

NAME: _____

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Sift®



Dig Deeper

Oct. 3, 2022

EDUCATOR GUIDE KEY AND STUDENT PAGES FOR News Goggles

What makes something newsworthy?

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](#). 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 2-5).**
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.



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News Goggles What makes something newsworthy?

Featured Video: [“News Goggles: María Luisa Paúl, The Washington Post.”](#)

Featured Text: [“You met him as ‘Corn Kid.’ Now, he’s South Dakota’s ‘Corn-bassador.’”](#)
(María Luisa Paúl, The Washington Post).

Directions:

1. Read the featured text.
2. Watch the featured video, using this viewing guide to take notes about how Paúl organizes and structures her reporting.
3. Determine what a viral story can teach us about social media, internet culture and our world.



Resource Connection Tip: Complete [What is News?](#) in Checkology® to explore how journalists “filter” information, or determine which events and issues to cover in a given news cycle, by using key criteria.

- * **hard news:** news events that have just happened or are about to happen, such as protests, political meetings, natural disasters, court rulings, crime and speeches
- * **features:** stories that can be connected to news events but are less time-sensitive. Often more creative and colorful than hard news stories

PART A: The Morning Mix

| |
|---|
| What is Paúl’s beat and what kinds of topics/stories does she normally cover? |
| How does Paúl’s team decide what is newsworthy on this beat? |
| What is the difference between hard news and features? |

- * **lead:** each article begins with a “lead.” A good lead should provide the most important and newsworthy information from the get-go. (Some journalists also write it “lede.”)
- * **news peg:** the timely, newsworthy element of a story. It answers the question, “Why write about this now?” Also called the “news hook.”
- * **Inverted pyramid:** a news story form that puts the most important information first and least important information last. Commonly used in hard news stories.
- * **kicker:** the ending of a story or news report, often intended to leave a lasting impression.

PART B: The reporting process

How did Paúl find this story about Tariq becoming South Dakota’s official corn-bassador?

Why are these kinds of stories — ones that are social media-driven and related to internet culture — important to cover?

What makes something newsworthy:



Other factors journalists consider include proximity or relevance. Some have even [proposed](#) “joy” as a news value. Can you think of any other factors or values?

What is Paúl’s news peg for this story?

Compare the lead from the [featured text](#) with the lead from a more traditional [“hard” news story](#) Paúl wrote. How do they differ?

FEATURE LEAD: Corn has the juice (it has the juice). Corn has a viral song. And now the “big lump with knobs” has an official ambassador.

HARD LEAD: Long-held suspicions of wiretapping by the Venezuelan government were substantiated last week in [a report published by Telefónica](#), the Spanish parent company of Movistar, one of three major mobile telephone providers in Venezuela. According to the report, more than a million Venezuelan users have been surveilled in the past year.

How does Paúl organize her stories? When is an inverted pyramid form used?

PART C: Reflections on journalism

What was the reader reaction to the featured story?

What are three things Paúl wishes everyone knew about journalism?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



Conclusion: What can a viral story teach us about social media, internet culture and our world? Consider what makes something newsworthy and Paúl's process to guide your answer. Incorporate journalism vocabulary in your response and use evidence from all parts of this viewing guide to support your answer.

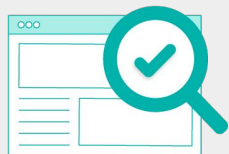


Challenge: Find five details from the story that show why Tariq becoming South Dakota's corn-bassador is newsworthy. Explain your choices.



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PART A: The Morning Mix

What is Paúl’s beat and what kinds of topics/stories does she normally cover?

Paúl is a reporter for the Morning Mix team at The Washington Post, which means she can write about anything and everything from politics to economics, tech, and social media-driven stories. Her goal is to create narrative-driven stories people might enjoy over their cup of coffee.

How does Paúl’s team decide what is newsworthy on this beat?

