

10827 version 2

Level 3

4 Credits

### Write feature stories

#### General

NZJTO is embarking on revision of all of its standards and has been involved in dialogue and consultation with the National Moderator in forming these clarifications.

#### Terminology

For definitions of most terminology, refer to the [Media Studies / Journalism Glossary of Standard Terminology](#), Resources for Media Studies:

<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/resources/mediastudies/index.html>.

#### Writing for Journalism

Evidence for Level 3 journalism standards requiring writing or editing must reflect language skills appropriate to Level 8 of the curriculum.

#### Sufficiency

The work required should be of similar quality as for Level 3 Media Studies achievement standards.

Students must meet all the requirements of the standard, including all PCs and all items in range statements, unless these are expressed in terms that offer some choice or flexibility (any of; any three of; may include but are not limited to, etc).

#### Features

For additional information about the nature of features, please see the NZJTO document, *Feature Writing for Print.pdf*, and the teacher-provided examples, *Sample Feature Articles.pdf*.

Further explanation about **profiles** is available in NZJTO texts or on a variety of web sites, such as (for example): [http://www.public.coe.edu/wac/journalism\\_workshop\\_profiles.htm](http://www.public.coe.edu/wac/journalism_workshop_profiles.htm)

#### Feature writing for assessment of this unit standard

Students must provide:

- **ONE issue-based feature** (e.g. litter, global warming, teenage drinking etc)
- **ONE individual profile feature** (*not* of a team or group), e.g. an outstanding sportsperson, new staff member, Head Girl etc
- **Each** feature should be **at least 800 words**.

#### Special Note 1

*Issues* are important topics for debate or discussion. They are not simply ongoing news stories. “The term stems from a build up of news stories into an important matter. For example, global warming, AIDS, famine in Africa.” (Mike Fletcher, NZJTO).

However, there is no need for issues to be of such international weight, or (necessarily) too serious in tone. Local/student-oriented issues can range from (for example) lighter issues such as the impact of Bebo, Facebook and other social networking sites to bullying, vandalism/tagging, underage drinking/drink driving etc.

#### Texts

A variety of texts to support journalism practice, including feature writing, at all levels is available directly from NZJTO, at <http://www.journalismtraining.co.nz>

## **Newsworthiness**

Newsworthiness can be summed up as, *'Who cares and why?'* In determining newsworthiness, a journalist or editor considers these factors:

- Timeliness – how 'new' it is. Some news dates fast
- Proximity – how close it is to the readers/viewers/listeners of the news source
- Exceptional quality – i.e. how unusual it is, its abnormality/'weirdness'
- Number of people affected
- Prominence – is someone/something famous involved?
- Conflict – physical, emotional or intellectual: everything from text bullying and name calling to physical attack or disagreement between official bodies, e.g. BOT vs MoE
- Controversy – how much debate or disagreement there is over the *figure* (e.g. Winston Peters), *event* (e.g. Zimbabwe elections or *ongoing issue* (e.g. global warming)
- Consequence/possible future effect – what has happened or might happen as a result?
- Human interest/pathos – Soft news: fluffy duck, 'warm fuzzy' stories
- Shock value/titillation – extreme news: frightening (terrorist attacks) or sexual (tour romps).

## **Interviews**

PC1.3 assumes that interviews will be completed for both features. See below for further details.

## **Readability**

A feature's readability refers to its *ease of comprehension* and *entertainment / enjoyment* factor. No matter how worthy a feature's topic may be, it must entertain and engage the audience. This is determined by both *content* and *language/style*.

## **Context**

Context is the *circumstances* – background, setting and other relevant information – that provide a clear understanding of the events and other factors leading up to and explaining the coverage.

## **Element 1**

Students must *gather material* (complete research) that will enable the writing of features that include appropriate context and meet editorial requirements (TA, angle, length, style etc).

The focus should be on primary sources (interviews, vox pops, surveys, observations etc) rather than secondary sources. Secondary sources may be used for additional support.

### **PC1.1**

Subjects for BOTH articles must be chosen because they are newsworthy (see above). Articles must be relevant to the Target Audience (TA) and newsworthy for specific reasons(s).

