



Guidelines for *ted*NEWS Reporting and Photography

Aiming for excellence we continue to work towards making *ted*NEWS look good in terms of pictures, and interesting in terms of reporting. This is important not just for Europe, but also because many articles posted in *ted*NEWS are seen and reposted by other news organisations such as ANN and Adventist Review. The TED theme is '**Connect | Inspire | Change**'. Your reporting is an important part of this process.

We commit ourselves to do our best to make your article look and sound good – but these few tips will really help!

Photography

Photos are vitally important. In the modern world, an article without a photo is unlikely to get published. However, the photos need to be engaging, in focus, and with good lighting. The appearance of *ted*NEWS is very much down to the standard of photography sent in. We can improve your reports in the editorial process, but we cannot improve your photography.



1. Only submit contrasting colour photographs.
2. Take lots of photographs. Only send the good ones.
3. The best camera is 'the one you have with you'. Ideally that is a proper, dedicated camera, but in the modern world good quality smart-phones can take good photos. However, beware! In low light situations they can be very poor and grainy and the quality too low for print.
4. Make sure your camera is set on high resolution.
5. Get in close to your subject.
6. Do not embed pictures in a Word file. Send them in jpeg format in high resolution. (Please note that some software will reduce image size for emailing. Please be cautious to ensure that your email or software programme does not do this.) Hi resolution is needed in case any articles go for print.
7. Include a list of captions if you want people to be identified.
8. Exposure. Many photographs sent to us are under-exposed. For indoor flash pictures the built-in flash on your camera is almost always insufficient. Use a dedicated flash gun if you can. If you have to use a camera with a built-in flash you must get within about 1.5 metres of the subject. Avoid the fill-in flash setting on your camera if you are inside. Outside in the sunshine it can help to flatten harsh shadows on people's faces.
9. Photographs, like reports, need to be interesting. Try to vary the composition of your photographs. 'Action shots' are preferable to 'firing squad pictures' (photographs of groups of people all facing the camera).
10. Use only "optical zoom" on your camera. Cheaper cameras with digital zoom reduce the picture quality.
11. Large files or collections of several pictures are best sent via file sharing websites such as dropbox, sendit or mailbigfile. This prevents filling up the editor's inbox and allows the editor to download the photos when there is a good internet connection.

What is news?

1. News happened today or yesterday. Make sure your report is sent in as soon after the event as possible. Make news, not history!
2. Most readers are from outside your own congregation/Conference/Union. Make sure your report will be of interest to people away from your local area.
3. Do not report events that occur in all churches unless something striking occurs. For example, reports on Christmas or Easter events, ADRA fundraising and summer camps are only of interest if something very special happens or you can find a unique angle.
4. Report that which is different, unique or inspiring. Is this something that could make a mission difference elsewhere?
5. Do not report anything and everything; but also, do not allow important events to go unreported.



What is interesting?

1. People are always interesting. Reports can be made more stimulating by introducing details about individuals. Readers are interested in ages, backgrounds, conversion stories, people who are DOING mission.
2. Children and youth are always interesting. Don't just list what they are doing. Capture them in action as they do great things for God.
3. Try to connect the church with one of the 'live' issues of the day. For example, the war against terrorism, abortion, migration/refugees, climate change, religious liberty, areas of the world experiencing political/social/economic upheaval.
4. News gathering. News will not fall into your lap. You will have to find it. Watch the active people in your congregation. Make contacts in all departments of the church. Listen for stories and interview people. Take notes. Report each event as and when it occurs.



What is not interesting?

1. Under no circumstances should you adopt a "blow-by-blow" method of reporting. Readers are not interested in the hymns you sang, the Sabbath school lesson you studied, who pronounced the benediction, etc.
2. You are not writing the minutes of a meeting; you are focusing on interesting aspects of things your church is doing, and recounting stories that will rivet the attention of the reader.

What is essential?

1. Clarity. Short sentences help to carry the reader along. Plan your piece; have an outline before you begin to write. Reread and, perhaps, rewrite your article before you submit it. Remember: you are not writing for its own sake - you are communicating. Use words to convey a message.
2. Catch and keep the reader's attention. Your opening sentence should lure the reader into your piece. Tell a story; don't just stack the facts.
3. Avoid Adventist jargon phrases which turn readers off.
4. Highlights only. When reporting the events of a special day be selective in what details you include. The report need not begin with comments on the weather or Sabbath school. It could, for example, begin with a quotation from the sermon, or a quoted reaction from a member of the congregation, or biographical details with regard to the speaker.
5. Get your facts right. Make sure that the spelling of all proper names is correct. If you are providing a list of names (for example, baptismal candidates) use a uniform style - either Christian names and surnames throughout or initials and surnames throughout.

Don't panic!

We recognise that most people who write for *tedNEWS* speak English as a second language. Equally, most are not journalists. Don't worry. We will take time to try and make your story shine! Equally, if a particular report or photograph does not make it into *tedNEWS* do not take it personally or get discouraged. Try again. You, along with the Editor, have the responsibility to make the news interesting, appealing and mission focused.

How to submit your report

Email your reports to: vhulbert@ted.adventist.org. Send large photos or files via a file sharing programme.

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