



ضبط الجودة والمعايير التحريرية
QUALITY ASSURANCE & EDITORIAL STANDARDS

Editorial Standards

Aljazeera Media Network



Editorial Standards

Aljazeera Media Network

First Edition

Chairman

In this guidebook, Aljazeera Network proudly presents its editorial guidelines. Over the last few years, Aljazeera has been at the forefront of a transformation in the global media landscape. This guidebook includes a number of advices and checks that are vital to maintain the highest global standards in news, current affairs as well as programmes. They are also an accumulation of our own experiences.

When issues are shrouded in ambiguity and confusion, this guidebook should be a beacon that helps make the correct judgment. These guidelines are meant to guarantee accuracy and impartiality, while making sure we get the story to our viewers before our competitors. We firmly believe that presenting accurate news is the right of our audience and a duty we have taken upon ourselves.

Sheikh Hamad Bin Thamer Al Thani

Director General

This guidebook represents a major milestone along Aljazeera’s long march. It comes out on our seventeenth anniversary. Our journey has been thrilling, challenging and replete with fulfilling experience. We feel the time is ripe to put the summary of our accumulated expertise into an all-encompassing editorial and technical criteria guidebook which will serve as our guiding principles to grow and prosper. Over the years Aljazeera employees acquired, observed and implemented “Aljazeera spirit”, helping us to race to the forefront of global media.

This is not a mere a guidebook to sum up Aljazeera’s accumulated editorial and technical expertise, instead it is a compendium that records, classifies and organizes editorial and technical criteria in a practical, easily accessible and comprehensible format. This is our first edition and naturally we will constantly strive to develop and improve it in the future.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the team of the Quality Assurance and Editorial Standards Division who carried out this project and all those who contributed to it from various branches of the Network as well as to our senior colleagues who founded the mother channel and the network.

Dr. Mustapha Sawaq

Introduction

This Guidebook stands as one of the most important documents Aljazeera publishes. It represents the first step towards a comprehensive manual or reference book for all those working in television news and programmes.

It is also meant to open the door to everyone in Aljazeera to contribute their thoughts, knowledge and experiences for the sake of everyone else. It sets out the standards required of everyone making news, programmes, and other content within Aljazeera.

These guidelines will help Aljazeera achieve its goal of being an authoritative leader in world media, giving the public high standard news and programmes. They are

intended to support creativity and innovation, not to stifle them. They should help Aljazeera journalists produce news and programmes that we can all be proud of. The content of this editorial guidebook has been divided into general concepts that deal with basic definitions, values, and principles; sub products classifying each and every format or individual component used in news production; and total products dealing with the overall structure of the entire news or programmes services.

These guidelines are the product of years of experience, common sense, values and interaction with the world audience. The Quality Assurance and Editorial Standards Sector has tried its best to start a process that may evolve into a constantly updated reference inspired by all of us to fulfil our growing and changing needs.

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Special Part

Al Jazeera Staff Code of Professional Ethics & Conduct

Special Part

Al Jazeera Staff Code of Professional Ethics & Conduct

First - Professional Ethics

1.1 Acknowledgment & Correction of Errors:

In compliance with Aljazeera's commitment to professional ethics and respect to its audience, it is mandatory to swiftly rectify any error committed during any bulletin or live show. Once discovered, mistakes should be corrected immediately whether while on air or when the show is repeated.

Occasionally bulletins or talk shows broadcast misspelled names or inaccurate figures when such flawed text is used from previous shows. Thus, attention should be exercised while preparing such items for broadcast; archival materials should be carefully examined before use as they may contain Spelling mistakes, misprint, or have simply become outdated. Therefore, all information should be scrutinised and verified whenever possible. Mispronouncing names of people, places or special items, is among the most common mistakes in broadcasting.

To avoid such errors and embarrassment it is advisable to ask a colleague hailing from that part of the world on how to properly pronounce the name and a presenter may ask the guest off air how to pronounce his/her name or title.

Upon realizing that a mistake was committed such as airing wrong information, false statement or erroneous figures, the following corrective steps should immediately be taken.

1.Ensure that the item will not be broadcast again.

2.Immediately acknowledge the error and apologize to viewers.

3.Rebroadcast the material after correcting it, except in such cases when the material is of a substantial nature and correction is neither editorially or factually worth the effort.

4.If an error affects an individual or entity, it is sensible

to provide them with an opportunity to correct the information or deny it, without allowing them to undermine the reputation of the Network or their opponents.

5. A senior news executive editor should be informed of the technical or editorial errors, verbally or in writing, and the steps taken to rectify such mistakes.

6. To publish the major error and corresponding correction on Aljazeera Net webpage.

7. No corrective action should be taken in cases involving slander or libel until a legal opinion is sought to protect the network against legal liability.

8. To forward the correction or remedial procedures

to relevant divisions or sections in news or program departments to avoid recurrence.

1.2 Conflict of Interests:

Aljazeera staff members should avoid any action or behaviour which may create a personal conflict of interests with the network. When in doubt or uncertain, employees should consult their superiors to avoid being legally liable as a result of their actions or statements.

Based on the aforementioned statement, the following guidelines should be observed:

A. Staff members should inform their superiors of any potential personal gains they or their first degree relatives

(parents, spouse, children, or siblings) would get as a result of conflict of interests with the Network. Such conflicts can result from having contracts to supply equipment or provide services, hold a position with another media organisation, or be part of a news report that would produce material or immaterial benefits to the person who had written, produced, edited or presented the report.

B. Staff members are not allowed to work, with or without pay, for competitor networks, stations, or any organisation having financial relations or bilateral agreements with Aljazeera Network or hold shares in such organisations. Staff members are not permitted at all to carry any external work, with or without compensation, unless they secure a written authorization from the network's

Director General. For example, script writers, presenters or highly-recognized staff members will not be permitted to engage in such activities unless they obtain a written authorization.

C. Staff members will not be permitted to accept gifts of any kind, whether cash, airline tickets, or hotel accommodation unless it is done with the knowledge and consent of network's management or during an official mission. However, there is no harm in accepting token gifts or souvenirs, such as mementoes and certificates of appreciation, provided that the network's management is informed to determine whether such gifts can be kept by their recipients or should be surrendered to the network due to their content or significance.

D. The Network shall presume goodwill in all the journalists' professional demeanours and relations with and towards any other body beyond the Network; and any journalist shall have liberty with respect to his/her political and ideological affiliations; provided that the same shall not impact his professional duties within Al Jazeera Network.

1.3 Gathering Information & Private life:

All individuals, not only celebrities or public figures, have the right to privacy. Consequently, it is not permitted to invade people's privacy without professional or ethical justifications. Deliberate aggravating actions causing embarrassment or negatively impacting people's lives will not be permitted.

The following points should be taken into consideration.

- Individuals giving opinions or making statements should know that their opinions or statements will be attributed to them. For example a person who has been tortured or molested by security forces should know that details of his/her statement will be delved into.

- When a private aspect of a public figure becomes a public matter worthy of investigation, it should not justify violation of personal liberties or rights, nor should it engender vilification, libel or slander.

- People do not enjoy the same degree of privacy outdoor as at home. Therefore, while filming in public places, the people present should be informed, verbally or via a

signboard that this is a shooting location and those who do not want to be filmed should keep out of the camera range.

- Privacy of individuals who are not part of a news story, such as siblings or relatives, should not be violated, if filming them harm their reputation or cause them social, financial or legal problems. A good example might be the appearance of passers-by while security forces are raiding a brothel or narcotics hangout.

- We should be cognizant of potential legal consequences when taking close-up shots of people such as when reporting on rogue stock market traders, gambling, narcotic addiction, fraud, or professional malfeasance

where innocent individuals will appear in the shot and may embroil Aljazeera in a legal action.

1.4 Hidden Cameras & Microphones:

The use of hidden cameras, microphones or wiretapping devices is an ethical issue. While some may justify it as a ‘professional necessity’ in investigative reporting, in most cases, however, it is fraught with ethical and legal problems.

Covert filming represents the most blatant form of violating a person’s privacy. However, in certain reporting circumstances, there is no other alternative available to get to the facts. In such cases evidence is needed to demonstrate that public’s interests or welfares have been

violated and covert filming is the only means possible to protect it.

In all cases, the following three conditions must be met:

The case should represent a public matter.

The case should have a strong link to transgression, offenses or crimes against society at large or a specific sector of the community. Covert filming is the only way to glean information about the case.

The decision to authorize covert filming should be separated from the decision to broadcast it, as the Director of News may decide later not to air the piece after discovering flaws in the recording or if newly-emerged developments render broadcasting them unethical.

It should be noted that covert filming is sometimes the last resort to obtain facts of public interest matter.

Al Jazeera occasionally resorts to covert filming in countries in which authorities prevent free reporting, conceal facts, or prevent interviewing individuals, for example Al Jazeera coverage of events in Myanmar.

When resorting to covert filming, all facts and versions of an event must accurately and fairly be presented. Al Jazeera does not use covert filming obtained from other sources, except in rare circumstances, after securing the approval of the Director General.

1.5 Filming within Private Property:

A prior approval should be obtained from owners in cases involving filming private properties and staff members must leave the property as soon as they are ordered or requested to do so. Filming within private property without approval is permitted only in the following cases:

If a transgression or crime has been committed;

If a public interest event is taking place;

If embedded with security forces raiding a public property.

1.6 Competition:

A. Competition does not mean humiliating other media organisations by smearing their reputation or casting doubt on their credibility. High status comes by gaining

the trust of the public. It must be noted that Al Jazeera is not completion with entertainment stations despite their popularity. Al Jazeera is, first and foremost, a news network, where there is no room to mixing up entrainment shows with news.

B.The quest to achieve excellence, overtake the competition, or score scoops, should not be an excuse for impartiality, lack of objectivity or manipulation of the Code of Professional Ethics & Conduct. Attaining respect and credibility should have priority over achieving popularity. it is imperative to focus on the minds of viewers and not their hearts.

C. Safety and wellbeing of staff members should have priority over the quest for exclusive reports or scoops.

Thus, reporters and producers must exercise caution and do not put themselves in jeopardy, especially while covering wars, riots, violent upheavals or sport events.

D. The quest to beat the competition with exclusive reports or scoops does not justify interrupting the broadcast to air an insignificant event as a “Breaking News”. That decision should be left to a senior news editor.

E. Al Jazeera is a media organization and should not scarify journalistic values and ethics for monetary gains. Stories related to corporations airing commercials on Al Jazeera should not be withheld nor should guests with potential negative views of such corporations be excluded. Aired programs should be designed for the minds and not stock market.

2. Professional Conduct

Al Jazeera staff members shall not be allowed to:

1. Promote other media organisations, whether competitor or not, by appearing as guests or analysts, without prior authorisation from Al Jazeera management.
2. Issue statements that may undermine the name, reputation or standing of the Al Jazeera, such as expressing disparaging racial or religious views in public.
3. Consume alcohol, narcotics or drugs inside Al Jazeera premises or reporting to work while being intoxicated or drugged. Smoking is permitted only in designated areas.

4. Staff members shall not be permitted to establish web blogs to express, without disclaimers, views and opinions in contradiction to Al Jazeera's standards, ethics or values as per the Code of Professional Ethics & Conduct.

5. Staff members are not permitted to participate, without prior management approval, in political, commercial or institutional campaigns, whether Al Jazeera is involved in such campaigns or not; participation will be permitted on case-by-case basis

6. Staff members are not permitted to publicly declare their political, ethnic or denominational affiliation. This injunction applies to all news and program staff members, including presenters, producers, and reporters.

7. Staff members will not yield to threats or inducements to air any material in violation of the Code of Professional Ethics & Conduct and are expected to report such threats or enticements immediately. No such material shall be aired without prior consent of the concerned staff member; this covers materials on news ticker.

8. Staff members will not be permitted to exploit their professional position, threaten or vilify individuals and/or corporations, or gain personal benefits or preferential treatment; such actions will negatively impact the name, reputation or standing of Al Jazeera. For example using staff ID or business card for purposes other than Al Jazeera-related work.

9. Staff members should not debate Al Jazeera’s policies, claim to represent it, disclose its current or future plans, reveal internal information in public or private gatherings, without prior management approval. Such permission will be granted on case-by-case basis.

This applies to disclosing internal circulars, resolutions, workflow directives, or divulging addresses and phone numbers of Al Jazeera guests or staff members, including “Talk-Back” (the internal dialogue platform) for personal gains.

10. People appearing on Al Jazeera, including presenters, anchors, or reporters, must look presentable; their appearance and clothing must look smart; untrimmed hair or beard, or clothes lacking simplest requirements of elegance will not be permitted.

11. Staff members will not be permitted to damage, wilfully or inadvertently, devices, property, equipment, tapes, information, or archive materials. It is prohibited to use devices for any purpose other than what they are designated for. For example, telephones should not be used to make long distance personal calls, computers for gaming or the Internet for chatting.

3. Professional Relations

1. Working in the world of media require collective efforts and a spirit of teamwork ingrained in all staff members and practiced by all sections, without exception. Consequently opposing opinions must be respected while putting together news bulletins and programs; professional conduct must be observed without tyranny. This does not strip a team leader of his discretionary authority or ruling power, as he is responsible for consequences of his decision or when he adopts his colleague's recommendations.

2. Seniority or job title is not a license to disregard or ridicule opinions of other team members. All staff members are entitled to be respected and esteemed while a team

leader should not favour any member at the expense of others when allocating duties. Team members should be offered equal opportunities to work on broadcasting material without prejudice to job descriptions or seniority. However, there are certain exceptions, for instance when a particular reporter is better than others in covering a specific issue.

3. Professional relations are based on mutual respect, where there is no room for personal malice or evil. Therefore, it is not permitted to engage in squabbling, futile arguments or brawls on the premises, even if the dispute is job-related.

4. Seniority must be respected and senior officers cannot be bypassed at work. For example, if when a producer

is in charge of team of reporters tasked with specific assignments and a difference arises among them, his decision will be final.

4. Instructions & Directives

The violation of any criteria, restriction, requirement or directive mentioned in this Guidebook constitutes shall represent a breach of the Employment Contract and the conditions stipulated therein.

1. All directives of work regulations and duties sanctioned by departments, sections, or divisions are binding and shall constitute an integral part of this Guidebook.

2. All issued editorial circulars must be in harmony with standards and values contained in this Guidebook.

3. All journalists, reporters, correspondents, language monitors, translators, interpreters, producers, technical

directors, and editors shall abide on a daily basis by the official email and the Information & Polices; all editorial circulars or directives contained therein are binding upon all staff members. In case of any breach or violation, there shall be no excuse for those who claim they did not read them.

Part A: General Concepts

1. Accuracy

Accuracy is the core of editorial value for broadcasting journalism and the starting point to achieving other editorial values such as objectivity, neutrality, and impartiality. Governing media regulations all over the world penalize deliberate misinformation and oblige offenders to acknowledge and correct their mistakes and issue an apology.

The need for accuracy supersedes the quest to be the first to land a breaking story or a major scoop. Whether reporting or presenting shows broadcast journalists and field reporters should strive to achieve accuracy. They should avoid excessive rhetoric and pretentious language which will negatively impact central components of a

story and its credibility. Accuracy requires a high degree of professionalism, honesty and precision and should not be employed to promote specific policies and agendas.

News coverage should present facts, content and imagery, in a simplified and direct manner while avoiding potential errors which may arise as a result of negligence and inattention. This can be detailed as follows:

1.1 Language Accuracy:

Each Al Jazeera channel should abide by a high standard of language, maintaining simplicity and clarity of expression, whether in scripting news or presenting bulletins and programmes.

While simplicity entails avoidance of superfluous rhetoric, clarity should eliminate any reason for confusion, misinterpretation, or misconstruction. In short, simplicity means a commitment to what is known as the “language of journalism”, keeping in mind the following:

1- Language accuracy, whether written or spoken, is not limited to the use of a language free of grammatical mistakes, misspelling, or syntax errors, but also means the proper use of connotations, denotations, and abbreviations.

For example it is imperative to be aware of the difference between “rebels and fighters”, “kidnapped and hostage”, “executed and killed”, “fundamentalist and extremist”.

Using the wrong term diminishes the accuracy of a news story.

2- Ambiguity or phrases and terms that can cast doubt on the credibility of a story should be avoided. For example, it is critical to state the exact date of an important event like the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime; instead of saying "recently", "in recent years" or "a few months ago" etc. A story should not rely on viewers' memories.

Another example is the use of terms with multiple meanings. For instance in using the "Lebanese Forces" when talking about the "Lebanese Security Forces" which is composed of the army and internal security forces, because "Lebanese Forces" refers to an active institution in Lebanese political life. Therefore, one should either use

“Lebanese Security Forces” or “Lebanese Army” to avoid potential misinterpretation or confusion.

3- When translating news items or program material, accuracy must strictly be adhered to. Without being too literal, safeguarding the integrity of the original wording is paramount. For example: “Obama reveals a new strategy limiting the use of nuclear weapons.” The original text may be “In a new US national security strategy Obama reveals a strategy that may diminish the role of nuclear weapons”.

