

Video news script template

This template can be used for initial practice in working towards the script. Please make a copy for your own uses. This script template is for a 1 minute news story using separate columns for audio and vision – both of which should be considered thoroughly.

T/C	VISION	AUDIO
In this column insert number of seconds for each grab of vision and audio	In this column, describe the images (pieces of video) that best represent the audio on the right hand side.	In this column, describe the natural sound on tape that will go here, or the audio of the reporter or interviewee. This voice recording goes with the video as described on the left hand side. (Note that music is not used in news, unless as part of the original recording, at the news event.)
20 secs	<p><i>Graphics</i></p> <p>Describe the still images that could be superimposed on screen, as graphics, when the newsreader introduces story.</p> <p>About 20 seconds.</p>	<p><i>News Reader reads to camera</i></p> <p>This is called the <i>lead</i> and read by the Newsreader.</p> <p>Two to three sentences revealing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the story angle - the point of the story. <p>About 20 seconds.</p>
10 secs	<p><i>Video</i></p> <p>This section begins the opening images that will be assembled later in editing.</p> <p>This section follows and adds to the words of the lead section.</p> <p>About 10 seconds.</p>	<p>Insert introductory audio here. This section begins the audio-based material that is assembled later in editing.</p> <p>This section follows, and elaborates, on the lead section as read by the newsreader.</p> <p>This could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a voice-over, - a short piece to camera or natural sound from tape, - like a transcribed interview, which goes with the video as described on the left hand side. <p>About 10 seconds.</p>
10 secs	<p>Describe the images in the next grab here.</p> <p>It should continue to build the story from the previous section.</p> <p>About 10 seconds.</p>	<p>Insert the next audio here.</p> <p>Again, this could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a transcribed interview, - a voice-over, - a short piece to camera or natural sound that goes with the video as described on the left hand side. <p>The section should continue to build the story from the previous section.</p> <p>About 10 seconds.</p>

15 secs	<p>This video should continue to build the picture story from the previous section.</p> <p>The story should be established at this point.</p> <p>This section elaborates by giving more visual information, which in turn sets up the next section.</p> <p>About 15 seconds.</p>	<p>This could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a voice-over, - a short piece to camera or sound like that from an interview, which goes with the video as described in the left hand column. <p>Continue to build the story from the previous section.</p> <p>The audio-based story should be established at this point and telling the story, elaborating and setting up the conclusion.</p> <p>About 15 seconds.</p>
10 secs	<p>Begin to set up the picture-based conclusion in this section.</p> <p>This could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - video accompanying a voice-over, - a short piece to camera or interviewee grab, <p>Transcribe the audio (in words) in the right column.</p> <p>About 10 seconds.</p>	<p>Begin to set up the audio conclusion in this section.</p> <p>This could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a voice-over, - a short piece to camera or sound that goes with the video (interviewee grab) as described on the left hand side. <p>About 10 seconds.</p>
10 secs	<p>The conclusion.</p> <p>This could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - strong vision that goes well with the words of a voice-over, - a short piece to camera or vision belonging to the audio, as described or transcribed on the right hand side. <p>About 10 seconds.</p>	<p>The conclusion.</p> <p>This could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a voice-over, - a short piece to camera or sound that goes with the video (a wide shot with sound or an interviewee) as described on the left hand side. <p>About 10 seconds.</p>

Script Evaluation Guide

This checklist AND the Recommended MEAA Code of Ethics (see below) provide considerations for evaluating scripts:

Newsworthiness and Angle

- What is the angle? Is it appropriate does it make the story worthy to run?
- Is it important or interesting?
- Is the story timely?
- Are the news-values relevant to the community of interest?
- What might be the extent of the impact or effect on the community?
- Is the story being told creatively?

Accuracy and Fairness

- Are facts and details accurate?
- Are sources, community or camera subjects dealt with fairly?
- Will participants be given all relevant information?

Ethical

- Have the relevant points of the MEAA Code of Ethics been considered?

Legal

- Ensure the script does not:
 - o defame anyone
 - o demonstrate perspectives of racism
 - o identify minors involved in or having parents involved in criminal cases
 - o cause contempt of court
 - o breach confidence or copyright
 - o require the news team to trespass while obtaining the story
 - o create a nuisance
 - o violate anti-terror legislation

Story Telling Practicalities

- Is the story tight and visually stimulating?
- Is the story feasible and technically possible – resources, time, locality?
- Is the script imaginative and original?
- Has it been edited thoroughly?
- Does it avoid cliché? (Sometimes the use of cliché is the way to go)
- Does it avoid distasteful, sexist or racist material?
- Is the script / story of broadcast standard?

Aesthetics

- Has consideration been given to
 - o location ideas for filming
 - o the intended use of elements such as graphics or audio inputs
 - o the piece to camera and voice-over

Lead, Structure, Flow and Coda

- Does the Lead
 - o describe the crisis point or incident?

Code of Ethics

As recommended to the Australian Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA) in 1997.

Journalists describe society to itself. They seek truth. They convey information, ideas and opinions, a privileged role. They search, disclose, record, question, entertain, suggest and remember. They inform citizens and animate democracy. They give a practical form to freedom of expression. Many journalists work in private enterprise, but all have these public responsibilities. They scrutinise power, but also exercise it, and should be accountable.

Accountability engenders trust. Without trust, journalists do not fulfill their public responsibilities.

MEAA members engaged in journalism commit themselves to:

- honesty
- fairness
- independence
- respect for the rights of others

In consultation with colleagues, they will apply the following standards:

1. Report and interpret honestly, striving for accuracy, fairness and disclosure of all essential facts. Do not suppress relevant available facts, nor give distorting emphasis.
2. Make efforts to give the subject of any damaging report an opportunity to comment, preferably in that same report.
3. Urge the fair correction of errors.
4. Use fair and honest means to obtain material. Avoid misrepresentation and use of concealed equipment or surveillance devices.
5. Pictures and sound should be true and accurate. Any manipulation likely to mislead should be disclosed.
6. Plagiarism is stealing. Always attribute fairly.
7. Only quote directly what is actually said or written. Otherwise paraphrase. Meaning and context should be accurately reflected.
8. Disclose any direct or indirect payment made for interviews, pictures or information.
9. Do not allow personal beliefs or commitments to undermine accuracy, fairness and independence. Where relevant, disclose.
10. Do not allow any payment, gift or other advantage to undermine accuracy, fairness and independence. Where relevant, disclose.
11. Do not improperly use a journalistic position for personal gain.
12. Guard against advertising or commercial considerations improperly influencing journalism. Where it occurs, disclose.
13. Accept the right to privacy of every person. Public figures' privacy may be reduced by their public role. Relatives and friends of those in the public eye retain their own right to privacy.
14. At times of grief or trauma, always act with sensitivity and discretion. Never harass. Never exploit a person's vulnerability or ignorance of media practice. Interview only with informed consent.
15. Do not place unnecessary emphasis on personal characteristics including race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, sexual orientation, family relationships, religious belief or physical or mental disability.
16. Never knowingly endanger the life or safety of a person without informed consent.
17. Exercise particular care for the welfare of children in reports involving them.
18. Respect every person's right to a fair trial.
19. Aim to attribute as precisely as possible all information to its source. When a source seeks anonymity, do not agree without first considering the source's motive and any alternative attributable sources. Keep confidences given in good faith.
20. Educate yourself about ethics and help to enforce this code.

Guidance clause

Basic values often need interpretation and sometimes can come into conflict. Ethics requires conscientious decision-making in context. Only substantial considerations of public interest, or substantial harm to people, allows any standard to be overridden.

