



## Build It Up, Trim It Down

## Sportscaster

*Lesson Idea by: Ron McMullen, Rutland Senior Secondary, Kelowna, B.C.*

### Application

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A sportscaster's job is to cover sporting events and report what happened to the viewers. The goal of the radio or television sportscaster is to use pictures and words to make you feel like you were at the game yourself.

The sportscaster isn't the only person involved in producing a sports show, however.

"In the world of television, we rely on editors, directors and producers, so it's not just the one person you see on TV," says Pat Kennedy, a sports director and producer. "It's all those people behind that person that put the product on the air."

All in all, one story may pass through the hands of more than 20 people before you ever see it on your TV screen.

So, what does it take to get a sports story on the air? The story begins at a sporting event, covered by the sportscaster and a cameraperson. During the game, the sportscaster takes notes and the cameraperson shoots the video. Afterwards, they interview key players. Then they go back to the TV station where the work continues.

"We take a three-hour hockey game and turn it into a minute-and-a-half story covering the most important goals, turning points of the game, and reactions from the players, coaches, and fans," Kennedy says.

The sportscaster writes a story about the game and reviews the video on the game and the interviews to pick out the best parts. Then the editor takes over.

"We communicate to the editor exactly how we want that story put together. When I say 'Ken Griffey cranked out a home run,' I need to see Ken Griffey hitting that home run in that particular piece of video. So I have to tell him where that video is, so that what I'm saying on air is what you're seeing," says Kennedy.

From there, the production crew takes over. While the on-air sports anchor is reading the introduction to the story, the behind-the-scenes production team is making sure the tape is in the machine, the audio is ready and the cameras are rolling.

No sportscaster has the time to attend every game they report on. In these cases, the sportscaster has to write a story using information provided to them, usually in the form of game box scores or statistics.

Pat Kennedy can write a recap of a game he hasn't attended just by looking at the quarterly scores. He doesn't include every detail about the game. Instead, he picks out the big plays that turned the game into a win or loss for either team.

## Practice

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It's the first Sunday at the start of the NFL season. You're just starting your new job on the sports desk at your local television station. Since you're the only one working the sports desk reporting it live "on air."

You search the online news service to get the results of tonight's game between Baltimore and San Diego. Working by yourself or in pairs, write a brief but interesting recap of the game, based only on the information in News Wire #1 (below).

Remember to pick out only the most important pieces of information for your recap. Follow the same guidelines that sports journalists do:

- Your own feelings about the game cannot be part of anything you write.
- Write the story as if you were there and covered the game. The only material you have available is what you see in News Wire #1.
- Pick out the most important plays, turning points, and key elements of this contest. Ask yourself if there was a particular quarter that was key to winning the game? If so, which quarter? What helped San Diego win the game?
- Make it exciting.

As you have only 10 to 20 seconds of airtime to deliver your report, you will need to "trim it down." Still, you have to make your report informative. And, don't ever forget that your audience has to enjoy listening to your report -- otherwise they'll turn off their radios!

Include a glossary of the abbreviations used in the News Wire with your final report.

## Principles

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As a class, look at the two samples of game reports written by professional sportscaster Pat Kennedy. Note how these samples were written based only on the quarterly scores, but they still make the story come alive.

"The San Diego Chargers defense came up big in the fourth quarter, shutting down Baltimore en route to a 21-to-17 win. San Diego scored touchdown passes of 36 yards, 72 yards, and 38 yards from Stan Humphries to Tony Martin. The San Diego defense kept the Raven offence grounded most of the game except for the third quarter, when Baltimore was able to score 11 points, including a 37-yard touchdown pass from Vinny Testaverde to Jermaine Lewis."

Or:

"The Baltimore Ravens blew it open in the third quarter by scoring 11 points, but in a losing cause. San Diego scored three touchdowns, one in the first, second and third quarters, and were consistent throughout the game. The scoreless fourth quarter was the demise of Baltimore, and they were unable to close the gap."

Post your completed game stories and glossaries around the classroom. Review them to determine the highlights in each copy.

Using the reference text, *Technical Writing Situations and Strategies*, First Canadian Edition, (Markel and Holmes), review the section on "choosing the right words and phrases." (pages 166 to 175). Discuss with your classmates the writing process required for this type of work.

## Learn

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As a class or in smaller groups, present your own game reports. Practice reading your report several times before presenting it to your audience. Use a "peer assessment adjudication form" to evaluate the performance of your classmates. (You can find a form that can be adapted for this purpose in Chapter 4 of the text *Speaking for Success*, by Anthony Lieb.) Have your audience face away from the "announcer" to simulate a "listening" environment.

Once you're finished, discuss the content and the delivery of your reports with your group.

## Yes, you can do it

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Select one or more of the following activities to test your reporting and writing skills.

- Pick a sports report from the newspaper or the Internet and write a highlight summary of the game. Give a 10- to 20-second radio report.
- If possible, get news service copies of news reports or sports stories to produce an oral or videotaped report. This may include charts, pictures, videotape or transparencies in a multimedia format.
- Using a set of pictures of a school event, write a report that will provide readers with a summary of the highlights. This report, along with the pictures, may be displayed in the school or submitted to the yearbook committee.
- Visit The Sporting News website at <http://www.sportingnews.com/scores/> to get scores for a variety of sports and games.