### **PC 1.2**

This standard and in particular this performance criterion presume specific editorial guidelines/requirements. These must be provided to students in specific detail in the brief and should include style conventions, angles, TA, deadlines, copy presentation parameters, length etc. This may be established by an in-house stylebook or publication profile / vision statement etc.

A checklist could be used to verify the learner's gathered material in terms of meeting feature (is there enough information to develop the story fully?) and editorial requirements (as in the brief). This could be done before students continue with writing the story, as a progress checkpoint.

### **PC1.3**

**At least ONE interview** should be undertaken **for each feature**. In fact, *more than one should be expected* in order to get a variety of viewpoints and achieve balance and depth, etc.

## Element 2

### PC2.1

Intros must have **impact**: dull intros of ‘On Monday 25 March...’ style will not suffice. Intros need an *angle / hook* and must *suit the story type* (serious issue or entertaining profile) *and structure* (Wall Street Journal, etc).

### PC2.2

Background *context* is required (See **Additional > Context** above). Context must be *relevant* and *assist audience understanding* of the stories.

### PC2.3

*Structure* must be *clear and logical* and information presented in a *comprehensible order*.

*Length* should be appropriate to both the requirements of the brief AND the subject of the feature.

Unjustifiable padding is not appropriate but nor is leaving the audience needing more information to understand the topic, or with unanswered questions that the feature ‘promised’ to satisfy.

### PC2.4

*Clarity of meaning* should include: mostly active voice, simple and clear vocabulary, generally simple syntax, and effective paragraphing (flexibility and variety of length for effect is appropriate).

*Specialist jargon* should be explained to the audience the first time it is introduced.

Refer to **Additional>Readability** above for explanation of *Readability*.

*Colour* (emotive language, personal tone, amusing anecdotes etc) is appropriate depending on the focus of the article (e.g. profile versus issue).

### PC2.5

Stories must be fair and accurate.

*Fairness* can be achieved by providing balanced coverage of the issue/person by the inclusion of a range of viewpoints/spokespeople.

*Accuracy* can be assured by evidence of checking of facts (more than one source is one option).

### PC2.6

Content can include *both opinions and facts*. Readers must be able to easily separate the two, and must not be misled to think that some *opinions* are facts. Opinions should be clearly attributed, e.g. *Ms Redmonds thinks that ...*

### PC2.7

Sources of data or statistics should be identified within the feature by conventions such as brief publication title/author, web site etc in brackets after the information, direct attribution within the copy, e.g. *2003 Census Statistics for ...*, or other conventions.

Attributions (i.e. *X said*) must accompany all quotes.

## Element 3

### PC3.1

Formality of language can be flexible to suit the publication but a stylebook or example of the publication’s style conventions should be available and adhered to, and grammar rules observed.

Capitals and punctuation should be consistent (one or two lapses at most).

Journalism conventions should be followed,( e.g. Numbers 1-10 in words, larger numbers in numerals; abbreviations should in general be avoided; honorifics (titles such as Mrs Mr, Dr, Major etc) should be correct e.g. no full stops after Mr, Mrs etc).

*Colour* (PC2.4 – emotive language, personal tone etc) is appropriate depending on the focus of the article (e.g. profile versus issue).

### **PC 3.2**

A specific deadline must be set and met.

Presentation of copy ready for publication should follow at least some of the conventions of journalism copy (see below) and/ or of the publication (e.g. Typed, 12 point Times, begin with byline, save as text into network folder).

Examples of common journalism conventions for copy are:

- Times / Times New Roman or Arial
- Double line spaced
- 4 cm left margin
- Writer's name left justified above story
- Story "slug" (working title / brief subject; could be a draft headline)
- Begin with byline
- Then story copy
- A word count in parentheses
- Followed by 'ENDS'.

**NB:** Publication stylebooks or other in-house guidelines may vary but at least some common journalistic conventions should be evident.

### **PC3.3**

Draft and revised final versions of each feature should be required of students to demonstrate revision and to establish authenticity.

**National Moderator  
Media Studies  
29 May 2009**

## **Feature Writing for Print**

Feature writing adds colour, depth and perspective to newspapers and magazines.