4- Condensing or summarizing the content of foreign sound bites when voicing them over in English, especially the first and last sentences, may give an impression that it has been altered or is not accurate, especially to those

audience who understand both languages. Attention must be paid when voicing a sound bite in English from a foreign language, since it may harm Aljazeera's credibility.

5- However, it is acceptable to summarize sound bites if they are unrelated to important facts or if the quoted person is an ordinary citizen talking about a general subject. Occasionally, a reporter/correspondent may paraphrase a sound bite, if the speaker had failed to express himself well. Furthermore, if the spoken sound bite is in an Incomprehensible local dialect, employing a subtitle will help those who do not speak that dialect to understand what has been said.

6- A language that may give an impression of prejudice should be avoided. Saying the "Khartoum regime" instead

of the “Sudanese Government” may indicate nuanced political bias.

7- Great attention must be paid to select the most appropriate words used to change statements or views to news items. For example: “Movement X has expressed its support for president Y, to assume the presidency for another term” while the original statement by the Secretary General of Movement X was: “The movement is ready to support President Y, provided he recognizes Movement X as a legitimate political party.”

8-Offensive, distasteful, improper words or incomprehensible local dialects should be avoided. If the use of such words is unavoidable, then they must be

used in a proper context and a reference to the source must be made.

9- In describing a scene, exaggeration should be avoided. For example: “unprecedented sadness in the village for the victims of the fire” or “opposition demonstrators filled city squares up to the horizon”.

1.2 Accuracy of Images:

Pictures are the most important element in news coverage, even more superior in value to a script. Some scripts would not attain any importance without corresponding images. Aljazeera network applies editorial guidelines to all images, videos and still pictures. Proper attention must be paid to the following element:

1- Accurately selecting the right pictures of a news item. Distorting facts of a story by manipulating or erroneously editing its pictures, for instance by employing special effects or graphics, is not allowed. Resorting to such means may be allowed only to enhance the original image and sound, for instance employing sound effects to amplify the inaudible original gunshot recording. Pixelating the face of a speaker or a contributor to protect his/her identity, however, is allowed.

2- To avoid confusion and ensure accuracy when using archival pictures, they must be clearly labelled and dated to make viewers aware that the pictures are neither new nor live.

For instance, viewers will be confused if a news report uses archival pictures of an explosion that took place few months ago if they are not told that the aired images are old.

3- News is about people. In shooting a demonstration, close up or wide shots of demonstrators is inadequate. To convey feelings of demonstrators to viewers natural sound should be relied upon as much as possible.

1.3 Accuracy of Information:

Aljazeera network is committed to presenting accurate information. Our mission is to present all angles of an issue accurately, objectively and impartially to help

viewers form their own views. To achieve that goal, the following must be observed:

1- Obtain information from original sources. Rely on our field correspondents as primary sources of reliable information. They often become vital links between the newsroom and events on the ground. Statements or press releases received via fax or email must be verified by contacting the senders or Validate it with another body before airing them.

2- News must be presented impartially, in a direct and simple manner without personal judgment, conjectures or analysis. Viewers must draw their own conclusions. For example it is incorrect to say “an explosion of this magnitude will push the peace process to the brink of

collapse” or “The collapse of negotiations to form a government at this time means the door is wide open for the return of violence to the street”.

3- Accuracy requires the confirmation of a story from at least two independent sources, such as two news agencies, if Aljazeera correspondent is not the source.

4- Caution must be exercised upon obtaining a recorded video tape whose source is unknown. Its content should be verified before airing it by contacting the corresponding parties or conducting an Internet search. In addition to falling into a trap to promote a particular party or point of view, the acquired footage may fail the accuracy test because it has possibly been manipulated, forged, or doctored. The footage has to be thoroughly examined

by technical experts and approved by an editor before airing it. The purpose of the statement “Aljazeera was unable to verify the footage from an independent source” is designed to exempt the network from any ethical responsibility. It should be used only as a last resort when Aljazeera cannot afford but to air such important news/ events. The audience assumes that Aljazeera airs genuine material, whether video or still images.

5- To refrain from removing any part of a news story (picture, fact, or figure) simply because it contradicts personal views of the story producer. To avoid neglecting an important news story, whether exclusive to Aljazeera or through the wire services, only because it may not be welcomed by a segment of the audience. Example: In the spring of 1999 during NATO operations in Yugoslavia

some channels kept their audience in the dark when they dropped the story of 700 thousand Kosovar refugees fleeing to Macedonia and Albania, thus concealing important, documented information of crimes of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo.

6- To ensure accuracy of names, titles, policies, religious affiliations and military ranks of individuals as well as names of political, religious, social movements, geographical locations, and statistics. This means:

A- Accuracy should be exercised in quoting statistics (number of victims killed, injured or demonstrators etc.) taken from reliable sources, giving the source for statistics. Using inaccurate figures may cause further deterioration of an already volatile situation, cause further

complications among parties or result in labelling Aljazeera as a biased network. Example: “dozens of victims killed and injured” while the actual figures state “two killed and thirty injured”. If possible, we should consult with our field correspondents to verify figures of wire services and name the source even if this may lead to compromising a scoop.

B- Do not refer to newspapers as sources of news because often times they are old. But exceptions can be made for exclusive stories.

C- Do not over-abbreviate names when they are stated for the first time. For example, the official name of Palestinian president is “Mahmoud Abbas” and not “Abu Mazen”. The Iranian president’s name is “Ahmadinejad”

and not “Nejad”. The same applies to names of parties and movements; we say “The Islamic Jihad Movement” and not the “Jihad Movement”.

1- Special attention must be paid to news items that may cause panic, such as stories of epidemics or crimes. Specific sources of statistics must be clearly stated. Controversial news items may require expert guests to provide further explanation and information.

1.4 Accuracy of Internet Information:

Journalists must exercise caution when relying on information gleaned from the Internet, especially from unfamiliar or suspect websites. Journalists have fallen victim to sites claiming to represent a certain party while

in fact they represent an opposition party. The following precautions may help verify the credibility of a website:

1- Verify domain names: “.com” means it is a commercial site, “.org” a registered and recognized organization and “.gov” indicates it is a reliable government site. For example www.pentagon.gov is the official website of the U.S Department of Defence while www.pentagon.com is a commercial website.

2- Official websites usually attract greater number of visitors than commercial ones. To attract visitors, certain sites may carry bogus names of well-known individuals or corporations. For example, kremlin.org can mislead visitors in believing that it is an official site of the Russian Government, while in fact the official website is kremlin.gov. One should refer to www.alex.com to truly evaluate

the status and legitimacy of any website based on the following:

A- Status of a website on the Internet: Google, for instance, will pop as number one while an ordinary website may appear at position 300000.

B- The number of other sites linked to it: The greater the links, the greater the reliability of a site.

C- Number of visitors or clicks. The number of Aljazeera website visitors (www.aljazeera.net) or (www.aljazeera.com) is much greater in comparison with other sites attempting to exploit Aljazeera's name and trademark. Alexa.com also gives a brief summary of websites.

1- When gleaning any kind of information from the Internet full attention must be paid to the last updates of time and date.

2- In economic and business news, press releases and media kits are good sources of reliable information. Subscription to electronic newsletters will not only serve as an important source of fast and reliable news, but will also provide access to such news before being published by new agencies. Occasionally, press releases may contain pictures and/or videos. For example, a press release of a petroleum company contained pictures of an oil leak from one of its wells in the Gulf of Mexico, ([LINK](#)), but one should not rely exclusively on company material or exclude other sources of information.

2. Impartiality

Impartiality means to be aware of the fine line which requires news to be presented in a fair and balanced way, without taking sides. It means that editors/producers/presenters of reports and programs should not espouse one position vis-à-vis another position, even if they firmly believe it is the right thing to do.

For example, if it has been proven by irrefutable evidence that U.S. fighters have bombed a civilian target in Afghanistan, then the story should be reported accurately. If, in the same example, it has been proven that the Pentagon knew in advance that the target was a civilian target and yet it authorized the bombing, then we have

to confront U.S. officials with our evidence. This will help our audience get the facts.

To achieve Impartiality, fairness and honesty must be observed. Opposing relevant views must be included fairly in regards to duration, format (DTL, PHONO, 1+1, ULAY, etc.) and guest eloquence and rank. (A junior party member should not be included to debate a senior member of an opposing party)

Any individual or party has the right to turn down an invitation to participate in news bulletins or talk shows. Thus, Aljazeera should not state that the refusal to participate is to avoid confrontation or in protest against Aljazeera and its editorial policies. Instead, Aljazeera should state in a simple and direct language that

the concerned party was invited but has declined to participate.

To achieve impartiality the following guidelines must be observed:

In news bulletins and talk shows, views of opposing parties should be sought. A third opinion can only be included if one of the main guests abstained to articulate his/her position.

When displaying still images of opposing individuals, they should be of the same quality and size, if possible.

There is no reason to praise or condemn any person, regardless of their title or position. Viewers should draw their own conclusions, based upon statements and actions of the guest.

All guests are addressed as Mr or Ms (what about Mrs) no other titles are permitted.

We do not congratulate a team for winning against another team, regardless of their nationality.

It is not necessary to eulogize or pay tribute to deceased individuals, whether they are political leaders, officials or religious figures. (An exception can be made during an interview with close relatives of the recently departed).

We do not comment, verbally or by gestures, on news items or guest's views, in a manner that may create the impression that the presenter is angry, upset or that he/she holds a definite personal position regarding that issue.

When conducting interviews, presenters should avoid questions reflecting their personal views or political affiliations and should refrain from siding with one guest against another.

While covering stories, for instance while waiting for a court verdict, field reporters should not become passionate or judgmental. In extremely emotional stories (example: a tsunami or children killed in an accident) a correspondent should try to control his/her feelings, although spontaneous expression of emotion is understood.

When preparing reports, whether in the field or newsroom, involving complex issues, balance in the use of footage and clips should be sought. (For example: ending a report

with banners of a specific party in a multi-party election may suggest that this party will end up the winner).

Distinction must be made between news, analyses, comments, and viewpoints to avoid possible prejudice or impartiality. While a news story can be verified for accuracy, comments or analyses may reflect arguable views that can be accepted or rejected.

When certain events require the opinion of correspondents or reporters, they should then be allowed to freely articulate their views and impressions and present them but not as “facts” (by using words such as “may be”, “possibly” or “I think” etc.) This can be done either in their 'piece to camera' or in a 'two-way' interview (DTL) with a presenter.

Impartiality requires that our comments must always be professional, accurate and balanced. While emotions will always be part of a story, our duty is to ensure that balance and fairness, are central to the narrative we present to our viewers.

3. News Sources

3.1 Basic Sources of News:

We try to find more than one source for a news story. We need to avoid falling into the trap of relying on two sources that refer to the same source. When more than one agency publishes a story taken from a local newspaper, it means there was only one source for the story, the newspaper.

If we cannot find two independent sources, then we have to quote the source. (Example: The Reuters news agency said the president of X has been taken to hospital after suffering a heart attack). Then we tell the audience that we will try to confirm the story.

Although quoting the source relieves the broadcasting channel from the consequences, the moral responsibility remains on those who made the decision to air the story. Therefore, the senior editor in the newsroom has to make that decision, especially when the story is important. For example, Aljazeera cannot rely on a single source in a story about a change of regime in an Arab country. This region is Aljazeera's backyard and airing a news story of this nature may lead to other international news organizations quoting Aljazeera as the source of the story.

Aljazeera considers its correspondents as reliable sources of accurate news. No distinction is made between Aljazeera Arabic, English, or the Balkan channels. A story coming from one of our correspondents means it is accurate. That is why correspondents' stories find their

way to the screen swiftly and directly except when the senior editor feels that the news story does not fit into the wider picture of events. He can then communicate with the correspondent for further clarifications before deciding to air the story.

Making the sources anonymous by using phrases like: “analysts say” or “some observers say” could mean there is no reliable source for the news, and that this narrative is an attempt to pass on the views of the news story writer or producer. To avoid falling into this trap we can bring in an analyst or official to say that himself, or attribute the story to a clear identifiable source such as a research centre or a ministry etc. However, it may be possible to state public opinion views about an issue without having to resort to analysts or observer,

for example, the continued support of consecutive U.S. administrations for Israel.

Correspondents and reporters should not hide their source of a news story unless revealing it may threaten or cause harm to the source or lead to a halt in the flow of information to the correspondent. In such cases the source should be revealed to the highest editorial authority who should decide whether or not to broadcast the story and taking responsibility for airing it. When airing it, it is sufficient to say “Aljazeera was informed that...”

In case the source refuses to reveal their identity, his motives and reasons have to be verified. We should not promise to protect the source's identity if that promise cannot be fulfilled. The head of news has to be consulted

before pledging to protect the identity of the source. If the news source came to us voluntarily, we have to warn them about the possible consequences of revealing their identity and that there is a possibility this may cause them any trouble.

Aljazeera network does not recognize phone calls, mail, e-mail, or faxes from unknown sources as a possible source for its news, regardless of the news value and importance. However, if the news story has been in circulation by more than one recognized news agency, while attributing it to an unknown source, then we may carry the story providing that we attribute it to the wires that carried it. We still have to exert the utmost effort to verify the information from a known source.

The logo of the source, if it is an institution, has to be verified before publishing press releases issued by different institutions such as political movements, parties, governments, or international organizations. If in any doubt, contact the source through the known regular channels.

A correspondent may take news from local media in various countries if it is proven to be accurate or if the news value is high and free from political propaganda.

There is no shame in carrying a story with only a competing broadcaster as a source. Often, an important story is disregarded or ignored simple because it was a competitor's scoop. If a competitor channel airs an

interview with a head of state or opposition leader, during which he made important statement that Aljazeera cannot ignore, then Aljazeera has to carry the story and attribute it to its original source accurately and clearly.

When carrying a study or research published on the internet, you need to contact the organization or person who published it and verify that the information mentioned on the web is accurate.

3.2 Eye Witnesses As A Source:

Eye witnesses recounting what they saw are often used as a source of news. The following points have to be taken into consideration:

Attention must be given to the possibility of exaggeration or generalization by eye witnesses. The producer must maintain a healthy degree of scepticism to judge how truthful the eye witness is.

Ensure you find out who the eye witness is, his identity and direct link to the story. Do not describe an eye witness as “anonymous” or just an eye witness, or an Iraqi citizen for example. It is more credible to mention the name and his relationship to being in the proximity or the area of the story. i.e. “Mohamed Taha, a local shop keeper and eye witness”. Just a name may not be sufficient.

Identify each and every person who appears in the report whether he is a labourer, farmer, unemployed, or homeless. You cannot say “one of the striking workers” but you can say:”Haitham Amin, a striking worker”.

When using eye witnesses do not use them as analysts on the story, but as narrators of what they saw.

3.3 Social Media As Sources of News:

Websites are widely used by opposition groups, and even by some governments to propagate their views, they should be dealt with utmost caution as sources of news. The use of images from these web sites should be limited to the following cases:

1- If the images are for an important news events in a country that imposes a media blackout.

2- If the site has exclusive pictures of an important news story that cannot be obtained through other sources. In any case, the images should be scrutinized and their

authenticity verified by all available means. Their source should be mentioned. In case they cannot be verified, we should say that their content cannot be verified by an independent source.

4. Intellectual Property & Criteria for Using Images

4.1 Intellectual Property Rights:

A) Plagiarism or theft of other people's work, ideas or efforts is prohibited. We should strictly observe intellectual property rights laws.

B) Acquisition or adaptation of creative works, whether poetry, novels, songs, music, paintings, pictures, articles or all materials covered under intellectual property rights laws, is not permitted without a prior permit from the author or holder of rights. Committing plagiarism would render the network vulnerable and subject to legal and financial penalty. Intellectual property rights laws do not

protect the ideas or information inherent in these creative works; they protect their forms and styles fashioned it distinctive forms. This strict approach to protect intellectual property rights does not prohibit some forms of adoption or adaptation as follows:

Exceptions to Adaptations

Creative works are not bound by intellectual property laws and regulation in the following cases:

If they are displayed in public places with no restrictions placed on photography.

If adaptation is limited to a small part of the entire work while citing the author or holder of the property rights.

If the reason for adapting the material is to critique or review it (while citing the original author or holder of rights) or if the material is the topic of a news story.

If the material is unintentionally mentioned in a news bulletin or programme during a live transmission (camera shooting the works while in the context of covering an event). However, broadcasting part or an entire recorded program may require obtaining a permit in advance from the author or the production company.

Some works are no longer covered by intellectual property rights laws because a considerable amount of time has passed since their creation. The time varies from country to country. In some countries intellectual property rights are dropped fifty years after the death of their authors; in

the US seventy years from the date of registering them. (refer to the Legal Department of the Network for advice if you do not have a license from the author to broadcast it.)

