

### Actionable information?



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### Actionable Information?



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The New York Times  
The Opinion Pages

OP-ED COLUMNIST  
**That Old Black Magic**

By MAUREEN DOWD

As though Bill Donohue didn't have enough to be cranky about.

The perpetually apologetic Catholic League president is on the rampage about President Obama trying to make sure women working at Catholic institutions get insurance coverage for birth control.

What's wrong with the rhythm method anyway? That's how I got here.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL. OPINION

**Birth-Control Mandate: Unconstitutional and Illegal**

*It violates the First Amendment and the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act.*

By DAVID B. RIVKIN JR.  
AND EDWARD WHELAN

Last Friday, the White House announced that it would revise the controversial ObamaCare birth-control mandate to address religious-liberty concerns. Its proposed modifications are a farce.

**Four Questions:**

1. How do you tell the difference between News Reporting and Opinion Journalism?
2. Why should you care which is which?
3. What is the value of Opinion Journalism?
4. How do you tell the difference between Opinion Journalism and Counterfeit Opinion Journalism?

# Warning: Test Ahead



10-question test on Lectures 1-6 will be administered in your week 6 recitation.

You will be directed to a special reading in advance of the exam, on which you'll be tested in the exam.

# Question examples

A coworker says a hurricane is headed for Long Island and you turn on the TV to get a forecast. First, you see a story about school closings. Next, you see a story about Lindsey Lohan's mother joining an all-girl punk band. Last you see a story about a local church collecting food for foreign workers stranded in Libya by the unrest there. What three types of information needed by humans do these stories supply. Explain.

The habit of a smart news consumer is to "Know Your Neighborhood." Explain what this phrase means and why it is so important.

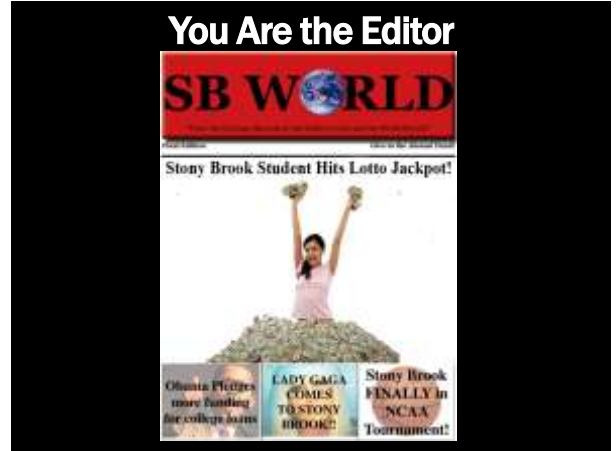
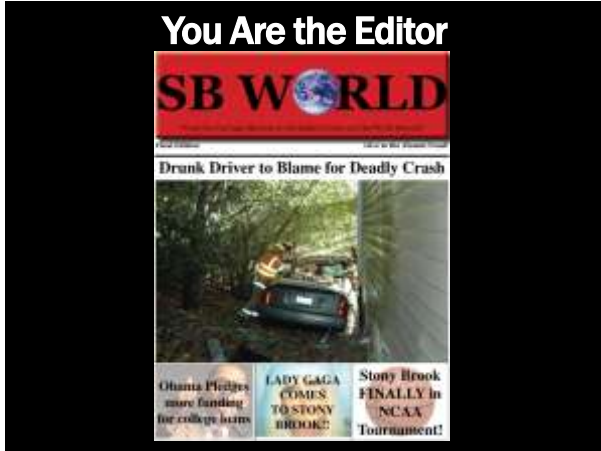
What three characteristics should you look for in any information you receive that will let you know whether it is journalism or something else?

# You Are the Editor



# You Are the Editor





## What is Opinion Doing in the Journalism Neighborhood?



### Code of Ethics: (excerpts)

- ✓ Distinguish between advocacy and news reporting.
- ✓ Analysis and commentary should be labeled and not misrepresent fact or context.
- ✓ Deny favored treatment to advertisers and special interests and resist their pressure to influence news coverage.
- ✓ Remain free of associations and activities that may compromise integrity or damage credibility.