Feature writing allows an issue to be examined in greater detail, putting flesh on what otherwise may be bare bones.

Feature writing complements the news, creating a balanced package for readers.

Often features are regarded as a device for long-winded expression and less-than-sharp focus.

Effective feature writing crafts compelling articles and produce them in an appropriate number of words.

The basic rules for feature writing are the same as news. The articles must:

- be newsworthy
- capture the reader
- flow
- reflect the importance of accuracy, balance, fairness, clarity of expression, standard grammar and spelling
- be of appropriate length
- be written to deadline.

### **Identifying feature stories**

Examine the opportunities arising from news and news backgrounders, consider the angles and whether the bare facts can be crafted into a compelling, longer read.

Analyse the types of features, comparing differences in structure and treatment of content, and set the focus for the story.

Identify and analyse aspects for feature treatment of news.

Examine for use within a feature the scope of personal experience or observation, where the writer as first person enters the story.

Consider a range of methods of revealing personalities in a profile.

Describe the target market/ audience (TA) and identify the purpose of feature.

Plan your research, including questions to ask and people to interview.

Ensure interviews produce lively quotes, anecdotes and experiences.

Use observation to generate descriptive detail, including scene setting; people - appearance, emotions, personal interests, lifestyle, environment.

Select material that illustrates the focus and style, and structure it to form a framework for the story.

Draw up a strategy and/or schematic map (production schedule/plan) to set the direction from beginning to end of story.

## **Writing feature stories**

Produce stories that say something, that add new facts and detail; stories that demand to be read.

The minimum length is 800 words. No maximum word limit is set. Length will vary according to the medium.

Craft an introduction that captures the readers' interest.

Include a key paragraph early in the story that identifies the main theme.

Unfold the body of the story in a logical sequence, using linking devices that enable the reader to move easily to the next point of discussion.

The main points will be stated and supported by evidence including quotes, statistics, documented facts, anecdotes and observations.

Writing technique will fit the purpose and audience expectations. These techniques include language use, literary devices, voice, tone, verb tense, scarcity of modifiers, succinctness and clarity.

The opinion of the writer may be used where interpretation and analysis is required.

Ensure the story is balanced and meets legal and ethical requirements.

Use an effective ending. Techniques include circling back, summary, predictions, warnings, unanswered questions, future action.

Use breakout material to add additional entry points and control main story length.

# Local filmmaker goes freelance

By Dave Parfitt

Wellington may have Peter Jackson, but Nelson has filmmakers of its own. Guye Henderson is a professional television documentary maker based in Redwood Valley. He has worked as an editor and director for 30 years on documentaries in New Zealand, Australia and England and now works freelance making his own films.

However, he is a relatively unknown name to the New Zealand film industry because he does not make films for New Zealand audiences.



This Guye shows that he knows what to do with a camera.

"I'm not known in this country at all," he explained. "I'm not looking at making films for the New Zealand market because it's a small market. There are some really good documentary makers out there and there's no point in me beating my head, trying to make a go of it, because it's all established and they're having a tough time anyway."

He started off driving vans at Pacific Films for about a year and a half until the job for an assistant editor at the NZBC opened up and he went for an interview. He got the job and gained a lot of experience over the following four years there.

Then he moved to Australia where he spent 15 years working on current affairs programmes in Sydney and Melbourne. It was in Sydney that he worked on 60 Minutes in its first six years.

After that he worked freelance for a while. "I started seeing some BBC stuff and I decided that was the type of work I wanted to do. So in the end I went over to England and lived in London for 12 years."

In London he worked on numerous films as an editor and director. "I did pretty well I suppose. I mean you don't live in London for 12 years if you're not good at what you do."

For Guye, one of the high points was being nominated for a Bafta for his editing work. "We found out later on that we missed out on that by one vote. The thing I am most proud of about that is that I was the first New Zealander or Australian to be nominated for an editing Bafta."

"Eventually we had a little girl and we wanted her to grow up in New Zealand, not London, so that she would be a Kiwi. So we came back here about five years ago."