4.2 Criteria for Using Images:

There are legal rules governing sources of images when used by Al Jazeera. These rules depend on the source and must be observed to avoid legal consequences. The following guidelines should be observed:

4.2.1 Images of news agencies Aljazeera has contracts with: Dope sheet, or Image description, acquired from agencies must be carefully and constantly inspected to be aware of restrictions of their use.

Some of the restrictions include:

Geographical scope: An agency may prohibit the use of some images in certain parts of the world.

Time scope: An agency may impose a ban on using images before or after certain time frame or date.

Special requirements: An agency may impose special conditions, such as editing restriction.

Format use: An agency may ban the use of certain images by other media outlets, such as print media or Internet, affiliated with the user. It may also impose a ban on their use in programs or documentaries but not in news.

4.2.2 Live images of other television channels:

Use of images of other television channels is allowed provided we:

Do not cover the logo of the original channel.

Declare, either verbally or in writing, the source of images.

Use of images from European television channels should be according to the laws of fair trade governing the use of third party channel.

4.2.3 Internet images:

International and non-government organizations, such as the UN and its agencies and Amnesty International, usually publish their images to be freely used by the

public, provided that users abide by published general rules and restrictions imposed on dates and times.

Social sites like Facebook and YouTube publish materials owned by other parties. The use of these images may require permission from the original owners, especially if they are commercial agencies or television channels. Uploading such images on the web does not mean they are public property.

Lobbyists, special interest groups, Jihadists or armed organizations usually seek to publish, without restrictions, their websites' materials. But it is still important to identify the source of images in Aljazeera bulletins.

4.2.4 Use of archive images:

If the sources of archival images are news agencies, the feed date must be verified, as new contracts of news agencies like Reuters and AP prohibit the use of images older than one year. In dire situations Aljazeera library can communicate with the news agency in question to secure the necessary broadcasting permission.

If the source of the archive material is images purchased by Aljazeera, the library has to be consulted on restrictions or limitations imposed by the producing company. The most common type of restrictions imposed on images is the maximum duration of their use. It is usually between one to ten minutes.

5. Violence

Violence is defined as any act that aims to cause harm, injury or physical or mental abuse to a living creature. Violence can be either physical or verbal. The screaming sound of a person being tortured or killed can be distressing to an audience.

5.1 Criteria for Dealing with Violence:

1. Violent scenes should not be shown, unless they are important elements of a news story. In such cases, a verbal or written warning should be used. The warning should state that the audience may find some of the violent scenes offensive and that Aljazeera does not condone such acts.

2. If it is imperative to broadcast violent scenes, then the number of such scenes in a news bulletin as well as their total number in other programs throughout the day should be taken into account. Careful attention must be paid to avoid broadcasting multiple violent scenes in news bulletins in any given day. Even when covering wars or armed conflicts we should not air violent scenes excessively. (See Accident, Natural Disasters, and Armed Conflicts section).

3. The dead must be respected. Avoid using close up shots of dead people. If it is an absolutely necessary to air such images, then medium or long shots may be used for few short seconds. Still pictures can be used instead of videos to lessen the distressing impact of violent scenes.

4. A well-written script may lessen the need for showing violence scenes. Balance must be maintained to avoid exaggeration in describing violent incidents. Descriptive terms of extreme nature should also be avoided (i.e. a blood bath... chopped off heads and human body parts everywhere... etc. except when the very extreme nature of the violence is the story)

5.2 Re-enactment of actual events:

1- It is acceptable to re-enact characters practicing their normal routines: i.e. getting out of a car, walking a few steps, reading a paper, and sitting in front of a computer most television and documentaries adopt such practice.

2- It is unacceptable to re-enact events that are not daily routine after their occurrence to recompense for the absence of the camera. The re-enactment may be legitimate if it is made only for clarification purposes and clearly labelled as “re-enactment” and not actual events.

3- Exaggeration must be avoided in reconstructing violent scenes, even if the purpose is to closely portray the actual situation, since the purpose of a re-enactment is to provide viewers with an approximate mental image and not necessarily an exact portrayal of the event. Re-enactment of spontaneous emotions, such as asking a mother to slap her child again in a supermarket for camera purposes, has to be avoided.

4- Re-enactment of news events is not allowed. If it is imperative to do so, however, it has to be authorized in writing by the Head of News.

5- Viewers have to be informed that these are re-enactment scenes and not real images of an actual situation by posting a “re-enactment” tag on the screen during the whole broadcast, following an announcement by the presenter.

5.3 Violence Against Animals:

Careful attention must be paid to scenes involving violence against animals by humans. Certain images, such as slaughtering a dog for meat in certain countries, may not be acceptable to a wide segment of viewers.

6. Terrorism

6.1 Criteria for dealing with kidnapping:

Aljazeera network has a strict policy regarding the broadcasting of kidnapping and hostage-taking. To maintain such policy, the following guidelines should be observed.

1- We do not broadcast images of hostages in humiliating or degrading situations.

2- We do not broadcast images of kidnappers to avoid glorifying them or portray them as role models. If it is absolutely imperative to do so, however, then their faces have to be pixelate prior to broadcasting.

3- We do not air hostage confessions because they are often made under duress.

4- In all cases, approval by a senior editor should be obtained before airing such scenes.

6.2 Requirements & Criteria:

When receiving threats via telephone or other means of communication from any party claiming that they have planted a bomb somewhere, it is our duty to deal with such threats seriously and :

1- Notify security authorities immediately.

2- As soon as enough credible information about the

location of the alleged bomb becomes available, we broadcast such information. However, we do not reveal the identity of the bomb planter or the party who reported it. Instead we state that “unidentified sources have contacted Aljazeera” whether the threat was real or not. In this manner we deprive them of any unwarranted credit.

7. Elections

When dealing with election campaigns, whether presidential, parliamentary, local, general, or referendum that involve slogans designed to gain public support, full commitment to impartiality, objectivity, accuracy, and fairness is needed. Extreme attention is required to give different parties equal time, opportunities, and consideration to voice their ideas and political programs.

7.1 Issues on how to deal with elections:

Given the sensitivity of the electoral process throughout its various stages of campaigning, voting, and counting, the following points need to be taken into consideration:

1- Abide by laws, rules and regulations governing election coverage of the country. For instance we refrain from interviewing candidates or broadcast election materials on the day campaigning ends.

2- There is no harm to include names of constituency candidates in a report.

3- Election indicators and results of opinion polls must properly be used by observing the following:

Language that gives credibility (there should be credibility but explain that there is no certainty) to opinion polls should be avoided; opinion polls are mere indicators and prove nothing.

If the difference between candidates falls within a margin of error, the story should state that margin. It is advisable to use graphics to explain the margin of error.

Name the organization that conducted the opinion poll and the size of the sample.

7.2 Requirements of neutral coverage:

4- To ensure balanced and impartial election coverage the following guidelines need to be observed:

A) Speeches of candidates and their press conferences should not be transmitted live; special reports about candidates should be strictly avoided, unless other candidates are afforded similar treatment. It is sensible,

however, to record speeches and press conferences to be used later.

B) Candidates should not be given an opportunity to insult their opponents by using rude language.

C) Images of candidates' supporters, especially those carrying their banners or wearing distinct uniforms, such as specific Lebanese or Palestinian factions, should not be transmitted, while depriving other groups of the same opportunity.

D) When interviewing candidates, they should be given equal time and similar settings.

E) Rhetoric and exaggeration of election results and their implications should be avoided such as saying “the victory of the X party is likely to shake the country’s political landscape for many years to come”. When declaring election results caution should be exercised; only official announcements are used as final results, and not initial indicators or exit polls.

8. Armed Conflicts & Natural Disasters

Coverage of armed conflicts or major catastrophes, such as plane crashes, stampedes, or natural disasters, require considerable preparation and planning to produce material quickly and accurately and deal with the timing and location of such disasters.

8.1 Criteria:

The urgency of such news stories requires the following:
The live broadcast should be professional, avoid emotional reactions, and use the lowest available figures of victims, in case accurate figures cannot be verified.

Close up images of dead bodies should be avoided.

Exaggerated portrayal of vague situations or descriptive analysis, not based on facts and confirmed data, should be avoided. For instance: “the group Islamic Courts have been dealt a fatal blow by Ethiopian troops” or “Taliban has pushed coalition forces out of State of Helmand”). If information is scarce, eye witnesses can be used as sources, provided caution is exercised in recounting their narratives (See eye witnesses).

Stick to the facts. If an Aljazeera reporter is invited to be an embedded journalist and visit a certain party, whether military, official or humanitarian, he has to be very careful and cover the whole story.

If he/she fails to cover the story properly, then he/she has to clearly state the kind of difficulties preventing him/her

to report the facts. In such cases the newsroom will strive to fill in the gaps and complete the picture by involving other parties or using archive material. We may say “our correspondent is embedded with U.S. troops in Iraq, or NATO troops in Afghanistan, during military operations”. This needs to be stated clearly when broadcasting reports or live coverage.

(i.e. During the 2003 Iraq war we were the only channel which refused to embed our reporters with US troops and broadcast American views. Working totally independently, our reporters succeeded to cover not only from where missiles were launched, but also where they landed.

8.2 Portrayal of children on television:

Aljazeera does not pay children to appear on its screen, but may incur cost associated with their appearance, such as transportation.

In covering children, special attention must be given to the following points:

Children are usually eager to appear on television and tend to exaggerate or invent stories.

Coverage should not involve details of their lives without prior permission from their parents or guardians.

Permission should be obtained from parents or guardians prior to interviewing children.

In breaking stories, we may conduct interviews with children as eye witnesses without securing prior permission from their parents or guardians, while being aware of their tendency to exaggerate.

Palestinian children living in the occupied territories are often eye witnesses and frequently relate their confrontations with Israeli forces. If interviewing them is imperative, then whenever possible an independent confirmation is needed from an adult or official to verify their accounts.

In cases involving sensitive issues such as socio-psychological impacts of war on children, parents' permission must be secured before interviewing their children.

8.3 Concealment of Children's Identity:

Occasionally, it may be in the interest of children to conceal their identities, because revealing them may compromise their future safety or negatively impact their reputation.

Children are not the best judges of how to safeguard their own welfare or whether they should conceal or reveal their identities. Aljazeera reporters and producers have to consult with children's parents and secure their permission before concealing their identities.

Concealment can be achieved by pixelating faces during editing or shooting with in extremely low light to render the face very dark. The voice may be altered electronically or voiced over.

9. Dealing with Various Social Groups

9.1 Children Audience:

Due to television's powerful impact on children and young people, Aljazeera coverage should not glorify dangerous or destructive actions, for instance commending amateur motor bike racers or portraying adventurous children as heroes capable of achieving things beyond their age.

9.2 Persons with Disabilities:

People with disability should not be introduced as different kinds of people. They should be dealt with as normal people. Like other members of society they have their own dreams, ambitions, opinions and goals. Their

disabilities should not be highlighted or focused upon, unless warranted by story context. Caution should be exercised to protect their safety and dignity.

The UN uses the term “persons with disabilities”. We too should use it instead of other common terms, such as “handicapped” or “special needs.”

1- We should avoid using terms designed to engender empathy or compassion for persons with disabilities , simply because they are different from other people, as well as terms intended to boost their morale like calling them “heroes”, “victims” or “special”, except when the person in question has achieved something worthy of praise regardless of his/her disability. Excessive praise can be construed as humiliation while the ultimate respect

paid to persons with disabilities is to treat them as normal people.

2- We should pay careful attention when using medical terms when describing people with physical or mental disabilities.

3- Whenever possible we should try to get people with disabilities to talk about themselves instead of having a doctor, an escort, or a representative talk on their behalf whenever, unless of course it is hard to understand them when they talk.

9.3 Religious Minorities:

Insulting religions and religious values is unacceptable

and not part of freedom of expression. Aljazeera respects freedom of worship, rejects coercion in religion, and will not allow stereotyping or casting religious prejudice. Guests who are known to repudiate monotheistic religions and denigrate them or extremists espousing fanatical views will not be invited, unless they are important parts of a news story.

10. Special Coverage

10.1 Coverage of religious conflicts:

Religious or sectarian reasons may seem outwardly to cause armed conflicts or political strife, while their underlying causes may be political, economic or cultural. Therefore, a great deal of attention is required when dealing with such conflicts.

For example, despite the perception that religion may be the cause of conflict between Moslems and Christians in Joss province in Nigeria in 2010, some may see politico-economic reasons behind the conflict such as the unfair distribution of wealth and power among competing segments of society. This does not necessarily mean that

religious strife was not a significant factor in the conflict. The war between Lebanese Shiite and Sunni Muslims in Beirut in May 2008 is another example of seemingly religious conflict while in fact it was between two rival political blocks, March 8th and March 14.

10.2 Covering Religious Celebrations & Festivals:

When covering religious celebrations or festivals their details should fully be understood through research, experts or disciples in order to appreciate their moral and spiritual values. Aljazeera may lose credibility among an important segment of its audience by committing a mistake which may offend believers of a particular faith.

When two religious events overlap caution should be

exercised to avoid upsetting followers of a particular religion.

10.3 Dealing with religious miracles:

Claims of religious miracles should be handled professionally and neutrally. For example Christians worldwide believe that statues of the Virgin Mary exude tears, blood, or oil with miraculous healing powers, while many report seeing her in different parts of the world. Such stories should be dealt with the utmost respect by listening to such believers without prejudice but without ignoring views of religious figures, scientists, or physicians who may have different interpretations of such phenomenon.

Part B: Sub Products

1. Television News Reports (Packages)

A TV news report is a crucial format in TV journalism. It is a lot more sophisticated than the short illustrated news story (OOV, Out Of Vision) both in terms of structure and content as it contains many editorial and technical elements.

Whether the package was prepared by a field reporter or in the newsroom, it must relate in depth a story within a timeframe of no less than one minute and half and not exceed three minutes.

A television news report, or package, consists of two essential elements, an audio and a video. Together they form an audible text and corresponding images. They interact in harmony and logic to tell a story.

The In-house package depends on incoming images from news agencies in addition to images obtained by the network's correspondents.

1.1 Conditions Requiring an In-House Report:

A) A story that depends either totally or largely on news agencies, archive images or graphics.

B) A story that depends either totally or largely on in-depth treatment in-house that cannot be provided in the field.

C) Certain international events that take place in more than one country or region, for example International Day of Breast Cancer or World Day of Indigenous People.

Incoming images from our bureaus or news agencies can be included in one in-house report instead of several reports from different parts of the world.

D) An in-house report is preferable in areas where Aljazeera correspondents or bureaus may be liable to legal action or penalty by the pertinent governments.

E) When a field reporter is not well-versed with the relevant issue, such as science or economics. This issue is usually discussed between the reporter and news editors.

F) When producing a field report is impossible because there is no office or reporter in the country.

G) An in-house report would substitute a field report

if technical or logistical circumstances prevent the production of a field report.

1.2 Structure of a News Report:

A) Report introduction, or lead-in, should include the following:

A brief summary of the story highlighting the most important element of the story. The lead-in is always subject to frequent updates without impacting the body of the report.

The lead-in should be written in an interesting style to attract and induce viewers to follow the rest of the report.

The transition from introduction to the body of the report

must be smooth in order to maintain a link between the two, even when the story is updated.

Ideally, the lead-in should be between twenty and thirty seconds, unless it was a necessity approved by the programme editor on duty.

A) Report components: The report should include story details, timeframe, location, and main actors in order to :

Describe events and situations, highlight data and figures and link report components in a logical sequence of events.

Inform viewers about the essence of the story.

Inform viewers of the basic facts of the story; why, where, when, how, who and what happened, in addition to relevant developments, consequences and significance of the story.

To ensure credibility of a story journalists are required to verify accuracy of information, should avoid anonymous sources or use conjecture and speculations as facts. A reporter may conceal the identity of his sources, if revealing it may jeopardize their security. Occasionally, however, it may be necessary to reveal the identity of a source to Head of News.

To highlight a story within a context and achieves a harmonious uniformity, including events' timeframe and location. Uniformity cannot be broken unless there is

an editorial necessity such as when a piece to camera becomes a bridge between two locations or two different timeframes.

1.3 Basic Conditions Required for a News Report (Package):

A) Topic uniformity: A report should tackle one topic only and not branch off to include other unrelated matters.

B) Consistency of time: A report must follow a reasonable progression of time and avoid irrational jumps between night and day and past and present. The script must also be consistent with writing to pictures and editing guidelines.

A) Consistency of location: A report must deal with a specific location or area where leaving or coming back to it is governed by editing rules to avoid confusing viewers.

B) To explain a story and provide context and balance reporters may be required to utilize audio clips, graphics, or archive pictures.

1.4 Criteria for Using Audio Clips, Graphics, and Archive Images:

1.4.1 Sound Bites (Audio Clips) (SOT/SYNC)

When inserting a sound bite of an important figure in a report an intimation of his/her views is necessary. Such hint should be seamless to avoid giving viewers the

impression that the audio clip was inserted suddenly or without context. Whenever possible it is preferable, however, to see the person in his natural environment. The sound bite should be translated to the channel's language if it is a foreign language. If it is spoken in a strong local dialect then it may require transcribing on the screen.

