

## **Journalist Guidelines: Hybrid Model**

All stories submitted to *[[insert publication name]]* go through a fact-check, but the exact process depends on the type of story.

Short or timely pieces are typically fact-checked using the newspaper model. Longform, investigative, or legally sensitive stories are typically checked using the magazine model. The details for both are below. If you aren't sure how you should fact-check your assigned stories, contact your editor.

Fact-checking is vital: It helps us keep reader trust, and it may also help prevent sources from suing over inaccurate claims.

### **Newspaper Model**

It is your responsibility to double-check the bulk of your work. Our copy editors / fact-checkers will do a light fact-check based on the following.

#### **What We Fact-Check:**

- Spelling of names and places
- Dates
- Ages
- Titles and affiliations
- Genders and pronouns
- And any other basic information checkable with published sources

#### **What We Don't Fact-Check:**

- Original quotes
- Any other information from an interview

Please be sure to double-check your sourcing. If you aren't clear on whether we have fact-checked a specific piece of information, please ask.

- Original quotes
- Any other information from an interview

#### **What We Expect from You:**

- Make sure you have double-checked your work and your sourcing.

- For the light fact-checking that will happen on our end: Be sure to provide an annotated copy of your story with either comments or footnotes showing your sourcing. Also provide back-up materials (links, reports, etc.).
- Consider the truthfulness of the story's overarching themes, narrative arcs, or thesis arguments.
- Look for potential errors of omission (ex: key information that contradicts or complicates a story's angle or thesis).
- In cases where primary sources are impossible to find — and this should be rare — use at least three unrelated and reliable secondary sources per fact and alert your editor.
- Be aware of controversial or critical topics and pay special attention to word choice and fairness.
- Books are rarely fact-checked, so corroborate information and make sure the story includes appropriate caveats.
- Be diplomatic with your colleagues.

## **Magazine Model**

### **What We Fact-Check:**

- Spelling of names and places
- Dates
- Ages
- Titles and affiliations
- Genders and pronouns
- Quotes and paraphrases
- Physical descriptions of people, places, and things
- Eyewitness accounts
- Numbers, statistics, and calculations
- Measurements
- Geography
- Scientific or technical explanations
- Analogies and metaphors
- Product descriptions
- Quotes from movies, history, etc.
- Superlatives: First, biggest, etc.
- Anecdotes widely assumed to be true

- Illustrations and photos, including captions
- Word choices
- Factual assertions
- Individual facts and overarching truths
- Any other matter of fact that isn't included on this list

### **What We Expect from You:**

The fact-checker should be able to clearly follow your reporting process. You should also be available for follow-up questions throughout the fact-check. If you have travel coming up or will otherwise be unavailable, let your editor know as soon as possible.

After your editor has confirmed your story is ready for the fact-check, please provide:

- An annotated copy: Every fact in the story should have either a footnote or comment with the relevant source information that clearly corresponds to your back-up material. Please be as specific as possible (include page numbers, relevant key words, timestamps, etc.) Use primary sources for all facts, and especially for criminal charges or other misconduct, or claims that could otherwise harm a source or reader if inaccurate.
- Back up material: Clearly label all cited sources and share via email or a file-sharing service. The file names, book titles, and other identifying information should match the footnotes/comments in the annotated draft. Examples include:
  - People: Contact information, include preferred method of contact, and, if relevant, any dates they will be unavailable. If applicable: Provide links for official websites/biographies/etc.
  - Articles and reports: PDFs or links.
  - Quotes: Interview recording or transcript.
  - Books: Copy of book or PDF of cover, copyright, and relevant pages.
  - Published works: In addition to links, please be sure to download or print as PDFs.
  - Websites, including social media: PDFs or screenshots, in case the links disappear.
  - Original court documents, arrest reports, disciplinary reports, or any other primary source.

Note: If any sourcing is highly confidential, provide encrypted and/or password-protected materials or contact your editor to plan for a secure hand-off.