Paúl’s team throws around ideas over what they see in the country and online. Sometimes they do hard news and breaking news, but their objective is to have entertaining, interesting stories that show you something about the world. They find trends. There might be something happening in the world, and they want to get in early and bring it to national attention.

What is the difference between hard news and features?

Answers will vary. Students should identify that hard news deals with news events that are time-sensitive while feature stories are less time-sensitive and often are more creative than hard news stories.

- * **lead:** each article begins with a “lead.” A good lead should provide the most important and newsworthy information from the get-go. (Some journalists also write it “lede.”)
- * **news peg:** the timely, newsworthy element of a story. It answers the question, “Why write about this now?” Also called the “news hook.”
- * **Inverted pyramid:** a news story form that puts the most important information first and least important information last. Commonly used in hard news stories.
- * **kicker:** the ending of a story or news report, often intended to leave a lasting impression.

PART B: The reporting process

How did Paúl find this story about Tariq becoming South Dakota’s official corn-bassador?

In early August (2022), Paúl saw Tariq’s interview on Recess Therapy and other videos about Tariq and corn. She witnessed the inside joke growing online. Her editor saw when he was named South Dakota’s corn-bassador and told her “you might be interested in this.” Paúl went on to write that story that night.

Why are these kinds of stories — ones that are social media-driven and related to internet culture — important to cover?

Paúl wants to talk not just about trends themselves but what they mean in the world. Doom and gloom is not the whole world. She believes there should be a space for joy (like people who love corn).

What makes something newsworthy:



Other factors journalists consider include proximity or relevance. Some have even [proposed](#) “joy” as a news value. Can you think of any other factors or values? Answers will vary. One example list from Purdue Owl can be found [here](#). Accept all reasonable answers.

What is Paúl’s news peg for this story?

Tariq becoming the corn ambassador grounds the story to the present moment.

Compare the lead from the [featured text](#) with the lead from a more traditional [“hard” news story](#) Paúl wrote. How do they differ?

FEATURE LEAD: Corn has the juice (it has the juice). Corn has a viral song. And now the “big lump with knobs” has an official ambassador.

Feature leads are more creative and less immediate than hard leads. This lead is fun.

HARD LEAD: Long-held suspicions of wiretapping by the Venezuelan government were substantiated last week in a report published by [Telefónica](#), the Spanish parent company of Movistar, one of three major mobile telephone providers in Venezuela. According to the report, more than a million Venezuelan users have been surveilled in the past year.

The hard lead is straightforward. It offers the basics (who, what, when, where, why and how).

How does Paúl organize her stories? When is an inverted pyramid form used?

Paúl thinks about the beginning (the lead) and the end (the kicker). She wants to start and end strongly. For this particular story, she wants to talk about what a corn-bassador is because that’s what the news peg is. She also needs space to explain where it came from, what Tariq said and why it’s important. The inverted pyramid structure is often used in hard news stories, where the most important information comes first and the least important comes last. Paúl didn’t stick strictly to an inverted pyramid structure in this story; she was more creative with her writing.

PART C: Reflections on journalism

What was the reader reaction to the featured story?

There were a lot of people who said, “Yes, finally, Corn Kid.” One grandmother wrote she could connect with her grandkids. There’s a sense of belonging that happens when we have these shared reference points. We can connect with people from all over the world.

What are three things Paúl wishes everyone knew about journalism?

1. Credible journalists report news without a personal agenda.
2. Journalism includes both hard news and joyful stories.
3. Social media is newsworthy because it holds a mirror to what society is.



Conclusion: What can a viral story teach us about social media, internet culture and our world? Consider what makes something newsworthy and Paúl's process to guide your answer. Incorporate journalism vocabulary in your response and use evidence from all parts of this viewing guide to support your answer.

Answers will vary. Be sure students incorporate key ideas from various points in this viewing guide.



Challenge: Find five details from the story that show why Tariq becoming South Dakota's corn-bassador is newsworthy. Explain your choices.