1- A report may include up to four sound bites. Exceptions can be made.

2- Ideally a sound bite must not exceed twenty seconds.

1.4.2 Use of Graphics

Use of graphics: Whenever images are not available, Graphics can be used to compensate for their absence. Such utilization, as can be seen in election results or opinion polls, can also be used to simulate situations lacking images such as the route taken by a hijacked or crashed airplane.

1.4.3 Use of Archive Images

Use of archival images: In general reports use recent or new images. However, when a story covers backgrounds, archive images will be used with clear labels, stating date of event or a tag that says “archive”.

1.4.4 Use of “You Tube” Images

Use of “You Tube” images: Aljazeera may air images of YouTube or other websites, provided that their authenticity is verified. Despite their significance contribution to stories not carried by Aljazeera or news wires because of inaccessibility or extreme danger, You Tube images should only be used as a last resort.

Such images may not satisfy acceptable broadcasting standard of images or sound because they are mostly amateur videos; they are valued for their exclusivity in covering a story.

Ending a report: Whether a report is produced in-house or in the field, it needs a proper ending. A report’s ending is as important as its beginning.

1.4.5 Ending a Report

A report's conclusion may:

Summarize the whole report

Raise questions about possible developments

Leave a lasting impression by inviting viewers to think about the issue.

Reporters usually end their field reports with “piece to camera”.

1.4.6 Image, Audio & language

1- Image: Video images are usually edited to match voiced scripts while natural sounds should be balanced with narrations. Maintaining a synergy between image

and audio is vital to producing an excellent report.

2- Audio: It is the vehicle to convey a script and has to satisfy all voice narration technical requirements.

3- Language: When writing a report a number of conditions must be satisfied.

1) A clear and straightforward language free of nuanced rhetoric.

2) Short sentences as they are easier to edit and comprehend by viewers.

3) Whenever possible, technical terms and abbreviations should be explained.

4) A narrator must possess a good reading voice free of speech impediments.

5) Observe the subtle relationship between performance, meaning, and images.

2. Field Reporting

Field report is a pillar of TV journalism. It is the most important element in a news bulletin because it tells viewers: “We are there and this is what happened”. An Aljazeera reporter is relating a story from its beginning; it is our product and we are fully responsible of its content. Field reporting requires a high degree of familiarity with local environment, culture, politics, and language. This awareness may become useful in overcoming logistic problems or safety hazards.

In addition to observing objectivity, impartiality, and accuracy, field reporting has to satisfy a number of conditions:

- A) Cover all angles of a story.
- B) Verify source of information.
- C) Write to the picture.
- D) Ensure visual richness.
- E) Involve the right guests.

Create a different context from an in-house report.

A field reporter uses a direct language to address an audience as a partner while relating a story. He acts as a narrator of facts witnessed and heard by him. This gives him a good pretext to appear in the report and contribute to the story, but not exaggerate his image or presence. The reporter's appearance needs to be editorially justified to achieve the following goals:

- 1- Credibility of being at location.
- 2- Speaking exclusively with someone important.
- 3- Illustrate the danger and difficulties encountered to report the story.

A field report usually includes a “piece to camera” in which a reporter addresses viewers directly. This is normally done at the end of the report as a sign off or in the middle as a “bridge” to either shift the focus to another relevant issue or to move to a different location or timeframe.

2.1 Piece to camera:

- 1- Consolidate the story and create a link between the location and the story.

2- Reporter's appearance should match the settings. His outfit needs to match the environment, in terms of casual or formal clothing.

3- Whether to stand still or walk depends on the topic and location.

4- He must appear mentally alert and physically assume the right posture.

5- The piece to camera should not exceed 25 seconds.

6- Achieves a smooth conclusion of the story through:
State an important detail of the story that has no matching image.

Summarize the whole report

Raise questions of potential developments

Leave a lasting impression by inviting viewers to think about the issue.

Comment on the story's complexity.

7- Do not copy the outfit of a particular religious or political group which may reveal their identity.

8- Do not wear the local costume of the country or the region. (Except when there is a need to abide by certain religious restrictions observed in a particular country like the Hijab in Iran)

9- Avoid getting emotionally or politically involved in the scene while shooting the piece-to-camera, such as being inside a protesting group.

10- Do not use sunglasses except in extreme cases.

3. Sound track

It is a short television report in which a reporter records a script by telephone or other devices. Corresponding images will be added to the voice track and edited to match the narration. It is a joint effort between the reporter and a newsroom producer. Its basic editorial value is that it is from the field where a reporter who witnessed and heard the story but could not visually record and send images. Such reports are usually covered by news agencies which provide corresponding images.

Such reports may be produced for the following reasons:

- 1- An urgent need to produce a story on an important topic where images are available in the newsroom.

2- A reporter is unable to send his full report due to logistical, technical or security reasons on the ground.

3- Report duration is usually between one minute and one minute thirty seconds.

An audio track report must be pulled off the air once a full field report becomes available.

4. Profile report

A profile report is a personal biography of or a brief summary of an important place which had an impact on history.

4.1 Conditions for a Profile Report:

1) To highlight a personality which has made a significant political, religious, or cultural impact and is the focus of people's attention.

2) To focus on the state of a personality at their downfall due to a scandal, conspiracy, or a defeat. For example could be a Noble laureate being stripped of his prize.

3) A profile or biography may become an expanded obituary and look deep into the life of a deceased person and his lasting impact on people. The report may take an insightful angle and go beyond highlighting the achievement, controversies, and rise and fall of the person but look deep into the concept of rise and fall itself.

4.2 Special factors in constructing a profile report:

* Details: The aim of the profile should not be limited to satisfy viewers' curiosity, but seek answers to profound questions about the life of the individual and produce a unique profile that blends known facts of the person with reporter's impressions.

* Humanizing the story: Contrary to a news story, a profile should include humane or psychological aspects of the individual, as well as those who helped him reach the peak or caused his downfall.

* Context: A profile may look into political, social or psychological events which had an impact on the life of the individual and establish a link to his current situation.

* Beyond Biography: A good profile goes beyond a limited, cold, neutral biography and adds a human touch to the story.

* Find A Story: A key success factor in writing profiles is to find an interesting chapter in the life of the individual

to use at the beginning of the profile to attract viewers' attention.

* Begin with a quote: A profile may start with a quote or a clip of the profiled famed individual. For example, the sound bite of the late Palestinian leader Arafat “They want me a prisoner, or a fugitive but I tell them they will only get me as a martyr, martyr, martyr” can be used at the top of the profile to highlight the suspicions surroundings of his death.

4.3 Language:

- Writing a profile represents an opportunity for journalists to reveal their language skills and writing styles.

- A profile is not limited to presenting facts; it provides ample room to exhibit literary and artistic skills, including the use of symbolism.

- Titles and job descriptions can be used in profiles. For example, the late Libyan leader Qaddafi used to call himself “King of kings of Africa”)

- Viewed in different perspectives, time and place can transcend the normal or familiar abstract. For example, one can say “ The founder of Hamas movement Sheikh Ahmed Yasin was born twelve years before the creation of the state of Israel” instead of saying “He was born in 1936”. Or when talking about Obama’s history-making victory we may make reference to Martin Luther King’s famous line by saying “Five decades after his death,

Martin Luther King’s dream has been fulfilled”.

Open ended profile report makes space for the audience to contemplate and think about the person even after the report is finished.

5. Background Report (Backgrounder)

Most news stories have backgrounds. And to properly cover such stories knowledge of their backgrounds is critical. A swift background review may put the story in its wider context.

Making a brief reference, in conjunction with an OOV, to a background may not be sufficient in complex stories. For example, when we say “U.S. and Russia are conducting talks aimed at reducing their nuclear arsenals”, the report requires highlighting the long history of nuclear arms talks and treaties concluded between the two countries. Or when we say “The strategic city of Kismayo has fallen to the hands of the Somali forces after driving out Al-Shebab fighters”... How important the city is, why is it

strategic, and what does it mean to both parties? Such questions need to be answered in a separate report called a backgrounder which aims to achieve the following:

A) Highlight the political, economic, or social background of a major news story that is hard to understand if it is covered without context.

B) Understand previous parts of a story still significant in shaping current events.

C) Collect integral details of a news story that has been severed from its past. For example, when an armed group decides to lay down its arms and adopt a peaceful path.

D) A major scientific breakthrough making specific

medical practices outdated or the discovery of a new drug that cures previously incurable disease.

E) A major political change that creates a new reality, such as cession of southern Sudan, or efforts of GCC countries to establish a union.

F) Outline the political landscape ahead of the country's parliamentary or presidential elections.

G) Commemorating the anniversary of a major event that still impacts peoples' lives, for example the 1967 war in the Middle East.

H) Recall the history of an on-going event to highlight its previous stages and link them it to the present. For

example, selecting a new head of the Syrian National Transitional Council may entail reviewing early stages of the council's formation.

I) Duration of background reports are recommended to be between two and three and half minutes.

6. Video Wall

A video wall is a relatively new media tool whose impact and utility has not been fully exploited. They come in various sizes and levels of sophistication and allow presenters to be seen standing or walking in newsrooms, provide a panoramic wider shot of the studio set and visualize clearly displayed material.

6.1 Types of video wall:

6.1.1 Still video wall

This type of video walls display still images only. In a pre-planned arrangement with the producer, the director changes the images during the broadcast of a news story.

Upon loading the script onto the “auto cue” system, a presenter’s instructions are usually inserted into the text to ease shifting from one image to the next, thus ensuring a smooth and natural flow of images.

Normally, the presenter is expected to stick to the text and avoid ad-libbing. In such cases the following must be observed:

- 1) Sentences are kept short.
- 2) A reasonable amount of time should be allocated for comment on each image.
- 3) Images must be arranged in a logical sequence to tell a visual story even in the absence of a script.
- 4) Video walls depend on a dynamic relationship between the presenter, the screen, and the viewer. The presenter needs to use the pace allocated for his movement, his

body language and vocal tone to present the displayed material in a manner which gives the impression that he is talking freely to the viewer.

5) The background image consists of a still image and a changing text written in large fonts. Usually the presenter must stand next to the video wall and read the script from the auto-cue. Synchronization between what is displayed on the screen and what the presenter is reading is critical to enhance the impact of the two combined elements, script and displayed image.

6.1.2 Pre-produced video wall

This type of video wall has the following features:

1- The presenter is able to move part or all of the displayed image by swiping his hand across the screen or by pressing a button.

2- Videos can be played on part of video walls. In brands with large screens the section designated for text remains constant while videos are played on another section. Presenter's prepared script can be brief or he may adlib while a video is being played. Videos are often played to prove a point or to remind viewers of an event associated with the story.

When a video wall is 10-15 meters long it can be utilized to narrate a particular story. Selecting the appropriate corresponding images becomes a major component of the production, providing the main source of visual material.

The following consideration must be taken into account:

A) Presenter's script is synchronized with the images. The last image may not necessarily always be the end of the story and the presenter can go back to the middle or even the beginning of the video wall to continue with his story.

B) A large video wall may be accompanied by three cameras equipped with auto cue systems. This may require a high degree of coordination between the

director, producer, and presenter and few rehearsals to ensure a smooth live production. The presenter may need to speak to a far-off camera shooting a wide shot of the set to show the dimensions of the studio and the size of the video wall.

7. Feature Story

Feature stories are not hard-core politics but they can tackle political issues from social, economic or cultural angles and must include exciting, entertaining and visually thrilling images. A feature story takes the camera to the common people and show aspects of their daily lives; their main characters are ordinary people, not politicians.

7.1 Topics of a feature report include:

- A) Exciting human interest stories.
- B) Art events, festivals and celebrations.
- C) Cultural and traditional issues of interest to viewers.
- D) Personal experiences
- E) Social transformations and evolutions of societies.

F) Controversial social issues and problems.

7.2 Necessary language and style of features:

1) Used language must be emotive, flexible, and personal to distinguish it from language used in news.

2) Succinct to allow images and natural sound to speak for themselves.

3) Given the absence of news power to draw an audience, an exciting storytelling style should be employed to attract viewers.

4) Allow the story's main characters to tell their own stories while keeping reporter's role at minimum in order to focus audience's attention at important themes.

8. Walk & Talk Report

1) Produce a creative piece to camera (PTC), totally dissimilar to ones produced for news stories.

The style is similar to making a documentary film where a narrator carries out a dialogue with someone or talks to a camera in a medium to long shot.

This style has become one of the main tools used by field reporters to convey their first-hand impressions. It enables them to capture what is going on around them and tie a subject to a location, with the least amount of editing required.

8.1 Reasons for using walk and talk report:

- It offers a fast way to produce and air a report until other elements needed for a proper package become available.
- It is utilized to add colour and variety to a bulletin.

8.2 Conditions for walk and talk:

The following should be observed:

A) Interviews: The norm in a walk and talk report is to see the reporter walking and talking alone. But he may also take quick comments from bystanders, for example asking protesters in a demonstration about their motives or expectations or shop keepers and shoppers in a

marketplace about a recent decision to abolish subsidies on certain goods.

B) Consistency of location: The rule is to see the reporter in a single location. But with prior coordination with the news room, exceptions can be made to record in multiple locations to enhance the story, in terms of content and duration.

C) Editing: The rule is that no editing is required except at the beginning and end of the report; minimum editing may be required in multiple locations.

D) Directness: The standard style is that the reporter adlibs while walking. It can be live or recorded. The reporter should look directly into the camera while talking.

8.3 Requirements:

Walk-and-talks require mental alertness and attention, as it is based on adlibbing. This requires:

Proper language and a good voice.

Absolute coordination with the cameraman to achieve the highest level of harmony between images and words.

Employ phrases that include “probably or possibly” in case a developing story may reveal contradicting or different information from that of the reporter’s.

9. First-person report

This format is commonly used to highlight the impact of major events on the lives of people and their future. The report may portray an extraordinary representative event, where a person gives an onsite account of his personal experience, in words and images that took place within his environment. Images can be played over his narration to illustrate the event. A first-person report focuses on the impact of events and policies on individuals, as narrated by the subject, not a reporter, analyst or expert.

9.1 Reasons to use First-Person Report:

The first-person report aims at:

A. Examining the experience of an individual within the context of a larger event. This is particularly effective when this experience is indicative of the event's impact or consequences on the lives of a larger group of people. In this format, the character is given space to tell his own story because his experience is not limited to him but reflects the experience of the entire group or society facing the same event. An example of a first-person report is a university graduate who has been struggling for months to look for a job to match his degree; being unemployed for a long time he was compelled to accept a job outside his specialty or reflective of his qualification.

B. To shed light on talented or gifted individuals with outstanding achievements not only to showcase exemplary models, but also to celebrate human achievements.

9.2 Linguistic requirements in a first-person report:

The Al Jazeera reporter lowers the level of his/her language to the level of the character relating the story in his/her own language. Lowering the linguistic standard gives rise to a number of requirements, including:

1. A clear language, as close as possible to the highest linguistic standard, should be used where translation or paraphrasing will not be required.
2. If the character's language is foreign, his narration needs to be translated.
3. If the character uses a heavy local dialect that is impossible to be comprehend by a large segment of

viewers, then his narration must be paraphrased, even if he hails from a native English-speaking country.

4. The first-person report must observe all editorial and technical requirements applicable to news reports, in terms of voice, image and performance.

5. It is recommendable that the report duration does not exceed two minutes.

6. The reporter/producer voice or image should not be included in the first-person report; all images should be that of the narrating character whether he appears in the frame or not. If he is not seen in the frame then all corresponding image should be related to him whether is walking or sitting.

7. As products of Al Jazeera, all editorial and technical criteria will be applied to first-person reports, even if its journalists or reporters do not speak or appear in them.

9.3 First-Person Report Criteria:

In such reports, a cameraman will shoot the character while moving within relevant places to his story, for example his workplace or coffee-shop where he spends most of his joblessness time. Multiple interviews with the character are filmed at different locations and then edited. Even in the absence of reporter's voice and image the story should maintain its own journalistic style and flavour. In essence the reporter/producer is the ghost writer and he is responsible for moulding the story's frame, including smart introduction and conclusion.

Given the nature of the first-person report it will require a special introduction but not a reporter's Aston. Instead a reference to the reporter is made in the introduction.

10. Out of vision news items (OOVs)/(ULAY) underlay

An OOV is a news format broadcast as video footage. It is recommended that it is to be written in a concise manner ranging in duration between 20-35 seconds and structurally falls into two categories :

10.1 Introduction:

The OOV's introduction includes the most important elements of the story, regardless whether there is corresponding images or not. The introduction, read by the presenter in vision, should include the latest development of the story, since it is not subject to constraints resulting from images.

The duration of the introduction should not exceed 15 seconds under any circumstance, unless sanctioned by the editor in charge, nor less than eight seconds which is the minimum duration of presenter in vision, to avoid confusing viewers.

