



11 Specialized Types of Stories

Notes

1. *Globe and Mail* newsletter, October 24, 2017:

<https://beta.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/evening-update-newsletter-federal-deficit-shrinks-on-strong-economic-growth-liberals-say-in-fall-update-quebec-softens-some-provisions-of-face-covering-law-bill-62/article36705284/?ref=http://www.theglobeandmail.com&>

2. Browne, Malachy, Drew Jordan, Nicole Fineman, and Chris Cirillo. 2017. “10 Minutes. 12 Gunfire Bursts. 30 Videos. Mapping the Las Vegas Massacre.” *New York Times*, October 21. Accessed June 20, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/video/us/100000005473328/las-vegas-shooting-timeline-12-bursts.html>

Exercise 1: Specialized Types of Stories

Brights

Use the following information to write brights, taking care not to reproduce any errors (e.g., spelling, style) that might appear in the information. Write some brights with a summary lead and others with a surprise ending.

Squirrels

University officials are blaming squirrels for a rash of problems students, teachers, and staff members have been experiencing with their cars. One person whose car has been damaged by squirrels is Oliver Brooks, an associate professor of English. One of the headlights in his van went out a few weeks ago. He replaced it, but it still didn't work. When he opened the hood, however, he was surprised to find a squirrel's nest. “There was a big squirrels' nest in the corner where the light wires were,” he said. Brookes spent \$184 to get the wiring replaced. Linda Kasparov, university

dietitian, had a similar experience. She was driving home one night when the headlights, speedometer, and oil-pressure gauge on her new sedan all quit working. She pulled into a service station and asked the attendant what was wrong. She said, "The attendant put up the hood and then jumped back exclaiming, 'My God, what have you got in there!'" She said there was a nest made of sticks, string, and plastic bags. One of the bags started moving, and when the attendant pulled it out, he discovered three baby squirrels. The squirrels had chewed through every wire in the engine compartment except two. The repair bill for Kasparov was \$425. Laura Ruffenboch, a wildlife professor at the university, said the insulation on many electrical wires is made from a soybean derivative, and the squirrels may find that attractive. She also said it was unusual for squirrels to make nests in cars that are used regularly.

Underage Driver

Charles Todd Snyder was charged with drunk driving following a traffic accident in your city one week ago. He was also charged with driving without a driver's licence in his possession. He was scheduled to appear in court at 9 a.m. this morning. He failed to appear in court. As a consequence, Judge Edward Kocembra ordered police to go to Snyders home and to haul Snyder into court. Police went to the address Snyder had given officers at the time of the accident. The police returned to the court at approximately 10:15 a.m. and appeared before Judge Kosembra with Snyder. Snyder was in his mother's arms. He is a 13-month-old child, and his mother insisted that he drinks only milk and that the only vehicle he ever drives is a stroller. So the judge apologized for the inconvenience and told the officers to give Snyder and his mother a ride back to their home. Snyder, apparently frightened by the unfamiliar surroundings and people, cried. Police said that whoever was stopped had falsely given the arresting officers Snyders name and address when he signed the drunken driving ticket and the ticket for driving without a driver's licence in his possession. They told the judge that they have no idea who that person might be.

Exercise 2: Specialized Types of Stories

Followup Stories

Write a story summarizing the initial set of facts and then just the lead for a followup story about the later developments. Or your instructor might ask you to write a complete news story about each day's developments. Be sure to correct any errors of grammar, spelling, and style in the notes.

Yesterday

Two boys were playing in Nichols Lake in Lakeside Park in your town. They were wading along the shore of the lake at about 12 noon at a point where the bottom drops off steeply. The two boys were Randy Stockdale, age 9, son of George and Lillian Stockdale, and Edward McGorwan, age 10, son of Karen McGorwan. Edward waded too far from shore, lost his footing, and was unable to get back to shore. He and Randy started to yell for help. A man whose name has not been released by police heard their screams and ran to the lake to help. James Kirkman, a cab driver who was taking his lunch break in the park, heard the screams, too. He radioed his dispatcher who called 911. Kirkman said later that the unidentified man waded out as far as he could and tried to reach out to Edward, but the boy had drifted too far from shore. "When the boy went under and didn't come back up for air, this guy dove under to find him. But he didn't come back up, either," Kirkman said. Police Officers Kevin Barlow and Eddie Linn arrived on the scene at 12:18. Barlow immediately

stripped to his shorts and started diving into the lake to find the victims. After several dives, he came back up with Edward McGorwan, who was unconscious. Linn tried to resuscitate the boy, but he was still unconscious when he was taken by ambulance to the Regional Medical Centre. Barlow continued to search for the unidentified man for another 20 minutes until Dorothy Heslin, a scuba diver who assists the police on a volunteer basis, arrived. She pulled him from the water about 1:15 p.m. Wayne Svendson, a paramedic, tried to resuscitate the man. Svendson said the water was unusually cold and hypothermia had set in, which was indicated by the fact the man's skin had started to turn blue. The man was taken to the Regional Medical Centre. Dr. Catrina Lowrie, a physician at the Medical Centre, said the man was pronounced dead when he arrived. She also said that Edward McGorwan was in critical condition. Officer Barlow also was treated at Regional Medical Centre for minor shock caused by the long period of time he spent in the water looking for the victims. He was released that afternoon.