## A Brief History of Opinion Journalism



Alexander Hamilton Starts the *New York Post* and Attacks Thomas Jefferson

## The Rise of the “Objective” Press

### The Advertiser Model –

Newspaper publishers needed to attract a wide variety of readers and advertisers



## The Opinion Quarantine

### Editorials



### The Opinion Quarantine

Columns



### The Opinion Quarantine

Columns



### The Opinion Quarantine

Columns



### The Opinion Quarantine

Columns



**An Opinion Quarantine on TV?**

foxhours.wmv

**What Happens When Lines Blur?**

foxhours2.wmv

**An Opinion Niche?**

Are the Cable News Channels  
Inheriting the Role of  
Alexander Hamilton's  
New York Post?

Not Mass Media, Partisan Newsletters?

**Question # 1:**

How do we tell the difference between  
News Reporting and Opinion Journalism?



**News Report or Opinion Journalism ?**



**jobsbill.wmv**

**News Report or Opinion Journalism ?**



**jobsoppinion.wmv**



### Surgeon General's Warning:

A News Report will often include the opinions of experts, participants or witnesses.

That is not what is meant by "Opinion Journalism."

Failure to cling to this distinction may be harmful or fatal to your grade.

## Definition of News

Main Entry: **news** 🗨️

Pronunciation: \ˈnüz, ˈnyüz\

Function: *noun plural but singular in construction*

Usage: *often attributive*

Date: 15th century

News is information about a subject of some public interest that is shared and subject to the journalistic process of verification by an independent organization that is accountable.

## Definition of Opinion

Main Entry: **opinion** 🗨️

Pronunciation: ˈə-ˈpin-yən

Function: noun

Etymology: Middle English, from Anglo-French, from Latin *opinion-*, *opinio*, from *opinari*

Date: 14th century

Opinion is a view, a judgment, or an appraisal formed in the mind about a particular matter.

How You Can Tell If It's  
News Reporting  
or  
Opinion Journalism?

Language and Labeling

## Opinion Landmarks: Language

- First-person statements
- Exaggeration or Superlatives
- Emotional or dramatic descriptions
- Tone (sarcasm, irony, parody)

## Opinion Journalism Landmarks: First-person ("I")



## Opinion Journalism Landmarks: Exaggeration or Superlatives

*"Look. We are not the mouthpiece for the Democratic Party of the United States. But that party is so crackhead-incompetent at selling its own program, we thought it was important that someone point out to the public one of the party's accomplishments.*

*Here it is:*

*The current Congress, with its Democratic majority and with Sen. Harry Reid of Nevada at the helm in the Senate, approved the biggest tax cut in United States history.*

*And the Republicans voted against it.*

*Washington Monthly described the bill this way: "BIGGEST. TAX CUT. EVER."*

*All we can say is that voters should keep their eyes on the ball even if the Democrats don't."*

*-The Reno (Nevada) News & Review*

## Opinion Journalism Landmarks: Emotional/ Dramatic Descriptions

*"The GOP critique of government in the age of Obama would be more aren't being credible if the party's candidates did not equate trying to save lives with tyranny...kids strapped to gurneys here."*

*Bachmann's statement that the HPV vaccine causes intellectual disability "is the kind of know-nothingism that undermines public support for vaccination altogether."*

*-Wall Street Journal*

## Opinion Journalism Landmarks: Tone (sarcasm, irony, parody)

### We're watching our freedoms vanish

Here's how to cut crime at a stroke. It's cheap, it's foolproof and we can start to implement it today. Let's install surveillance cameras and microphones in every room of every new house that is built. Make it a condition of planning consent. Install on it in every refurbishment. Offices? Yes, of course offices, too. Why not? It won't just leave terrorists with no place to hide, it'll expose criminals whenever they're holed up or plotting, isn't this the logical extension of what is already happening, of what we're allowing with barely a squeak of protest?"  
-Scotland Yard's World

## The Importance of Labeling

- Reporter's Notebook:
- Editorial:
- News-Page Column:
- Op-Ed Contribution:
- Review:
- News Analysis:

### The Forms of News and Opinion

## The News to Opinion Spectrum: Print



## Editorial Cartoonists and Caricature



Cartoonists use exaggerated Language AND Art

## Labeling on TV



How Do You Know if It's Opinion?