10.2 Editorial Requirements of OOV's Body:

It is the video footage of the news item, summed up in the introduction. In writing the script the reporter should highlight the main elements of the story to match its visual sequence. While concise in nature, an OOV should carefully determine which element should be emphasized while objectively arranging story elements in a descending order of importance without unnecessary prolongation or insertion of superfluous information. It is important to note

that information mentioned in the introduction should not be repeated in the script.

An OOV must observe all editorial and technical criteria, as detailed below:

1. OOVs duration should not exceed 20 seconds.
2. Linguistically and grammatically accurate.
3. Concise using short sentences due to its brevity.
4. Using clear and direct language free of metaphors.
5. Accurate and fact-checked.

6. It should be up to date reflecting the latest story development at the time of broadcast.

7. It should have contextual depth including flashback to its background, in case it is related to previous incident or event.

8. The script should retain an objective sequence, in case it is linked to a previous or subsequent news item in the bulletin.

9. The OOV should have an editorial coherence between its introduction and the script; while the introduction's last sentence should be independent of the visuals it should still be relevant to the story.

Example of unacceptable OOV:

Activists posted images of protesters in night demonstrations (OOV):

In various areas in Homs. Residents of Joorat Al Shayah, Al Qarabees and Al Waar neighbourhoods took to the streets chanting slogans, calling for freedom and demanding the downfall of the regime.

Example of acceptable OOV:

Activists posted images of protesters in night demonstrations in various areas in Homs.

(OOV) Residents of Joorat Al Shayah, Al Qarabees and Al Waar neighbourhoods took to the streets chanting

slogans, calling for freedom and demanding the downfall of the regime.

To maintain harmony between images and script and to adhere to video editing technical requirements, the following guidelines should be observed:

1. OOVs should include the latest and most significant images available.
2. Images should be updated as soon as new ones become available, whether in terms of quality or content, while the script should be updated to stay in sequence with images.

3. Images should be time-sensitive and duly labelled (latest pictures, yesterday, last week, or archive pictures) to avoid confusing viewers.

4. Videos' natural background sound should be kept to ensure content liveliness.

5. The gallery director should end the video footage and its natural sound once the presenter is finished reading. This requires that the last scene should not be under three seconds long to ensure smooth fading out.

6. The final cut out can be delayed and the natural sound is slightly raised to convey the environment surrounding the news, after the reporter had furnished an explanation of the shots.

7. A description of OOV's footage content and its scenes is necessary to eliminate the need to re-watch the footage whenever the text is updated.

10.3 Technical Requirements of OOV:

Although perceived as the first approach to news and its simplest format, in fact an OOV require a great deal of writing skills. As a story, an OOV can be further developed or left alone. There are several reasons to adopt an OOV as news format, namely:

1. Significance of news: Usually news items of minor significance can adopt the OOV format, but this is not necessarily a mandatory rule; an OOV can be the initial format to address a story, perhaps representing the

most significant news material available at the time of broadcasting the bulletin.

2. Shortage of footage: This is the primary reason to use an OOV as a bulletin headline when an OOV is insufficient to produce a news package. For example; the initial footage of presidential assassination or plane crash.

3. Urgency: Broadcasting a news item as an OOV, as soon as the first footage is received to ensure an immediacy of broadcasting. The story's significance and urgency mandates its immediate broadcasting, without waiting for an elaborate handling as a proper news package.

4. Response to specific editorial needs: An OOV, which can be the most suitable format to summarize a story,

can also be utilized to cover an entire story and used in combination with an expanded interview, where an OOV acts as a news package.

11. Breaking News

Breaking news is a significant and grave event or development which mandates an immediate airing as a 'breaking news' and assumes priority over any other news item. In consultation with the on-duty editor, the producer should make a decision to air the breaking news and simultaneously reflect that in writing on the screen while the presenter announces the story. He may also decide to set up an immediate live interview with a reporter to provide more details of the breaking story.

11.1 Reasons for Breaking News:

1. To provide an instant live coverage of an event and provide viewers with the latest development.

2. To score “scoops” and consolidate the network’s reputation as a network capable of gathering, covering and following significant events.

It is imperative not to be entrapped by a desire to score scoops that are not genuine, where such stories are only natural development with no inherent significance.

It is vital that a ‘breaking news’ should represent a radical shift in a story or give rise to new realities that may significantly impact the entire current state of affairs.

11.2 Pitfall to watch for:

Such an approach may reinforce the value and gravity of the breaking news where it is enough for a literate viewer

to read the Aston of the 'Breaking News' to realise that a grave event has taken place.

Thus, the following guidelines must be observed:

A. The reporter on the scene or nearby should be contacted first before conducting an interview with someone else.

B. No story should be played as a 'Breaking News' unless it represents a radical shift within a story or an event, or if is a new event giving rise to subsequent new realities.

C. The Aston of a 'Breaking News' should appear on the screen not less than thirty seconds.

D. The Aston of a 'Breaking News' should be repeated a

several times according to the significance of the story.

E. The breaking news should be perused in the next bulletin by interviewing the pertinent reporter or related individual, per the significance of the story.

F. The decision when to play “Breaking News” should be carefully considered. For example it is inappropriate to show a ‘Breaking News’ Aston of an explosion in Yemen, while broadcasting live pictures of demonstrations in Syria.

G. The Aston of a ‘Breaking Story’ should not overwrite Astons describing live event or introducing a live guest.

H. Certain “Breaking News” are scripted and read by the presenter while the bulletin is being broadcast where

the presenter will make a note of a follow up in the next bulletin.

I. Certain breaking stories require interruption to the bulletin and shift it to special coverage, even if it is for a short period of time.

J. Certain breaking stories require extending the bulletin and shift it to a special coverage to cover the unfolding story.

K. In all cases, the decision to interrupt the bulleting and shift it to special coverage should be taken in consultation with the on-duty editor.

L. In major developing stories, the live broadcast should return to the headlines at the top of the hour to prevent potential coverage gaps, which may induce viewers to switch to another channel.

12. Still Images & Lead all (Graphics)

Live broadcasting is the major foundation on which TV news is built. If other methods are used to present news items, then it is an exception and not the rule.

Some news items are played as CAP, CAP/ANIS, or LEADALL, which are various news formats that depend principally on text, graphics, photos, including images of people, maps, national flags and other depiction.

12.1 Reasons to use still images (Graphics):

Graphics are used for:

A. Playing an important news item for which there are no images or videos available.

B. Playing a news item that cannot be played with still images, such as statistics, charts or figures.

12.2 Types of still images:

Still images fall into the following categories:

A. CAP: A news format that depends on still pictures or maps and where live pictures are unavailable. Using this format a news item cannot be played longer than 20 seconds, including the introduction and main script read by the presenter on which the still image is floating.

B. CAP/ANI: This format is more sophisticated than the CAP, as it is comprised of two separate CAPs played in succession.

C. LEADALL: This format is suitable for a news item with different stances, statistics, figures, or charts. These images are usually linked with short texts outlining facts in a duration not exceeding 90 seconds, where it is not necessary to match the text read by the presenter.

12.3 Editorial Criteria for Still-Image News:

When writing a news item with a still-image, all editorial criteria must be observed, including the use of proper language, accurate facts and balanced positions.

Technical standards of sound and graphics must also be observed.

In a still-image news item, the following should be observed.

A. In a news item involving a CAP, the introduction read by the presenter should be longer than the script covered with still images.

B. A still image should not be played longer than seven seconds.

C. A CAP can be comprised of one or many images, but not more than four.

D. Transition from one image to another, zoom, pan or animation, is to avoid tedium.

E. CAP is dropped as soon as fresh pictures, even archival ones, become available, changing the news item into an OOV format.

F. Technical criteria of fonts, colours, and graphics should be observed.

G. Still images used should be relevant to the text.

13. Clips

A clip is either an audio or audio-video extract of a recorded exclusive or non-exclusive press conference a speech, interview or public statement played for its newsworthiness.

A clip gains newsworthiness when the individual himself is the clip's source of the news, often as someone who made a statement, comment, raised an issue or took a certain position. The clip may contain a testimony by an average individual on an extraordinary event, where such testimony provides an invaluable clarification.

13.1 Linguistic features of a clip report:

The clip's language cannot be subjected to grammatical or lexical adaptation or rectification because newsworthiness takes precedence over verbal accuracy.

Linguistically, a clip may fall in one of the following three categories:

A. When it spoken in a clear and understandable language, even if grammatically incorrect, and it should be left unaltered.

B. When the clip's language is foreign, it should be accurately translated into a Standard English. Simultaneous interpretation can be used once, until

subsequent accurate translation is prepared and voiced over.

C. When the clip is in a heavy incomprehensible dialect of the channel's language, it should accurately be transcribed into a Standard English and his transcribed spoken words shown at the bottom of the screen.

13.2 Audio Requirements of Clip:

All audio technical requirements should be observed, including:

A. To ensure sound/voice quality (See Technical Requirements).

B. To leave at least three seconds of the speaker's original

natural voice at the beginning of the clip, if he is not speaking in English, to impart credibility and substantiate the attribute.

C. A clip should end with the end of translation. For editorial value purposes, the last three seconds of the clip should be played out to emphasize its significance.

It's meaningless to play out the original natural sound of a clip if it is in a language alien to viewers.

13.3 Video Requirements of Clips:

All technical video requirements, in terms of quality and editing, should be maintained, and the following guidelines should be observed:

A. A cut-away shot can be used in editing to interpose one

segment of the clip and link it to an unrelated significant segment of the clip.

B. The speaker's Aston should be played out two seconds before his appearance and last at least five seconds and appear after the subtitle, if he speaks in a foreign language.

C. An audio clip cannot be longer than 50 seconds. But in imperative situations, a second clip with shorter introduction highlighting its content can be prepared.

D. A clip must begin with a comprehensible sentence in the original language.

E. Natural sound should be maintained throughout the

clip while attention must be paid when recorded materials are sent by Al Jazeera's bureaus.

F. Clip's translated audio should be voiced over by the same gender.

14. Astons

14.1 Editorial Purposes of Astons:

An Aston is a written text displayed at the bottom of the screen for a number of editorial purposes:

A. To inform viewers of breaking news.

B. To briefly sum up the news and highlight its important aspects, especially during coverage of live events, interviews, or speeches by heads of states.

C. To introduce reporters, correspondents, presenters or guests.

D. To quote significant parts of speaker's speech.

E. To warn viewers of offensive materials, violent images, etc.

F. To shed light on the background of an unfolding story.

The Aston's language should be concise and use the minimum number of words in the channel's linguistic style. It is not enough to employ grammatically sound sentences but the Aston should also be accurate and expressive. Thus, editorial and technical standards and Aston writing guidelines should be duly observed.

14.2 Requirements & pitfalls of Astons:

The following guidelines should be observed:

- A. The proper use of grammar and sound language structure.
- B. Accurate attribution and quotes.
- C. Accurate use of facts, information and paraphrasing.
- D. Use Al Jazeera style guidelines of names, titles, designations and names of organisations, cities and countries.

E. Refrain from use of dots and exclamation and question marks.

F. Ensuring a germane link between the Aston and broadcast material.

G. Not all used Astons are identical. In a developing story a prime Aston will be played at intervals, as it represents the essence of the story.

Immediacy: The Aston must express the present status, which requires immediate and constant follow up of developing stories and unfolding events.

15. Inset

An Inset is a strong indicative image taken from a news story, OOV or package and used as a presenter background and a visual element of a story. If appropriate images are unavailable, pertinent expressive graphics can be used. In all cases, images, whether simple or complex, should meet all technical requirements.

Upon choosing an inset image, the following guidelines should be followed:

1. Not to use offensive or disturbing images, regardless of their aesthetic or expressive nature, for example images related to female sports or art shows, etc.

2. A single inset can be used with multiple interrelated stories, such as when providing extensive coverage of news issues.

16. Teaser

A teaser is an in vision clip of a reporter or a presenter in the field or in a studio used as a promotional material for a story or a programme from the field. For example, the following is a teaser by a reporter: “I am Robin Wood in Cairo, join me in a few minutes to examine the unfolding turmoil engulfing Egypt in the aftermath of Mubarak’s downfall”.

- Its duration is between 15-20 seconds.
- A teaser can be a promotion for an item within a news bulletin, a programme, or a window within a programme. It can also be for a number of items of an entire news bulletin, within which it may include short promos with a total duration of up to 40 seconds.

The language has to be sleek, attractive, simple and exciting. Example: “On the top of mount Jenting in Malaysia, touching the clouds is no longer a dream... I, Steve Riley, will be with you shortly at 20,000 feet above sea level to watch a view considered to be a legend.”

Using the camera to pan or zoom before it is focused on the reporter or the presenter to complete his statement is just an example of how creative the reporter or the producer can be when making a teaser. The reporter or the presenter should be wearing the same outfit used during the actual report or programme.

17. TV onscreen presentation

TV presentation, which includes a number of different formats, including news bulletins, interviews, talk shows, debate shows and town hall meetings among others, can be grouped together under the designation of “visual performance” where image is one its three pillars, in addition to content and performance.

TV presentation is both a gift and an art that can be learned. During his career a presenter continues to gain various presentation skills through his daily practice, imitating famous presenters and copy some of their popular skills as well as through an on-going training. Technological advancement and the emergence of modern TV

equipment give presenters a chance to acquire the latest presentation techniques and skills.

Consequently, regardless how gifted and naturally talented a presenter is, he must continue to acquire knowledge, experience and skills, rendering his professional performance a continuing hard effort.

This brief note is intended to highlight some of the relevant key points in TV presentation.

17.1 Formats of TV onscreen presentation:

TV presentation can be divided into:

1. Presentation of news bulletins;
2. Presentation of TV shows, including live or recorded

long or short programs, in or outside a studio with one or multiple guests.

3. Public shows; and

4. Special coverage shows.

In all the above-mentioned presentation formats, there are three key components that constitute the building blocks of TV presentation critical for conducting interviews and presenting programs. Keeping these three primary components constantly in mind throughout his daily practice will undoubtedly not only improve presenters' performance, but will also give them the chance to focus at higher goals:

17.2 Three key components of TV presentation:

17.2.1 Image

17.2.2 Performance

17.2.3 Content

17.2.1 Image

It is what viewers see on the screen and represents a direct link between them and the presenter. Although it's a common mistake, but a large segment of viewers measure presenter's performance solely by the image they see.

Image is not limited to presenter's look but encompasses other parts of the screen; the set, camera movement,

lighting, and materials used by a presenter such as graphics.

It is critical to pay attention to the image seen on the screen and improve its visual value; an important matter with direct significant impact on viewers' impressions.

Therefore, polishing onscreen image, drawing presenters' attention to its various elements, conducting short term training courses, including how to handle a video wall, and presenting public shows on a stage which require choreography and interactions, are all important issues that cannot be left to chance.

Although there are other secondary issues pertaining to onscreen image, it is inappropriate to raise them here

and Al Jazeera technical standards guidebook can be consulted for further details.

Here, we shall address some of the most important and relevant aspects to onscreen image:

17.2.1.1 Face

Presenter's face is the focal point which captivates viewers' attention during a broadcast. A male presenter's makeup should be simple and in agreement with the concept manhood while female presenter's lipstick should be modest to avoid viewers' resentment, or distraction. (See technical standards of presenters and their outfits).

17.2.1.2 Hair

A presenter's hair, especially female, should be well combed without excess or banality.

17.2.1.3 Outfit

Although presenters have a great deal of personal freedom to choose their own clothes and colours, a level of coordination and consultation with the stylist and makeup artist is needed (See technical standards of presenters).

17.2.1.4 Facial features and expressions

Viewers can discover the inner feelings of a presenter by observing his facial expressions and listening to his voice.

Some viewers have developed the ability to read and interpret presenters' facial features, especially when he is agitated, biased, distracted, or inattentive to what a guest is saying. Therefore, it is vital that presenters should develop the necessary skills to control their emotions and facial features to avoid misinterpreting his words.

Since presentation entails various degrees of acting, presenters on certain occasions are required to act out the text they read during major events and may even dramatize it. On such occasions presenters may find

themselves delivering the script using various facial expressions, frowning, smiling, or using their eyebrows to inject energy and emotions into the text. They read to attract viewers but without exaggeration.

The skill to act out a script varies from one presenter to another; some presenters find it enjoyable to do so is part of their nature; others don't. A presenter should be cognizant of the space available to him to act out the script as it increases in presenting live town hall- meeting shows and decreases in conducting short news interviews.

Presenter's character, cultural background, life experience and political affiliation, impact the way he is perceived by viewers. The points below should not be considered

comprehensive parameters but guiding points which when invoked would ensure impartiality and objectivity.

Therefore, a presenter should:

- Be firm, but not hostile, drawing a clear distinction between the two positions, to avoid offending the guest.
- Be smiling and cheerful when required, without being excessive or mocking.
- Be dynamic, not wooden, but without arbitrary movement or excessive hand gestures.
- Control tone and pitch; screaming is not evidence of valid points or logical argument.

- Avoid cliché, banality, vulgar phrases, or movements of mouth, head or hand which may offend the guest.
- Be able to employ his facial expressions relevant to the situation and discussed topic to maintain an animated and dynamic performance and eliminate uniformity in all situations.

