



# Dig Deeper

December 6, 2021

## EDUCATOR GUIDE KEY AND STUDENT PAGES FOR News Goggles

What makes a story newsworthy, and how do journalists provide context?

In this document you'll find:

- **Teacher directions for this lesson.**
- **Editable student pages.**
- **An answer key for the student pages.**

Teacher directions:

1. **Make sure each student has a copy of the [featured story](#), which includes an audio version for radio at the top. Students will need it as they work through the viewing guide.**  
Note: Your students should read or skim the entire article first to get a general sense of what it's about before digging deeper into questions in the viewing guide.
2. **Distribute student copies of the viewing guide in this document (pages 2-4).**
3. **Conclusion:** Have students use their notes from this viewing guide to brainstorm a response to the essential lesson question. Then, discuss as a class. To extend this question further, have students develop their thoughts in several paragraphs or an essay.





# Dig Deeper

December 6, 2021

## News Goggles

### What makes a story newsworthy, and how do journalists provide context?

**Featured Video:** [“News Goggles: Miguel Otárola, Colorado Public Radio.”](#)

**Featured Text:** [“A year after the Cal-Wood wildfire, land managers ask: What should a healthy forest look like?”](#) (Miguel Otárola, CPR News).

**Directions:**

1. Read the featured text.
2. Watch the featured video, using this viewing guide to take notes about how Otárola chose this story and included relevant context.
3. Determine what make a story newsworthy for a particular beat, and how journalists provide context so that readers understand the significance of the facts in the report.



*Resource Connection Tip: Review these seven [standards of quality journalism](#) to see how context relates to other standards.*

\* **beat:** a newsroom term for the particular topic that a journalist covers

\* **newsworthiness:** the measure of how much a given subject deserves to be covered as news

#### PART A: Determining the story

What is Otárola’s beat?

How does Otárola decide what stories to cover on his beat? How does he decide what’s newsworthy?

How did Otárola get his idea for the Cal-Wood story?

What made it newsworthy?

Think about 'The Big Four' elements of newsworthiness, or how timely, important, interesting and unique a story is.

### PART B: Craft

Why did Otárola select the first quote for this story?

"I was asking some experts, 'Where is the recipe for that? Where can I follow a recipe so that I can actually do that?' And they told me that they don't have one yet," Salgado said in an interview from the Cal-Wood center.

What can quoting sources do?

In the boxes below, note how Otárola approaches reporting for radio versus print, including quote selection.

Radio

Print



## PART C: Context

Pause the video. How would you describe context in your own words?

Revisit the featured article. Find the excerpt shown below. Then restart the video.

Excerpt:

Helping forests grow again has become increasingly urgent as **climate change leads to wildfires that are burning larger and hotter**. Large patches of forest are left without any surviving trees and seeds, particularly in ponderosa pine forests like Cal-Wood,

- Why did Otárola include the information that is highlighted above?



**Conclusion:** What makes a story newsworthy for a particular beat, and how can journalists provide context so that readers understand the significance of the facts in the report?

Think about Otárola's process to guide your answer.



**Challenge:** Find another excerpt where Otárola provides context for a fact or set of facts. How does this context help make the meaning clearer for readers?



NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_



# Dig Deeper

December 6, 2021

## News Goggles

### What makes a story newsworthy, and how do journalists provide context?

**Featured Video:** [“News Goggles: Miguel Otárola, Colorado Public Radio.”](#)

**Featured Text:** [“A year after the Cal-Wood wildfire, land managers ask: What should a healthy forest look like?”](#) (Miguel Otárola, CPR News).

#### Directions:

1. Read the featured text.
2. Watch the featured video, using this viewing guide to take notes about how Otárola chose this story and included relevant context.
3. Determine what make a story newsworthy for a particular beat, and how journalists provide context so that readers understand the significance of the facts in the report.



*Resource Connection Tip: Review these seven [standards of quality journalism](#) to see how context relates to other standards.*

---

\* **beat:** a newsroom term for the particular topic that a journalist covers

\* **newsworthiness:** the measure of how much a given subject deserves to be covered as news

#### PART A: Determining the story

What is Otárola's beat?

Otárola's beat is climate and the environment at Colorado Public Radio.

How does Otárola decide what stories to cover on his beat? How does he decide what's newsworthy?

At Colorado Public Radio, reporters covering climate and environment have divided this broader beat into sub-beats. Otárola has generally focused on extreme weather events that are caused by climate change, including wildfires, floods and droughts. He covers energy stories, including oil and gas, renewable energy and nuclear energy. His beat also examines the impact these changes have on the workforce, as well as exploring the climate justice angle of these topics.

Otárola focuses on his areas and looks for things that are happening. He gets to know the people, or sources, involved in these topics. He considers newsworthiness factors such as how timely, important, interesting or unique a story is (called “The Big Four” at NLP). Proximity often plays a role. If something unique or interesting is happening in a section of the state, he tries to bring in the bigger context of how it is representative for the entire state or what other communities are dealing with these types of issues. He also localizes national news.

How did Otárola get his idea for the Cal-Wood story?

Otárola went to a wildfire conference in Grand Junction, Colorado, and talked with fire experts and fire chiefs for story ideas. A fire chief told him they don't know the strategy to bring trees back to forests after wildfires. Otárola thought that was an interesting question: What is being done to restore forests after wildfires?

What made it newsworthy?

Think about 'The Big Four' elements of newsworthiness, or how timely, important, interesting and unique a story is.

This is an important question in Colorado since three of the biggest wildfires in state history occurred in the past year. At the time of this story, Otárola ran across a lot of one-year anniversaries related to these wildfires, so when the Cal-Wood Education Center reached out, the timing made sense to pursue this story, since the center is also grappling with how to restore forests after wildfires. There were also university studies related to this topic. All of these pieces together made it newsworthy.

## PART B: Craft

Why did Otárola select the first quote for this story?

"I was asking some experts, 'Where is the recipe for that? Where can I follow a recipe so that I can actually do that?' And they told me that they don't have one yet," Salgado said in an interview from the Cal-Wood center.

The first quote was indicative of the entire story.

What can quoting sources do?

Quoting sources can hold public officials accountable, show where key facts originated, add different voices to news coverage and point to broader significance.

In the boxes below, note how Otárola approaches reporting for radio versus print, including quote selection.

Radio

Otárola constantly looks for interesting and unique sounds that put you in a place and time, and are indicative of the story.

Print

Otárola looks to get right to what the story is about.



## PART C: Context

Pause the video. How would you describe context in your own words?

Answers will vary.

Revisit the featured article. Find the excerpt shown below. Then restart the video.

Excerpt:

Helping forests grow again has become increasingly urgent as **climate change leads to wildfires that are burning larger and hotter**. Large patches of forest are left without any surviving trees and seeds, particularly in ponderosa pine forests like Cal-Wood,

- Why did Otárola include the information that is highlighted above?

The station works to include the context of climate change into stories about climate and the environment as much as possible. They wrote up little sections – about fire, drought, heat waves, fossil fuels – that everyone in the newsroom could use in their stories so that readers know how climate change plays a part in these stories. Otárola believes it's the journalists' responsibility to mention how this connects to what humans have done to the environment, and what we can do about it. This context makes the story more accurate.



**Conclusion:** What makes a story newsworthy for a particular beat, and how can journalists provide context so that readers understand the significance of the facts in the report?

Think about Otárola's process to guide your answer.



**Challenge:** Find another excerpt where Otárola provides context for a fact or set of facts. How does this context help make the meaning clearer for readers?

