

## Comparing News Formats

TV news, newspaper articles, and online reports have advantages and disadvantages, and differences in purposes, techniques, and effects. Recognizing the differences helps you analyze the information and make informed decisions about current events and issues.

### HERE'S HOW

**Strategy 1: Recognize the advantages and disadvantages for each news format.** The news is packaged in a variety of ways, not only to deliver information but also to appeal to an audience.

	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Print</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>coverage often more detailed</li> <li>more time devoted to gathering facts and interviewing people</li> <li>quick scans reveal basic facts and information</li> <li>quotations put in context</li> <li>readers can choose what to read</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>not up-to-the-minute</li> <li>readers need more time to understand the day's events</li> <li>stories might be cut for space, losing details or information</li> <li>not as personal</li> <li>reports are static—no live footage, sound bites, or music</li> </ul>
<b>TV</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>breaking stories covered</li> <li>viewers put at the scene</li> <li>video and audio give immediacy and drama</li> <li>regular updates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>not always thorough</li> <li>stories might be aired before all facts gathered</li> <li>sound bites can be taken out of context</li> <li>footage or sound bites can sensationalize story or create bias</li> <li>viewers have little or no choice about which stories to view</li> </ul>
<b>Online</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>breaking stories posted and updated immediately</li> <li>no length limitations</li> <li>interactive features bring story to life</li> <li>links give additional information</li> <li>readers can choose which stories to read</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>not available or easily accessible for everyone</li> <li>quick posting often leads to inaccurate facts</li> <li>site may not be reliable</li> <li>site may be biased</li> <li>story can be sensationalized</li> </ul>

**Strategy 2: Consult multiple sources.** Ask yourself: What information does one news format have that another might not? How does consulting several sources add to my understanding?

LESSON  
**11**

## PRACTICE WORKSHEET A

## COPYMASTER

**Comparing News Formats**

**Directions:** The newspaper article and Web site story below cover the same incident. Answer the questions after you have read both stories.

## Fire Leaves 23 Families Homeless

RAM BLUFF—Late last night, a fire gutted the Maplewood Suites apartment complex, leaving its twenty-three families without a home. Although there were no injuries, firefighters worked through the night trying to contain the blaze.

The cause of the fire is unknown. Residents and firefighters believe that it began on the second floor, possibly due to an overturned candle. Police have not ruled out the possibility of arson.



Firefighters try to contain the fire at Maplewood Suites.

http://www.webstreetjournal.com/breakingnews/fire/suspect

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### **BREAKING NEWS: Suspected Arsonist Nabbed**

RAM BLUFF—After further investigation into this morning's fire, Fire Chief Tom Popper reported that an arsonist caused the fire. The police have a suspect, Paul Rivers, in custody. "We believe Rivers started the fire after his girlfriend kicked him out," stated Popper in a press conference this morning. "We found a gas can and rag where the blaze started."

The blaze gutted the Maplewood Suite apartments, leaving twenty-three families homeless. Luckily, no one was injured.

[Video interview: How one resident escaped to safety](#)

[Ram Bluff Fire Department Web site](#)



Paul Rivers, pictured here, is suspected of starting the fire at Maplewood Suites.

1. What facts about the fire appear in both articles? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Which article is the better source for learning about this news story? Why? Cite specific details from both texts to support your answer. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Comparing News Formats**

**Directions:** Choose a current event that recently has received coverage in the newspaper, online, and on TV. Track the story, and compare the coverage of each format. You may need to write your full comparison on a separate sheet of paper.

Story: _____	Online	Print	Newscast
1. What was the headline or lead?			
2. What angle did the story focus on?			
3. How thorough was the coverage? Were any questions unanswered? If so, which ones?			
4. How many sources were consulted?			
5. How much time or space did the report take up?			
6. What video footage, interactive features, or images accompanied the story?			
7. Where or when was the report featured? (If online, what was the homepage?)			
8. How timely was the report?			
9. Was the story biased or sensationalized? If so, how?			
10. Overall comparison: Which report did the best job of covering the story?			