17.2.1.5 Presenter's movement

A presenter may use the way he sits, hand gestures, body and head movements, and how he holds his pen, paper, glasses or computer mouse to project a charismatic image.

In due course, every presenter will find a comfortable sitting

position and personal manner to use his paraphernalia. It is neither wise nor possible to dictate a single presentation style for all presenters, limit their body movements in the studio or curb their freedom of creativity.

For example, presenters should be given enough space to select the most comfortable way to stand, move, turn, and handle graphics on a video wall.

Adopting a most comfortable and suitable way to sit and move achieves the most elegant and stylish look on the screen. The following segments will highlight key issues. They should not be deemed as a fixed blueprint cast in iron but as important points to steer presenters away from troubles.

17.2.1.6 Hands

1. Hands should not be placed under the table at any time during the show.
2. Arms should not be crossed in a manner showing lack of interest.
3. The index finger should not be pointed towards a guest.

17.2.1.7 Onstage Walking

Walking on a stage to present a public show requires choreographing a movement plot in coordination with the director. The plot should be carefully laid down and presenter's standing spots and course of movement should be cautiously designed to allow the director to take the best possible shots during the show.

This kind of shows requires pre-planning to select the best spot to place the podium in relation to the audience. The presenter should adhere to the movement plot and standing spots as designed and agreed upon.

When objects, such as graphics or visual aids, are used in such shows, not only timings should be fixed beforehand, but also the manner in which such materials will be used. The exit and its route should also be agreed upon.

17.2.2 Performance

Performance is the second key component of TV presentation. Polls conducted on TV shows, presenters, and stations indicate that performance leaves a lasting

impression on viewers' minds, whether positive or negative.

What is meant by performance? It is the essence of the audio-visual on the screen, combining content with image in a coherent format.

There are two core components that determine presenter's performance. These two pillars are impacted by his experience, knowledge, qualifications, linguistic skills and creative powers.

17.2.2.1 Credibility

Credibility is one of the most important goals a presenter aspires to achieve and maintain. This goal is achieved with the passage of time and accumulation of experience, especially when trust is created and cemented with viewers. To establish such trust, presenters should possess and properly employ a number of prerequisites, practices and abilities.

A. To present credible, fact-checked news and information, avoiding speculations and hearsay.

B. To deliver logical analysis and in-depth presentation based on informed sources, well-established facts, and quotes from experts and decision-makers.

C. To stand at equal distance from opposing political parties and avoid espousing their views or positions.

D. To cover an issue comprehensively and not focus solely on a particular aspect, thus losing sight of the entire picture.

E. Provide different perspectives to enrich the debate.

F. Maintain a coherent, balanced position and not change values and political position to suit changing political situations.

G. Able to swiftly respond to any unexpected situation or idea while presenting a debate show.

H. To embrace the motto ‘the only constant variable is the quest to seek knowledge and news,’ and convey them to viewers.

I. To furnish the latest information and present the truth without vanity, hubris, or conceit.

J. To underscore credibility, the maximum possible opposing views to those expressed by the presenter or espoused by the network should be allowed and not dismissed.

17.2.2.2 Control

It means the presenter is in command of the bulletin, show or interview, including their corresponding tempo

and content as well as behaviour of guests. This is not limited to presenting the show but also includes handling technical glitches or editorial errors, which require a great deal of experience, command, inventiveness and occasionally improvisation. The need to strengthen presenters' controlling skills acquires greater importance when presenting live or public shows.

In which cases control means:

A. Ability to cover all issues already highlighted as part of the show.

B. Ability to manage the duration of the show and time allocated to each part.

C. The presenter should be able to ask all key questions, be cognizant of guests' tactics to avoid answering questions or steering the discussion in a certain direction and should be able to put the show back on tracks.

D. Ability to manage heated disputes among guests and maintain full command over the show's progress, duration, and tempo, but without being rude or offensive.

E. To stop sarcasm, insult, offensive language, or depraved act.

F. To skilfully deal with unexpected guest withdrawal during live shows.

G. Prevent any guest from manipulating the situation by threatening to withdraw from the show.

H. The presenter should be able to immediately recognize vital pieces of information when they are introduced by guests, which may change the dynamics of the show, and cleverly weave it into the broad themes of the show. The new facts should be fully examined and guests should be asked to react and comment on them.

I. Ability to maintain self-control; avoid any impulsive reaction or trade insults with guests who should be given a chance and time to reconsider their mistakes and apologise.

17.2.2.3 Charisma

In addition to achieving the two primary goals of credibility and control, the dream of all presenters is to achieve the third vital goal of charisma; the highest accolade a presenter can receive is to describe him as charismatic. So, what is charisma and how can it be acquired?

Charisma is a Greek word that means ‘gift of grace,’ It describes the charm or attraction that inspires devotion in others. Few presenters are endowed with charisma, simply because it is not the product of experience, knowledge, and professional skills only, but also the result of blending natural gifts with perfect performance. Therefore, it is difficult to define the requirements or criteria for acquiring charisma because it is the result of knowledge, intellect,

character, wits, common sense, humour and many other traits.

In summary, every presenter should aspire to achieve the three goals of credibility, control and charisma.

17.2.3 Content

Undoubtedly a handsome male presenter or pretty female presenter helps attract more viewers while exceptional performance leaves a lasting impression on them. However, good looks and excellent performance alone are insufficient without rich, in-depth content augmented by informed opinions and backed by facts, to give viewers the knowledge and facts they seek.

Content is the magnet, without which a presenter, regardless of beauty or eloquence, will fail to attract viewers if it is marred by distorted information and shallow analysis. Solid content is the indisputable path to viewers' hearts and minds. So, what is content?

1. It includes everything a presenter says; information, ideas, views, quotes as well as what is displayed on the screen such as images, figures, graphics, reports, etc.

2. A good presenter strives to diversify content, without resorting to speculation or hearsay or relying on catch phrases or clichés.

3. Use reliable sources, certified studies and fact-checked data to conduct thorough research of all

aspects of an issue. And since most public issues are diverse and complex, they shouldn't be examined from a narrow perspective.

For example, the Palestinian conflict cannot exclusively be covered from an Arab-Muslim perspective only; the Israeli, American and European views should also be highlighted, regardless how contradictory to the Palestinian views they may be.

4. All issues can be discussed at varying degrees; simple, normal or highly sophisticated levels. Because the world of television is not a science and viewers range in sophistication from university professors to average individuals with limited knowledge, therefore while issues

should be covered in depth, they should also be tackled in a direct fashion, easily understood by average viewers.

5. Using common sense and accurate information presenters should be able to interview and debate politicians and experts and not appear or sound like pupils receiving instructions from their teachers. Confident and alert of answers to his questions, a presenter should also know how to cover an issue and properly divide it into sub-themes in a timely manner.

18. Vox Pops

Vox populi, or vox pop, is a Latin term meaning voice of the people. In TV journalism it is common to inquire about public opinion and people's position vis-à-vis specific issues, especially controversial ones.

Broadcasting views of the general public cannot be considered a scientific survey but should be seen as an attempt to get closer to the people, listen to their concerns, and observe their spontaneous reactions to a given issue. It is a random attempt to gauge public opinion towards a socio-political, economic or ideological issue by consecutively playing views of some people after editing them. This random survey must meet a number of conditions:

A. Worthiness: where the concerned issue is important, divisive or controversial. It is unacceptable to solicit people's reaction towards the religion and faith of other groups.

B. Diversity of samples: Randomness in sampling, in terms of gender, age and professional background, is imperative.

C. Uniformity: A single question is asked about a specific issue to discover different opinions.

D. Balance: recorded vox pops should be played in an impartial manner to reflect varying degrees of opinion but without deliberate editing to favour one camp at the expense of another. A presenter may mention that the

majority of vox pops are in favour of a specific issue and that these views reflect opinion of their speakers.

E. Equality: Vox pops should be of equal duration, say 15 seconds, to ensure equal opportunities.

F. Duration of the vox pop segment should not exceed one minute and thirty seconds (90 seconds).

As long as vox pops are comprehensible, they should be played in their original language and voice of individuals, regardless of dialect or accent, otherwise subtitles should be used, to keep speaker's original voice. The microphone used to record vox pops should be carefully selected in accordance with technical standards of voice/audio.

The camera angle to shoot speakers should be changed to avoid the appearance of one sided picture. The screenshot should meet all technical standards in accordance with Al Jazeera style.

19. Chapter Head

It is a short promotional material employing all TV elements, including audio, video, graphics, text and music, to highlight an event or special coverage. All audio-video editorial and technical criteria should be observed.

19.1 When to use chapter heads:

Chapter head is used:

1. For extended coverage of developing important stories, such as Arab Spring revolutions.
2. For a special or an extended coverage during which Al Jazeera is dedicated to a given issue, such as elections.

3. When promoting a series of field reports covering a given issue, in which the issue is tackled beyond routine news manner.

4. For coverage of breaking news and its ramifications, such as an assassination, natural disaster, etc.

19.2 Editorial Requirements of Chapter Head:

Editorially, a chapter head should go to the heart of the story while technically should strive to achieve an image of beauty of image, serving as a visual text replete with meanings. To achieve this, a chapter head should:

1. Not exceed fifteen seconds and not less than ten seconds.

2. Corresponding text should be very concise and brief, i.e. not more than 4 words.

3. As the story develops, the chapter head should be updated to reflect the latest reality on the ground.

4. As soon as the event becomes normal, the chapter head should not be played anymore, even if the extensive coverage continues.

A chapter head can be used as a Sting, five to seven seconds long, having the same standards and conditions mentioned above.

20. TV News Interview

It is a critical component of news bulletin. Any interview failing to explain a subject, clarify a political position, furnish a new perspective or significant piece of information, or provide an important analysis to enable viewers to better comprehend an issue, is considered meaningless and a problem to be remedied.

20.1 Why use a news interview?

Any news interview should achieve the following goals:

A. Be relevant to the story and create additional valuable information.

B. Identify unclear aspects of the story.

C. Prove that a reported piece of news is either valid or false.

D. Explain the consequences of an issue people are not certain where it will lead to.

E. Analyse the long and short term implications of a news story.

F. Discuss the details of a news story with a reporter, whether it is a breaking story or not.

20.2 Standards to meet in news interview:

In principle, the purpose and rationale of a news interview will determine the following:

1. Guests: how relevant are they to the story?
2. Questions: to what degree are they related to the story?
3. Types of interviews: informative, explanatory, and challenging.
4. The type of an interview determines its tempo, thus presenter's questions and speed will be adjusted accordingly; informative interviews require fewer questions while explanatory or challenging interviews require more.
5. Duration: a news interview should not exceed three minutes, except in specific or urgent cases as determined by the editor in charge.

20.2.1 Walking Interview

It is a form of live or recorded interview, depending on available logistics, where reporters or presenters conduct field interviews to show visual diversity and establish a link with the scene. The duration is almost equal to bulletin interviews.

20.2.2 Floating images during interview

Floating images can be played during interviews to augment them with more visuals; it helps viewers to get a better feel for the story and breaks the flatness of the screen.

Floating pictures should adhere to certain editorial and technical requirements:

1. To be relevant to the core issue of the interview.
2. Close-up zoom shots of quoted speakers should not be used in floating pictures to prevent confusing viewers about their identities. An exception is the image of the story's central character; such as in the death of a statesman, a politician, or a key figure.
3. Natural sound of floating pictures should not be high to avoid confusing viewers.
4. To break flatness of screen, footage of floating pictures should be diverse and not less than three minutes.

5. Floating footage should constitute a story in itself that can easily be followed without a script. It should be edited chronologically, based on the story's timeline.

6. Except in phonos, floating images are not mandatory for each interview. For example, it is unnecessary to run floating pictures during an interview with a Russian official discussing diplomatic efforts to resolve the Syrian crisis. But if it is absolutely necessary, it can run during part, and not entire, of the interview.

7. Floating images of one interview should not be used for another, even if the two interviews are related to the same story. This is an editorial decision to be taken by the producer.

8. Floating images should be continuously updated during the day to avoid boredom and repetition.

9. Floating images should be taken from the main source and not the news package, since the source contains rich and diverse shots.

10. Should not include close up of corpses; wide shots will suffice.

11. Indoor images as floating pictures should not be used, unless no alternative is available.

12. Archive footage can be used as floating images, especially in scientific stories or unfolding conflicts. Date references should be clearly made to avoid confusion.

21.Programme Interview

Interviews are the sine qua none of talk shows and debate programs. When conducted between a presenter and a guest, an interview will be determined by a number of factors:

21.1.1 Subject & nature of interviews

A presenter may wish to seek clarification from an official about a vague or an important issue to a large segment of viewers, discuss a decision which has led to confusion or caused problems or explore implications of a highly disputed subject with potential grave consequences.

21.1.2 Interview Guests

The interview subject will determine the identity of guest(s) to ensure association between the two.

21.1.3 Purpose of Interview

The purpose of an interview is either to obtain information about a subject not understood by viewers, explore implications of a public issue, or reveal the truth about an issue. The results of any interview can be examined in relations to its goal. For any interview to achieve its goal it should observe a number of requirements and criteria.

21.1.4 Questions

Questions should be directly related to the interview's subject matter. This requires the questions to be sensible, focused, and diverse and not superficial or groundless. Questions asked by presenters define whether they are well-versed in subject matters or not.

21.1.5 Pace

Managing time is one of the most crucial elements in TV presentation; it sets the pulse or tempo of the show.

Tempo is the rhythm of the show and determines how frequently a presenter intervenes or shifts the discussion from one theme to another. It also depends on the presenter's awareness of the timeline and remaining

issues to be covered and his/her ability to divide time among guests even-handedly without undermining the subject matter.

21.1.6 Performance

Good performance, which was discussed in detail under ‘presentation,’ is a prerequisite for news or talk show presenters.

Good performance requires impartiality, comprehensiveness, wits, and the ability to move from one guest to another and from one item to another. More importantly, performance requires total control over all aspects of the show, especially when a subject

is discussed from different angles by intensely opposing guests. In brief, a talk show presenter should:

a. Be well versed in the subject matter.

b. Be able to ask concise and focused questions.

c. Manage the show properly and be aware when to speak, interrupt or keep silent.

d. Be able to summarize what has been stated in a concise form.

e. Be able to improvise and deal with unexpected events or breaking news.

f. Have good voice, clear diction and smooth delivery.

21.1.7 Language

The use of proper standard language is mandatory while colloquialism, even if it is prevalent, banality, vulgarity or any insulting gesture by mouth, head or hand is not permitted.

21.2 Types of programme interviews:

There are six types (techniques or styles) of interviews, which will be outlined in full details. It is important to point out that it is unwise to employ only one style constantly because it may damage the reputation of the show and its presenter. Each of the six types serves a specific

purpose and should be used within the boundaries set for each interview. Occasionally, an interview may involve more than one style (technique), depending mainly on the nature of the interview, guest(s), and duration; the presenter should be fully aware of this fact, especially during long interviews.

21.2.1 Machine Gunner style

In this style questions are asked in rapid succession with a very short interval between them, leaving the guest insufficient time to think his/her answers or to pause between questions. The principal goal of this type is unsettle the guest and compel him to concede his position revealing information he was keen not to disclose.

This type of interview requires the following:

A) The questions should be directly linked to the subject matter.

B) The questions should be brief, clear and not bewildering.

C) To leave the guest sufficient time between questions to comprehend their link to previous ones.

D) Posing fast questions should not involve disrespecting or mocking of guests.

E) Rapid questions cannot continue throughout the entire show, because it is unsustainable.

F) If there is a need to ask numerous questions, the

presenter should not read them in rapid succession from paper. Doing so makes the presenter appear as unprofessional beginner relying on written questions and may negatively impact his credibility; especially if he does not give the guest appropriate chance to answer.

G) The presenter should use some of the answers as a as a lead into the next question.

H) It is impractical to start or end a long interview with such fast-paced interviewing style.

I) To avoid negative repercussions, the presenter should carefully identify and select the part of the interview to bombard it with multiple questions. Such questions should not be artificial or irrelevant.

J) On rare occasions a presenter may repeat the same question many times to achieve his objective.

21.2.1 Interruption Style

Interruption has become one of the most common interviewing tools used by talk show presenters worldwide. Interrupting a guest can achieve a number of objectives, such as stopping him from continuing with a long speech or give another guest a chance to come in. The following criteria must be observed when interrupting a guest:

A) Interruption must be justified and supported by a good reason; stopping embellishments, seek clarification, or express a counterpoint.

B) Interruption should not be carried out as soon as the guest starts to answer the question. It should come after the guest has been given ample opportunity to make his point.

C) Interruption should be relevant to the subject and carried out in a professional, polite and tactful manner.

D) Interruption is not a goal but a tool to move the interview forward. It should have a good justification, otherwise it will be seen as a cheap shot by the presenter to look objective or seem in control.

E) Constant interruption can damage presenter's image and label him as a habitual interrupter.

F) In programmes involving more than one guest, all interruption guidelines should equally be applied to all of them.