## The Importance of Labeling



## The News to Opinion Spectrum on TV



## News to Opinion on TV

TVspectrum.wmv



## The News to Opinion Spectrum Online



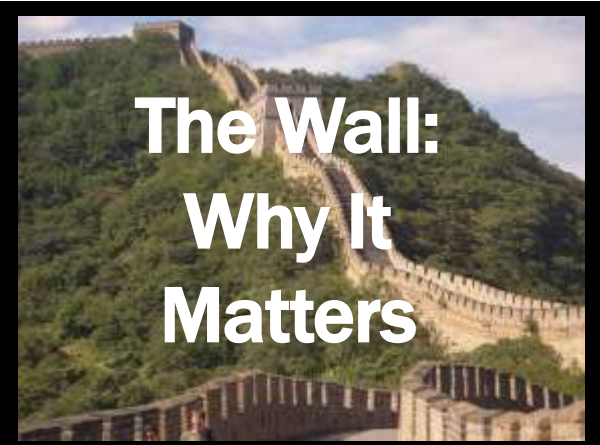
## The News to Opinion Spectrum Online

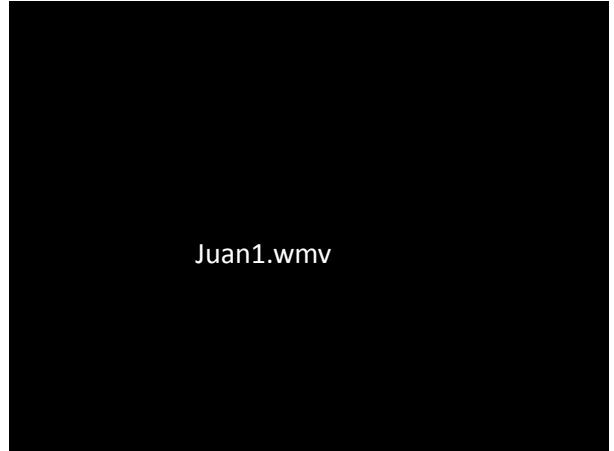


### Question #2: Why should you care which is which?

The goal of news reporting is to give you the information you need for your Fourth Estate role.

The goal of opinion journalism is to help you make up your mind about that information.





### Question #3:

What is the value of Opinion Journalism?

- Gives you new insights
- Challenges your assumptions
- Helps you make a decision or judgment

Opinion Journalism is Valuable When:

- You are well-informed
- You are open-minded
- You are active, not passive

### Question #4:

How Do You Spot  
Counterfeit Opinion Journalism?  
(Evidence vs. Emotion)



### Opinion Journalism or Counterfeit?





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## Opinion Journalism or Counterfeit?

UncleRush.wmv

## Opinion Journalism or Counterfeit?

Fact-based vs. Emotion-based  
Logic vs. Belief

### Moynihan's Maxim

*"Everyone is entitled to their own opinions, but they are not entitled to their own facts."*



Daniel Patrick Moynihan (deceased)  
Ambassador,  
Four-term U.S. Senator from New York

**Journalism, Opinion Journalism or  
Counterfeit Opinion Journalism  
Which Is It?**

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## **News vs. Opinion: A Summary**

To tell the difference between news and opinion,  
analyze language & labeling

Start with news: Know the news before you  
seek opinions about the news

Moynihan's maxim: *"You're entitled to your own  
opinion, but you're not entitled to your own facts."*

Alternate views can sharpen your thinking