represented by lawyers
- Lawyers are trying to do whatever to help their player win
- Judge serves as a referee making sure everything is fair & by the book
- Judge or jury decides who wins

Skeptics guides to the courts:
- Never trust a lawyer unless you know him or her very well.
- A judge’s word may be law, but it is not gospel.
- Truth and justice do not always prevail.
Business Stories

- Journalists and business executives are often adversaries & wary of each other
- Companies often want a story to make them look promising to investors
- Put a face behind the numbers
Sport Stories

- Details & stats are important
- Paint the scene
- Know the game/sport
- For a unique perspective look for the losers, the bench warmers, beyond the crowds
- Story behind the story: money, the real “why”, the real “who”
Obituaries

*Often a starting point for reporters*

- Some larger papers often prepare research files for “famous” people for such stories

- Some papers will have a formula format

- Mortuary forms will have basic details, but try to go further
  - Include details to make it personal
  - Highlight distinguishing characteristics or accomplishments

- Make sure you gather info on right person
  - Verify spelling & info
- Use care when reporting cause of death and other personal details
- Use accurate terminology to describe circumstances and terms
- Private individuals have more “right” to secrets than public figures
SOURCES

- Telling the Story by The Missouri Group