21.2.3 Paraphrasing Style

In paraphrasing the presenter restates precisely and accurately what the guest has said using different words and sentences. Occasionally this style is justified provided the following points are taken into consideration:

A) Whether the presenter paraphrases what the guest has said only a few moments ago or twenty minutes earlier, he has to be accurate and provide appropriate context for guest's statements.

B) In summarizing what the guest has said, the presenter should be careful not to distort or twist the meaning of his statements.

C) Intentional rephrasing to twist the meaning of what the guest has said is a serious matter. A presenter should not resort to such ploy due to its potential serious impact on the presenter, the show, and the network. The damage is greater when the paraphrasing involves an articulate outspoken guest who reacts immediately to presenter's deliberate twisting of his meaning. He is liable to attack the presenter and accuse him or the channel of unprofessionalism.

D) There is no harm in paraphrasing a guest if he is imprecise, vague or too long, or to use a part of his statement to form a question.

E) Presenters should be ready to defend themselves when accused by guests of deliberately twisting their words or falsifying facts under the pretext of providing the audience with a good summary to help comprehend the subject.

F) With multiple guests in one show, the presenter should not single out a particular guest to paraphrase his words with a twist. This may not bode well with the audience.

G) Paraphrasing requires a good memory, an excellent command of the language, and good understanding

of guest's implied meanings to make note of important points and ideas that may be rephrased later on.

H) Paraphrasing is a skill that can be developed with time. If a presenter deems it necessary to resort to paraphrasing to achieve a specific objective, then he has to carefully choose the part he intends to paraphrase.

21.2.4 The Red circle

In this style (technique), the presenter encircles the guest with tough, hard-hitting questions, giving him no chance to escape. This style can be used for a short period of time where a presenter drags the guest to a specific point in the discussion and keeps him there. Unbeknownst to the guest, the presenter may have important classified

information or leaked documents. The presenter has to pay attention to the following:

A) The presenter should not employ the “red circle” style at the outset or the very end of the interview.

B) The “red circle” part of the interview has to be carefully chosen; the guest has to be at his weakest point and prepared questions should succeed in undermining his position, reveal hidden facts or expose position.

C) Approaching the red circle part of the interview should not happen abruptly. Instead, it should come logically, as an extension of a continuous polite dialogue linked to other parts of the interview.

D) The red circle questions should be clear and fact-checked and based on extensive research from reliable sources.

E) Keeping guests locked in red circles require the display of a great deal of tact, intellect, and respect. The presenter has to show extreme courtesy, such as saying: “Sir, with all due respect, your answer is incomplete and unconvincing and compels me to ask you another question”.

F) Red circle questions are both confrontational and challenging and consequently may lead to a tense, unfriendly or aggressive situation with guests.

G) The red circle segment of an interview should not last long. It may constitute the climax of an interview but

shouldn't include repeated questions and has to end well before the conclusion of the show.

H) This style should not be employed commonly but only in exceptional cases.

21.2.5 The Ambush Style

This style can be employed when a channel secures classified documents or vital information. In most cases guests are ignorant of plans or intentions of the presenter or channel. To avoid serious consequences, the following points should be taken into consideration.

A) Prior to conducting an interview, the invited guest has to be told about the topic, themes, name of presenter, and names of other invited guests.

B) Information obtained by a channel has to be authentic and fact-checked. Otherwise it will damage credibility.

C) A channel should not rely on one interpretation of the valuable information it succeeded in obtaining; other interpretations should also be considered before rejecting them.

D) The interviewer should be prepared for a potential violent reaction by the guest, such as rage, physical assault and vulgarity, if the cited information turns out to be fraudulent or fabricated.

E) A good surprise line of questions requires a gradual build-up of the story so that the highly sensitive information can be revealed at the most appropriate and delicate point in the interview. It is unwise to immediately jump to the critical point from the outset of the interview. This may create unintended chaos and can give the guest an opportunity to withdraw from the interview and accuse the channel of entrapment.

F) If the presenter plans to show videos or documents, which may impugn the reputation of the guest, the channel and the interviewer should be prepared to face potential law suits, financial claims, or demands for apologies. The wisest course in such circumstances is to inform the guest after he has agreed to be interviewed, that the channel plans to air clips or show documents.

If the guest does not object and gives his green light to air the material, the interview then can go ahead. But if he demands more information and clarification as a condition for doing the interview, the channel (producer and presenter) should provide him with as much available information as possible. Should the guest demand to know all the information in the channel's possession as well as its sources, the channel has to decide whether to air the material with the interview or without it.

21.2.6 Sudden Interviews

Door stepping or sudden interviews, sometimes, are seen as violation of personal freedom. In principle, Aljazeera conducts interviews after securing the consent of the guest and informing him of all relevant details. However,

occasionally the need arises for a sudden interview, especially with senior government officials who are quite familiar to facing cameras and microphones unexpectedly. Consequently, it is quite normal to approach and ask them questions without prior permission.

The door stepping interview comes with a list of moral conditions that Aljazeera is keen to maintain. The following cases demonstrate the case in which a sudden interview can take place.

It is permitted to conduct sudden interviews with individuals who have in the past ignored our requests for interviews or turned them down.

A sudden interview may be with a camera or over the phone line if it is difficult to reach the person concerned.

You can conduct sudden interviews while talking to eye witnesses or taking vox pops from the street.

21.2.7 Talking to victims or their families

Respect must be shown to victims' feelings (like those who have been humiliated or abused under certain circumstances or those who lost someone close). Avoid addressing their emotional side or focusing on their spontaneous reactions (such as screaming, crying, or agony) that may not be important elements in a news report or story.

21.2.8 Content of Pre-recorded Interviews

Professional integrity and respect of the interviewee

require that the recorded interview cannot be manipulated or altered in any way through editing.

If a guest insists on imposing restrictions prior to conducting an interview which might damage the channel's credibility, professional commitment to our audience necessitates the rejection of such restrictions; in such cases it is preferable to cancel the interview and inform the audience of the circumstances. If on the other hand a decision is made to proceed with the interview anyway, the audience should be informed of the conditions imposed by the guest.

We should neither disparage statements of guests, even if they contradict network values, nor tell guests or

interviewees what to say or ask leading questions hinting at answers we desire or expect.

21.3 Nature & criteria of programme interviews:

The purpose of an interview, identity of guests, and format of talk shows are critical factors in determining the nature, tempo and style of interviews and talk shows. Conducting TV interviews and presenting talk shows is an art that require refined skills, wits, alertness, and the ability to manoeuvre, ask penetrating questions, and interrupting guests at the right moment. The identity of guests is vital in determining the nature and tempo of the interview, as can be seen from the diverse types of guests:

21.3.1 Politicians

An interview with a politician or statesman (president, minister, member of parliament, officer of an international political organization such as the UN) can be usually be influenced by a number of factors including tension, confrontation, challenge, and employ solid facts to counter their political position and expose gaps in their stance, while maintaining the highest degrees of respect.

21.3.2 Political Analysts

Although the title ‘political analyst’ implies that such a person is impartial and endeavours to provide an in-depth perspective, without political calculations or specific allegiance, the fact is that some of them have personal

political agendas. Political analysts, therefore, can be classified into two categories, as follows:

1. Biased political analyst: By observing news bulletins and political shows it's quite obvious that political predisposition among political analysts is quite common. Consequently, a great deal of caution and alertness should be exercised while interviewing or listening to them.

While mindful of his political bias, his views, perspectives or data should not be dismissed; on the contrary, the interviewer should debate him carefully and cleverly. This requires that the presenter should attentively listen to the biased political analyst and counter his views with fact-checked information and extensive research.

Views and opinions expressed by biased political analysts enrich debates, even if they are not liked by viewers. Partial political analysts derive their views and analysis from their culture, ideology and regional experience. The rule governing interviews is as follows:” views and perspectives expressed by biased political analysts should be countered by good preparation and alertness”. When interviewing an analyst known to be biased, his political affiliations, sympathy, or leanings should be hinted at either when introducing him or during the interview.

2. Unbiased Political Analyst: This type of analyst is very rare because he/she transcends his/her personal political affiliations and agendas and does not worry about the impact of his/her views on the TV station he/she is being interviewed by, political organization, country or individual

under discussion. The same previous rule applies on this type of guests too: “alertness, caution and preparation but with a major difference: to be aware of his impartiality and objectivity”.

21.3.3 Professional Specialists & Experts

The rule governing interviewing professionals and experts in military, economic, scientific, medical and other specialized fields is: “allow them as much space as possible to articulate their arguments in order to benefit from their expert knowledge and information”. It is imperative that the presenter should appear in command and has sound knowledgeable of the topic. But this should not give presenters license to flaunt their expertise by

flooding shows with superfluous data and antagonising guests. The primary goal of this type of interview should be to enhance viewers' knowledge and understanding.

21.3.4 Editorial Requirements

On certain occasions relevant footage can be employed to create pertinent links with news interviews as well as to break screen's monotony. Used images should meet all technical requirements. The following editorial requirements should be also met:

1. Used images should have rational relevance to interview topic.
2. Sufficient images should be used to avoid repetition.

3. Not every interview require floating images. Please refer to the Floating Images part.

21.4 Performance of guests:

There are a number of standards and criteria that enable us to properly gauge and evaluate the performance of guests, namely:

1. Language: The ability of a guest to articulate views and ideas in an accurate and proper language.

2. Information: The degree to which a guest is versed in the topic of the interview whether he is able to provide significant and updated information.

3. Fluency: To be able to speak without stammering, stuttering or agonizing slowness.

4. Courtesy: It is not enough for guests to be experts or good speakers only. It is imperative that they should observe familiar rules and values of good debates; to be polite, listen to others and give them a chance to talk.

5. Specialisation: To be well-versed in a topic to take part in a TV interview and to be able to interact with the camera and deal with studio operators and technicians.

21.5 Right of Refusal:

Any individual can refuse to participate in any show. Such refusal does not mean a show should be cancelled

because a guest has turned down an invitation. Viewers can be informed of such refusal which should not be implied as a sign of evasion or protest against Al Jazeera's policies or editorial approach. The announcement should be simple and straightforward. Al Jazeera should present the absent party's views objectively, fairly and without misrepresentations and should not permit any guest to disparage the reputation of the absent party. In such cases the presenter should immediately step in to stop the vilification and grant the absent party the chance to respond at the earliest possible opportunity.

22. Commercials: Criteria & Requirements

Paid TV commercials and advertisements are means to promote commodities and services. Although commercials are packaged material produced by other parties, they must meet all editorial and technical criteria of the Network.

Al Jazeera provides its journalists and reporters a working environment free of political or commercial pressures. Therefore, TV commercials should neither undermine Al Jazeera's professional standards and practices, nor prejudice its news and program editorial policy. To avoid legal troubles or protect its credibility, the following guidelines must faithfully be adhered to:

Criteria & requirements:

1. Commercials must be compatible with ethics and values outlined in the Professional Code of Ethics & Conduct Guidebook.
2. Commercials should not include any material promoting violence or endorsing offense or crime.
3. Commercials should not include any materials degrading any religion, sect, ethnicity or culture.
4. Politically-motivated or inciting commercials cannot be aired.

5. Commercials promoting sorcery, magic or witchcraft cannot be aired.

6. Commercials endorsing harmful products such as tobacco and alcohol cannot be aired.

7. Commercials must not denigrate viewers' values or show nudity or gambling.

8. Commercials of products should not denigrate or cast doubt on the competition.

9. News bulletins or programs should not include audio-video segments of commercials.

10. During news bulletins, programs or reports products,

where its trademark is clearly visible, should not be displayed

11. No reference should be made to qualifications of presenters or producers.

12. Close-ups of brands, trademarks, outfits worn by guests, vox-pop speakers should not be shown.

13. Commercials of products or services involved in legal disputes should not be aired.

14. Commercials from unknown sources should not be accepted.

15. Commercials containing political or public message

should be clearly stated that it is a paid commercial.

16. Care should be exercised to avoid being trapped by inadvertent “free advertisement” while preparing or presenting programs or news items. Examples may include:

Stating that a certain product is considered the best in the market, thus promoting it and degrading others.

Praising artworks (book, film, play, portrait, painting, musical piece, etc.) by saying it is an unrivalled artwork; such acclaim is permissible within the context of a competition or an award presentation.

The showing of a hotel, factory, or bank, in a report without

any justification or relevance to the story.

Wearing specific uniforms or emblems on certain occasions or inviting viewers, even when indirectly, to enjoy a particular tourist attraction in a certain location or country.

17. Notwithstanding the above-mentioned paragraph, paid political commercials or promotions are acceptable, provided a clear reference is made that it is a 'paid advertisement' so that viewers would not think that they represent Al Jazeera's views.

18. Promoting humanitarian organisations or charities is not considered political promotion, but part of Al Jazeera's humanitarian mission; channel's senior management

have the discretion to take such decisions.

19. Under any circumstance, editorial policy should not be influenced or pressured by advertisers.

20. Commercials should use proper language, where slang or grammatical mistakes will not be acceptable.

21. Commercials or ads that fail to meet Aljazeera's prescribed technical standards will be rejected.

23. News ticker/scroll

The news ticker is a service that provides a brief summary of the latest news stories and notifications of channel's programs written in a format to be displayed at the bottom of the screen. It informs viewers of the latest news whenever they want without having to wait for scheduled news bulletins.

23.1 Editorial & technical standards:

News items shown on the news ticker, like other news formats, are subject to the same editorial and technical requirements and Code of Professional Ethics & Conduct Guidebook. The following guidelines will be applicable:

A. They should not promote cruelty, hatred, violence, religious sectarianism or ethnic division.

B. Items displayed on the ticker should attempt to correspond to bulletins' stories or segments.

C. Ticker items should not have promotional or commercial nature.

D. Ticker items should avoid news that emphasize protocols or lack significance.

E. Balance must be maintained in the structure and content of the ticker's news items, as if it constitutes a complete news bulletin.

F. Ticker news items must satisfy all broadcasting conditions, like any news story.

G. Ticker news items should reflect the current state of affair at the time of broadcast.

H. Certain news stories that were not covered in news bulletins can be run on the ticker.

23.2 Language:

A. Ticker news items must be written in a clear and concise language.

B. Factual writing style, not descriptive, should be used in writing ticker news items.

C. No punctuation marks shall be used, unless potential misconception is likely to emerge if not used.

D. Names and titles must be abbreviated or used in shortened format, without compromising accuracy of information.

23.3 Shape & format of news ticker/scroll:

A. The number of words of news items should not exceed 12 words or 80 characters i.e. should not be longer than the screen's length.

B. The entire news ticker duration should not exceed three minutes.

C. When confronted with long news stories, they can be divided into a number of small parts to be played successively and yet meet ticker editorial and technical requirements.

D. The ticker's broadcasting sequence is governed by the significance of its news items and should reflect bulletin's rundown.

E. The content of a ticker should not be repeated, under any circumstances, longer than 24 hours,

F. Promotions or notification of programs should not continue running on the ticker beyond its transmission date.

24. News promotion

It is a short video to promote the network or inform viewers of an upcoming events or stories that will be covered in news bulletins, interviews or programs at specific times.

24.1 Types of News Promotion:

There are several types of news promotions, including:

A. A short video clip, accompanied by a stimulating narration, to promote the story and motivate viewers to watch it when it airs.

B. A short sound bite, extracted from previously recorded interview, to promote the interview. The sound-bite is

normally played out without adding additional significance to it.

C. An audio-video clip with one or multiple sound bites, taken from live footage, to expose the contradiction between words and deeds.

D. A clip of still images showing one person, taken over a period of time, or several people who share a particular story or shots taken from different angles. In such cases camera's zoom and music play a major role.

E. A clip showing a programme presenter reading a script in a real or virtual studio setting, whether or not accompanied by music.

F. A promotional clip showing a programme presenter in another city, not inside a studio, employing the natural scenery to promote the script. It is a very effective promotional tool.

G. A promotional clip which may show a reporter or presenter on the scene, to give the story credibility and importance and persuade viewers to watch the show.

Although pictures constitute the essential ingredient of television, scripts add value to promos, because they help viewers to focus on promoted subjects. Thus, promos cannot be played out without an appealing voiceover, clever script, and eloquent narration to express the corresponding images.

Duration of news promos range from 10 to 20 seconds; when played within bulletins, they should be a lot shorter, unlike promos of interviews or programs.

24.2 Music:

Promos require an audio element, such as music, because it is insufficient to rely exclusively on the associated natural sound of filmed images. The quality and type of selected music will undoubtedly add value and style to promos, while creativity and artistic sensitivity play vital roles in promo production.

Note: This part is to be read along with the Technical Standards & Requirements of Promotion.

25. Overlay

Overlay is a format to present information where it depends mainly on a script and graphics. It is played on one side of the screen while a presenter is reading the script on air.

25.1 Why Use Overlay:

It is used as a break between news items in a bulletin or news programs or as a promo for upcoming stories. Its role is similar to that of the LEADALL; summarising information, adding visual diversity, or reinforcing facts, figures or specific piece of information.