Today

This morning, the police department released the name of the man who died trying to save Edward McGorwan from Nichols Lake. His name is William McDowell and he is an unemployed housepainter. He was 30 years old. Police Chief Barry Kopperud said, "McDowell risked his life without hesitation to try to save someone in trouble. He was a real hero." Also this morning, Dr. Lowrie at the Regional Medical Centre announced that Edward McGorwan had died. "He spent the night on a respirator, but his condition did not improve. This morning, at his mother's request, we took Edward off the respirator. He died less than half an hour later." McDowell's sister lives in your town. Her name is Janice Carson. She said her brother had dropped out of Colonial High School one year before graduating and joined the navy. He spent six years in the navy and after he left he held a succession of jobs, including electronics technician, cook, construction worker, and painter. She said he always enjoyed his jobs but was too restless to stay at one for more than a couple of years. "I guess some people would call him a drifter, but to me he was a free spirit. He loved people but he didn't want to be tied down with a house and a mortgage and all of that. There were only two things he never learned how to do. He couldn't hold a job for more than two years and he could never say no to anyone who needed help," she said with tears in her eyes.

Exercise 3: Specialized Types of Stories

Roundups – Multiple Sources

Write a single news story that summarizes the following information. Organize the information in a clear, logical, cohesive manner. As you write the story, correct the spelling, style, grammatical, and vocabulary errors. Also be thorough; report every issue in depth. Notice that the sources' comments appear in quotation marks, so you can quote them directly.

Background

The Sunnyview Retirement Home is an 8-storey brick building located on Hillcrest Street in your community. The building is a former hotel. Ten years ago it was renovated and turned into apartments for retirees. It is privately operated, for profit, with 110 apartments, including 30 for a single resident and 80 for two residents, often couples, sharing an apartment. About 175 people were living there when a fire broke out at approximately 7:10 a.m. this morning. As many as 150

firefighters from throughout your region, including nearby communities, were called in for assistance in battling the blaze and assisting in rescuing all the victims from their peril.

Fire Chief Tony Sullivan

“It’s the worst damn fire I’ve ever seen. We’ve got seven dead we know of and maybe 20 more that’ve been taken to hospitals with various injuries, some pretty serious. We just can’t tell for sure. There could be lots more in the building, people who couldn’t get out. I can’t send my men in yet to look for them, not at this point, because it’s not safe. We’ve got the fire out, but it was a fierce one, and some floors and walls were weakened and are liable to collapse at any time. We may have to pull them down or they could fall on my men. It may be another day before we’re able to make a thorough search and recover all the bodies.”

Rescue Worker John Charlton

“People I’ve talked to say the fire started on the first or second floor. The fire itself wasn’t so bad, except on the first couple of floors. Everything on those floors is gone. The fire didn’t spread to the upper floors, but most of the deaths occurred up there. It was the smoke that did it. People said they couldn’t breathe, and then a lot of them were old and in bad shape to begin with. We’ve taken the survivors that weren’t hurt none to a church just across the street, and they’re mostly resting there now. I don’t know where they’ll go tonight, where they’ll sleep. The Red Cross is setting up an information centre for relatives at the church. We’ve, uh, got all sorts of relatives that’ve been in and out all morning, looking for their people and apparently bringing them home with them, so we don’t know who’s missing or dead or home safe with their families.”

Retirement Home Director Mildred Anchall

“We don’t know how the fire started, just that it started somewhere on the second floor, and our alarms sounded at 7. It happened so fast, it spread so fast, that all we could do was try and get everyone out. No one had time to stop and get a list of all our residents, and now they’ve been taken a half-dozen different places. We don’t have any way of knowing who’s safe and who’s missing. Besides our residents, I’ve got my staff to worry about, and some visitors who were in the building. It’s a tragedy, a real tragedy, something like this. You hear about things like this happening but never think it could happen at your home.”

Building Inspector Ralph Schweitzer

“We inspected the building just a couple weeks ago, and it satisfies all our codes. When it was remodelled 10 years ago we didn’t require sprinklers, and they would have saved everyone, would have put the fire out in a minute or two, so they would have really prevented a tragedy like this. Anyone building a nursing home today is required to put in sprinklers, and this is what we have in mind to prevent, a real serious tragedy like this one.”

Survivor Steven Minh

“I’m 82, and I’ve been living here since it opened 10 years ago. Nothing like this ever happened here before. It’s like I was back in World War II or something. I lived on the eighth floor, and people up there were screaming for help. The smoke was real bad, and some of us don’t move so quick anymore. The firemen got up there real fast and led us down the stairs. There were some real heroes up there. I saw firemen carrying a half-dozen people down 6 or 8 flights of stairs when they could

hardly breath themselves, and a lot of us would be dead without them. We couldn't have lasted much longer with the smoke and all. I'd just like to know what started the fire because it spread so fast. One minute everything was OK, then we were all choking on the smoke."