On his return he was offered editing jobs in Auckland and Christchurch but declined both of them. "The whole point was to see more of each other, not less."

He also tried to get a job teaching locally. "Nayland was one of the colleges I looked at. I wanted to set up a film and television unit but the school didn't have the funds so that didn't

work out."

He continued searching for jobs until he found that he could make more money making documentaries in New Zealand by himself and selling them overseas. "You sell a documentary here for \$100,000 – which is pretty cheap. You can also sell that same documentary in England for £100,000. Well, the exchange rate now is something like \$NZ2.50 to the pound."

With so much experience working as an editor he is at an advantage when it comes to filming. He has a better understanding of how certain shots work or don't work, giving him

valuable skills as a cameraman.

Guye has also found that he can save money by working alone. "The advantage of being a one man band is that your labour costs are really low. If I had to hire a camera crew it would cost me \$1500 to have a cameraman and a sound recordist. Whereas if I'm doing it myself the costs are drastically reduced."

By selling his films overseas Guye avoids the aspects of New Zealand television that constrict what he can do as a director. "It's not that I wouldn't like New Zealand TV to buy my programmes, but I'm not aiming at it because there are so many commercial breaks and I just think that's obscene from a creative point of view. It just breaks the audience's concentration."

He also really enjoys the freedom to create the sort of films he wants. "Now I can make what I want to make, which is a very luxurious situation to be in."

He is now working on two projects, one of which involved travelling to China. "The China film I'm doing (I was in China last year for four weeks), is a 15-20 minute promo which I'll send off to National Geographic and the BBC to raise interest in the project. If they do get interested, I'll then try to get a private investor interested."

The other film he has been working on involves the New Zealand fishing industry. "I've been having great fun with this fishing film,

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It's like surfing; the optimum point is being at the breaking point of the wave. That's where you want to be, particularly if you're in a creative career.

Guye Henderson  
Filmmaker

running around seeing places in New Zealand I've never seen before and met some amazing people."

When it comes to young people trying to work in film or media in Nelson, Guye has a pretty blunt view. "The problem for Nelson probably is, well what can you do here? It's just such a small place," he said. "Nelson's a great place to bring up kids or die."

That view is the same for most of the rest of the country in terms of new ideas and audience size. "The trouble with New Zealand is, it's a very small country. Then you go to Australia and it's bigger so the vision is bigger; then you go to somewhere like London and it's like the centre of the universe. There are films about everything, from space projects to the police force, political and historical."

That's not to say that Guye feels New Zealand has nothing to offer to the world. "We certainly punch above our weight. That's something to be proud of."

For Guye success is not the recognition for his work. For him success is working in an ever changing industry with new and amazing technology and concepts coming through all the time. "It's like surfing; the optimum point is being at the breaking point of the wave. That's where you want to be, particularly if you're in a creative career."



# Local businesses buy into recycling practices

By Miriam Sherratt

Our modern lifestyle encourages people to shop excessively. The result of this is lots of waste which in the past was thrown straight into landfills. But people have realised the effect of this on the environment. Recycling is a solution to the problem. If everyone took part, the amount of waste filling the landfill could be greatly reduced.

In Nelson, developments are constantly being made to improve our waste management. In a vox pop on the main street of Nelson, of the eight people asked, all recycled. This casts some hope on an issue which needs to be a focus for the city. Businesses are becoming aware and are taking the time and energy to make the change. In Nelson many independent businesses are working towards sustainability.

Equilibrium, a chiropractor and health and well-being practice on Church Street, set out last year to be as green as possible. They recycle as much as they can, from using glasses made from old wine bottles to having their own composting system. "Where we can, we try to make it as eco friendly and we try to use all local businesses to

make it as local as possible for all the products that we use," chiropractic assistant Jacki Hull explained. Their efforts were recognised nationally and they were nominated for a green ribbon award.

Another business which is working hard to become sustainable is the Cawthron Institute which specialises in coastal and fresh water science. They focus on reusing. "If someone has something which they think could be reused, it's sort of publicised or advertised just by email around the site here and people can help themselves to it," systems modeler Eric Goodwin said. These are things like half-used batteries (that can't be taken off site because of the risk of them going flat) and furniture. They have a system where the staff have to take their own rubbish to a large recycling bin and they have a compost bin on site.