25.2 Overlay requirements:

A powerful statement is needed not exceeding 6 words, subject to the same guidelines of composition, picture-script harmony and sequence. It is unnecessary to shot-specifically match the script read by the presenter with what appears on the screen.

Note: This Part is to be read along with the Technical Standards of Overlay.

Part C: Total Products

1. Structure of news bulletin

A news bulletin is a complete structure designed to give viewers information and clarifications about news, current affairs and unfolding events, whether domestic, regional, or international. The length of news bulletins depends mainly on the applicable editorial policy to cover news, events and affairs according to their significance, magnitude, proximity and timing. These criteria are essential to structure news bulletins properly, as detailed below.

1.1 Headlines & their editorial requirements:

Headlines are concise and neat descriptions. They highlight the most important three or four news times

within a bulletin. Each headline is an OOV combining images with text, unless necessity dictates the use of graphics.

1.1.1 Script:

It is a text read by a presenter and must meet the following conditions:

A. Brevity: Headline text should neither exceed 12 words nor last longer than six seconds, unless it is necessary to use an UPSOT at the beginning or end of it, in case of an important statement. It adds value to the story and prompts viewers to watch it during the bulletin.

B. Clarity: To use clear, grammatically-correct, concise

language, without any allegory or double meaning. A headline cannot begin with a phrase.

C. Severability: Each headline should relate to one story only, unless there is a clear link between the two for example, UN suspends its mission in Syria as 300 are massacred in Hoola.

D. Instantaneous: This justifies and validates the headline as it reflects reality up to the time of broadcast.

E. Current: This means that the headline and corresponding story is updated, in script and images, as the event develops. Certain stories do not require updating its picture which can accommodate any updated script.

1.1.2 Image & its technical requirements:

The strongest and most relevant shot should be used to capture the true essence of the story to help viewers get to the heart of it, easily and directly. This is best seen in coverage of natural disasters, wars, demonstrations, etc.

In editing images, the following guidelines should be taken into consideration:

A. Conformity: A clear synergy between the image and script, where words and images interact in harmony to present the essence of the story; video editing should not be a mere copycat of the script.

B. Superficiality: In addition to being harmonious with the script, images should flow smoothly while narrating the story.

C. Newness: Archival footage cannot be used, unless it is vitally important to run a news story for which there no recent images are available. This must be clearly indicated on the screen by displaying the 'Archive' tag, or could be dated, to avoid confusing viewers. The 'Exclusive' tag must be used if the footage is filmed by Al Jazeera.

1.2 Technicality:

All the technical audio and video editing requirements must be met before running the headlines.

2. Units of news bulletin structure

A. Bulletin stories should be arranged according to four key criteria: Significance, Proximity, Newness, and Magnitude. Significance and proximity are determined by the targeted audience by the network. In setting up the running order, one should not fall captive to anyone of the four criteria at the expense of the other three.

B. When the afore-mentioned criteria are equal in importance for a given new story, other professional and technical criteria should be considered, such as powerful images or availability of guest or news package.

C. News items on the rundown must be in the same order of the headline.

D. Headline stories must be covered within the first 15-20 minutes of an hour-long bulletin and the first half of short bulletins.

E. Occasionally a story is revisited for technical reasons, such as when a satellite link cannot be established with a reporter or guest; in long bulletins, however, it can be planned that way but viewers should be informed.

F. Diversity, by employing different suitable news formats, must be maintained; a story can be an OOV, package, LEADALL, or short clip to suit the story's nature.

G. A news bulletin should provide the maximum possible coverage of the current state of affair and set up according to the criterion of significance.

H. Interviews represent important components of news bulletins. Their durations and numbers should be rationalized to maintain bulletin's rhythm and balance. Their aggregate duration should not exceed one-third of the bulletin's entire duration, unless editorial necessity mandates otherwise.

I. An attractive lead should be chosen while avoiding the use of excessive details in LEADALL or graphics. As key shots can be run as an OOV or package, other minor details can also be played in a LEADALL or graphics. In-house packages should not be used if field reports are available.

J. If there are multiple teasers in the bulletin's rundown, they should run in sequence. If a teaser promotes two

stories, then they should be played in the same sequence as teased.

K. Accuracy, logic and common sense must be used in shifting from one chapter to the next and from one story to another within a chapter.

L. A reasonable balance should be maintained between breaks. For example, it is unreasonable to have the first break after 30 minutes and the second break after 5 minutes. A break should not last more than 1 minute to avoid losing viewers to other stations. This should be clearly written in contracts with advertisers. Long TV commercials and advertisement should not be played within news bulletins. When editorially necessary, producer can run over breaks, even paid ones.

M. Where bulletin's rundown include business or sports segments, their timing should be fixed to create regular habits among viewers.

N. A 'News Belt' within a long bulletin should maintain the same nature throughout the day. For instance, the 'wipe' technique used to move between items cannot be employed one day and discarded the next. Furthermore, clips should not be used within a news belt because it is in conflict with its nature as a quick capsule of news stories.

O. Non-political stories are integral components of a bulletin, especially those of interest to a large segment of viewers. Bulletin editors should remember that non-political stories, such as art stories, should also be

covered and promoted to avoid producing politically-saturated dull news bulletins.

3. Recurrence of news items in bulletins

The recurrence of news items in bulletins is governed by a number of guidelines and requirements, namely:

- The shortest time span for a package to continue running is 24 hours, with a maximum frequency of 3-8 runs, provided that its content remains valid. An exception to this rule is an exceptional, exclusive Al Jazeera packages which should be put to maximum use.

- In-house major story packages should be regularly updated between main news segments, even in the absence of substantial development. The editorial policy and average number of bulletins, where the maximum number of in-house packages should not exceed 5 runs,

should be kept in mind. On certain occasions, a package may lose its newsworthiness after a single run.

- In-house packages containing exclusive Al Jazeera footage should be fully exploited, provided they remain news-valid.

- Clips of recorded live interviews are also governed by the maximum recurrence parameter, namely 5 runs, unless they contain an exclusive Al Jazeera coverage within a developing story. In such cases, the number of re-runs will be decided by the Chief Editor or the editor on duty; the minimum number of re-runs will be decided by the producer taking into consideration the day's news priorities.

4. Pre-planned Special Coverage

Pre-planned special coverage represents detailed, extensive news coverage of an already known or expected event, sometimes long before it unfolds, for example, presidential or parliamentary elections, or historical events affecting international policies.

4.1 Requirements of pre-planned special coverage:

A. A pre-planned special coverage enables TV stations to shed light on the surroundings, dimensions or impact of a particular event and spotlight its key players or those affected by such an event. Furthermore, it empowers TV stations to shape viewers' awareness of a particular subject as well as how to cover it from various angles:

political, social, economic, societal, environmental, health, etc... through multiple packages and interviews in an extended coverage.

B. A pre-planned special coverage, not only adds variety to the screen, but also contributes to attracting new viewers from among those interested in or affected by the covered event.

C. A pre-planned special coverage enables TV stations to highlight its direction, especially when covering major issues such as the Middle East, instead of following the agenda set by international news agencies and succumbing to their monopoly and editorial policies.

4.2 Variety within pre-planned special coverage:

Diversity should be maintained within a pre-planned special coverage, by employing all types of news formats, including headlines, summaries, OOVs, packages, interviews, talk shows and debate seminars.

Diversity within a pre-planned special coverage should not be limited to the format only, but should also include the content. Therefore, coverage should include news packages, biographies, features, etc.

Normally pre-planned special events have slogans composed of two or three words known as ‘Chapter Head’ played at the beginning and/or end of the coverage.

4.3 Pre-planning:

Preparation for a pre-planned special coverage begins days, weeks or months before the event takes place, at various administrative, editorial and technical levels:

A. The coverage plan should include a detailed picture of the event's most important points and best implementation angles.

B. To determine the logistics and technical requirements, including cameras, lighting, microphones, SNGs, etc.

C. To determine the number and identities of team members needed to supervise the coverage at the channel's headquarters.

D. To determine the numbers and identities of team members needed to carry out the field coverage, including cameramen, technicians, transmission engineers, etc.

E. To instruct pertinent editorial and technical members to prepare chapter heads, promos, stings and other relevant segments and prepare it as early as possible prior to event's scheduled date.

F. To instruct reporters on the scene and journalists in the Newsroom to prepare background and specific packages for the event.

G. To prepare an interview list of potential guests and personalities, inform them of the general outline of the

coverage and establish an early communication and coordination with them.

H. To instruct concerned administrative bodies to finalise required formalities, such as visas, entry permits, equipment import/entry permits.

I. Team leaders should coordinate their efforts with promo and graphics divisions to produce chapter heads.

J. A pre-planned special coverage should be launched a day or a few days prior to the scheduled event, according to the significance of the event and its priority on the news agenda

K. In pre-planned special coverage involving news windows, a suitable studio location will be selected, taking

into consideration required technical aspects for director-director communication; all relevant key installations, fixtures and equipment should be set up and tested at least 24 hours prior to the first news window.

4.4 Evaluation of pre-planned special coverage:

A comprehensive evaluation should be conducted after the completion of a pre-planned special coverage. The following questions should be answered scrupulously:

1. Was the coverage launched at the right moment?
2. Was the coverage duration suitable and sufficient?
3. Did the coverage include all aspects, points, and angles previously identified?

4. Did the coverage include any outstanding features (images, news, packages) in comparison to other competitors?

5. Did the coverage interviews involve all concerned parties, those influencing the event or impacted by it? Was the coverage fair, objective and balanced?

6. Was the technical aspect of the coverage (chapter head, promo, sting, camera work, directing) outstanding?

7. Were all necessary logistics and administrative requirements made available during the coverage?

8. Was it possible to improve the coverage? If so, how?

4.4.1 Live coverage:

It is a live broadcast of an event of known time and location aired for a specific duration according to its significance. Examples of live coverage can involve a press conference, presidential address, major conference, or the following of an important developing story which require going live to the scene.

During a live coverage the following guidelines should be taken into consideration:

1. To announce verbally or in writing, or both, that the broadcast will shift to a live coverage.
2. The 'LIVE' tag and event's location tag should be maintained throughout the coverage.

3. When re-broadcasting clips from the live coverage, the 'live' tag should be removed to avoid confusion.

4.4.2 Preparation

Preparation to cover a live event should start early enough to guarantee the advanced arrival of reporters, cameramen, technicians and the equipment at the location. A list of potential interview guests should be prepared as well as relevant packages highlighting its possible developments before they unfold.

During a live coverage, it is important to shift between past and current developments and contrast previous facts and information with those taking place. Graphic charts, spotlighting event's background, dimensions

and figures, should be prepared and presented during bulletins or incorporated within reporters' packages.

4.4.3 Coverage

An event can be covered and broadcast live and then shift away from, according to its significance. Coverage of a press conference takes into consideration its timing, speakers and used language. Simultaneous interpretation should be provided when needed.

4.4.4 Guests

A list of potential guests, experts and professional specialists should be established and communication should be reached to involve them either as satellite guests

or as presenter's friend. Simultaneous interpretation should be made available for any emergency or unforeseen circumstances.

A field reporter may interview a guest present at event's location, where he will answer 'donut' questions.

4.5 Breaking news live coverage:

4.5.1 Nature

It is a live coverage of a breaking news or unexpected pressing event that requires instant extensive broadcast due to its magnitude, significance or huge political, security or economic repercussions.

4.5.2 Requirements & Criteria

During any live coverage of a breaking news or unexpected pressing event, the following guidelines should be observed:

- To go live using the most immediate source ahead other competitors.
- To refresh and diversify images as and when required.
- Interview the most suitable guests relevant to the event.
- Give guests equal time.
- Balance informative and analytical interviews.

- Use the most direct type of interviewing (DTL, phonos, studio guests, Skype, etc.)
- Ask accurate, clear and relevant questions.
- Use accurate Astons with clear and correct language.
- Update screen information regularly and swiftly.
- Coverage duration should wisely be determined.

4.5.3 How to end breaking news of a live coverage

A. Breaking news within bulletins can easily and swiftly be ended, after covering an event without redundant excess or prolongation. Live coverage should be resumed as new

developments unfold and can be terminated to pave the way for the next bulletin by announcing “we’ll continue to monitor the developments at the top of the hour, or after

B. Breaking news of a huge magnitude, such as 9/11 attacks, should continue without interruption and go over scheduled bulletins or programs. It can continue as an extended special coverage.

C. If a big event is expected to continue for a long time, the producer in charge should assign duties, give detailed instructions to team members to monitor picture sources, wire agencies and pertinent channels and establish communication with guests. Finally, the event should be wrapped up in coordination with programming and

transmission sections, if returning to the normal grid is expected.

D. The decision by program editor to categorize stories carried by wire services and news agencies as “breaking stories” should be taken in coordination with the Executive Editor who should determine how to cover the story and from what angle. Not all stories posted by news agencies as ‘breaking news’ should be treated as such.

E. “Breaking news” coming from news agencies, should clearly be attributed to them on the screen.

F. The decision to post Astons of “breaking news” should not be confused with Astons of a story running on the screen.

5. Recorded Programmes

A recorded programme, subject to all editorial, technical and linguistic criteria, has the advantage of being able to be modified, edited, re-edited, shortened or expanded.

5.1 Types of Recorded Programmes:

In term of subjects, recorded programmes are generally classified into documentary, debate or investigative shows, while in terms of duration they are classified into a half or one hour.

Recorded programmes are normally produced and presented by one of Al Jazeera's presenters or country

reporters. The presenter should follow all “TV Presentation” criteria

5.2 Editorial Criteria of Recorded Programmes:

A recorded programme which may include packages, clips, and vox pops, that can be examined separately, must be in harmony with the editorial line of the Network in general and news bulletins in particular, namely:

- Content of a recorded program should be in harmony with channels’ news agenda (Arabic, English, Balkan); the recorded program should strive to achieve a genuine benefit and must have a specific purpose.
- Subjects and themes of recorded programmes must

reflect the identity of the channel, taking into consideration editorial particulars of each channel.

- Topics of recorded programs should be treated and produced in an outstanding manner, while maintaining the generic nature of Al Jazeera.

6. Criteria for Programme Repeats

After its initial transmission, the Coordination Division may repeat a programme, whether live or recorded, twice, taking into consideration potential high viewership at various parts of the world at different times.

Live programs should be repeated without any editing, unless it is necessary as a result of:

- Technical glitch on air, such as losing the audio on air.
- A gross violation of the Code of Ethics has been committed by the uncontrollable behaviour of a guest on air, namely vilification, libel, slander or physical violence.

One of the main reasons for editing a program is to avoid any legal liability against Al Jazeera.

When repeating a documentary program long after its initial transmission, its content and facts should be verified and pertinent parts edited or deleted, if they are invalid. This is done to avoid infringement on copyrights, circumvent any potential damage to people and/or institutions and maintain viewers' trust and confidence by providing them accurate information. Such programs can run with notifications indicating their dates of production and/or initial transmission.

7. Interrelation between News Bulletins & Programmes

News bulletins and programmes of Al Jazeera's channels should reflect their visions, philosophies and editorial lines. This requires the maintenance of harmony and coordination between news bulletins and programs without undermining the unique characteristics of each format. Any overlap in addressing certain issues should be without prejudice to programmes' liberty to explore other aspects which cannot be covered by news bulletins

In general, there should be coordination between news bulletins and programmes in the following areas:

7.1 Interrelation of Topics:

While a good harmonious relationship should exist between program topics it is very important they should also be related to news headlines.

7.2 Angles to Tackle Same Topics:

In covering certain issues, coordination between news bulletins and programs is necessary to safeguard against treating them in an identical manner. Unlike news bulletins, an inherent features of programs are in-depth analysis and lengthy investigative examination,

7.3 News & Programme Guests:

Diversity in guest selection must be maintained; unless it is absolutely necessary, the same guest should not be interviewed in a news bulletin and talk show program. Reappearance causes boredom and should be avoided. A guest may be suitable for news bulletin but not necessary for a programme, and vice versa.

7.4 Timings:

In covering an issue, timing is one of the most important determining factors. The subject should not be exhausted by news bulletins first, before tackling it in a program; simultaneous treatment is vital.

7.5 Specialisation:

News stories should be covered in-depth by programs, in accordance with strict editorial considerations. Coverage of top news should not be driven by competition, to the detriment of Al Jazeera's image. This requires concerted coordination between News and Programming Departments in each channel.

7.6 Editorial Line: Professionalism & Style:

Programs must observe the same professional values observed in news; it is unacceptable to be objective and concise in news and biased and convoluted in programs.

Names, titles, etc. used in bulletins and programmes,

both in writing and pronunciation, should be uniform as per the Style Guide. In brief, all technical criteria and editorial values observed in bulletins must be adhered to in programs too.

7.7 Information & Terminology Coordination:

Harmony and coordination must be maintained between News & Programming Departments in all Al Jazeera channels (Arabic, English, Balkan, Web) with respect to the editorial line avoiding the use of contradictory information, figures, etc.





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