Survivor Betsy Aaron

"It was terrible in there. We began hearing fire alarms, but they weren't loud enough. By the time we realized what it was and went out into the hall it was full of smoke. I had a third-floor apartment, so I was able to get right out. I just took an elevator downstairs. Other people said they weren't working, but that must have been later, after I was out, that the elevators stopped working. When I got out on the street and looked up I saw people I knew leaning out their windows and shouting, 'Help me! Help me!' I couldn't do anything for them, not anything at all."

Fire Chief Marshal R.J. Hilton

"We haven't pinpointed the cause of the fire yet. It's too early, but my personal feelings are, strictly on a preliminary basis, it seems to have been an accidental fire that started in one of the apartments. It'll be at least a day or two before we have anything official on that."

Exercise 4: Specialized Types of Stories

Sidebars

Use the following information to write two separate stories: first a news story reporting the fire, then a sidebar based on the interviews with Mrs. Noffsinger.

Main Story

The Grande Hotel is located downtown at the corner of Manitoba and Barber Avenues. It is a seven-storey structure with a total of 114 rooms. It was constructed and opened for business in the year 1924. In recent years the hotel has been in an obvious state of decline, unable to compete with new facilities in the city and with the convenience of motels located along highways which now bypass the city. Many of the hotel rooms have been rented on long-term leases, often to elderly persons who like its downtown location, which is more convenient for them, since many facilities they use are in walking distance and buses are easily available for other trips they want to make. Three persons died in a fire at the hotel last night. The cause of the fire is undetermined. It started in a third-floor room. It spread and also destroyed the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh floors before it was brought under control at 4:30 a.m. today. At about 11 p.m. a guest called the lobby to report the odour of smoke. A hotel employee used a passkey to enter the third-floor room where the fire originated and found it totally engulfed in flames. The room is believed to have been vacant at the time. The employee sounded a fire alarm in the hotel and called firefighters. It was the first five-alarm blaze in the city in more than 10 years. Every piece of fire equipment in the city was rushed to the scene, and off-duty firefighters were called in to assist. Fortunately, said Fire Chief Tony Sullivan, no other fires were reported in the city at the same time or he would have had to send a truck and men from the scene of the hotel blaze. Hotel records indicate that 62 persons were registered in the hotel at the time the blaze initiated; 49 had long-term leases and 13 were transients. All the transients were located on the second floor and escaped safely. The dead, all of whom had long-term leases, have been identified as Mildred Haserot, age 58; Willie Hattaway, age 67; and Pearl

Petchsky, age 47. The bodies of all three victims were found on the fourth floor, where they lived. Fire Chief Tony Sullivan said this morning the hotel is a total loss and that some walls are in danger of collapse. He said: "The fire was already out of hand when our first units reached the scene. I was called from home, and by then the flames were breaking out through the third- and fourth-floor windows. We were really lucky there weren't more people killed, but the hotel people knocked on the door of every room that was occupied to get everybody out. Most guests used a back stairway, and we were lucky the elevators kept working for a while even after my men got into the building, otherwise the loss would have been worse. I'm also told that the top two floors were empty, and that helped keep down the loss of lives."

The Red Cross is caring for survivors, finding them new rooms and providing clothes and emergency allocations of cash, a total of \$250 per person. Five people were injured, including one fireman who suffered from smoke inhalation. The others suffered from burns, some serious, and also from smoke inhalation. Three are being treated at Mercy Hospital. Two have been released, including the fireman. Their names and conditions are unknown at this time.

Sidebar

Nora Noffsinger, 74, has been a resident of the Grande Hotel for the past nine years. She paid \$880 a month rent for one room on the fifth floor. A retired bookkeeper, she said afterward: "It was dreadfully expensive, but it was a charming old building and I had lots of good friends living there. I was asleep last night when I heard someone pounding on my door. I don't know who it was, but he told me to get out fast, and I did. All I had on were my pyjamas and a robe, but I could see the smoke, even up there on the fifth floor, and I was scared; I knew right away that it was bad. Everyone else was scared too, but we all knew what to do. We'd talked lots about what we'd do if there was ever a fire because you hear so often about fires in old hotels, and we wanted to be prepared. We all kept flashlights in our rooms and planned to go down the back stairway unless the fire was there, and it wasn't. The lights were still on, so we didn't even need our flashlights. Now the Red Cross put me in a motel room a few blocks away, and I guess I should be happy I'm safe, but I lost everything—my clothes, a little money I'd kept hidden in a secret place, all my photographs. My husband's dead, you know, and I lost all my pictures of him. I don't know what I'll do now; I don't have any children. I'm all by myself, except for my friends, and they all lived at the hotel with me."