Sealord is trying to deal with their waste environmentally. They recycle the plastic crates they use by collecting them and sending them down to Christchurch to be recycled every six months. These are then recycled to become plastic piping or other plastic products.

For most businesses that don't recycle it's because it is too costly and time consuming. Presently the Nelson City Council is focusing on residential waste and it would be too expensive - they would need more resources to pick up from businesses. "All of this is an on-going process: there's no beginning and there's no end," according to Karen Lee, the sustainability coordinator at Nelson City Council.

In a survey of 60 Nelson businesses, including accountants, motels, lawyers and restaurants, about their recycling practices, only 25 really made the effort to recycle all they could. Eighteen said they only recycled cardboard and paper, but would do more if the council gave more support.

Although these numbers are low, it was inspiring to learn individual businesses' efforts. For instance The Honest Lawyer has a composting system which they use for their gardens and recycle cardboard as protectors for around the trunks of trees. Around six months ago Penguins began collecting their spoons for reuse and since then have collected two boxes full.

Accommodation businesses often find it difficult to recycle as it is partly the customer's responsibility. But Shellbourne Villa, a bed and breakfast on Shellbourne Street, made the decision to become sustainable when they became part of Nelson's sustainable tourism industry. They not only recycle and compost, but try to reduce waste



Forklift shifts bales of materials at the Nelson Recycling Station.

as much as they can. They buy bulk cereal and make their own, which they serve in visually attractive glass jars instead of buying commercial mini cereals. Their complimentary toiletries consist of soap wrapped in a piece of paper with their logo and refillable conditioner and shampoo bottles. They also use microfibre cloths to reduce the amount of chemicals used. They have signs up telling guests to leave their recyclables out of rubbish bins and sort through bins as well.

Since the change owner Eric Goodwin has noticed a big drop in their waste. "We've gone from the wheelie bin never being big enough to it often going out half empty even in the busy time of year," he said

The council is getting on board too. Ms Lee recently introduced a programme called 'walk the talk'. She took away every staff member's rubbish bin and replaced it with a tiny green cube and a paper recycling box. Twelve recycling stations were placed in the building, which staff must walk to to deposit their recyclables. Green cubes are for compostables which go to the Bokashi system, an enzyme invented in Japan that breaks down compostable waste into liquid form.

The police are also showing commitment and recycle all they can, with the Bokashi system at

work in the staff room. They also reduce by keeping documents electronic instead of printing.

So where does all this recycling go after it's carefully sorted by individuals? Nelmac is the first to deal with it. They have two compacter trucks for recyclables. These pick up either glass or mixed waste each week and are dedicated to the blue bins left out on the street. Once these are picked up they are driven to The Recycling Centre on Pascoe Street. Here rubbish is dumped and pushed into a big pile in a shed. This is put onto a conveyor belt. One person opens plastic bags and the other spreads out rubbish with a rake.

A magnetic belt was recently put into the centre, to pick out the metals. These and wires stripped from dead electronics are sent to Simms Pacific Metals which is an international player in recycling. Metals are separated, melted down and remade into new products.

The rest of the waste goes upstairs where four men stand pulling off individual materials. They separate all the glossy paper, cardboard, newspaper, mixed paper, clear PETE plastic one and PETE plastic two. This is thrown into a drop chute where its collected in big cages.

Paper and cardboard go to Full Circle, a baling industry on Pascoe Street where it's

compressed into big blocks that are sent to saw mills in the North Island. Paper like office whites can be made into things like toilet paper. Cardboard can be remade into corrugated cardboard. Once paper has been recycled a few times it will become things like egg boxes.

Plastics are exported to China, Vietnam or Indonesia. Here the plastic is remade into clothing like polyprops and other synthetics. Other types of plastic can be made into things like lids. Sending products away is a contestable issue as energy is used on exportation and in many countries work ethics are poor. In New Zealand companies are being set up to recycle plastic here which could solve these problems. For example there is a company in the North Island recycling plastic into fence posts. Glass, which is collected separately, is crushed by Fulton Hogan and used for roads and pavements.