**Step 1:** Randomly select a box score and write a story summary. Provide a dynamic account for the reader.

**Step 2:** Team up with a classmate. Swap summaries and each develop a 10- to 20-second oral report.

**Step 3:** Team up with a different classmate. Swap copies of the oral report and deliver it to an audience.

(Turn your classroom into an exciting and dynamic "newsroom" by imposing a deadline of 30 or 45 minutes. You may also choose to break the class into groups of four or five students each to work together as a "sports team.")

You will be evaluated by your peers and teacher on your summary and report.

- Attend a local or school sporting event and develop a box score. Write a summary or a 10- to 20-second oral report, or both, to be delivered as part of the school's daily announcements.

## News Wire #1

### NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

#### GAME BOX SCORE

<u>NFL FINAL</u>	<u>1ST</u>	<u>2ND</u>	<u>3RD</u>	<u>4TH</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
BALTIMORE	3	3	11	0	17
SAN DIEGO	7	7	7	0	21

#### SCORING SUMMARY

1ST QUARTER: SDG - TD, TONY MARTIN 36 YD PASS FROM STAN HUMPHRIES

(GREG DAVIS KICK), 8:33. Drive: 6 plays, 72yards in 3:13. Key plays: Humphries 27-yard pass to Brown to Baltimore 44; Humphries 12-yard pass to Still on 3rd-and-14 to Baltimore 36. SAN DIEGO 7-0 BAL - FG, MATT STOVER 47 YD, 12:36. Drive: 11 plays, 25 yards in 4:03. Key plays: Testaverde 7-yard pass to Green on 3rd-and-6 to San Diego 44; Testaverde 6-yard pass to Green on 4th-and-5 to San Diego 33. SAN DIEGO 7-3

2ND QUARTER: SDG - TD, TONY MARTIN 72 YD PASS FROM STAN HUMPHRIES

(GREG DAVIS KICK), 7:04. Drive: 2 plays, 73 yards in 0:35. SAN DIEGO 14-3 BAL - FG, MATT STOVER 35 YD, 14:31. Drive: 9 plays, 43yards in 3:43. Key plays: Testaverde 13-yard pass to Yarborough to San Diego 48; 5-yard holding penalty on Chargers' Shaw on 3rd-and-5 to San Diego 38. SAN DIEGO 14-6 3RD QUARTER: BAL - FG, MATT STOVER 28 YD, 3:38. Drive: 9 plays, 64 yards in 3:38. Key plays: Testaverde 13-yard pass to Alexander to San Diego 44; Testaverde 33-yard pass to Lewis to San Diego 11.

SAN DIEGO 14-9 BAL - TD, JERMAINE LEWIS 37 YD PASS FROM VINNY TESTAVERDE

(VINNY TESTAVERDE PASS TO MICHAEL JACKSON FOR TWO-POINT CONVERSION), 9:00. Drive: 8 plays, 77 yards in 3:39. Key plays: Morris 17-yard run to Baltimore 40; Morris 9-yard run to Baltimore 49; Testaverde 7-yard pass to Morris on 3rd-and-5 to San Diego 37. BALTIMORE 17-14 SDG - TD, TONY MARTIN 38 YD PASS FROM STAN HUMPHRIES (GREG DAVIS KICK), 14:57. Drive: 3 plays, 54 yards in 1:08. Key plays: Humphries 15-yard pass to Fletcher to Baltimore 38. SAN DIEGO 21-17

4TH QUARTER: NONE

<p>Curriculum Organizer(s): See appendix below</p>	<p>Curriculum Sub-organizer(s):          Technical reading (decoding an abbreviated message); writing (revise and edit communications); speaking (demonstrate an awareness of the varying degrees of formality and precision required depending on situation and context)</p>
<p>Prerequisites: None</p>	<p>Resources:          - Computer lab          - Internet access          - Texts: Technical Writing Situations and Strategies, First Canadian Edition, by Markel and Holmes, and Speaking for Success by Anthony Lieb          - Copies of box scores/information used by sportscasters</p>

**Appendix: Learning Outcomes Addressed in This Lesson**

**Reading a Professional Communication**

- Interpret technical and professional information conveyed in a varied print format
- Distinguish between implicit and explicit "messages"
- Read and summarize written technical and professional communications

**Writing, Representing, and Speaking (Revising and Editing)**

- Use electronic technologies to revise, edit, and format communications
- Consistently apply the common conventions of standard written English
- Revise and edit to ensure logical and organized presentation of information
- Correctly use the structural elements associated with particular standard formats for written technical and professional communications (in particular, a journalistic strategy using the "5Ws" may be employed)

**Communication and Collaboration (Nature of Language)**

- Demonstrate an awareness of the power of language in technical and professional contexts
- Independently develop focused inquiry questions relating to particular topics or issues, with reference to purpose and audience

**Reading, Viewing, and Listening (Research II)**

- Gather, analyze, organize and make effective use of primary source information with reference to purpose and intended audience

### **Writing, Representing, and Speaking (Planning)**

- Identify, describe and independently apply (as appropriate) a range of strategies for organizing information

### **Communication and Collaboration (Process and Systems I)**

- Demonstrate an awareness of the varying degrees of formality and precision required in technical and professional communications, depending on situation and context

### **Writing, Representing and Speaking (Products and Presentations I)**

- Create an effective technical and professional communications product

### **Communication and Collaboration (Process and Systems II)**