The recycling station in Nelson also contains two junk shops full of interesting things which people have discarded. The shop is always full of people. "Not only is it the green thing to do, but it's also a cheap way of applying goods if you're on a limited budget," operations manager at the station, Murray Simms said. "I mean why spend money on new stuff when something is no longer any use to someone else but still has a good lot of life in it?" To get an idea of how much stuff they circulate, they run an auction which empties every week with 200-300 items. All of these things could potentially have ended up in landfill.

In Nelson an estimated 3000 tonnes of waste a year is recycled. But there is still around 6000 tonnes dumped in the York Valley landfill, which although environmental, won't last forever. The Nelson City Council is creating a push towards people separating their compostable waste. "Getting them to think about good ways of using them, because it actually can be a very valuable resource. It's not a good look if it goes into the landfill because at the end of the day, that's going to be a source of methane," Ms Lee explained. Research shows that methane gas is twenty times worse than carbon dioxide, a major cause of global warming.

Recently the council has run a programme called Create Your Own Eden. They set up

displays around major retail car parks. "What we're trying to do is catch people who don't currently do things like composting. So catch the busy busy people who obviously say 'well I haven't got time to do that' in an environment where it's easy to get their attention with a really short little bit of information that could make them think 'oh maybe I could have a go at that'," Ms Lee explained. If people want more information, workshops are available.

Ms Lee has designed another system which is aimed at recycling at events. "We have a kit with Nelmac that any event organiser can use for free and it's a trailer and there's some wheelie bins, a huge pile of crates and a kit bag which has velcro and removable signs for the crates."

The wheelie bin is placed in the centre for non-recyclables and the bins are labeled glass, paper, etc and placed around the outside so people can easily drop their rubbish in them. Volunteers

empty the bins when they get full. This system has been trialed at Opera in the Park, The Cusp and The Relay for Life. It has been successful every time, especially at Opera in the Park where they collected

three full wheelie bins of glass.

At the moment the Waste Minimization Bill is being discussed by central government. If it goes through, there will be a levy raised on waste going to the landfill. The money raised from this could be used by local councils to promote recycling and for groups to apply for to fund environmental projects.

All of these projects are part of educating people to do the right thing. The council contracts an organization called Waste Education Services through the Environment Centre. Sarah Langi goes to schools to inspire young people to be more eco friendly. She has visited all of the Nayland schools where she has done waste audits.

Nayland Kindergarten and Nayland Primary have a composting system and worm farm which the children can get involved with. Nayland Primary is working on a system to reuse paper that has only been used on one side. They will collect this and bind it into notebooks which parents can buy as doodle pads for their kids. Schools are tackling packaging in kids' lunches. The kindergarten has a display showing a child's lunch using



Abby models an eco bag.

containers instead of wrap. The earlier kids start learning about correct waste management and the more it's reinforced the better. "It's about our teaching team doing it and believing in it and making those opportunities possible, getting parents and families into it," Nayland Kindergarten teacher, Gaye Wood said.

Nayland College has an active environment committee which works on waste minimization. They're working on getting a worm farm for the school and have plans to reduce packaging in the canteen. The 'green teens', Sophie Turner and Abby Ward from Nayland with Britany Packer from Girls College began their war on plastic bags when they were just 14 and have been working hard since then. They have achieved great things including the recent ecobag month.

So why is all this hard work being done to publicise recycling? "You think of every truck, every vehicle, every airplane, every boat that comes into Nelson on a daily basis bringing stuff and you think now, aren't we going to get full? Where's it going to go?" said Mr. Simms.

Recycling is the last step in waste management. People need to think about what they are buying first. Then before discarding anything thought should be taken to consider whether it could be useful to someone else or whether it could be reused.

Waste going to landfill is a major cause of global warming. Think about what you throw in the bin. As Mr Simms puts it, "Don't throw anything away, there's no 'away'."



Recycled robot stands tall.

“Don't throw anything away. There's no 'away'.”

Murray Simms  
Recycling Station  
Operations Manager

Photo: Miriam Sherratt

Photo: Katherine Patterson